

Easy Read



ADSS Cymru

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

The impact of coronavirus on services in Wales



This document was written by the ADSS Cymru. It is an easy read version of 'Delivering Transformation Grant Programme 2021/22. The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Day Services, Respite Care and Short Stay Placements'.

November 2021

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But 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**.



Where the document says **we**, this means **ADSS Cymru**. For more information contact:

Website: www.adss.cymru

E-mail: contact@adss.cymru

Phone: 01443 742384



This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**. To tell us what you think about this easy read version, [click here](#).

Contents

Page

Introduction.....4

What we found out.....8

Summary.....13

What needs to happen next.....18

Hard words.....22

Introduction



Coronavirus has been the biggest emergency in the UK since World War 2.

It has had a huge impact on:



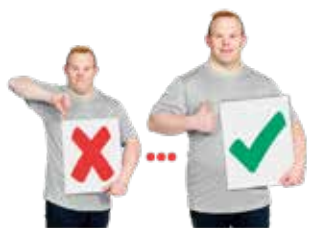
- services
- money
- and the health and well-being of everyone.



We didn't know much about the virus when it first started.



The government, health boards and councils had to make plans and decisions about services quickly. Based on what they knew at the time.



Services had to make big changes to protect people and stop the spread of coronavirus. They had to stop some important services or put them on hold.

About this report

This report is about the impact these changes have had on people who use:



- day services



- **respite**

Respite means someone staying somewhere for a short stay. It may be to have a rest or to give carers and family a rest.



- and overnight stay services.

People who use these services include:



- older people
- disabled people
- and children with a lot of extra needs.



Many decisions have had to be made by local authorities, health boards and services.



This is because the Welsh and UK governments have not always been clear about what to do. Especially for day services and **respite** services.



This report looks at the impact all of this has had. Some of the impacts are bad but some are good.

In this report the Welsh Government asked us to look at:



- what services have learnt
- what differences what we have learnt will have on how we plan and run services from now on
- what we can do in emergencies in the future.

About us



We are **ADSS Cymru**. **ADSS Cymru** stands for **Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru**.



We represent the Directors of Social Services in Wales.



We have written this report.

What we found out

The main things we learned about the impact coronavirus has had on services:



1. Coronavirus had a huge impact on services.



2. Coronavirus had a very bad impact on the well-being, physical health and mental health of the people using services. It also had a bad impact on their unpaid carers and the staff providing services.



3. The changes made to services have impacted the voice, choice and control of people who use them.



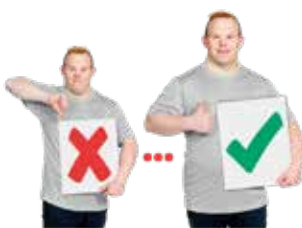
4. There has been a lot of stress and anxiety for the people who use services and their families. This has meant they have not made full use of the support they could have had.



5. Some people have not had fair access to services during coronavirus. This is because some people do not have support from family and friends. And because some people cannot use computers, smart phones and the internet.



6. Changes and closures have meant some services may not be able to keep running.



7. There have been some good impacts on people who use services. This has led to changes to services for the better.

The main things services did to lessen the bad impact of coronavirus:



8. Services had to change the way they work. They came up with good new ways of providing support.



9. Services couldn't support as many people as they usually would have. They came up with ways of finding the people most in need of support.



10. Services used technology like computers and smart phones and came up with new ways of working. This helped some groups of people to keep getting the support they need.



11. Many services across Wales changed the way they provide services to meet the needs of individuals.



12. Services across Wales have said that their staff helped keep services going through being strong and willing to work differently.



13. Services needed to have better communication during coronavirus. For some people this has helped to make services better.



14. Services were grateful for the support they got from other organisations like Public Health Wales, councils and charities.

15. The ability of services to keep on providing their service was impacted by things like:



- How good their buildings are.



- How good their technology, like the internet and computers is.

Other things we learned:



16. Many services have started looking into the changes they made during coronavirus. And the new ways of working that helped them through coronavirus.



17. Services are finding it hard to open and run like they did before coronavirus.



18. It is now more clear than ever before how important family, unpaid carers and **peer supporters** are.

Peer supporters are people with similar experiences and issues that support each other.



19. We understand better than ever how important **respite** care is in helping people to carry on caring. This is because **respite** services have had to close. Or have not been able to offer as many people as much support as they did before.

