

Mental Health Policy Briefing: National Assembly for Wales Plenary Debate 7 October 2015: Agenda item 5

Mental Health

Mental Health Ring Fence

The Welsh Government commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to provide the Minister for Health and Social Services with recommendations on how the mental health ring-fence can be strengthened.

PWC concluded that the basis of the ring fence lacked effectiveness and recommended that this year LHBs publish data on their assessment of mental health need for their population along with a commentary as to how planned service and workforce expenditure for 2015/16 is expected to meet this need.

PWC also recommended that the Welsh Government should ensure that the programme budget process is completed in a timely fashion, with returns being published no later than 9 months after the year end, and that in future years Welsh Government should aim to bring this deadline forward.

For 2016/17 PWC recommended that the Welsh Government consider revising the mental health expenditure that is ring fenced for each LHB so that the amounts are based on current needs rather than historic spend, and that this revised allocation should be implemented following the completion of 'robust needs assessments'.

The report also stated that since the ring fence arrangements were introduced best practice in healthcare provision has progressed, and that to be more effective, arrangements should be linked to outcomes rather than solely looking at expenditure.

The report also stated that compliance by LHBs with the requirements of the ring fence have not been monitored adequately by Welsh Government.

Disease Burden

Disease burden is the impact of a health problem as measured by financial cost, mortality, morbidity, or other indicators. It is often quantified in terms of quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) or disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), both of which quantify the number of years lost due to **disease** (YLDs).

A report published in 2010 on the economic case for investing in mental health in Wales¹ stated that the occurrence of mental illness is widespread, and that the consequences are multi-dimensional. It estimated that the overall cost of mental health problems in Wales is £7.2 billion each year, which includes:-

¹ Promoting mental health and preventing mental illness: the economic case for investment in Wales: Lynne Friedli and Michael Parsonage October 2009

- The costs of health and social care provided for people with mental health problems
- The costs of output losses in the Welsh economy that result from the adverse effects of mental health problems on people's ability to work
- A monetary estimate of the less tangible but crucially important human costs of mental health problems, representing their impact on the quality of life

Amongst its conclusions were:

“No other health condition matches mental ill-health in the combined extent of prevalence, persistence and breadth of impact”

“Mental health problems often begin early in life and cause disability when those affected would normally be at their most productive (unlike most physical illnesses)”

According to the Mental Health Policy Group in England², mental health problems account for 23% of the total burden of disease.

3 Key Messages

1. Recovery-focused high quality mental health services must be safe and based on effective Care and Treatment Plans that can help decisively support people moving from dependence on high-cost services through to lower-cost support and on to greater independence.
2. We must work to reduce the inequalities in health and social care outcomes where we find that people with mental illness have the lowest employment rate for any main group of disabled people, endure greater poverty, have poorer housing, have fewer training and educational opportunities and experience greater social isolation.
3. We must make sure that no person with a mental illness feels isolated, alone and without support.

About Hafal

We are Wales' leading charity for people with serious mental illness and for carers. Covering all areas of Wales, Hafal is an organisation managed by the people we support: individuals whose lives have been affected by serious mental illness.

Underpinning our services to clients is our own unique Recovery Programme. Based on modern principles of self-management and empowerment, this holistic programme offers clients a methodical way of achieving recovery by focusing on all areas of their life.

For further information on this briefing please contact Peter Martin on 01792 816600 or email peter.martin@hafal.org

² The Mental Health Policy Group consists of six national organisations working together to improve mental health, comprised of the Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Network, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.