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# Learning Disability Inpatient Services

A review of what's in Wales and how buildings could be better

This document was written by **NHS Wales**. It is an easy read version of 'Improving Environments, Improving Lives'.

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# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 22**.



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# What this booklet is about



This review looks at how **learning disability inpatient services** are provided in Wales.



An **inpatient** is someone who needs hospital care and treatment. And they must stay in a hospital setting to get that treatment.



We have **specialist inpatient services** for people with a learning disability. They are provided in different types of buildings.



This review is about the buildings we use for these services. And if they are suitable enough to meet people's needs.



Many of the buildings are very old. And they are not spread out fairly across Wales.



Many of the buildings are far away from where people live. So, patients are not part of their community when staying there.



The buildings do not help people to feel safe and comfortable when they are staying there.



They are also all very different. And run in different ways.



This booklet is about these differences.



We have looked into how services are run in these different types of buildings. And said how we think these buildings could be improved.

# What people need



Research has shown that patients need to get the right care and support to get better.



The ideal place for people to get care and support is in their community.



But sometimes people with learning disabilities need to be in a hospital setting. This is because they need hospital treatment.



People should only be in a hospital setting for the amount of time they need to get treatment. But we know some people have been in a hospital setting for most of their life.





When this happens people should receive the best support to get well. And in the best setting.



They should expect good quality care that meets their needs, in buildings that are safe and have the right facilities.



# Enabling Environments - what does this mean?



This is a term used to describe what buildings should be like.

**Enabling Environments** means the **place** should be:



- Safe.
- Private.



- The least **restrictive** as possible. This means people have the freedom to do what they want to do. If things are put in place that stop them from doing something, it is only ever to keep them safe.



- Supporting each person's needs.
- Supporting the person to get better, as quickly as possible.





When the building is good, it is also easier for staff to do their jobs well.

The **Enabling Environment (place)** will offer the patient things like:



- Natural light.



- Clean and airy spaces.



- Quiet areas.

- Social areas.



- Everyone should have a bedroom with their own bathroom.

- There should be private spaces.



- **Accessibility.**

**Accessibility** means people with different needs can use something. For example, doors that wheelchairs can go through. And signs that can be easily read.



- There should be a range of activities.



- The security should be thought about carefully.



- People's needs should be thought about and planned for.



These are the kinds of things we thought about when checking the buildings.

# What is in Wales now



There are 28 buildings across Wales that provide **inpatient** services for people with a learning disability.

They have different levels of security. For example:



- security alarms



- different ways for people to keep their belongings safe



- front doors that are locked at night.



And they offer different types of support. They are:

## Assessment and Treatment Services



These support people with **behaviours that challenge**. This means difficult behaviours that can harm the person or those around them.



People should only stay here for the amount of time they need. And until permanent homes can be found that fully meet their needs.



**Mencap** made a guide for people staying in Assessment and Treatment units.



It says people's human rights should be met. And they should get good support.



There are 31 beds for people across Wales, in Assessment and Treatment Services.

## Low Secure Services



These are for people with **complex** needs. This means people who need a lot of support in their lives. And they cannot be supported in less secure places.



There are 26 beds with this type of support in Wales.



But none are run by the NHS. And they are all in south Wales.

## Continuing Health Care Services



These are units for people who need longer term support.



The NHS pays for these services. Some are in hospitals and some are in the community.



There are 67 beds across Wales.



## Controlled and Uncontrolled Egress Services



These are words used to describe units that are locked. And where only certain people can come and go at certain times. There may be different rules for each unit for how and when locks are used.



People need help for mental health issues they have had for a long time. And they find it hard to cope with everyday life.



People are supported to learn skills. This is to help them be more independent.



There are 49 beds across Wales.

## Review of Welsh Units



We checked the buildings used for these services across Wales.



We looked into things like bedrooms and living spaces.



We looked into whether staff can carry out their jobs well.



We looked at where units were based in Wales. For example, how far they are from family members.



We also looked into how safe units are. And if rules are being followed so they are well run.

# What we found out



We found that many of the buildings had been used for other things before.



This means they had not been designed to be used as places of support.



Some are on hospital grounds where many other services have closed. This means people are cut off from others.



Many of the buildings are very old. And need a lot of work to be safe and suitable.



We found that **Low Secure units** were far away from the community.

We found that some spaces had important things missing. For example:



- Call buttons



- Safe fire escapes



- Areas for learning skills



Every unit was different with how clean they were.



Some places hired cleaning services. In others, the staff had to do the cleaning.



We found there were not enough **assistive technologies**.

**Assistive technologies** means equipment that help disabled people live more independently.



This meant that staff would end up doing things **for** people. Instead of supporting people to be independent.



Most places were not set up to support people with mobility issues. For example, some did not have hoists. Some had areas where wheelchairs could not be used.



There were not enough signs in easy read.

# What we think should happen



1. All buildings should have to follow the same standards and rules. This will help make sure the buildings meet people's needs.



2. The units should check how they will manage buildings and repairs well.



3. When services are run by more than one organisation. Repairs should be managed carefully.



4. More should be done to support people with additional needs. For example, through **assistive technology**.





5. People should be able to understand information whatever needs they have.



6. All staff should have fire training. And all units should check their fire escape plans.



7. Welsh Government and the NHS should look into keeping patient records online. This is a record about all your care and treatment.



8. Staff should get the support they need to do their jobs well.



9. There should be spaces for meeting visitors. And they should be safe.

# Hard words

## Accessibility

This means people with different needs can use something. For example, doors that wheelchairs can go through. And signs that can be easily read.

## Assistive technologies

This means equipment that help disabled people live more independently.

## Inpatient

An inpatient is someone who needs hospital care and treatment. And they must stay in a hospital setting to get that treatment.