

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales

National Review of Mental Health Crisis Prevention in the Community 2020-21

Terms of reference

At the time of undertaking this national review, health and care services across Wales have had to rise to meet the challenges of a global pandemic, Covid-19. This has introduced unique and unprecedented pressures on the system that will continue through the winter months. The review will be conscious of how services have adapted and changed to cope with these pressures.

Background

In its Operational Plan [2019-2020¹](#), [Healthcare Inspectorate Wales \(HIW\)](#) committed to a programme of national reviews which included crisis in mental health. The decision to undertake this review was based on a number of concerns relating to people's ability to access timely care, to prevent them reaching a crisis with their mental health.

HIW previously identified that initial access to mental health services is an area that requires improvement. Our Joint Thematic Review of Community Mental Health Teams national report 2019², highlighted a lack of knowledge for some primary care professionals, with the range of referral services available for people suffering with mental health issues.

Our review on Substance Misuse services in 2018³ identified significant challenges around holistic working within mental health services. Issues were identified with long waiting lists after referral to mental health services, and staff at substance misuse services highlighted concerns that referral processes were sometimes overly complicated and inconsistent. In addition, it was recommended that improved co-ordination between substance misuse services and mental health teams was required in some areas of Wales.

¹ <https://hiw.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/190412operationalplan1920en.pdf>

² <https://hiw.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/190207joint-thematic-review-community-mental-health-en.pdf> This review was undertaken jointly with Care Inspectorate Wales

³ <https://hiw.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/180725smen.pdf>

The Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010⁴ made provision for the expansion and strengthening of mental health services at the primary care level. The GP is often the first point of contact for people with mental health concerns, and the care which they provide in local settings helps to normalise mental health issues. However, it is important to note that third sector organisations may also be a first point of contact for some people, although currently they cannot refer people directly in to NHS primary care services.

Welsh Government published the National Model for Local Primary Mental Health Support Services⁵ in August 2011. The aim of these services is to improve access and patient outcomes for mental health care within primary care settings. In addition, the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022⁶ highlights a number of priorities, which includes improved access to preventative measures and early intervention to promote recovery. The Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat⁷, published by the Welsh Government and its partners in 2015 highlights a shared statement of commitment to improving mental health services in primary care, and is endorsed by senior leaders from organisations who are most involved in responding to those in mental health crisis.

Consideration of work by other organisations

Since we decided to undertake this review, Welsh Government has commissioned other streams of work, which includes the following:

- The NHS National Collaborative Commissioning Unit (NHSNCCU) which is carrying out the Mental Health Urgent Care Access and Conveyance Review; due for completion in 2021
- The NHS Delivery Unit is undertaking an All Wales Psychiatric Liaison and Crisis Care Review 2020-21, and its work will be work carried out within each health board in Wales.

Understanding the planned and ongoing work by other stakeholders and partners within mental health crisis services has been a key consideration in shaping the focus of our national review. This is to ensure our work can add value to what is or is not known in this area, and not to duplicate any ongoing or planned work in the area of urgent care or crisis within mental health.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2010/7/contents>

⁵ <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/863/Mental%20Health%20Measure%20-%20Primary%20Care%20Model.pdf>

⁶ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/together-for-mental-health-delivery-plan-2019-to-2022.pdf>

⁷ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/mental-health-crisis-care-concordat.pdf>

Scope and methodology

Our research, stakeholder and third sector engagement has helped inform the main question which our review will seek to answer. That being:

- Is mental health crisis being prevented in the community through timely and appropriate care?

Throughout the review we will explore:

- The experiences of people accessing care and treatment

It will also explore how services available within the community of each health board across Wales:

- Provide safe and effective services to help prevent mental health crisis
- Understand the strengths and areas for improvement to help prevent mental health crisis

The review will focus on support provided by GP and other NHS services across Wales to prevent mental health crisis, and what third sector organisations do to support this. We will listen to the accounts of people, their partners and families to gain their opinion of the services they receive to help manage their mental health condition and prevent crisis. We will also explore how well services work together to provide holistic care. The national review will collect evidence in a number of ways over the next year.

The review will also aim to explore evidence of good practice and areas for improvement from our previous reviews and routine and reactive inspection work within mental health services, and that of partners, stakeholders, and third sector services.

Phase 1

Phase 1 will consider the evidence and any themes that emerge from a programme of work to explore primary care mental health services across Wales. The focus will be on the care and support available for patients within primary, community and third sector organisations.

This work will include:

- Interaction with the NHSNCCU, NHS Delivery Unit and Care Inspectorate Wales
- Review of relevant inspections or reviews undertaken by HIW in the last 36 months
- National public and professional surveys
- Interviews with health board and GP representatives

We will launch a national public survey, developed with input from Community Health Council Wales, and other relevant stakeholders. The aim is to gather the experiences of individuals who have accessed mental health care or support across Wales.

Professional survey(s) will also be launched to capture the views of staff working within relevant community settings and other services that support people with their mental health.

These surveys will also be published on our website and shared with health care providers as applicable.

Phase 2

This will be informed by the work undertaken during Phase 1 and will intend to include:

- Interviews or focus groups with GP and community services staff
- Interviews or focus groups with third sector organisations in Wales
- Focus groups with service users

Following completion of the national review, we will publish a report in 2021.

Working with other organisations

We will seek to collaborate with a range of stakeholders, including the Community Health Councils and third sector organisations, in order to engage with people using mental health services, their partners and families, to understand their experiences of mental health services across Wales.

We will liaise with these stakeholders at key intervals throughout the review, to share plans and ensure any joint working opportunities are explored to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and to share findings following completion of fieldwork.

Planning

We have established a mental health stakeholder reference group to inform the review. They will provide support and advice to our internal project board as required on the day to day implementation of the review.

Timescales

Scoping and research for the review commenced during 2019. The development of the review continued through 2020 with implementation set for the end of the year and continuing in to 2021. Analysing of the findings will be undertaken during the spring of 2021 with a report published during the autumn.

The methodology of the review may be amended during the review, to adhere to Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance on the Covid-19 pandemic, this may affect timescales of the review.

Analysis and reporting

The review will conclude with the publication of a national report in the summer of 2021. The final report will highlight key themes and recommendations identified throughout our review. The report may make recommendations for health care providers, other stakeholders and Welsh Government to consider and take action.

If any urgent concerns are identified, these will be raised promptly with health boards, service providers or Welsh Government.

Publication and engagement

Any highlight reports will be published on our website and a communication strategy will be developed to enhance exposure.

A dedicated webpage for the mental health crisis prevention review will be developed on our website, with updates on the key findings from the review. We will also use a number of communications tools and channels to raise awareness of how people can take part in the national survey and engagement activities. Following the publication of the final national report, follow-up, engagement and learning events will be considered.

Personal data

This review forms part of our work to provide independent assurance on the quality and safety of healthcare services in Wales. The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 (Part II, Chapter 4) gives HIW the power to carry out inspections, reviews and investigations of the NHS or services provided for the NHS.

Where we process personal data, this is in accordance with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations. Further information is set out in HIW's privacy notice which can be found on our website <https://hiw.org.uk/privacy-policy>.