

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

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

MHI 88

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Both Parents Matter Cymru

Hello

I am contacting you, on behalf of the Charity, Both Parents Matter (Cymru), with regard to the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee, launching a new inquiry, focusing on mental health inequalities across different groups in society.

I note that the inquiry will concentrate on the experiences of people who are disproportionately affected by poor mental health in Wales and look at what barriers exist to accessing mental health services.

Having viewed the list of groups mentioned, which I appreciate is not exhaustive, I note that there was no specific mention of the impact of family breakdown on the parents and children. Whilst many parents can and do co-parent at outset, there remains a large number of cases where matters proceed to Family Court as contact between both parents and the child (children) breaks down, often for prolonged periods of time. The impact of the breakdown has a huge impact on the mental health of both the non-resident parent and also the child.

The Charity (BPM) is a Child's Rights Charity, working under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The community we work with in our core business consists of non-resident parents and grandparents seeking to maintain a constructive and beneficial relationship with their children/grandchildren after parental separation. Parents who have recently separated, both resident and non-resident, face enormous practical and emotional problems. Our focus is on helping prevent these difficulties adversely affecting the children's best interests, which generally means facilitating an ongoing meaningful relationship between both parents, and all grandparents, and the children. Non-resident parents need particular support because of the nature of their position. These are mostly, but not invariably, fathers.

With regards the children, parental separation is recognised by Public Health Wales as the most prevalent Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). Moreover, constant support from both parents is strongly correlated with providing the child with the resilience needed to ameliorate the adverse effects of ACEs. This is the factual basis of the value of BPM's services in assisting both parents to retain meaningful involvement in their children's lives post-separation in pursuit of the children's best interests.

Our service users are typically experiencing severe social isolation at a time when they require support most. The other aspect of our service is therefore emotional support. As from summer 2019 we have been asking all our service users to complete standard psychology questionnaires to

measure mental wellbeing and social/emotional loneliness. (We use the same measures as advised by the Welsh government). The results emphatically confirm what is readily apparently in our typical service user. 41% are severely lonely, compared to 5% in the general population. In terms of mental wellbeing, our service users clearly form a distinct statistical population from the general public, with a huge elevation in the poorest levels of wellbeing.

Attached for your consideration and information, please find attached two researched articles, the first of which was published in the Journal of Psychology, as prepared for the Charity by Dr Richard Bradford, who spent a period of time as a Trustee with the Charity.

[Loneliness, impaired well-being, and partner abuse victimisation of separated fathers in Wales - Richard Bradford](#)

[A report for NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights by families need fathers both parents matter cymru in conjunction with public health Wales](#)

Lynne
Lynne Blore

National Volunteer Co-ordinator
Charity Trustee