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Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LN/00067/24  
Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

19 March 2024

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 9 February regarding Petition P-06-1405 *We want and need a Mental Health unit for men in North Wales with beds.*

The Welsh Government recognises that whilst our intention is to provide safe and appropriate healthcare for everyone in Wales, there are some specific groups in society who are less likely to reach out for support and this includes men. We continue to raise awareness of the easy to access support that is available. This includes our CALL helpline, which can offer confidential emotional support and signposting to local support, and 111 press 2 for urgent mental health support. Forty-one percent of callers to 111 press 2 are male, which demonstrates that the service is successful in providing a model of support that is accessible for men.

Men continue to be a priority group in our Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy which, along with the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy were issued for consultation on 20 February. The draft Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy specifically highlights that men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women, with middle-aged men (40-49) having the highest rates of suicide of any group since 2008.<sup>1</sup>

The draft strategies, out for consultation until 11 June, aim to change how we think about mental health, empower people to improve their mental health and remove the barriers and stigma around getting help. With half of mental health conditions impacting people by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 23, there is a strong focus on prevention through ensuring everyone has equal access to the things they need to maintain good mental health, like exercise, the natural environment and belonging to the community.

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<sup>1</sup> [Suicides in England and Wales Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics](#)

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

There is also a specific focus on the wider factors affecting mental health, suicide and self-harm– including housing, employment and finances – with both strategies recognising that work is needed across the whole of Government and across sectors to improve mental health and wellbeing and to reduce suicide and self-harm in Wales. Some groups are at greater risk of poor mental health than others and inequalities can contribute to poor mental health. This is why the strategies will also promote equity of access, experience and outcome for all.

Our Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy aims for people in Wales to live in communities which are free from the fear and stigma associated with suicide and self-harm and are empowered and supported to both seek and offer help when it is needed.

When people do need help, the strategies recognise that people's needs are diverse and not everyone will need access to clinical or specialist mental health services. The aim is to build on the success of easy to access support like 111 press 2 and online cognitive behavioural therapy, alongside broader approaches to continue to improve support in schools, workplaces and the community. There are lots of excellent initiatives already underway across Wales to support men's mental health. Our National Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Team organised free one day events in north and south Wales for men who are members of groups, group leaders or men who are interested in establishing groups. These were grassroot events developed by men for men to explore men's needs, identify barriers, enhance collaboration and share best practices, ultimately, to inform future planning and amplify collective impact.

Our vision is that there will be a connected system of support across health, social care, third sector and wider, where people can access the right service, at the right time, and in the right place. Care and support will be person-centred, compassionate and recovery-focused, with an emphasis on improving quality, safety and access – and will be delivered by a workforce that feels supported and has the capacity, competence and confidence to meet people's needs.

The strategies also recognise the unprecedented financial pressures that we are facing and aim to provide direction to services and partners to ensure value-based targeting of resources, rather than set out a list of new funding commitments.

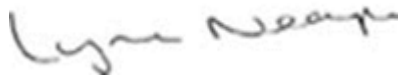
Any future consideration in relation to establishing a mental health unit for men in North Wales would need to align with existing work already underway to review current service provision. The draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been informed by the work the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee has undertaken to develop future specialist mental health capacity. During the last 18-24 months, we have also reviewed a range of information from Wales, across the UK and wider to inform the strategies. All of the modelling suggests an increase in mental health needs if we do not continue to invest in prevention, earlier intervention and whole system working.

The current consultations will further inform our future priorities and we encourage people to respond so they have a voice in shaping these priorities. We have provided the links to these consultations below for ease of reference:

[Draft suicide and self-harm prevention strategy | GOV.WALES](#)

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynne Neagle". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

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