Dear Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament,

I hope you, your families and your friends are all keeping well during these strange and difficult times. I wanted to write to you to update you on our work as a Committee during the coronavirus outbreak, and to congratulate you on your session with the First Minister and Minister for Education last week.

First of all I wanted to let you know about progress with our follow-up work on Mind over Matter. I know the work of your Emotional and Mental Health Support Committee is well underway, and we are really looking forward to hearing what you think can be done to help improve things for children and young people.

In February this year, representatives of your Committee met with us to share their thoughts. We also heard from key stakeholders. In March, parents and carers joined us to share their experiences. Each of these sessions was invaluable in terms of shaping our next steps. Information about these sessions is available our inquiry webpage, and I wanted to share this with you at this stage in case it is of help to your ongoing work.

In light of the unprecedented circumstances surrounding Coronavirus, we have taken the difficult – but necessary – decision to pause our follow-up work on Mind over Matter, and other non-Covid19 business. This is to ensure that all necessary public resources can be focused on the immediate public health situation that we face. I would like to reassure you, however, that our work on the emotional and mental health of children and young people remains a key priority for us – as soon as we are able, we will return to it and will of course keep you updated. We are also doing all we can to keep a close eye on the mental health and well-being support available to our children and young people during what we know has been – and will be – a very challenging period for everyone. Sessions we have held with the Minister for Education and Minister and Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services can be seen online, and the emotional and mental health of children and young people has been an area we have prioritised in our questioning.

Finally, I wanted to draw your attention to our call for views on Covid-19 and its impact on children and young people (including students in further and higher education). We would be really grateful to hear your views, and those of the children and young people you represent. Hearing directly from children and young people about their experiences during this time is a high priority for us. A child-friendly version of our call is available on our website too.
I know that this is an uncertain time for our children and young people in Wales and beyond, so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, your friends and your families well, and to urge you to keep safe and take care over the weeks and months ahead.

Kind regards,

Lynne Neagle MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.