

18 August 2022

Dear

ATISN 16518 – Community Mental Health Teams

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 28 July 2022. You have requested the following:

- 1. Please outline the statutory and policy framework underpinning the duties and responsibilities of Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) in Wales.*
- 2. Please outline when and how these responsibilities were amended or eased during the coronavirus pandemic, and when/whether the pre-pandemic regime resumed.*
- 3. What guidance or training is available to staff working in mental health services to support patients/clients who also use drugs or alcohol.*
- 4. What assessment has been carried out of the future funding needs of CMHTs, in order to meet projected demand for mental health services, as well as supporting delivery of related strategies such as the Ending Homelessness Action Plan.*
- 5. Please provide an update on progress made against the national action plan for the Wales Crisis Care Concordat, specifically actions against core principles two and three, on access and quality of crisis services.*

Our response

- 1. Please outline the statutory and policy framework underpinning the duties and responsibilities of Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) in Wales.*

Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) deliver community mental health services within tier 2 of the whole system model. CMHTs screen and assess people referred to Tier 2 services, and deliver a range of health, social care and psychological interventions, having taken into account a person's range of needs.

The [Code of Practice to Parts 2 and 3 of the Mental Health \(Wales\) Measure](#) provides clear guidance to mental health service providers in Wales in meeting their obligations under Part 2 of the Measure (Coordination of and Care Planning for Secondary Mental Health Service Users) and Part 3 (Assessments of Former Users of Secondary Mental Health Services).

[Policy implementation guidance for primary and secondary mental health services](#) was also published in 2012.

- 2. Please outline when and how these responsibilities were amended or eased during the coronavirus pandemic, and when/whether the pre-pandemic regime resumed.*

Mental Health Services were positioned as 'essential' services during the pandemic and the responsibilities of CMHTs were unchanged. However, services and delivery models were adapted to remain accessible in line with the restrictions at the time, for instance by providing access to support over the phone or via digital means. Some CMHTs were also consolidated into fewer locations to ensure the sustainability of services during the pandemic.

3. What guidance or training is available to staff working in mental health services to support patients/clients who also use drugs or alcohol.

The Welsh Government has produced a [service framework](#) for the treatment of people which have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. This guidance aims to support integrated and collaborative practice in the delivery of mental health and substance misuse services for adults, children and young people. Traumatic Stress Wales are also developing "Stabilization" Training to support staff working with those who use drugs and alcohol.

4. What assessment has been carried out of the future funding needs of CMHTs, in order to meet projected demand for mental health services, as well as supporting delivery of related strategies such as the Ending Homelessness Action Plan.

Understanding future mental health demand is complex and officials use a range of information and evidence to monitor changing mental health needs. This includes working closely with the Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Services function to review published evidence and population surveys, and with services to understand changes in demand or needs for services.

All health boards are also required to assess local needs and future demands for services local as part of the routine planning process, this includes for mental health services.

Officials in the Mental Health Policy Team work across Government and there are a number of mechanisms in place to inform wider policy and action plans, as well as updating on progress against existing actions – for instance *The Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board*.

5. Please provide an update on progress made against the national action plan for the Wales Crisis Care Concordat, specifically actions against core principles two and three, on access and quality of crisis services.

The Crisis Care Assurance Group is a multi-agency group which continues to meet on a quarterly basis. Each of the HB footprints have a multi-agency Crisis Care Forum responsible for overseeing delivery of actions set out in the Crisis Care National Action Plan. A new national Action Plan has been developed for 2022. The 7 crisis care forums in Wales aim to ensure collaborative working between the NHS, the third sector, local authorities and police forces to improve the multi-agency response to crisis.

If you would like a more detailed update on progress, please contact Peter Martin, the Crisis Care Assurance Group Co-ordinator : p.martin@mind.org.uk

Key areas of progress include the investment of £6m from 2021/22 to improve access to crisis services, the establishment of alternatives to admissions (for instance, Sanctuaries) and the current roll-out of 111, press 2 for mental health. This new service will provide access to a mental health practitioner via 111 for urgent mental health advice, with plans for the services to provide 24/7 coverage across Wales by the end of 2022.

In 2021/22 the Welsh Government has also funded a National Mental Health Conveyance pilot to improve access to appropriate and timely transport for people in mental health crisis.

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,