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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/LN/0936/22

Russell George MS
Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

07 June 2023

Dear Russell,

I am writing to provide you with an update on progress against the recommendations in the 'Everybody's Business' report which is attached at Annex A.

As the Committee will know, preventing suicide is a top priority for me. On 2nd March 2023 we hosted a National Conference on Preventing Suicide and Self Harm which took place at Cardiff City Hall. The conference, which was arranged by the NHS Collaborative in partnership with Welsh Government, Swansea University and Improvement Cymru was full to capacity. I was very pleased to speak at this important event to re-affirm our commitment to suicide and self-harm prevention in Wales. The event included a list of eminent speakers including Professor Ann John (Swansea University), Professor Louis Appleby (Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Manchester and Director of the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health) Professor Rory O'Connor (Professor of Health Psychology at the University of Glasgow) and Dr Rosalind Reilly (Consultant in Public Health, Public Health Wales). Crucially, the speakers also included people with lived experience, and we were fortunate to be able to hear from Emma O'Sullivan, DPJ Foundation; Mental Health Farming Charity and Dr Simon Jones, Chair of the North Wales Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Forum. The event was an overwhelming success, and the conference report will be fundamental to informing our work to develop the successor to Talk 2 Me 2.

On 28 October 2022 we launched our draft guidance '*Responding to people bereaved, exposed or affected by suicide*'. The guidance was informed by insights into the needs and experiences of people living with bereavement by suicide in Wales, following a listening exercise that explored the points in their bereavement journey when they interface with statutory or voluntary services. The guidance aims to ensure services provide a more compassionate response.

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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 consultation ended on 20th January and 38 responses were received. The National Task and Finish Group for the guidance document has now re-convened following the closure of the consultation and will re-focus as an implementation group. This group will work to embrace the responses from the consultation into a revised document, for final publication, while also working on the implementation of the systems response described within it, continuing to work collaboratively with the relevant agencies, and with experts by experience.


Officials are also finalising the specification to commission the National Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service. This work has taken longer than anticipated due to data sharing issues, but I expect the procurement process to commence imminently.

Since our last update, the Cross Government Suicide Prevention Strategic Group has met on a further two occasions. The meeting in November 2022 focused on ensuring a joined-up response to the cost of living crisis as well as suicide prevention in schools and transport. The focus of the meeting on 17 April 2023 was on strengthening the multi-agency immediate response arrangements following a probable suicide.

As I reported in my last update to the Committee, we have now transformed the suicide and self-harm prevention infrastructure in Wales since the *Everybody's Business* Committee report. This transformation, along with development of the successor strategy and the continued work led by the national suicide prevention co-ordinator will deliver the key themes across the Committees recommendations. I would therefore like to assure you that the recommendations will continue to shape the work on suicide prevention and I would welcome a discussion with you about the format of future updates.

I would like to thank the Committee for its continued focus on suicide prevention and self-harm.

Yours sincerely



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