Summary



1. Coronavirus has had a huge effect on everyone. But it has had an even bigger effect on:

- children who need a lot of extra support and their families
- older people
- people with physical impairments
- people with learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems
- people with long term health conditions.



2. These groups are at a higher risk of dying. They also had less social and health care support during coronavirus. This has all had a huge impact on all parts of life, and many have died too soon.



3. Having to stay at home has affected the way many people move and get around. This has made people's muscles weaker and increased the chance of falling. And having worse health.



4. People with less money have been affected more by coronavirus. And people who have not been able to use a computer or the internet.



5. Some people said that communication got much better during coronavirus. But some people said they were not happy with how much contact they had with their social workers.



6. Some people said their human rights were affected by the changes made to services during coronavirus.



7. We must make sure people have the right to choose and use their voice fully as services re-open.



8. Social care and healthcare staff have been hugely affected by coronavirus.



9. Coronavirus has caused a lot of stress and anxiety for people who use services and service staff. This has been bad for their mental health, and the impact of this is likely to last a long time.



10. Services have had to find and give support to people most in need.



11. One of the biggest challenges for services has been staffing issues. For example, because of staff sickness and needing to **self-isolate**.

Self-isolating means staying at home because you might have, or you do have coronavirus.



12. Some staff had fewer hours to work during coronavirus, so they had to find other jobs. We also have fewer staff because people from overseas could not travel here to work during coronavirus. And also because of **Brexit**.



Brexit is the name used for Britain leaving the European Union. The European Union is a group of countries whose governments work together.



13. Some services say the impact of coronavirus has been so big they don't think they will be able to stay open.



14. Most staff have gone along with all the changes to services and have been very strong.



15. Some people who use services have been able to live more independently than services expected. This is a good thing.



16. There has been better communication between services and **commissioners**. This has helped services to deal with coronavirus.



Commissioners are people who plan, organise and decide who will run services and pay them to do so.



17. Lots more technology has been used during coronavirus. We must now look at this and make sure it is being used in the best way. And also make sure it does not have a bad impact on people.



18. Coronavirus has made it clear that day services, **respite** and overnight services are very important.

What needs to happen next



1. Welsh Government should accept that day care and **respite** services needed better guidance on how to deal with coronavirus.



To help with this, we think all future guidance should be **co-produced** with services.



Coproduced means everyone is included in all decisions when planning and providing services. They are equal partners and have equal voice.



2. Welsh Government should spend money on updating and improving buildings and facilities. This is to make sure they are suitable after coronavirus.



3. Local authorities and health boards need to look at this report and make the changes needed.



4. The views of people who use services should be listened to and acted upon. Services should listen to people and respond to their needs.



5. **Commissioners** and service providers should look into our findings about communication. They should make sure good communication carries on. And do something to improve communication that wasn't good enough. Especially communication with people who use services and their carers.



6. Services and **commissioners** should work together to look at how technology was used during coronavirus. They should check what worked well, what could be better and how to use it going forward. Any changes must be explained clearly to people who use services, staff and carers.



7. The good work carried out by staff during coronavirus must be valued. Staff must be supported. Leaders and managers must think about the impact coronavirus may have had on them.



8. **Commissioners** need to check what impact coronavirus had on their services. They should look at what happened to services that had to close. They should support providers who are finding it hard to keep running.



9. Local councils and health boards should work together with organisations like **Social Care Wales** and **Health Education and Improvement Wales**. They should make new training courses that will support staff to work in new ways.



10. Welsh Government, local councils and health boards need to look at the inequality people faced because:



- they do not have a computer or the internet. Or cannot use these things



- they do not have support from family, friends or other social networks.



They should find ways of overcoming this inequality in their equality plans.

Hard words

Brexit

Brexit is the name used for Britain leaving the European Union. The European Union is a group of countries whose governments work together.

Commissioners

Commissioners are people who plan, organise and decide who will run services and pay them to do so.

Coproduced

Coproduced means everyone is included in all decisions when planning and providing services. They are equal partners and have equal voice.

Peer supporters

Peer supporters are people with similar experiences and issues that support each other.

Respite

This means someone staying somewhere for a short stay. It may be to have a rest or to give carers and family a rest.

Self-isolate

Self-isolating means staying at home because you might have, or you do have coronavirus.