



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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Minister for Children and Social Care

Ein cyf/Our ref: DB/PO/0196/25

Buffy Williams MS  
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Dear Buffy,

23 April 2025

Thank you for your letter of 3 April seeking clarification on two points from my previous letter and Oral Statement in relation to the National Practice Framework and Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDACs).

### **1. Publication date for National Practice Framework:**

I can confirm at the time of the Committee's inquiry into the radical reform of children's services, Welsh Government's intention was to publish the Framework by the end of 2023. During 2023, extensive discussion and engagement took place which meant that, whilst not having the final published version, a draft Framework was in place ready to share for further engagement in early 2024. Extensive work and continuing engagement was required during 2024 given the range of issues raised. Further work has been undertaken on the Framework since my last letter in January, and we will be publishing the Framework as planned at the end of April. I will write to you again on its publication. I appreciate this has taken longer than we had hoped but it was important to ensure we have both buy-in and traction with this key work.

### **2. Family, Drug and Alcohol Courts**

#### The Welsh Government's response to the evaluation

The evaluation of the Welsh pilot in Cardiff and the Vale has been of great interest to Welsh Government, and we are continuing to keep abreast of wider FDAC development across the UK to glean as much learning about the model as possible. We have liaised with LFJB Chairs and Sponsors around the FDAC Evaluation and discussed the findings with the Wales Family Justice Network. A number of positives were identified in the Evaluation and the Working Group has been established to consider how the learning from this can be expanded across Wales; and how FDAC interacts with other existing services in Wales. The Working Group will report back in the Summer.

#### Assessment of whether the FDAC pilot delivered value for money

The two-year Cardiff and the Vale pilot was funded by Welsh Government to learn lessons that would support potential roll-out of the FDAC model. Learning from the pilot is reported in CASCADE's Evaluation which focussed on the implementation of the Cardiff and Vale

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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.

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pilot, how it operated, how it was experienced in this context, any indicative evidence of impact, and how suitable it is for wider roll-out and evaluation. The Evaluation was not an impact evaluation, nor did it include an economic analysis so value for money was not a consideration. However, the "[The Case for Investment](#)" report by the Centre for Justice Innovation is focused on value for money of the FDAC model more generally. The Report demonstrates a break-even point for local authorities in year two of operations, and sets out projected savings of the different options for central government.

#### Plans in relation to the FDAC pilot for the rest of the Senedd term

The Cardiff and Vale FDAC pilot has ended and there are no plans for it during the rest of the Senedd term. As I previously mentioned a FDAC Working Group is looking at FDACs, but is also considering the model more widely in the Welsh context.

The Working Group is working creatively with other agencies with an interest in this area, including those in other parts of the UK, to explore a move from adversarial Court Proceedings to more trauma-informed work with families.

In addition to the work around supporting parents during Care Proceedings and looking at the FDAC model, Welsh Government is working closely with All Wales Heads of Children's Services to explore the infrastructure that supports parents during pre-proceedings and children at the edge of care. We are planning a two-part workshop, with local authorities and wider partners, which will consider the good practice already in place and how we ensure there are services and structures to better support children and families so we reduce the numbers of families entering public law court proceedings and fewer children come into the care of the local authority.

By the end of the Senedd term I want to be in a position to have clear recommendations and a pathway for change.

Yours sincerely,



**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**

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