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Inquiry into Suicide Prevention
Ymchwiliad i Atal Hunanladdiad
Ymateb gan Unigolyn
Response from an Individual

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17/10/2017

SeneddHealth@Assembly.Wales

Evidence for the Suicide Prevention Consultation

To whom it may concern,

I will give you my opinion on the things that I think need to improve in order to reduce suicide and self harm in Wales, then I will give you a little background about myself.

The first thing is to remove the stigma surrounding mental health. This is being tackled by organisations such as Time to Change Wales, but still has a long way to go. Their new schools programme is an example of the work that needs to be done. If young people are happy to talk about their mental health things will improve.

For me, the next most important thing is easy, face to face, access to a health care professional. The new triage system in most health centres is a nightmare for anyone seeking urgent help. You cannot walk into a surgery and make an appointment, you have to telephone and wait for a call back. By the time you receive that call it may be too late.

Then, there is the lack of access to counselling services. If you can't pay privately the waiting list is endless.

Those last two points are vital, even if we tackle the first. Once someone has admitted that there is a problem they need access to help.

Another point is that the current benefit systems are horrendous, with people being left in debt for weeks even if their application is successful.

My Background:

To spread some light on my experiences I'll now tell you a bit about myself. I am a 55 year old female IT professional, a wife and mother of two, a town councillor, committed Christian and Food bank organiser and Time to Change Wales mental health champion.

I don't remember when I started self harming, but it was before secondary school. I am an introvert and had very low self esteem, and used self harm as a way of managing my emotions. I never discussed it with anyone. At 33, with a small baby and having been through a stressful time at work, everything on the surface looked fine, but I tried to kill myself by throwing myself under a bus. I was lucky that I knew the bus driver and he smiled at me, so I stepped back instead of forward. I was able to go straight from the roadside to my local surgery and see a doctor within minutes. I think that the smile and the quick treatment saved my life.

I am pretty well now, but I do have a great worry that if I go downhill I won't have the strength to go through the rigmarole that is now needed in order to get help.

I'm also aware, from my work in the food bank and with TTCW of the huge number of people who are not currently receiving any help at all. This really needs to be addressed.

Thank you for giving me the chance to contribute. If I can be of any further help, please let me know.

Yours,

