



Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P- 05-892
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07379/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

13 August 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 29 July following your Committee's consideration of my letter of 20 June. I note the further comments relating to the petition for a Learning Disability Commissioner.

You ask how people with a learning disability are supported to engage in self-advocacy. Securing strong voice and control for individuals is a key principle of the Welsh Government. The approach we have taken is to embed advocacy within the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014, ('The Act') accompanied by a dedicated Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy), (The Code).

The Code under the 2014 Act recognises self-advocacy as an important form of advocacy. The Code also stipulates that local authorities and local health boards must utilise the outcomes from their shared population assessment to inform commissioning and partnership arrangements under Part 9 of this Act, for the provision of advocacy services. Advocacy includes the full range of provision set out in Chapter 8 of the Code of Practice, which includes self-advocacy.

The Code sets out the requirement for local authorities to ensure that access to advocacy services and support is available to enable individuals to engage and participate when local authorities are exercising statutory duties in relation to them.

A Technical Group is currently providing advice in updating the Code to align with the requirements which were placed on regulated service providers from the end of April 2019, when the Regulated Advocacy Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019 came into force.

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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.

I maintain the view that we do not need a Learning Disability Commissioner at this time. We are committed to improving the lives of all people with a learning disability in Wales. The best way of achieving this is through the implementation of the 24 recommendations in the Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i' in "Gething".

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services