

HR 08

Ymchwiliad i hawliau dynol yng Nghymru

Inquiry into Human Rights in Wales

Ymateb gan: Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Aneurin Bevan

Response from: Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee Inquiry in relation to Human Rights in Wales. I should be grateful if you would find below feedback from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board with regard to the three areas of your Inquiry:

- The impact of the UK Government's withdrawal from the European Union on human rights protection in Wales;
- The impact of the UK Government's proposal to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998 and to replace it with a UK Bill of Rights, and
- Public perceptions about human rights in Wales, in particular how understandable and relevant they are to Welsh people.

The Health Board recognises that the area of human rights is a complex and wide ranging topic and is mindful of the existing evidence base in relation to aspects of equality and human rights within Wales, such as those published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Bevan Foundation.

Importantly, the approach to equality and human rights in Wales has gained increasing emphasis over recent years and it has been helpful to see this mainstreamed across a wide range of strategic approaches such as the Health and Care Standards for Wales, NHS Wales Planning Guidance and the requirement for equality impact assessment. This have given a strategic context for our equality activity and supported a more 'joined up' approach with our public service partners. This position will also be further built upon through our implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act and particularly the opportunities presented by the Well Being of Future Generations Act.

The Health Board has welcomed the general public sector equality duties and Wales specific duties as helpful tools in reducing the inequalities experienced by people in Wales. We would not want to move to a position where this could be potentially compromised or significantly changed, which would impact on our ambitions to have a more equal and fairer society.

The Health Board has emphasised its commitment to support a human rights based approach in the ways in which we work. We do this through the application of five key principles:-

- Putting human rights principles and standards at the heart of policy and planning;
- Ensuring accountability;
- Empowerment;
- Participation and involvement;
- Non-discrimination and attention given to vulnerable groups.

The Health Board is clear that taking a human rights based approach is a way of ensuring that human rights principles and standards are promoted and embedded in all that we do and therefore are made real in practice.

In terms of the implications of the UK leaving the European Union, it is not possible to accurately predict the what the impact of the withdrawal will be on human rights protection in Wales, as this will depend on the agreements that the UK reaches on leaving the European Union and also how the newly proposed Bill of Rights is framed and what rights it seeks to protect and promote.

The Health Board is aware both from research and our engagement with the communities we serve, that people do not always understand the relevance and impact of human rights in Wales and the protection and support this offers to them. Therefore, it is recognised that in each of our organisations, in our partnerships and at a Welsh Government level we could always do more to help people understand their importance, their impact and the opportunities they offer to promote equality and a fairer society for the population of Wales.

I hope this response is helpful. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Richard Bevan, Board Secretary.