

Mair's Manifesto

SENEDD ELECTIONS: 6 May 2021



VOTE FOR

MENTAL HEALTH!



MY NAME IS **MAIR ELLIOTT** AND I'M CHAIR OF WELSH CHARITY **HAFAL**. ON BEHALF OF HAFAL'S MEMBERS ACROSS WALES I AM ASKING SENEDD ELECTION 2021 CANDIDATES TO PLEDGE THEIR SUPPORT FOR:-



Increasing the spend on mental health and ensuring that resources for mental health are fully protected: both NHS funding and funding provided to local authorities for mental health social care



Developing and delivering a new mental health strategy which prioritises those with the greatest need and supports a service-user centred mental health system



Improving support for young people and ensuring that specialist CAMHS only deal with the much smaller numbers of young people with the highest needs



Increasing access to psychological therapies



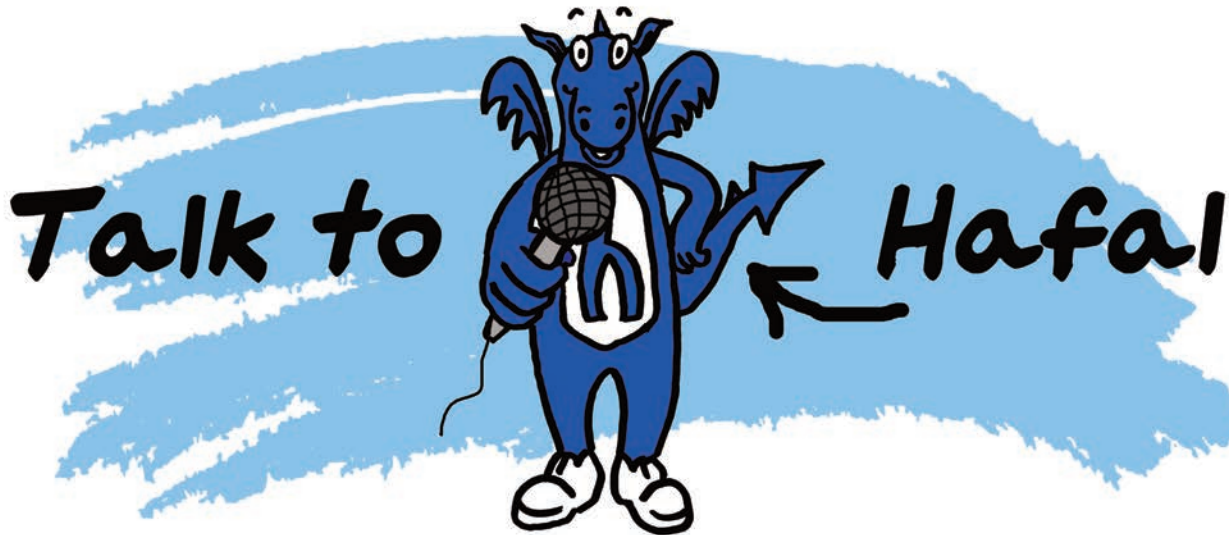
Improving support for carers across Wales so that they can achieve a better quality of life

Inside: find out more about the key issues - and how you can raise them with candidates...

WHY DOES THIS ELECTION MATTER?

The **Senedd Election 2021** is important to people with a mental illness and their carers: health matters are devolved to the Welsh Parliament and there are some other key areas which are addressed in the Senedd including Education, Housing and Social Care.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES CONCERNING OUR MEMBERS?



As a Member-led organisation we know from experience what issues face people in Wales with a mental illness and their carers every day. During Summer 2020 we ran our "Talk to Hafal" campaign, speaking to people across the country about what they want from services in the future, and from the next Welsh Government. These are the priorities we identified:

1. MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE NEED GREATER RESOURCES

Funding for mental health services should be set at a higher level – not least to recognise the increased and lasting pressure on mental health services arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. This funding should be applied as minimum percentage of health and social care budgets, and the ring-fenced percentage should be expanded as necessary to achieve parity with other health and social care needs. Funding for mental health should not be diverted to support the responsibilities of public-facing general services to protect the mental wellbeing of their clients. Value for money should be ensured through commissioning services based squarely on patients' needs.

2. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES NEED TO FOCUS ON THOSE WITH THE HIGHEST NEEDS

There is an urgent need for mental health services to define their role clearly, refocus their work, and avoid medicalising normal life events. There is also a need for mental health services to focus on achieving specific outcomes.

The welcome recognition in recent years that mental wellbeing is an issue for everybody does not mean that mental health services should expand their role. Specialist mental health services should give priority to those in greatest need, aiming to assist those patients receiving higher end (and more expensive) services to achieve recovery and move down into lower-level support services, as this will have the greatest impact in terms of improving people's lives - and additionally in reducing the cost of their care and treatment. These high-level interventions need to be provided quickly.

3. FOCUS YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ON THOSE WITH THE HIGHEST NEEDS AND SUPPORT SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE PASTORAL CARE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LOWER LEVEL PROBLEMS

The mental wellbeing of children and young people depends on supportive families, schools and colleges which take their responsibility for pastoral care seriously, and well-supported training and work opportunities.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) should be available immediately for young people who have serious mental health challenges; they should act quickly to resolve problems or sustain support for as long as needed. This will only be possible if there is a clear threshold of need for their services. But no child or young person should fall between different levels of support and they should always receive a positive referral to an appropriate source of help.

4. PATIENTS NEED MORE OF A SAY ON THE SERVICES THEY USE

Patients using mental health services at all levels should be empowered to exercise choice. For example, patients in secondary mental health services should all have a Care and Treatment Plan as required under the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010. Typically these Plans are constrained by the availability of services commissioned through traditional assessments of need. This position should be reversed: all secondary mental health services should be commissioned by reference to these Plans. Patients should be able to access funding for psychological treatments of their choice from any approved provider, and - if they need hospital care - where practicable have a choice of which hospital they go to.

5. CARERS AND FAMILIES NEED BETTER SUPPORT TOO

Carers and families need to be treated as key partners in the provision of mental health services. Carer assessments should address both what carers need to fulfil their role as a carer and their personal support needs. Support for carers should cover their need to sustain or gain employment and access to benefits as appropriate. Mental health services should "contract" with carers as a third party so that each partner - patient, service, and carer - agrees their contribution to the patient's care and recovery.

To address these 5 priorities we also need:

- > Action to address inequalities in mental health care, especially for black and minority ethnic communities
- > Appointment of a Minister for Mental Health to protect the interests of those who use mental health services and to lead the essential changes required to mental health care

WHAT SHOULD I BE ASKING MY LOCAL CANDIDATES?

Ask your local candidates about any local or national issues that are important to you. These are some suggested questions about the main issues:-

- > How will you ensure that mental health services are properly resourced and get a fair slice of the cake?
- > How will you ensure that specialist mental health services give priority to those in greatest need and are available as quickly as possible?
- > How will you ensure that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are available immediately for young people who have serious mental health challenges?
- > How will you ensure that patients using mental health services are empowered to exercise choice?
- > How will you ensure that the needs of carers and families of people with a mental illness are met?

HOW SHOULD I APPROACH MY CANDIDATE?



- > Ring, email or videocall your candidate's office - you could visit their office either on your own or in a group, or set up a conference call
- > If you meet in person or virtually with your candidate be specific with your questions and get them to guarantee what their party will do - write down what they say, or get them to write it down
- > Follow up your visit or call with a letter to emphasise your points
- > You can also attend local hustings. Again, remember to make a note of candidates' answers to your questions!

Remember to have your say and **use your vote!**