

Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y  
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/104/25

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Equality and Social Justice  
Committee

5 March 2025

Dear Jenny,

I am writing to provide an update following my last correspondence of 30 September 2024. I apologise for the delay in this correspondence. However, given the cross-cutting nature of this area this has provided an opportunity for my officials to consult across portfolios which I hope will address the points raised in your letter of 02 October 2024.

I am also copying this letter to Jane Dodds MS, Mark Isherwood MS, Julie Morgan MS and Sioned Williams MS, as this response addresses the points raised in their joint letter of 20 December 2024. I am thankful to the members as well as to yourself for your continued championing of this issue.

There was a suggestion in your letter that the note of the summit held on 24 January 2024 had not been shared with the RCSLT nor the attendees of the summit. I can confirm that the note of the summit was shared with attendees including the RCSLT on 28 March 2024 and feedback was provided from colleagues from the RCSLT. To provide additional assurance the note will be resubmitted to RCSLT.

I am also able to provide an update on the action relating to the cross-department meeting between health, education and crime and justice colleagues. Senior leads from across these policy areas met on 29 November 2024 to consider the current position on Speech Language and Communication Provision including the points raised by the RCSLT this year.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care spoke about Speech Language and Communication needs in the criminal justice system in the Senedd on 22 January 2025, as part of a wider Debate on Speech and Language Therapists.

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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 Cabinet Secretary confirmed that Local Health Boards are responsible for determining population health needs and for determining the best way to meet their population's needs. All Local Health Boards in Wales provide speech and language therapy as a health treatment where it is clinically required. This service is available to all children who are assessed as requiring speech and language therapy in Wales, including children in contact with the justice system, subject to a referral process. Not every child with a speech, language and communication need may require or benefit from specialist therapy.

The Cabinet Secretary set out that it would be for youth justice service teams to provide any further services relating to speech language and communication needs, beyond that delivered by their Local Health Board, in order to deliver on their reserved statutory role.

Local authorities who consider there to be a need for additional provision can employ their own speech and language therapists directly or commission and fund provision via another employer, such as the NHS or private sector. They have access to a number of funding streams which could be used to support this, and our work with local authorities ahead of last year's summit highlighted several examples of where this is already working well. This includes local authorities using the UK Government's Turnaround funding scheme, which has been renewed into 2025-26, to fund provision.

I hope this letter answers your queries. We will continue to engage with the UK Government on their reserved responsibilities relating to this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the top.

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

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