

**Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a
Gofal Cymdeithasol**

**Health and Social Care
Committee**

Sarah Murphy MS
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

27 January 2025

Dear Sarah

Welsh Government draft budget 2025-26

I am sorry that you were unable to attend the Committee's scrutiny session on the Welsh Government's draft budget. I hope you are feeling better.

Although we were able to put a number of questions relating to your portfolio to the Cabinet Secretary, there were a few outstanding matters and I would be grateful if you could respond to them in writing:

Mental health

1. Your evidence paper states that health boards need to make better use of existing resources rather than seeking additional funding for mental health. Can you clarify what specific measures or changes you expect health boards to implement, and how these will ensure services can meet growing demand and maintain quality of care?
2. The mental health ring-fence ensures that health boards maintain a minimum level of investment in mental health services. Can you confirm if any health boards have failed to meet this minimum investment level and, if so, what are the consequences of not meeting this requirement.
3. In the absence of a revised Mental Health Strategy, can you set out the Welsh Government's current priorities for mental health and clarify how these priorities are reflected in the draft budget, particularly in terms of the areas of service provision being prioritised and the balance between investment in preventative care and specialist support.
4. During its scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget, the Children, Young People and Education Committee was told that it is not possible to determine how much health boards invest in specialist child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), despite long waiting times and documented challenges in achieving timely interventions. This information is essential to understanding why desired outcomes have not been achieved, so can you advise

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how you can ensure investment levels are sufficient and used effectively to improve outcomes without this data.

Children's health

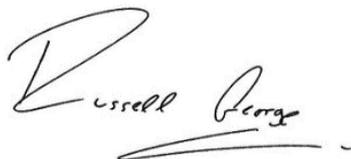
5. Can you confirm whether the Welsh Government has de-prioritised children's health in this year's NHS Planning Framework guidance/ Health Board allocations, given the absence of specific directives to health boards to safeguard children's services (which were highlighted as disproportionately impacted by pressures in last year's NHS Wales Planning Framework)? And does this reflect an assumption that issues for this group have been sufficiently addressed?
6. Can you confirm when you expect the children's health quality statement to be published. And, in the meantime, can you provide us with a detailed list of priorities and workstreams for the clinical lead on children's health within the NHS Executive, and clarify how this budget is supporting their progress.

Women's Health Plan

7. Do you believe the £3 million allocated for the Women's Health Plan in 2025-26 will be sufficient to meet key actions set out in the Plan?
8. As this is a ministerial top priority, is this allocation adequate given it represents a relatively small portion of overall health spending?

It would be helpful if we could receive your response by Friday 21 February.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.