



Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref MA/KW/1261/21

Lynne Neagle MS  
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee  
Welsh Parliament

19 March 2021

Dear Lynne,

In your report *Mind over Matter: Two Years on* you called on the Welsh Government to monitor the implementation of the whole school approach framework and report to the Committee before the end of the current Senedd. Our response of 2 December 2020 accepted this commitment.

As you will be aware the *Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing* was published on 15 March to coincide with the return to education of older children. Our initial focus in the next few months will be to raise awareness of the Framework and support partners in its implementation. In this respect a communications plan has been developed with the aim of:

- Communicating with audiences to ensure the whole school approach is communicated clearly.
- Engaging learners and the workforce in communicating the framework principles.
- Encouraging partners / schools / stakeholders to share our 'assets' and key messages

An animation, aimed at children and young people has been developed to sit within a dedicated You Tube playlist. This includes filmed case studies, which includes teachers from schools across Wales explaining what a whole school approach means to them. We are also using the Dysg education and training newsletter and social media to promote the launch of the guidance with the hashtag - #WholeSchoolApproach.

A stakeholder briefing pack has been developed and comprehensive distribution list compiled. I have written to local authority Directors of Education, highlighting the launch and the requirements of the Framework. The letter has also been shared more widely (with Regional Consortia, WLGA, School Governors Working Group, Youth Services and others). There will also be a briefing to communications leads in stakeholder organisations such as Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, Colegau Cymru, Careers Wales and the National Academy for Educational Leadership. In addition the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing

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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.

and the Welsh Language and I have also jointly written to the Chairs of Regional Partnership Boards highlighting both the Framework and the linked work of the Together for Children and Young People Programme; and the role of RPBs' in taking both forward. We are also working with colleagues in Health and Social Services to promote the Framework via letter to NHS Chief Executives, Directors of Social Services and Heads of Children's Services.

You are aware that we have made available funding to Public Health Wales to appoint implementation coordinators to work with schools, local authorities and other partners to support implementation locally. My letter to local authorities references their work and a key early deliverable will be to establish local steering groups to drive the whole school agenda regionally.

I have also asked officials to work with the Children's Commissioner's Office to both raise awareness and monitor impact of the Framework. Officials recently met with their counterparts in the Commissioner's office to explore the use of her networks to raise awareness. The Commissioner has a number of networks, including School and Community Ambassador Groups of children and young people which can be used to promote the Framework, providing us with direct access to children and young people. The Commissioner also meets School Wellbeing Leads and Governors and agreed to use these platforms to further promote the Framework. We also discussed the potential to work with the Commissioner's office to support us with some initial evaluation of take-up, possibly from the autumn. Issues they could help us explore would be whether children are aware of the Framework; whether their school has engaged them in developing local plans; and whether they feel their school acts on their views.

We are continuing to work with partners to explore what further resources we can develop to support implementation. You are aware that we have previously agreed a range of professional resources for teachers. Most have now been delivered from the Higher Education Institutions, the remainder will be delivered in the next few weeks and all should be on Hwb by the end of April/early May. We are also exploring with health boards the potential to develop further resources, such as resources related to eating disorder and positive body image for learners and teachers, which can complement both the new curriculum and the whole school approach. We had also previously planned on commissioning Public Health Wales (PHW) to develop a toolkit for schools of universal and targeted interventions to sit alongside the Framework. This work was placed on hold as PHW staff were redirected to other Covid19 related activity. However, PHW have now indicated that they are in a position to reprioritise this work and we hope the toolkit will be available by the summer.

You will also be aware that we are funding the extension of the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey to Primary Schools. Following the feasibility study the next stage is to begin piloting activity in primary schools during 2021-22. This will provide an opportunity to explore implementation of the Framework in a way which is backed by academic rigour. During 2021-22 we are also undertaking the biennial Student Health and Wellbeing Survey in secondary schools, this will also provide an opportunity to explore the extent to which wellbeing is supported and gain learner views.

More specifically, you will know that we have contracted Cardiff University to undertake an evaluability assessment of the evidence, and evidence gaps, which can be used to measure the impact of our work in the short, medium and long-term. The work has been impacted by the Covid19 pandemic and will now report later in 2021.

I hope this assures you that we are committed to maintaining the good progress which has already been achieved in this area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education