

Dr Dai Lloyd AM  
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

03 May 2018

Dear Dai,

**Mind over matter: A report on the step change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales.**

Further to previous correspondence, I wanted to draw your attention to the publication of the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee's [report into its inquiry into the emotional and mental health of children and young people](#). Given the common interest of both our committees in emotional and mental health, I hope the report and its recommendations will be of interest to colleagues on the HSCS Committee, especially in light of your ongoing inquiry into suicide prevention.

Paragraphs 231 – 235, 264 and 291 of our *Mind over matter* report outline the evidence we received in relation to suicide. In summary we were told that:

- 2016 saw the highest number of suicides among 15–19 year olds in Wales, which was the highest number in five years, and the second highest in 12 years;
- While there has not been a discernible increase in suicides among children and young people under 18 years old (remaining consistently at around 12 suicides a year), recent increases in reported suicides were among 18 and 19 year olds;
- The transition between child and adult services is a time of particular vulnerability, with an increase in suicide rates among 18 and 19 year olds;
- Young people leaving care in the UK are five times more likely than their peers to attempt suicide; and
- Enabling people to talk about self-harm and suicide reduces, rather than increases, attempts at both.



In light of the alarming evidence presented of a significant increase in self-harm admissions to A&E among children and young people in the last three years, and the increased rate of suicide among 18–19 year olds during 2016, our **recommendation 15** calls on the Welsh Government, within six months of our report’s publication, to outline how resources could be directed towards enabling crisis teams in all health boards to provide training and cascade expertise to other frontline services, particularly colleagues in A&E, in border areas (to improve cross-border relations with those centres most often accessed by Welsh domiciled patients), and in schools (to normalise conversations about suicide and self-harm in particular).

In response to the evidence received in relation to the importance of enabling people to talk about suicide, our **recommendation 16** calls on the Welsh Government to work with expert organisations to:

- provide, within three months of our report’s publication, guidance to schools on talking about suicide and self-harm, to dispel the myth that any discussion will lead to “contagion”;
- prioritise the issuing of guidance to schools where there has been a suicide or suspected suicide; and
- ensure that basic mental health training, including how to talk about suicide, becomes part of initial teacher training and continuous professional development, so that all teachers are equipped to talk about it.

We expect to receive a response to our recommendations from the Welsh Government by Thursday 7 June. We will ensure that a copy of the response is shared with you so that it – along with our report – can help inform your important inquiry into suicide prevention.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AM**  
Chair

