

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Sam Rowlands MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

30 June 2023

Dear Sam,

Thank you for your written questions reference 88339, 88340 and 88342, to the Minister for Health and Social Services around autism diagnoses for women and girls and the upcoming women and girls' health plan for Wales. As neurodivergence policy falls within my portfolio, I would like to respond.

The increasing demand for autism assessment services has resulted in waiting times, irrespective of gender, being longer than we want them to be. The work we are now undertaking in our Neurodivergence Improvement Programme, which is backed by £12m of additional funding, over 3 years, will focus on needs based service development, including streamlining referrals and reducing waiting times. The funding will also improve pre and post assessment support services.

All neurodivergence assessments are required to meet the National Institute of Health Care Excellence (NICE) guidance as reflected in the [Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services](#) published in September 2021.

For adults, the Integrated Autism Service (IAS) collects robust data on the gender of referrals received and this information is available here: [NAT-Annual-Report-2122-Eng.pdf \(autismwales.org\)](#). Welsh Government currently does not hold gender information around referrals for children.

In Wales, for Autism, we have adopted the estimate of 1% of the population, as used by the National Autistic Society. For ADHD, the National Institute of Health Care Excellence (NICE) estimates that the UK prevalence is 3-4%, with a male to female ration of approximately 3:1.

Over 3,800 women and girls from across Wales responded to a national survey sharing their views on health services and what is important to them. From that the NHS Wales Collaborative published the [Discovery Report: Foundations for a Women's Health Plan](#), highlighting perceived service gaps and potential opportunities for improvements across health areas affecting women, including neurodevelopmental conditions.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The next stage is the establishment of the Women's Health Network, generating key improvement actions as part of the Women's Health Plan based on the priorities shared by the women and girls of Wales.

I want to re-assure you that we are working hard to achieve improved neurodivergence services for all.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie', written in a cursive style.

Julie Morgan AS/MS

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