

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/05681/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
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Dear Janet,

Thank you for your latest letter and your request for additional information relating to petition P-05-882 Transforming the response for older people experiencing domestic abuse – a call for action. I have outlined my views and plans for how we will continue to tackle all forms of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) and I am confident our priorities will inevitably support the ongoing work of the older people commissioner.

We committed in our National Strategy to ensure that relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to all victims and survivors including older victims. To date over 167,000 professionals in Wales have accessed training in line with statutory requirements outlined within the National Training Framework.

Our good practice guidance on Domestic Abuse: Safeguarding Older People in Wales, 2017 evidences the need for professionals to be aware of the indicators of abuse of older people. As we work towards enhancing and strengthening the role of our public services in preventing these issues, it is crucial that those working with older people are able to recognise signs of abuse and are able to offer appropriate advice. "Ask and Act" guidance prioritises groups of professionals, such as those in primary care and social care, that older people feel more confident and able to access. Ask and Act will have been fully rolled out across Wales by 2021 and we will continue to work with relevant authorities to ensure that older people's services are addressed in their VAWDASV training plans. We want to ensure that our specialist services are equipped with appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence to respond to older victims of domestic abuse and are exploring options to provide enhanced training to the VAWDASV specialist sector on this.

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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.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures were launched during Safeguarding Week this year. The procedures set out for anyone working with children or adults what to do if they suspect an individual is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This builds upon the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and on the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard People' and reaffirms -our commitment to promoting the right for both children and adults at risk in Wales to be safe.

Welsh Government is committed to promoting and advancing equality in Wales. Equality is central to all of our work in the Welsh Government and our vision for Wales, as set out in Prosperity for All. A more equal society benefits us all. We all want to live in a country where there are equal opportunities for everyone where people can live harmoniously together and where discrimination is not tolerated.

Our Strategic Equality Plan recognises the importance of putting the needs of service users at the heart of delivery in key public services. We have identified detailed actions across the Government that will help us work towards this objective. We are currently working to develop a new Strategic Equality Action Plan for 2020-2024, which will include supporting actions across all protected characteristics, including age.

We support the work of the commissioner in the need for age appropriate data collection. The Welsh Government has written to Directors of Social Services in Wales asking them to disaggregate, where it is possible, all data on adult safeguarding measures by age. We will also be modifying the annual adult safeguarding return so it has more detailed age bands. This will be available from 2020-21. Furthermore, we will develop the Adults Receiving Care and Support Census in the next financial year so that it will be possible to break down additional components by age.

The Welsh Government will continue to work to address the barriers faced by disabled people when accessing services by ensuring our information is accessible to everyone and that our policies fully take into account accessibility issues. Consultation documents will be provided in a range of formats such as large print, easy read British Sign Language and video. Engagement activities and events will be held in accessible venues and locations and delivered in a way that is inclusive of people with a range of impairments.

Our VAWDASV communications campaigns are informed by our stakeholder communications group. We work with our communication group and providers to ensure our campaigns use inclusive imagery and will continue to disseminate the concern of the commissioner and voices of older people within our communication network.

We will be reviewing membership of this group in the New Year, together with our Communication Framework and would welcome engagement with the Commissioner's office in this process. The VAWDASV team can be contacted at VAWDASV@gov.wales

Yours sincerely,
Jane

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