

The Welsh Assembly Government's response to the report of the National Assembly Audit Committee's report on Adult Mental Health Services in Wales: A Baseline Review of Service Provision: Committee Report (2) 05-06

The Welsh Assembly Government is grateful for the report. We welcome the findings and offer the following response to the 8 recommendations in the report:

1 The Welsh Assembly Government and local agencies take concerted action to implement the recommendations made by the Auditor General that are still outstanding

Accepted. The Assembly Government originally commissioned the Auditor General to carry out a comprehensive baseline assessment of services across Wales and to make recommendations. His commissioned report was published in October 2005 and made 6 recommendations for the Assembly Government and 8 recommendations for local agencies. The Assembly Government has produced a national Action Plan as part of its revised National Service Framework that incorporates the issues and recommendations made by the Auditor General, and has also required each Local Health Board to develop a local Action Plan setting out how, in partnership with Local Authorities, NHS Trusts and other stakeholders, they intend to implement the NSF and the recommendations of the Auditor General over the next 3 years. These plans will be subject to future performance monitoring. Progress in implementing each of the recommendations has already begun.

2 The National Public Health Service takes steps to further develop its expertise in mental health needs assessment in order to fully support the production of local health social care and well being strategies.

Accepted. The NPHS has accepted Mental Health as one of its key priorities for development in 2006/7. The Assembly Government will discuss with the NPHS issues relating to capacity and resources to undertake mental health needs assessment with a view to strengthening the input to the development of local health, social care and well-being strategies. The NPHS has developed a national mental health profile and has collated relevant available data on mental health services in Wales. The report will be published later this year and one of its main objectives will be providing assistance to LHBs in the development of the mental health needs assessment component of their health and social well being strategies. The NPHS is combining this with a package of support for LHB and other stakeholders around mental health needs assessment.

- 3 The Welsh Assembly Government and Local Health Boards use the new Programme Budgeting arrangements to identify differential spends on mental health services and provide assurances that resources are being directed to the areas and services with greatest needs.**

Accepted

To date the programme budget returns have been indicative expenditure figures and have showed consistency in the level of expenditure on mental health and as a percentage of total expenditure between 2003-04 and 2004-05. The programme budget returns are completed on an annual basis, and the aim is for an incremental improvement in quality each year and this is dependant on accurate activity information received from NHS Trusts.

- 4 The Welsh Assembly Government accompanies the roll out of the action plan with a programme of work that supports its implementation within the relevant local organisations and which helps them target mental health promotion initiatives at those groups of the population with the greatest needs.**

Accepted

The action plan will be rolled out in early 2007 following a consultation exercise, and will outline actions at a national level to promote mental health and act as a guide to LHBs/LAs to develop local actions to be incorporated in their Health, Social Care and Wellbeing strategies. In particular a flagship pilot programme, Mental Health First Aid, will accompany the action plan. The programme aims to provide people in the front line the skills required to offer help and guidance to those in mental distress. This is a good example of a centrally supported programme that can be rolled out.

- 5 In parts of Wales where improvements are still required (in inpatient mental health facilities) , the local statutory organisations take urgent action to ensure that the quickest reasonable progress is made to draw up and submit strategic outline business plans for replacing old and unsuitable inpatient accommodation**

Accepted

The Assembly Government announced £75 million Capital investment for mental health for the periods 05/06, 06/07 and 07/08, and will in August 2006 draw this recommendation to the attention of the relevant NHS Trusts and Local Health Boards in Wales to ensure that mental health modernisation is included in the Strategic Outline Programmes the first draft of which are due in autumn 2006.

- 6 The review into the Care Programme Approach (CPA) is used to gain assurance that CPA is being fully implemented and is leading to improved services for people with a mental health problem. The review should be informed by the views of those using mental health services.**

Accepted

The review of CPA in 2006 has demonstrated that significant progress has been made in all areas of Wales in implementing the CPA. The outcome of the review will be published in autumn 2006, highlighting areas where CPA can be further advanced. The Mental Health Foundation is shortly to undertake a research programme in England and Wales on the views of service users and the impact of CPA on their needs.

- 7 The Welsh Assembly Government requests NHS Trusts to demonstrate how funding was used to develop and bring up to date their protocols and that the required protocols are now in place across Wales.**

Accepted

The Welsh Assembly Government asked each NHS Trust to submit an action plans showing how funding was used and to detail what protocol arrangements were in place. An analysis of interim reports received in April this year shows that all Trusts are making good progress in achieving the actions they set out in their bids for funding.

- 8 The Welsh Assembly Government identifies a clear timetable to follow up work relating to the development of a framework to embed better collaborative working practices between specialist services in mental health and drug and alcohol misuse services, and that it seek assurances that the substance misuse framework is leading to improved services for patients with a dual diagnosis.**

Accepted

In November 2004 the first five modules of the Substance Misuse Treatment Framework for Wales were published, One module was a service framework to meet the needs of people with co-occurring substance misuse and mental health problems. To support the implementation of the module the Welsh Institute of Health and Social Care (WIHSC) was commissioned to facilitate a series of workshops across Wales intended to bring together professionals from mental health and substance misuse services to consider the working practices between the services and to ensure a seamless pathway of treatment for these very vulnerable clients. A draft report on the progress in holding the workshops, the difficulties encountered in taking this forward and recommended future action has been prepared by WIHSC. This report will be considered by the specialist sub group of the Substance Misuse Project Board that developed the module in September 2006 and consideration given to providing further events to assist in the development of robust protocols.