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Prison Health in Wales: Experiences from a devolved nation

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On behalf of: Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales

Overview

- Prisons in Wales
- Devolved / non-devolved policies and partners
- A whole-government and whole-prison approach
- Our collaborative approach to improving health outcomes
- Sharing learning across the Five Nations

Prisons in Wales...

- Six male prisons in Wales (no female)
- Prison population 5,000
- Annual throughput 10,000
- Shared health issues:
 - *Vulnerable populations with high levels of poor physical and mental health*
 - *Social care needs*
 - *Substance use and addictions*
 - *Low educational attainment and employment*
 - *Environmental challenges to health from the prison environment*

Challenges unique to Wales...

- Smaller nation (population 3 million)
- Welsh women (and men) held in England
- Devolved government with policy and law making responsibility for areas including education, health, transport, agriculture, culture
- Devolved / non-devolved Policy Landscape
 - *Health and Social Care are devolved, separate from England*
 - *Justice is non-devolved and is a shared estate with England*

Devolved and Non-Devolved Partners / Responsibilities

- Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (*non-devolved*) – responsible for the secure estate in Wales.
- NHS Health Boards (*devolved*) – provision of healthcare in prisons.
- Local Authorities (*devolved*) – duty under the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 to assess the need for and provide social care to prisoners.
- Police and Crime Commissioners funding (*devolved*) – to support prisoners with substance misuse issues (psycho-social), includes a focus on continuity of care.

All partners recognise...

- Those in prison are an underserved group often experiencing inequalities.
- Those in prison should have equitable access to health services both in the secure estate and community settings.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of those in prison requires an all-prison, all-government approach.

Implementing a whole-government approach to prison health

- Whilst prisons are unique settings, the delivery of health services in prisons must be normalised across government and health departments.
- The needs of those in prisons are now recognised within national health strategies in Wales for: mental health, substance use, suicide and self-harm prevention, liver disease and dementia.
- Prison health and wellbeing has been identified as a priority for 2019/20 for NHS Health Boards in Wales.

Implementing a whole-prison approach to prison health

- A healthy prison population will support a healthy prison environment
- A health promoting prison environment will improve the health of those in prison
- Health and wellbeing must be recognised in all areas of prison policy
- Example, National Probation Service Health and Social Care Strategy 2019-2022

A collaborative agreement: shared priorities for prison health in Wales

- Fundamental focus is to drive improvements in the health and wellbeing of those held in Welsh prisons.
- Underpinned by the statutory obligations of each partner organisation.
- Shared objective to ensure *“those in prison can live in environments that promote health and well-being and where health services can be accessed to an equivalent standard of those in the community”*.

Partnership priorities for prison health in Wales:

- Prison environment
- Mental health
- Substance use
- Medicines management

Task and finish groups for each priority

To be overseen by **Prison Health and Social Care Oversight Group.**

Working together across the Five Nations:

- We share borders with England
- Frequent movement of those in prison between Wales and England
- Occasional movement from/to Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland
- Shared challenges....and shared solutions
- Consistency to support equality
- Changes in one nation can spur changes in another (e.g., smoke-free prisons)

Working together across the Five Nations:

- **Shared learning** – BBV progress in Scotland, collaborative models in England, suicide and self harm prevention in Republic of Ireland
- **Shared ambition** – for the development of quality prison health datasets comparable between nations
- **Shared presentations** – Wales and Northern Ireland joint presentation on latent TB at RCGP Secure Environments Summit (2019); Five Nations Presentation at ICPA Conference (2017)
- **Shared publications** – Journal of Public Health “The Five Nations Model for prison health surveillance: lessons from practice across the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland”



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Thank you

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