

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-761
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/00683/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

9 March 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your follow up letter of 23 February regarding petition P-05-761: Demand Funding from the Welsh Government to Support Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru.

The decision to establish the Integrated Autism Service was based on evidence gathered through a scoping exercise undertaken as part of the delivery of the ASD Strategic Action Plan, Interim Delivery Plan in 2015. The purpose was to establish options for future integrated autism support services in Wales and involved consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, advisory groups and professionals to gather data on existing good practice and gaps in service provision. This included a desk top review of current research, relevant NICE guidelines and visits to established autism services across the UK, including the One Stop Shop model introduced in Scotland, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing models of care and support. Learning was also taken from the Community and Monitoring and Support project for autistic people which was supported by the Welsh Government between 2010-2014.

The findings and recommendations of the scoping exercise resulted in the Welsh Government's commitment to introduce an Integrated Autism Service (IAS) across Wales. The service is based on best practice advice contained in relevant NICE Guidelines¹ which recommend that services for children, young people and adults should be provided by specialist community based multi-disciplinary teams. Also as stakeholders frequently raised concerns about inconsistencies in service provision, it was important to take a national approach to service delivery. An independent evaluation of the delivery of the ASD Strategic Action Plan has been commissioned, the interim report was published on 1 March, which I attach. One of the key findings stated:

¹ Autism: The management and support of children and young people on the autism spectrum (NICE Guideline CG 170) and Autism: recognition referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum (NICE Guidelines CF142)

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

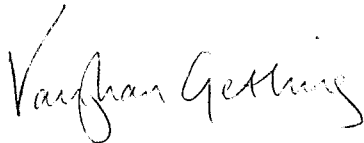
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

Weaknesses and inconsistencies in both assessment and diagnostic services for adults with autism and in support services for adults and children with autism provide a strong case for national action to drive up standards and ensure good practice is adopted across Wales. All stakeholders interviewed support this view.

The IAS is funded through the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) which promotes integration and innovation. Funding is allocated to regional partnership boards, which comprise of health boards, social services and third sector organisations. A competitive tendering process is not required as ICF funding is allocated to health boards on behalf of the regional partnership boards. The boards should collectively determine how ICF funding is utilised. The IAS is intended to increase skills and capacity, not to replace existing services including those already provided by third sector organisations. In each region it has been developed by working in partnership with local stakeholders including the third sector, to minimise duplication. We have also established a national IAS Leads group to ensure that the service continues to develop and improve through collaborative working and best practice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services