

Mr Steve George  
Clerk  
Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CARDIFF  
CF99 1NA

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009

Dear Mr George

**Call for Evidence  
Announcement of the Committee Inquiry:  
Mental Health Services in the Community**

It is with great concern and disappointment that I note the age parameters in the terms of reference accompanying the above Call for Evidence.

Both Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales have made submissions in relation to the provision of mental health services in recent years.

Age Concern supported the UK Inquiry into mental health and wellbeing in later life, published in August 2007. Help the Aged provided significant input on discrimination in service provision for older people with mental health conditions in its response to the 2007 Discrimination Law Review.

The UK inquiry found that there is a 'tremendous unmet need in every area', and that 'age discrimination remains the fundamental problem', meaning that 'the majority of older people with mental health services do not receive services'.

Age Discrimination is a particular problem within mental health services and this creates an unfair and inequitable system where services are often split between those for "adults of working age" (up to 65) and those for "older people" (65 and over). The result is that many people are forced to move to a different service upon reaching 65 often leaving a familiar service that is working well for them and joining a new, unfamiliar and often inappropriate one. Other older people find that they no longer fit the support criteria for their local service and are therefore excluded from sources of support that they require.

Cont...../

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales

Tŷ John Pathy, 13/14 Cwrt Neptune, Ffordd Blaen y Gad, Caerdydd, CF24 5PJ

Tŷ John Pathy, 13/14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff, CF24 5PJ

Ff/T 029 2043 1555 E/E [enquiries@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@agecymru.org.uk) [www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)

Elusen Gofrestredig / Registered Charity No. 1128436 Cwmni cyfyngedig trwy warrant / Company limited by guarantee Cofrestrwyd yn Lloegr ac yng Nghymru rhif / Registered in England and Wales no. 6837284

Mae Age Concern Cymru a Help the Aged yng Nghymru wedi uno i ffurfio un elusen, Age Cymru, a fydd yn ymroddi i wella bywydau pobl hŷn.

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales have joined together to form a single new charity, Age Cymru, dedicated to improving the lives of older people.

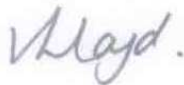
Thus, in considering the weaknesses in current provision, we believe there is considerable scope for the Committee to look at all adults, not merely those under the age of 60.

Indeed, the National Service Framework for Older People in Wales refers back to the 'Adult Mental Health NSF for Wales (2002), updated in 2005 stating that it provides the strategic framework and standards for mental health services in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Although targeted at adults of working age, the principles apply equally to mental health services for older people'.

We would urge the Committee to reconsider the age limit on its inquiry to ensure that it acquires a full picture of the situation in Wales.

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales would like to see the Welsh Assembly Government remove age discrimination from the mental health system. Specialist mental health services for older people should sit within mental health services for all adults and not alongside them. Older people should be treated on the basis of need rather than age and given equal access to treatment such as counselling and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy as well as equal choice and quality of treatment.

Yours sincerely



Victoria Lloyd  
Temporary Director of Policy and Programmes

**Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales**

Tŷ John Pathy, 13/14 Cwrt Neptune, Ffordd Blaen y Gad, Caerdydd, CF24 5PJ

Tŷ John Pathy, 13/14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff, CF24 5PJ

Ff/T 029 2043 1555 E/E enquiries@agecymru.org.uk www.agecymru.org.uk

Elusen Gofrestredig / Registered Charity No. 1128436 Cwmni cyfyngedig trwy warrant / Company limited by guarantee Cofrestrwyd yn Lloegr ac yng Nghymru rhif / Registered in England and Wales no. 6837284

Mae Age Concern Cymru a Help the Aged yng Nghymru wedi uno i ffurfio un elusen, Age Cymru, a fydd yn ymroddi i wella bywydau pobl hŷn.

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales have joined together to form a single new charity, Age Cymru, dedicated to improving the lives of older people.