


REPORT TO THE WALLOON PARLIAMENT

Mental health – care provided by specialised out-of-hospital services under the Walloon authority



The Belgian Court of Audit examined the provision of care for people with mental health issues and disorders in Wallonia. It focused its analysis on out-of-hospital care specialising in mental health and coming under the Walloon public authority. It tried to determine whether the supply of care services was sufficient, accessible and appropriate to meet the needs of the Walloon population. The analysis also covered the effectiveness of the monitoring and steering system in place.

The Court found that the provision of specialised out-of-hospital care has increased overall over the last five years. However, the geographical and financial accessibility of such services is insufficiently guaranteed. Despite the principles laid down by regulation, there are still imbalances and risks of inequalities.

Although professionals in the sector report a growing trend in demand and long waiting times, the extent of requests made and requests actually met by specialised services cannot be objectively quantified in the absence of accurate and appropriate data. The disorders treated, in particular their severity or the resulting level of dependency, also remain unknown at the overall level of the system audited.

The audit work also revealed that the Walloon authority cannot guarantee that all beneficiaries covered correspond to the target public determined by the regulations. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that care is provided to the users who need it the most.

At the strategic level, the Court of Audit notes that the Walloon policy suffers from a lack of targeted priorities, clearly defined overall objectives and corresponding indicators. The information and monitoring system has also shortcomings that make it impossible to reliably produce all relevant and useful data. In this context, any assessment is jeopardised and the steering of the audited system cannot be carried out effectively.

The new decree provisions adopted in January 2024 bring forward some solutions to the issues identified. The effectiveness of these measures will need to be verified.