

**Jane Hutt AM**  
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip  
Welsh Government

18 December 2018

Dear Jane

**Post-legislative scrutiny – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015**

The then Leader of the House and Chief Whip attended our meeting on 7 November to give evidence in connection with our ongoing post-legislative scrutiny of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

At the meeting the Leader of the House and Chief Whip agreed to provide further details, including:

- A copy of the document listing information on the various strategies, frameworks and funding associated with the Act;
- A commentary on the progress of implementation of the recommendations from the Committee's 2016 post-legislative scrutiny report;
- A list of budget lines and funds that supports projects and initiatives resulting from the Act;
- Details on the number of children who have accessed Hafan's services;
- Details on the progress of implementing Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as a statutory part of the curriculum, following correspondence with the Cabinet Secretary for Education;



- Details on the number of people that have accessed the “Ask and Act” training;
- Links to each of the published local strategies;
- Details on the timescales for establishing the sustainable funding model.

### Commissioning guidance

Following the evidence session on 7 November, we still consider that the statutory commissioning guidance should be published as a priority, as we recommended in 2016.

After this Committee raised concerns in 2016 that the statutory commissioning guidance had not been published, the Welsh Government [stated](#) that it would be “consulted on by July 2017”.

[Draft commissioning guidance](#) was published for consultation in March 2018, and the [summary of responses](#) was published in September 2018.

The previous National Adviser said in 2016 that “the publication of the statutory guidance on commissioning for specialist services is critical to the purpose of the Act and it is therefore concerning that there is no confirmed timeline for the publication of this guidance”.

In the absence of this guidance, Lloyd’s Bank Foundation and Welsh Women’s Aid produced the non-statutory “[Tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; A Collaborative Commissioning Toolkit for Services in Wales](#)” in 2016.

It is now nearly 4 years since the Act was passed. Given that there is so much existing work on the commissioning guidance (the non-statutory Lloyd’s Foundation guide and this year’s consultation), **we see no reason that the statutory guidance cannot be published early next year.** Services need certainty, and given the length of time they have waited for this statutory guidance, we consider that this should be prioritised.

The Committee also seeks information in relation to the following:



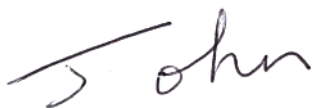
- Details of any future legal consequences in the event that local strategies are not published by deadlines as prescribed in the Act. In the statement made by the then Leader of the House and Chief Whip in Plenary on 27 November, it was mentioned that legal consequences “wasn't a proportionate response in this instance”, for strategies that weren't published in their final form this year, but that it would be possible “if, in further iterations, the timescale isn't met”.
- An update on the **timescales for the delivery framework**;
- A draft of the **data that will be collected as part of the National Indicators**, and
- In light of the First Minister's recent announcement about the review of refuge provision, when will the task and finish group considering the review alongside the sustainable funding model complete its work?

The Committee also wishes to receive information about the interim arrangements for services while they await outstanding pieces of work (for example, the commissioning guidance, the roll-out of healthy relationships education, the national indicators, and the sustainable funding model).

Finally, the Committee would like to seek periodic updates every three months from the National Advisers, to provide reassurance on the pace of implementation of the Act.

I should be grateful if you would respond in due course.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths AM  
Chair



Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

