

This response was submitted to the [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) on the [inquiry into Social Cohesion](#)

SC 03

Ymateb gan: Prifysgol Abertawe

Response from: Swansea University

Date: 11/02/2025

Dear Equality and Social Justice Committee,

Re: Social Cohesion in Wales

We write to you in response to your call for written evidence to inform your inquiry into *Social Cohesion in Wales*.

We are researchers from Swansea University with an established research programme¹ into Online Misogynistic Ideology with an emphasis on establishing (a) predictors of risk and harm and (b) potential intervention pathways.

In our most recent work², funded by the Commission for Countering Extremism, we conducted the largest primary study of involuntary celibates (incels) to date (over 500). Incels are groups of young men who communicate mainly online and build a sense of identity around their perceived inability to attract women for sex and relationships. Overall, the group perpetuates harmful misogynistic views, has poor mental health³, and a bleak outlook on life and the future. There have been a small number of notable cases of incels engaging in violent attacks.

The incel community is large – just one online forum (incels.is) alone has almost 30,000 members and 15,000,000 million posts at the time of writing. While the community is online, the ideology and harm does not stay confined to the virtual space.

There are young men in Wales, including some referred to Prevent services, who are either part of this community or adjacent to it and share some of their common misogynistic views. These views are making their way into Welsh classrooms and reducing social cohesion by furthering conflict between young men and women. Head teachers we work with from Cardiff confirm that the signs of this ideology emerge in young boys as early as Year 7.

¹ <https://psy.swansea.ac.uk/SURIC/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/predicting-harm-among-incels-involuntary-celibates>

³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40806-022-00336-x>



We believe that those interested in healthy relations and social cohesion between young men and women in Wales (e.g., the Equalities and Social Justice Committee and the Welsh

Government) should pay close attention to the influence and impact of the incel community and other communities within the broader “manosphere” movement.

Below, we summarise some of the key findings from our research which you may find useful, many of which we presented to the Women and Equalities Select Committee⁴ at the House of Commons last year:

- Incels consider feminists, women, and the political left to be their enemies
- Incels have exceptionally poor mental health with 1 in 5 having daily thoughts of suicide
- There is a high incidence of autistic traits among incels
- Misogynistic beliefs and willingness to condone violence are higher among incels who:
 - Have poor mental health
 - Have a greater believe in incel ideology
 - Network regularly with other incels.
- Of the three aforementioned, it is mental health and ideology belief that have the strongest relationship with harm
- Contrary to stereotypes, incels show diversity in their ethnicity, age, and educational background
- There seem to be to “pathways” to incel harm⁵:
 - Those with autistic traits and a history of bullying and poor self-esteem
 - Those with exploitative and antisocial personality traits and extreme right-wing views

We would welcome to opportunity to provide more evidence to your inquiry and share our insights on how to quantify the risk of this movement to social cohesion in Wales as well as pathways for intervention based on our conversations with NHS boards and prevent units across the UK.

⁴ <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/213262cb-f990-4597-8dae-5608899ef3db?in=14:30:47>

⁵ https://osf.io/preprints/osf/avhnf_v1