

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Gwella Iechyd Emosiynol ac Iechyd Meddwl Plant a Phobl Ifanc | Inquiry into The Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People
EMH 26

Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Response from: Individual

On the 20th of September I met with two people from Barnardo's Cymru, Lobke and Tim. The aim of the conversation was to discuss my thoughts on and experience of CAMHS. We spoke about both CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS). Lobke has drafted this letter.

I and my family have moved from England to Wales and we spoke about my experiences with AMHS and CAMHS in both countries. I feel there is a significant difference in quality between the services in England and Wales. More specifically, in my opinion AMHS in England was better than AMHS in Wales while CAMHS in Wales are better than CAMHS in England.

I have had some mental health issues myself and I strongly feel that this reflects upon the emotional wellbeing of my children. If I'm feeling good, my children immediately feel better as well. This also works the other way around: at moments when I'm not feeling great, this affects my children for the worse. I have frequently asked my GP for referral to AMHS, but I never actually got referred. I have tried to look for help in other ways, but I got told that I wasn't "ill enough". After talking about this and the relationship between my own mother's mental health issue and my teenage years and involvement with CAMHS, we concluded that there appears a clear relationship between AMHS and CAMHS. I would like to emphasise that in order to be able to help a child with mental health problems they might have, it is essential to have good parental mental health support and AMHS in place.

It took quite a while for my child to get into the mental health service system. CAMHS is a very busy service to start with, but my ability to parent was often questioned as well. At some point, I was even accused of abusing my child. This led to social services involvement as abuse might have been the reason for the behaviour of my child. I never abused any of my children at any time and none are on the register. Due to social services involvement, GP referrals to CAMHS were referred back to social services. I often thought: 'How much worse does it have to get for them to help us?'

My child never actually made it to CAMHS, because we received help along the way. This help was and still is provided by the Newport Family Assessment Support Service (FASS). The three of us established this to be a 'pre-CAMHS' phase. My experience with this service has been very positive and I speak highly of the people that have worked with me and my family over time. I feel that FASS has been of great help to me and my own mental

health, the relationship between me and my children and my family's overall well-being. When having talked about FASS, we concluded that FASS actually was the service that I needed at the time.

I understand that CAMHS will always be a busy service, but I feel that if there were more resources for the most severe mental health services and those that we called pre-CAMHS, a better quality of the service would be achieved. I would also like to point out that pre-CAMHS services might be able to help others solve any problems they might have, without even needing CAHMS.