Wales Safer Communities Network response to:
Senedd Cymru- Mental health inequalities
Consultation: Mental Health Inequalities (senedd.wales)
Closed 24 February 2022

Introduction to the Wales Safer Communities Network
The Wales Safer Communities Network was established in January 2021 following the recommendations of the Welsh Government's Working Together for Safer Communities Review. The Network aims to become the strategic voice for community safety in Wales, working collaboratively to champion and support community safety partnership working, and influence the shaping and development of national policy and local practice.

Consultation response

Mental Health is and remains an area of growing concern within the Community Safety arena. Mental Health issues can involve and/ or lead to substance misuse, including alcohol abuse, placing additional monetary pressures on people. We acknowledge that there are some characteristics which can increase the prevalence of mental health.

Mental Health does not occur in isolation. Hate crime is likely to negatively impact on individual, family and community Mental Health. There is a circle of Mental Health and Community Safety that is increasingly being discussed within community safety for example parents mental health deteriorating due to tenancy risk caused by their children's problematic behaviour (Anti-Social Behaviour). Also, neighbour disputes which increased during the pandemic have the potential to exacerbate mental health issues for both parties.

Mental Health is impacted by things like isolation and the external environment, by stress and anxiety. The more people feel safe in their communities the more opportunities there are for engagement locally which may prevent escalation to Mental Health crisis. Limited resourcing of both low level mental health support and community safety services, which could be delivered jointly, may be reducing the prevention of escalation in both fields.

Part of the prevention and de-escalation needs to include a focus on community safety. Mental Health issues also increase community safety incidents whether that is anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse or carrying out hate crimes. This can result in mental health issues not being identified but perpetrators are criminalised where mental health treatment and/or support would be more appropriate and have a longer lasting impact.

The Wales Safer Communities Network are keen that Mental Health is not seen in isolation but part of a richer holistic tapestry which empowers people to feel safe and to be confident in engaging with their local community. It won't prevent all

inequalities in Mental Health, but could make a change and reduce the levels or scale of mental health within certain sections of our communities here in Wales.