

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 28

Ymateb gan: Awdurdod Heddlu De Cymru

Response from: South Wales Police

Consultation Response

I refer to the CAMHS consultation on the Emotional and Mental Health of Children and Young People and the committee's inquiry to consider whether the review of CAMHS is on track to deliver the 'step-change' in CAMHS services that is needed under the following headings:
Specialist CAMHS.

Transition to Adult Services.

Links with education (emotional intelligence and healthy coping mechanisms).

South Wales Police (SWP) acknowledges the changes to CAMHS services facilitated by the additional funding from Welsh Government to improve services to children and young persons (C&YP's) under 18 years of age and report as follows under the above headings:

Specialist CAMHS

1.1 South Wales Police recognises the new service provision of the crisis liaison teams in each of its 3 local health boards between the hours of 9am and 9.30 pm, with out of hours CAMHS On-Call maintained at the switchboard at the University Hospital of Wales. This service will provide vital contact advice which is required under the Police and Crime Act 2017 (when effective later this year) where officers must where practicable telephone for advice from a health care professional prior to arrest. The police officer must, if it is practicable to do so, consult with-

- a) A registered medical practitioner,
- b) A registered nurse,
- c) An approved mental health professional.

1.2 For 2015/16 and 2016/17 the number of section 136 detentions has increased from 36 to 48 respectively against a total number of all detentions of 680 which represents a significant increase year on year for C&YP's. Whilst police officers are encouraged to use police protection powers under the Children's Act 1989 so as not to stigmatise children, officers are too often left with no choice but to invoke section 136 in the best interests of the child or young person.

1.3 Designated places of safety remain the same for C &YP's as they do for adults. However on occasions officers are encouraged/directed to use CAMHS establishments such as St David's Hospital in Canton, Cardiff. Whilst using these resources during office hours perhaps consideration should be given to having separate PoS's within each LHB or a regional facility such as Ty Llidiard as a hub for the reception of C&YP's detained under section 136. Completion of the requisite section 136 forms by CAMHS is indifferent and should be forwarded to the mental health act department in each LHB in every case.

1.4 Additionally, expanding the services of Ty Llidiard as a triage centre could facilitate the reception of C&YP's in need of specialist help. In August 2017 SWP dealt with a C&YP discharged from section by Ty Llidiard into the care of local services only to be re taken a short while later by police under section 136 to A&E, before being returned to Ty Llidiard where they were detained under the act. Such a facility would reduce demand on A&E departments.

1.5 SWP understands that there is insufficient in -patient capacity in Wales

1.6 Liaison and diversion services are yet to be determined by CAMHS in the SWP force area for C&YP's who have committed a crime under the Welsh Government's Policy Implementation Guidance on Addressing Mental Health Problems of Children and Young People in the Youth Justice System. By employing means designed to keep a small but often vulnerable group of children and young people out of the criminal justice system, it is more likely to stop problems from escalating and, critically help prevent the stigma and debilitating effect of a criminal record later on in life.

1.7 SWP acknowledges in cases of crime, specialist forensic opinion may be required from the CAMHS psychiatrist to the Forensic Adolescent Consultation Team (FACTS). This is also incorporated in the MOU on Murder /Manslaughter which will soon to be finalised with services.

1.8 SWP have in place the Welsh Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) agreement with the 3 LHB's in it's force area. Information sharing can on occasions be difficult to access and is an area for improvement.

Transition to Adult Services

1.9 SWP acknowledges that as a C&YP approaches the age of 18 there is difficulty in determining the appropriate action in the best interests of the C&YP. SWP advocate a joint partnership approach by CAMHS and adult services so that C&YP's do not fall between services.

Links with Education (emotional intelligence and health coping mechanisms)

2.0 SWP are aware of the services CAMHS provides but do not directly have involvement through the schools programme. We are therefore unable to comment further on any improvement to their service since implementing any changes. Anecdotally we are aware that there is a long waiting time for C&YP's identified as needing counselling services. Our schools community police officers (SCPO's) do not refer pupils into CAMHS and schools are not allowed to make direct referrals to CAMH's. The parents are advised to go to their GP. We understand that schools are unhappy with this direction. SCPO's may, however be aware of pupils currently either waiting for or receiving CAMHS services.

2.1 Children do not suddenly become unwell, then have a few months treatment and are cured. Meaningful provision means preventative steps must be taken to protect our young minds from an early age. We need far more robust education in our schools and care homes to identify the signs of mental health - and strategies and support put in place to help these C&YP's. It is also crucial that there are 'step down' facilities so C&YP's have the support to re integrate them into society and are not just referred back into the situation that caused their illness in the first instance.

I submit this response on behalf of South Wales Police to the children, Young people and education committee.