



Russell George MS
Health and Social Care Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

By email

30th June 2023

Dear Russell,

We are writing to you as co-leads of the development and the implementation of the National Trauma-Informed Framework for Wales 'Trauma-Informed Wales: A Societal Approach to Understanding, Preventing and Supporting the Impacts of Trauma and Adversity.'

Can we begin by thanking the committee for the important report of its inquiry, 'Connecting the Dots', and for recognising the contribution that the Trauma-informed Framework can make to tackling mental health inequalities in Wales. Dr Hopkins was pleased to attend the committee with the delegation from Public Health Wales to talk about this. We note that recommendation 11 is a specific ask of Welsh Government that *'By July 2023 the Welsh Government should publish the key deliverables and qualitative and quantitative measures for the impact of the trauma-informed framework for Wales, and put in place a robust evaluation framework. If the Welsh Government is not able to commit in its response to our report to the work being completed within this timeframe, it should explain why it is not achievable and provide information about the timescales within which the measures and evaluation framework will be completed'*.

We are aware that the Welsh Government accepted this recommendation, in principle, on the grounds that it could not accept it in full because it was not a Welsh Government framework. We think this is a very important point as the Framework was co-produced with a wide range of organisations, and individuals, with an interest in the promotion, and adoption, of trauma-informed approaches, including those with lived experience of trauma. The overall goal of the Framework, and of all of those who have contributed to its development, and are now contributing to its implementation, is to make Wales a trauma-informed nation.

We met with Deputy Ministers for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS and for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle MS on the 6th June 2023 to discuss progress on the implementation of the Framework, since they helped to launch it last July. We agreed that, as co-leads, we would write to you to set out the plan



for measuring impact and deliverables of the Framework, and to explain how this framework was developed, and how it will be implemented, as a co-produced, co-delivered, all of society approach with people and organisations in Wales.

We were pleased that the Deputy Ministers reiterated their support for the work, including the provision of additional funding for our respective organisations to help support the implementation. Welsh Government officials were members of the Expert Reference Group that supported the development of the framework document and will be integral to the approach we take to implement it.

The Trauma-informed Framework was developed with the support of an Expert Reference Group, made up of people with lived experience, professionals from a range of settings, including mental health clinicians and leaders from third sector organisations. A public consultation was undertaken, by us, on the draft Framework before the final document was launched on July 14th 2022.

Since the launch we have begun to develop an implementation approach that retains the key principles of co-production and co-delivery. We held engagement events across Wales in January and February 2023, open to all, to develop an understanding of what is needed, going forward, and as a result a pre-Steering Group was established to support this work. We have also established a virtual hub between our two organisations to provide project support and ensure our Framework implementation work is fully integrated. We have met as a pre-Steering Group to agree what the substantive group will look like and hope to establish a full Steering Group in the next few months. We have also met on a regular basis with Welsh Government officials to discuss the implementation of the framework.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Trauma-informed Framework is something that we have all agreed should be developed at the very start of the implementation programme. ACE Hub Wales and Traumatic Stress Wales have agreed, with the Welsh Government, to develop a robust evaluation framework, which includes deliverables and both qualitative and quantitative measures this year. The Trauma-informed Framework document itself sets out a number of these within each of the four practice levels in the section 'what does good look like' which shows the impact and outcomes for each at an individual, organisation and system wide level.

We are committed to a co-production approach and the monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed in this way. The pre-Steering Group has established a sub group to develop this; starting with a theory of change that will identify the activities and outputs needed to achieve outcomes in the short, medium and longer term. We anticipate that this high level work will be completed by the end of July, which is in line with the timescales the Committee identified.



Other key areas of our evaluation framework will be using a realist approach to evaluate whole-systems or community-based interventions, where circumstances may vary between different settings and implementation of the same intervention may lead to very different outcomes. We will identify data that can already be used to support measures around delivery of training, for example, or outcomes such as reduced sickness absence in the workforce or increased uptake of services. We feel as a group that there is also a need to really capture how the implementation of the framework has made people feel. A trauma-informed approach is something that feels different and there are a number of storytelling methodologies that partners are already using to capture this that it will be important to include. Our shared ambition for the work is to develop a social movement, with a commitment to continuing to learn as we go along, with our communities and practitioners, what is needed to help us to get there. The evaluation process has to be flexible and iterative as we continue to develop our knowledge of what works through pilots, conversations and engagement. We will also continue to look outside of Wales, and to work with our partners outside of Wales, who are also working to understand and evaluate the impact of adopting a trauma-informed approach and will continue to share learning and best practice.

We will send you the evaluation framework approach, once co-developed, to share with the committee and we would be very happy to provide an update on the evaluation framework and implementation work overall, if that would be helpful. We have already agreed to meet with the Deputy Ministers again, later in the year, to provide them with an update on progress on the implementation of the Framework.

We hope that this reassures you that we are prioritising this area of work, and also provides some useful further information as to why this process is a more long term, co-delivered commitment that, by its very nature, takes time to develop.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Hopkins".

Dr Joanne Hopkins
Director of ACE Hub Wales

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Bisson".

Professor Jon Bisson,
Director of Traumatic Stress Wales