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Lynne Neagle MS, Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament

15 July 2020

Via Email SeneddCYPE@senedd.wales
Our Ref: 28552

Dear Lynne

RE: COVID19 CAMHS In-patient units

Thank you for your letter dated 30th June in which you asked me to provide an update on the arrangements that are now in place for HIW to visit and inspect in-patient facilities and the plans that HIW has to respond to any future easing or tightening of lockdown requirements.

HIW recently published a [position statement](#)

In summary, our approach during the pandemic period has been underpinned by four principles:

1. Reducing the burden and regulatory pressure of our work on healthcare settings at such a pressured time, whilst still delivering our statutory functions.
2. Maintaining an oversight of healthcare services and providing assurance to the public and Minister through a focus on intelligence and working closely with partner organisations.
3. Supporting the NHS, Welsh Government and other organisations directly in responding to the pandemic.
4. Preparing HIW to enable it to continue to deliver its purpose in the face of the current and ongoing challenges, whilst meeting our duty of care to HIW colleagues.

Although this approach led us to suspend routine inspection on 17 March, we have continued to monitor and risk assess healthcare settings through established intelligence feeds including monitoring performance measures and analysis of serious incidents, public concerns, information shared by our partners and our strong relationships with health boards. For the safety of patients, healthcare workers and our own staff, we have had to raise the threshold for undertaking physical inspections. However, it is important to note that we have at all times retained the option of inspecting healthcare settings where

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we believe there are immediate risks to the safety of patients. There are a number of ways in which HIW can seek assurance, take action or escalate concerning issues without physically visiting a healthcare setting, but it has been necessary to conduct inspections on two recent occasions. These inspections did not, however, relate to the provision of CAMHS inpatient services in Wales.

In the case of independent mental health services in Wales, for which HIW acts as Regulator, we have continued to work closely with the National Collaborative Commissioning Unit (NCCU) in order to assess any risks to the safe provision of services. This wider monitoring arrangement includes oversight of the inpatient CAMHS services provided by Hillview Hospital, Ebbw Vale. Over the past year we have also had ongoing contact with the Children's Commissioner about care provided by this setting, which has helped us to discharge our role as regulator.

In response to the safety considerations associated with undertaking physical inspections, which I have referred to above, we have been developing new ways of working. We are currently planning a new programme of routine assurance work which will be refined adjusted on an ongoing basis according to risk. We will be piloting our new way of working for the three month period from August to October. Towards the end of this period we will evaluate the approach to ensure it is appropriate and in meeting its aims and objectives. A key feature of our new approach will be the use of a three tiered model of assurance and inspection that reduces the reliance on onsite inspection activity as our primary method of gaining assurance. Tier 1 activity will be conducted entirely offsite and will be used for a number of purposes but, at this stage, primarily where issues cannot be resolved via our standard concerns process and where the risk of conducting an onsite inspection remains high. Tier 2 will introduce a combination of offsite and limited onsite activity, whilst Tier 3 will represent a more traditional onsite inspection. The unannounced nature of our work means that I cannot disclose exact details of our forthcoming work programme in relation to CAMHS services. However, I can confirm that our plans take into account a range of intelligence in relation to inpatient CAMHS services including the findings from previous inspections.

You may recall that HIW published a [youth thematic report in March 2019](#), which including concerns about the ability of CAMHS to accommodate people who are high risk and the need for young people to receive services outside of their local area. We are planning to follow-up on the recommendations of the youth thematic review imminently by seeking updates on action taken by Welsh Government, health boards and independent service providers. We will publish the findings of this work and would be happy to meet with you or attend a future committee to discuss this work

I hope you find this update useful in understanding how we are discharging our role during these challenging times. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to raise any specific issues or concerns about inpatient CAMHS in Wales.

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Yours sincerely



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