

Vaughan Gething AM
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education

16 August 2018

Dear Cabinet Secretaries,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 July following up on the plenary debate on our Mind over Matter report.

Your letter outlines your intention to establish a Ministerial Task and Finish Group – chaired jointly by you both – “to formalise arrangements to drive and oversee progress and to enable timely decisions to be made to maintain the pace of delivery” in relation to support for the emotional and mental health of children and young people. The Committee welcomes this development as recognition of the inquiry’s findings, and the strength of feeling expressed in the Chamber about the need for a step change in this important area.

I have sought the Committee’s endorsement to participate in the Task and Finish Group and am pleased to accept the invitation to do so. Committee members and I agree that it would most appropriate for me to engage as an observer, participating and engaging fully in all discussions and meetings, but retaining my ultimate independence to scrutinise and hold the Government to account in my capacity as a Committee Chair.

The Committee welcomes the creation of a new team of officials to work across health, social care and education portfolios to drive this agenda forward and deliver a coherent, whole–system approach to the emotional and mental wellbeing



of children and young people. We further welcome the establishment of a stakeholder reference group to inform this work, and look forward to being consulted on its membership.

In order to ensure that the Task and Finish Group's work addresses the matters we raise in Mind over Matter, we would be grateful to be consulted on its terms of reference. As a Committee we are keen to maintain the pace of work necessary in this area, and would welcome the agreement of final terms of reference by the end of September 2018.

During the Plenary debate I, and other Members, called on the Welsh Government to reflect again on its response to our report. In light of your intention to create a Task and Finish Group, the Committee recognises that time will now be needed for the Group's work to get underway to address the issues raised in our report. Nevertheless, our commitment to ensuring that progress is achieved as a matter of urgency remains strong. On that basis, and in recognition of the need to reflect the Task and Finish Group's work and the ongoing work of the Together for Children and Young People Programme, we would welcome a revised written response to our report's recommendations by March 2019.

We look forward to working with you to deliver the step change we have called for in our report, and will engage constructively and with commitment to deliver the whole-system approach needed to improve the support available for our children and young people.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AM
Chair

