

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 19TH MAY 2022

12:00 – 13:00, ZOOM

PRESENT: Jenny Rathbone MS (Chair), Sioned Williams MS, Heledd Roberts (office of Rhun Ap Iorwerth MS)

IN ATTENDANCE: Katharine Gale - RCN Wales, Alison Scouller - Socialist Health Association Cymru, Helen Bayliss - Consultant gynaecologist Cwm Taf UHB, Rhianydd Williams - Equality and Policy Officer Wales TUC, Amanda Davies - Consultant SRH Swansea Bay UHB, Pauline Brelsford - Committee Member Abortion Rights Cardiff, Bronwen Davies - volunteer Abortion Rights Cardiff, Rachael Clarke – Chief of Staff BPAS, Gemma Roberts - Policy and Public Affairs Manager British Heart Foundation Cymru, Deborah Shaffer - Founder Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW), Diana Dobrzynska - Client Care Coordinator BPAS, Charlotte Morgan - Policy and Public Affairs Co-ordinator British Heart Foundation Cymru.

APOLOGIES: Rhun Ap Iorwerth MS, Delyth Jewell MS

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26TH JANUARY 2022 AND MATTERS ARISING

- Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed
- After the previous meeting on pain during gynaecological outpatient procedures, the Women's Health CPG worked with speakers from that meeting to develop a submission to an RCOG consultation on pain management guidelines for these settings.

2. UPDATE ON ABORTION CARE

Rachael Clarke provided update on abortion care:

- Amendment to Health and Social care Bill in Westminster includes Wales. Welsh government still able to extend gestational time limits and provision, but the right to telemedical abortion care is the same for women in England and Wales.
- Across the UK there has been an uptick in the number of people needing abortion. Lack of access to LARC during the pandemic means abortion providers are seeing women who may have otherwise avoided unwanted pregnancies. Cost of living crisis is also expected to push up number of women seeking abortions.
- Services in Wales are still under pressure. BPAS has invested money in making more consultations available to reduce waiting times in Cardiff. Some changes that happened due to covid, e.g. people giving up beds needed for other services still haven't reverted back pre-pandemic

3. WOMEN'S HEALTH PLAN FOR WALES

Debbie Shaffer, Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales:

Background and context of the Women's Health Plan:

- Group is chaired by FTWW and BHF, it is made up of 45+ third sector organisations and individual patient representatives.
- Recent years have seen increased campaigning for women's health strategies. Scotland and England have plans and it seemed there was little appetite in Wales due to the Healthier Wales plan.
- However there are a growing number of issues women face when trying to access help and specific solutions are needed to address entrenched issues
- This Women's Health plan for Wales has been co-produced by patients, clinicians and charities and takes a life-course holistic approach.

Content of women's Health plan

- The document is comprehensive and addresses cross-cutting themes that need particular attention these are: Equitable access to specialist services, Improved data collection, Support for sustainable co production, Enhanced training for healthcare professionals
- There are appendices for a range of issues that can be used as stand alone action plans for that specific issue or condition. This list is not exhaustive but can be used as a starting point to help create life course approach to women's health in Wales.

Gemma Roberts, British Heart Foundation Cymru:

- BHF research uncovered the gender health gap in cardiac care and outcomes. Prompted them to reach out to other orgs to organise a specific plan to address women's health.
- Working with the health committee and Welsh government to prioritise a women's health plan and the minister has been supportive, there is also large cross-party support.
- Report will be launched soon and public support from the CPG would be welcome to help raise public awareness.

4. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RAISED BY SPEAKERS

Collaboration and co-production

- Members discussed how the co-production of this document had strengthened it and how sustainable co-production could be supported moving forward. FTWW and BHF were congratulated for compiling document in such a collaborative way.
- Abortion Rights Cardiff highlighted that they would like to be part of this work going forward, FTWW welcomes membership from anyone that would like to be affiliated.
- Importance of establishing what is meant by co-production, how to resource it and to ensure it's a key aspect of health service design and delivery was discussed. We must identify key advocates, networks and communities and support government and clinicians to work together – RCN highlighted the coproduction of endometriosis nurses as a good example.
- FTWW and BHF confirmed that all stakeholders involved in production had approved the final plan.

Political and policy context

- JR suggested that launch of this plan is a moment to restore peoples hope and allow them the chance to influence the services that effect their lives.
- Welsh govt is expected to publish Women's Health Quality Statement in July, followed by a fuller plan in Autumn. The QS will cover next five years and there is no scope to influence the QS after publication, so focus of influence will be how this QS is taken forward.
- TUC highlighted policy context, currently the Period Dignity Strategy, Race Equality Action Plan and LGBTQ+ action plan are in play, women's health sit in the context of all these plans. Will there be a piece of scoping work to ensure these plans work together and are as intersectional as possible?
- FTWW responded that the document makes clear that a scoping exercise should be the first aspect of any government plan development.
- BHF: Lack of BAME data is barrier to creating more inclusive and intersectional health strategies. JR highlighted the Data Collection Unit set up for minister for social justice and the work Welsh govt are doing to improve data collection.
- Socialist Health Association Cymru requested FTWW and BHF attend labour party women's group to give similar presentation.

5. AOB

- Secretariat will be refreshing the mailing list for the CPG. Please get in touch with any thoughts on new CPG members.
- JR shared a big thank you to Rachael Clarke and BPAS for the work they have done to secure telemedicine in Wales.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS:

Next meeting: Topic: A women's health overview and look to the future with the Minister for Health and Social Service, Eluned Morgan.

A chance for the CPG to discuss the government's plans with the Minister. JR suggested it would be good to invite the Women's Health Implementation Group. FTWW asked if it would be possible to extend invite to the Welsh Health Specialised services.