

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/VG/0208/20

John Griffiths AM
Chair Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

21 January 2020

Dear John,

I refer to your request to provide information in respect of action points raised at the Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee Draft Budget session on 9th January 2020. Please find below my response in relation to those issues which fall under my remit as Minister for Health and Social Services.

How the disparity in pay, terms and conditions and status between social care/services staff employed within the NHS and those in local authorities will be addressed; and what other actions will be taken to improve employment conditions and quality of work for local authority employed staff in the social care/services sector

We acknowledge that there is a difference between local government and NHS salaries for some workers. However it is also worth noting that job packages are made up of different terms and conditions beyond pay.

Recruitment and retention is a challenge across the whole of the social care workforce and this is why we are looking at how we can improve terms and conditions across this sector.

For example, following the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission last year, we are taking steps to establish a Fair Work Forum in Social Care. We will be looking closely at the outcome of our recent consultations on social partnership, and the socio-economic duty, and have been engaging with partners in the sector about the priorities for a Fair Work Forum.

In relation to social workers, Social Care Wales is talking with sector leads about the modern role of a social worker, and opportunities for post qualifying learning and development which forms part of the wider package of terms and conditions for social work.

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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.

Social Workers

There are a range of different organisations that employ social workers, including third sector, local authorities, and some independents as well as the NHS. These employers will recruit to different pay scales, for example CAF/CASS Cymru recruit social workers to civil service pay scales. This means that there are differences in terms of the terms and conditions of social workers across Wales. We have been engaging with partners such as BASW and Social Care Wales to consider if action is needed to address this and if so what this should look like. For example, whether there is a need for a national pay scale and career framework, or how local differences might be reflected.

Occupational Therapists

Salaries for occupational therapists employed in local government are different to those in the NHS. The NHS uses Agenda for Change and local government job evaluation sets salaries in individual local authorities. Traditionally new professionals (just graduating) might find that their starting salary is higher in local government, but as they progress the NHS salary passes them.

There have been issues (Swansea is an example) of joint teams consisting of occupational therapists employed to do the same job, where the staff employed by the NHS are paid more than the staff employed by the local authority to undertake the same work. This is a problem and is usually resolved by dissatisfied staff changing their employer.

However, the terms and conditions for any job are not limited to pay. The local government hours, annual leave allowance, flexible working policy etc. may all be different and some occupational therapists will accept a role with a lower pay scale if the other job benefits suit them better. Many occupational therapists in social care prefer the philosophy and model of working and this outweighs pay differences.

Ensuring that staff feel valued and see their role as of importance is also about the sense of impact and effectiveness, so good management and support and the ability (empowerment) to deliver their interventions to the top of the professional 'licence' also need to be taken into account and may contribute more to someone seeing their job as a very positive career of choice beyond a simple pay comparison.

How the Minister expects the increase in the Social Care Workforce and Sustainability Pressures Grant to be used and the desired outcomes

The increase in this grant in 2020-21 reflects increasing pressures facing the sector. These include, for example, uplifts to the national living wage.

We have responded to the pressures that local government has raised in relation to the social care workforce. These pressures can result in additional costs and adversely impact the continuity of care. These include increases in the national living wage, employer contributions and pension costs, as well as wider challenges resulting from high turnover rates, a reliance on agency staff and the need to support the workforce's continued professional development to deliver increasingly complex care.

Whilst workforce pressures are intrinsically linked to the wider sustainability of the sector they are not the only challenge it faces, so this additional funding is also intended to help local authorities respond to service pressures and to be better positioned to manage unexpected or increased demands. This will facilitate a greater focus on prevention and

early intervention. It recognises local authorities' calls for a 'double funding of investment' to support a greater emphasis on preventative work, whilst delivering current service provision.

We have received interim reports for 2019-20 setting out how local authorities have used the funding. These reports show that the funding is being used to tackle a range of different challenges across social care. The mid-year reports show that local authorities have used the funding to support delivery of a range of different services, for example:

- 11 local authorities have used a portion of their funding to increase wages across the sector. For example, Rhondda Cynon Taff has used the funding to target an uplift aimed at the Foundation Living Wage commitment for the Council's external domiciliary care providers.
- Nine local authorities have utilised the funding to support Adult and Older People's Services, in particular, residential home placements. For example, Pembrokeshire County Council has used the grant to offset increased pressures within the short term respite budgets.
- Eight local authorities have utilised the funding to support domiciliary care for older people,
- One local authority has funded support for maintaining business continuity of its core out-of-hours service.

