



BOTH PARENTS MATTER



Re: Call for views on post-Covid recovery and reconstruction in Wales by the Minister for Housing and Local Government (ref JJ/247/20, 2/7/20)

Email to: – ourfuturewales@gov.wales

31/7/20

Submission by FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru

Even prior to Covid-19 lockdown our service users (non-resident parents, mostly fathers) had extremely concerning levels of loneliness and poor mental well-being (details on following page).

A survey carried out by the charity during the Covid-19 lockdown indicated that,

- 61.5% of men responding to the survey had no contact, or only indirect contact, with their children during lockdown, a huge increase from 14% which prevailed prior to lockdown.
- 27% of women responding to the survey had no contact, or only indirect contact, with their children after lockdown, an increase from 9% prior to lockdown.

Levels of suicide in men in Wales are high and known to be related to loneliness.

Already alarmingly high levels of loneliness prior to lockdown will be further exacerbated by the findings of the above survey.

Post-lockdown economic conditions are anticipated to be severe.

Suicide, especially in men, is known to be related to economic downturns, i.e., unemployment.

50% of our service users were unemployed before lockdown.

All the ingredients are in place for a surge in suicide, amongst men generally and within our service user base in particular.

We estimate that just under 20% of all private family law cases in Wales involve our charity. (We see about 450 cases per year).

We have less than two full-time equivalent paid staff.

Our Suggestion for Recovery

Our view is that recovery should be focussed on two issues: creating employment for those less fortunate in terms of qualifications, especially men, and assisting severely socially isolated men to reconnect with community in a manner beneficial to themselves and society generally. Our charity will be happy to assist in the latter.

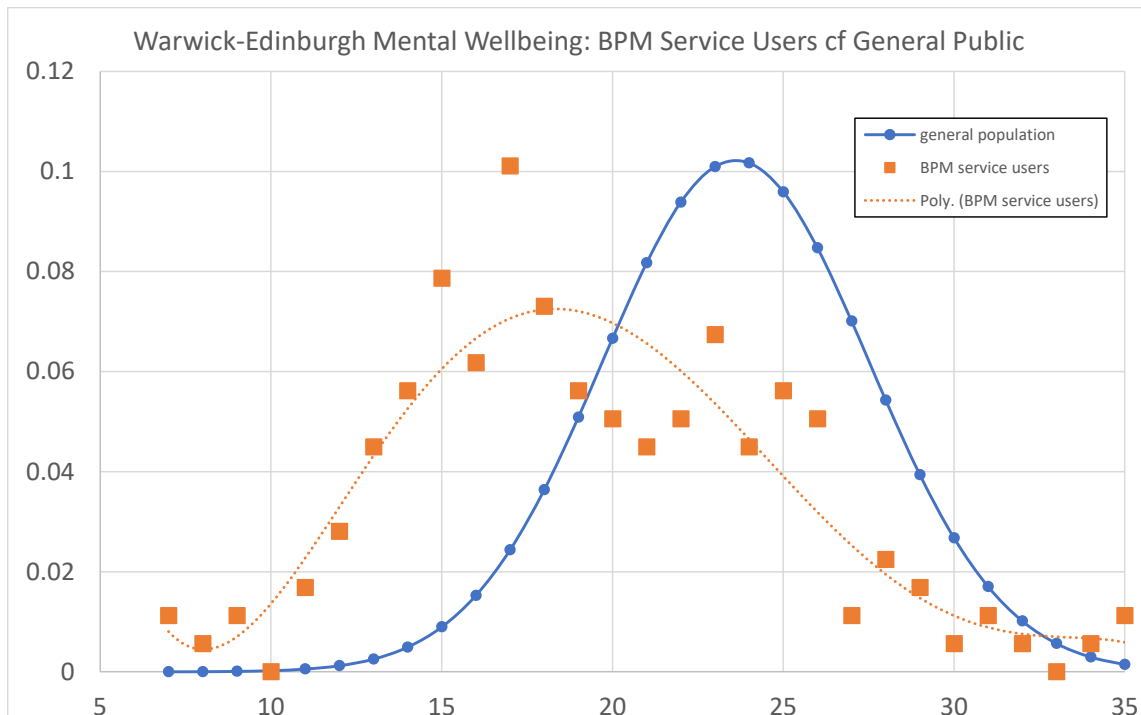


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Loneliness and Mental Well-being of BPM Service Users

- Under the auspices of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Ref.[1], there are 46 national well-being indicators, of which numbers 29 and 30 are the average mental well-being of the Welsh people and the percentage who are lonely, Ref.[2].
- Our service users (non-resident parents, mostly fathers) are severely disadvantaged in respect of these well-being measures.
- Using the same loneliness measure as the national indicators (DeJong-Gierveld), over the six months prior to Covid-19 lockdown 67% of our service users were lonely, compared with 16% of the Welsh public over 16 as a whole in 2017/18, Ref.[3].
- 40% of our service users are severely lonely, compared with 5% of large sample UK populations, Ref.[4].
- The national indicator for mental well-being is the Warwick-Edinburgh (W-E) scale. Our service users' scores on the shorter W-E scale are shown compared with general UK populations in the graph below. (Lower scores indicate poorer mental well-being). Adjusting for the shorter scale, the Welsh population average in 2018/19 was 25.5, Ref.[5].
- The poorest levels of mental well-being, which are rare in the population as a whole, are common in our service user base.





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References

- [1] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/part/2/crossheading/wellbeing-objectives/enacted>
- [2] <https://gov.wales/well-being-wales-national-indicators>
- [3] <https://tinyurl.com/y85ua32m>
- [4] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/lonelinesswhatcharacteristicsandcircumstancesareassociatedwithfeelinglonely/2018-04-10>
- [5] <https://tinyurl.com/yc4ky96s>