

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#)
ar [anhydraddoldebau iechyd meddwl](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care](#)
[Committee](#) consultation on [mental health inequalities](#)

MHI 48

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru |
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales



Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) - response to inquiry on:

Mental Health Inequalities

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Response submitted on behalf of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)

We confirm that this response can be published and no information needs to be treated as confidential.

Questions posed by the consultation below:

1. Which groups of people are disproportionately affected by poor mental health in Wales? What factors contribute to worse mental health within these groups?
2. For the groups identified, what are the barriers to accessing mental health services? How effectively can existing services meet their needs, and how could their experience of using mental health services be improved?
3. To what extent does Welsh Government policy recognise and address the mental health needs of these groups? Where are the policy gaps?
4. What further action is needed, by whom/where, to improve mental health and outcomes for the groups of people identified and reduce mental health inequalities in Wales?

HIW Response

HIW's role in gaining assurance in relation to the quality and safety of services provided to citizens in Wales means that alongside regulatory work, reviews, inspection and assurance activities, HIW receives and uses a range of information about healthcare services.

This includes:

- Listening to concerns
- Examining safeguarding concerns and outcomes
- Actively engaging and sharing information with healthcare providers and partner agencies.

By triangulating evidence from a number of sources HIW obtains a fuller picture of the quality of care and support provided by healthcare services in the NHS and independent sector.

Commencing in the spring of 2021, HIW undertook a review into Mental Health Crisis Care in Wales, the report into these findings will be published

on 10 March 2022. The terms of reference for this review provide more detail about the scope of this work. The response below is informed by this review, plus the understanding and intelligence we gain from our suite of other work, as outlined above.

1. Which groups of people are disproportionately affected by poor mental health in Wales? What factors contribute to worse mental health within these groups?

The Wellbeing of Wales report 2021 identifies a number of factors/groups of people that have been disproportionately affected by poor mental health. Without doubt the pandemic has had a significant impact on people's mental well-being with support services not available such as memory clinics for the elderly. Many social interactive/support groups have also not been able to meet during the worst times of the pandemic. Groups of people affected are: Older people, males in ethnic minority groups and people in low paid/less secure jobs. Young people and children from low income families have also been affected when there has been a lack of access to technology and Wi-Fi to effectively facilitate online learning and social contact with their peers.

Factors include;

- Lack of access to technology and Wi-Fi
- Gap in digital skills
- Lack of access to face to face mental health services
- Lack of access to social/support events
- Delays in routine physical health procedures/surgery impacting on the mental health of individuals
- Lack of direct support from family/friends due to pandemic restrictions
- Lack of financial security
- Lack of access to timely care

2. For the groups identified, what are the barriers to accessing mental health services? How effectively can existing services meet their needs, and how could their experience of using mental health services be improved?

Barriers to access include:

- Lack of public transport
- Lack of access to technology for on-line services

- Lack of support/education on the effectiveness of these services to facilitate attendance
- Lack of experienced/trained staff to facilitate these services
- Constraints/lack of capacity of existing services
- An understanding, from the services, of how they can better work together to meet the needs of people
- Access to crises/out of hours care

How can services meet their needs and how can their experience be improved:

- More effective discharge planning and ensuring mental health support services are available
- Early intervention services need to be developed
- Additional focus on patient experience
- Designated leads for “specialisms” eg; eating disorders
- Standardised assessments for patients
- Creating new pathways for care

3. To what extent does Welsh Government policy recognise and address the mental health needs of these groups? Where are the policy gaps?

- There are a number of strategies in place including; The Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan (2019-2020) and The Dementia Action Plan for Wales (2018-2022) and The Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 focuses on improving access to services and their delivery

Where are the policy gaps:

- Transition of young people between children/young people services and adult
 - Audit/governance/service evaluation
4. What further action is needed, by whom/where, to improve mental health and outcomes for the groups of people identified and reduce mental health inequalities in Wales?
- More integration of health and social care facilitated by local authorities and health boards