



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-879  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05863/19

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18 April 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 8 April seeking my views on Petition P-05-879 from Annie Harris entitled - Add mental health to the mandatory teaching curriculum for all schools in Wales.

I will respond separately to each of the specific points raised in the Petition:

- **Mental Health education becoming mandatory teaching for all schools in Wales without the addition of any exams/homework on this subject**

One of the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales is to support children and young people to become healthy confident individuals, who are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy. The four purposes will be at the heart of the new curriculum and are a starting point for all decisions on the development of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements.

The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) will draw on subjects and themes from mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will also consider how the school environment supports children and young peoples' social, emotional, physical health and well-being. As part of developing the Area, pioneers have considered evidence and expertise on how reflective practice can support mental and emotional well-being.

Each AoLE is organised into "What matters" statements. These articulate the fundamental principles or concepts which underpin the Area. The Health and Well-being AoLE includes a statement on mental health and emotional well-being, giving it parity with physical health and well-being. This includes the key experiences, knowledge and skills to support learners' mental and emotional health. It is currently proposed that Head Teachers will have a duty to deliver a curriculum that contains the six AoLEs, including Health and Well-being.

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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.

Curriculum for Wales 2022 will be made available for feedback on 30 April 2019. From April through to July, we will engage extensively with the teaching profession and wider stakeholders.

Whilst the importance of the new curriculum in this agenda cannot be understated, it does not stand alone. Developing a whole school approach needs to be an end-to-end process involving the whole school environment and starting with each school understanding its own landscape.

- **Every child in Wales having the opportunity to access a qualified counsellor through their school**

Local authorities in Wales are required in law to make reasonable provision of counselling services to all 11 to 18 year olds in their area, and to all pupils in year 6.

The Welsh Government provides £4.5 million annually for continued support of counselling provision. In the 2017-18, over 11,365 young people attended counselling services. An increasing number of local authorities are also making counselling services available online, often in more rural areas where distance and transport could act as a barrier.

- **Every school in Wales offering mental health training for their staff**

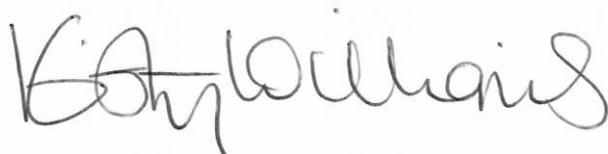
To ensure greater support for mental health in schools the Welsh Government announced in September 2017, £1.4million jointly from the health and education budgets to pilot Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in-reach into schools across six local authority areas (three health boards), spanning two academic years until summer 2020. Pending the outcome of evaluation we will consider the merits, or otherwise, of rolling out the programme more widely across Wales, in either its existing or an amended form.

The CAMHS in-reach pilot has a specific focus on early identification and intervention by up-skilling teachers and other school staff to deal with low level mental health issues, before they require referral to specialist services.

Specialist child and adolescent mental health practitioners have been recruited to act as link workers with the pilot schools to give teachers the opportunity to discuss with CAMHS professionals what strategies the school can use to support that child or young person. Or it may mean that the CAMHS professional recognises that a referral to specialist services is needed. This ensures those most in need are able to access the appropriate levels of care and support.

I hope this clarifies the points raised.

Yours sincerely



**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education