We have provided local authorities with a degree of flexibility around how the grant funding can be used in relation to social care workforce pressures and sustainable services. This is because local authorities are best placed to understand local needs and how to achieve maximum benefit from the funding.

To maximise the reach of this funding administrative arrangements associated with the grant are light touch. However we have set high level parameters for how the funding should be spent and will ask local authorities to confirm how they intend to use the funding before payments are made.

This grant funding forms just one part of our wider support for the sector which includes, for example, funding the Social Care Wales WeCare. Wales campaign, which aims to attract more people to work in the sector and promoting professionalisation of the sector through registration of the workforce.

Whether the allocation of £2.3million as a specific grant to the Adoption Service is adequate, and how will this additional money lead to improved outcomes?

This investment is being used to transform the adoption support 'offer' in Wales and is also being creatively used to match fund other resources to ensure widest reach. It is intended that this 'Core Offer' will:

- equip adoptive families at the start and support their early days to encourage healthy and confident families;
- provide effective information, advice or support as and when families need it and in a timely way so any issues that arise are less likely to escalate into more serious issues; and
- provide ongoing support or easy re-entry to services where it is needed.

New and Innovative services are being developed through this funding, many in partnership with the Welsh Voluntary Adoption Agencies for example TESSA, Adopting Together and Connected (a service for adopted children and young people).

- TESSA (Therapy, Education & Support Services in Adoption), a UK wide Lottery funded service is being rolled out across Wales; utilising match funding from this investment to provide wider reach in Wales. Based on delivery through paid parent-partners (experienced and trained adopters) it incorporates an expert psychology assessment and a 6 week course (based on a successful service provided by one Health Board in Wales), plus access to other recommended support services. It remains low cost, early take up is good and is being academically evaluated. When it is fully functional it will provide a services to circa 200 adoptive families in Wales at any one time. The services started taking referrals in November and 18 families are already accessing it.
- The 'Connected' service is the only specialist resource for adopted children and young people in Wales (replaced Talk Adoption). The investment is being used to ensure that it is available in all parts of Wales and also complemented by an advice and Information service provided for adopted C&YP in similar ways to that for non-adopted C&YP and a young adopted adults ambassador scheme provides mechanisms for consultation engagement and promotion of adoption. 100 C&YP were offered transfer to new service and 70 C&YP currently registered and receiving service while it is grown. A national development officer has been appointed as have 4 out 5 regional officers. Scoping for national adopted C&YP advice and information offer has commenced and the young adopted adult ambassador scheme commenced with 3 recruited so far.

The investment is also being used to change and improve practice across Wales. The National Adoption Service has commissioned AFA Cymru to work with the sector to develop new best practice approaches to the following:

- placing children and providing early support (including Adopting Together
- contact which is effectively facilitated by regional services / agencies;
- adoption support assessment, planning and review for all children; and
- working with birth parents including links to Reflect projects

How the Welsh Government is monitoring delivery of the requirements set out by the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014?

Welsh Government has put a range of steps in place to ensure that the delivery of the Social Services and Well-Being Act is carefully monitored and to ensure that the impact of the Act on the well-being outcomes of people who need care and support and carers who need support can be measured.

Firstly, a formal evaluation of the Act has been commissioned and is being led by the University of South Wales. The formal evaluation is exploring two areas - the implementation of the Act and the impact of the Act. Fieldwork is currently underway on the implementation of the Act and an initial report on this is due to be published in July 2020. The full and final report covering both the implementation and the impact of the Act will be published at the end of 2021.

Secondly, the Measuring the Mountain project is now in its second year and is exploring in depth people's experiences of care and support and carer's experiences of support. Measuring the Mountain is being delivered by a consortium of stakeholders, including Social Care Wales, the University of South Wales and ONS. The Measuring the Mountain project uses Sensemaker technology so that people and carers can share their experiences in detail enabling a wide range of stories to be collected and analysed. Measuring the Mountain also uses Citizen Jury methodologies which, again, allows in depth scrutiny of

people's experiences of the Act. The phase 1 Measuring the Mountain report was published in April 2019. Phase 2 of the project is currently underway and the second and final Measuring the Mountain report is due at the end of 2020.

Thirdly and finally, a new Performance and Improvement Framework will be launched on 1 April 2020 which will change the way the local authorities monitor their performance in relation to the Act. The new Performance and Improvement Framework will require local authorities to collect a range of data that will include quantitative data and qualitative data, and will also require them to engage with and use research and evidence. This will enable Welsh Government and local authorities to better understand people's experiences of the Act and to accurately measure how local authorities are contributing to improving the well-being outcomes of people who need care and carers who need support. It will also increase the quality and the consistency of the data that is gathered by local authorities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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