

Cafodd yr ymateb hwn ei gyflwyno i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

HSC PSS 78

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Mind Cymru

Blaenoriaethau cychwynol a nodwyd gan y Pwyllgor Initial priorities identified by the Committee

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi nodi nifer o flaenoriaethau posibl ar gyfer ei waith yn ystod y Chweched Senedd, gan gynnwys: iechyd y cyhoedd a gwaith ataliol; y gweithlu iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys diwylliant sefydliadol a lles staff; mynediad at wasanaethau iechyd meddwl; arloesi ar sail tystiolaeth ym maes iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol; cymorth a gwasanaethau i ofalwyr di-dâl; mynediad at wasanaethau adsefydlu i'r rhai sydd wedi cael COVID ac i eraill; a mynediad at wasanaethau ar gyfer cyflyrau cronig tymor hir, gan gynnwys cyflyrau cyhyrsgerbydol.

The Committee has identified several potential priorities for work during the Sixth Senedd, including: public health and prevention; the health and social care workforce, including organisational culture and staff wellbeing; access to mental health services; evidence-based innovation in health and social care; support and services for unpaid carers; access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services; and access to services for long-term chronic conditions, including musculoskeletal conditions.

C1. Pa rai o'r materion uchodydych chi'n credu y dylai'r Pwyllgor roi blaenoriaeth iddynt, a pham?

Q1. Which of the issues listed above do you think should be a priority, and why?

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on priorities for the Health and Social Care Committee. In the last Senedd term we found the scrutiny and inquiries carried out by the Committee critical to ensuring the Welsh Government and its delivery partners were held accountable for strategy and agreed actions to improve the lives and experiences of all people experiencing a mental health problem. We are pleased to see that access to mental health services has been included in the priorities for the Committee in the Sixth Senedd.



There is no doubt that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health of the population. We know from the surveys we have undertaken and feedback from those who have accessed our support that it has not been an even impact across the population either. Those with pre-existing mental health problems, on low or insecure incomes, from ethnic minority communities and children and young people have all reported higher levels of poor mental health than the general population in the last eighteen months. You can read more about our survey report via this link:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media/8961/the-consequences-of-coronavirus-for-mental-health-in-wales-final-report.pdf>

Some of these groups have been underserved in terms of mental health support for some time, experiencing either barriers to access support or significant waiting times. Therefore, any consideration of access to mental health support needs to include a focus on inequality of access and outcomes. It is crucial that the Committee seeks to hear directly from these groups in any future work.

As the ten year *Together for Mental Health* strategy comes to an end in 2022 it is worth the Committee considering the issue of access to mental health support within the context of this strategy and the outcomes it has sought to deliver within the next year. This should also consider the governance structure, where accountability lies and how investment has helped to shape outcomes. In the course of ten years there has been considerable change in demand for support as well as new focuses being prioritised through the three year delivery plans. Whilst an independent review of the strategy has been commissioned by the Welsh Government, we believe there is value in seeking evidence from a wide range of stakeholders on the impact of the strategy, where further work is needed and priorities to shape a future strategy. This should also be contextualised by it being ten years in 2022 since the Mental Health Measure came into force, so understanding whether this piece of legislation has improved access and experiences of mental health support would also be important to consider. With the recent publication of a White Paper on proposed changes to the Mental Health Act following a review instigated by UK Government, there is an opportunity to look at how the legislative framework around mental health in Wales operates. In considering these two milestones there would be an opportunity for joint work between the Health and Social Care Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee to ensure that there is an all age view of the effectiveness of both the strategy and the legislative framework.

We would also like to see mental health weaved through the other priority areas identified by the committee. From what steps have been taken to put in place an effective public health and preventative approach to mental ill-health to the way in which the pandemic has driven innovation and new ways of offering support to people right across Wales. The mental health impact of having a long term chronic condition can be significant and we would certainly welcome access to mental health support being something that is considered as part of that inquiry.

Blaenoriaethau allweddol ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd

Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd

C2. Yn eich barn chi, pa flaenoriaethau allweddol eraill y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd mewn perthynas â:

- a) **gwasanaethau iechyd;**
- b) **gofal cymdeithasol a gofalwyr;**
- c) **adfer yn dilyn COVID?**

Q2. In your view, what other key priorities should the Committee consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to:

- a) **health services;**
 - b) **social care and carers;**
 - c) **COVID recovery?**
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Gwasanaethau iechyd

Health services

We would not want to see the inquiries undertaken in the last Senedd term lost, as there are many recommendations that continue to be relevant and need to be followed through. In particular we would want to see the Committee following up on recommendations made by the following reports:

- Suicide prevention
- Mental health in policing & police custody

Both of these reports have made key recommendations to improve access and experience and it is vital that there is continued scrutiny of how these recommendations are being implemented.

We are also aware that the Committee was due to undertake an inquiry into out-of-area placements before the pandemic, understandably, altered the focus of the Committee's work. We feel there is merit in returning to this topic and refreshing the evidence base, at some point in the coming Senedd term

Adfer yn dilyn COVID

COVID recovery

The Committee has already carried out an inquiry into the impact of Covid and its management on mental health, again with some key recommendations for action for the Welsh Government and its delivery partners to consider. As we have said above when

considering Covid recovery it is important to recognise that there has been an inequality of experience during the last eighteen months and that these need to be specifically considered when looking at the issue of recovery. There is also a need to untangle the issues and disruption caused by the pandemic and the issues that are more systemic and longer lasting. Even before the pandemic we knew that an increasing number of people were seeking support and some services were struggling to cope, the pandemic has only heightened many of these issues and the inequalities that lie within them.

C3. A oes unrhyw faterion eraill yr hoffech dynnu sylw'r Pwyllgor atynt?

Q3. Are there any other issues you wish to draw to the Committee's attention?

There are definite opportunities for the Committee to work with other Committees on issues around mental health, as highlighted in terms of potential work with the Children, Young People and Education Committee. There should also be a continued scrutiny and request for updates on how the Welsh Government and its delivery partners are measuring their performance (outputs and outcomes), the development of the mental health core dataset, the transparency of the data currently collected and how this is being used to shape and tailor support. The issue of workforce consistently comes up in discussions around access and capacity. We are aware that Health Education and Improvement Wales are developing a mental health workforce strategy and this will be important in meeting the future need following the pandemic. It will be important that this forms part of individual scrutiny at Ministerial level as well as with HEIW and within any inquiries the committee chooses to undertake.