

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee

19 March 2019

Dear Janet,

### **National taskforce for children's mental health**

Thank you for the Petition Committee's letter of 21 February 2019, drawing the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee's attention to **Petition P-05-857 – Create a national task force for children's mental health.**

As you are aware, the CYPE Committee has undertaken extensive scrutiny of the emotional and mental health support available for children and young people in Wales over the last 18 months. This work built on an inquiry undertaken by our predecessor committee in 2013-14 and led to the publication of our **Mind over Matter** report in April 2018. In response to Mind over Matter, the Welsh Government established its Joint Ministerial Task and Finish (JMTF) Group in September 2018. The stated aim of the JMTF Group is to accelerate the pace of change needed in this area, and achieve a whole school and whole system approach to emotional and mental health.

As Chair of the CYPE Committee I sit on the JMTF Group as an observer with full rights of participation, as does the Children's Commissioner for Wales. As a Committee, we welcome the JMTF's Group's establishment and work. We remain committed, however, to holding the Welsh Government to account on delivery in this area. To this end, we announced our intention to follow up on the implementation of our recommendations one year after their publication, and have **written recently** to the Minister for Health and Minister for Education outlining our approach.

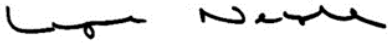
We warmly welcome all interest in this subject and we are keen to work with organisations to ensure that the Welsh Government is held to account on its progress in this area. We are concerned, however, that as currently drafted, there is a risk the work outlined by the petitioner could duplicate the inquiry already undertaken by the CYPE Committee, and the steps being taken to deliver recommendations via the JMTF Group.

We are confident that delivery of our recommendations would address the breadth of needs and services required to support our children and young people. Our report considered all aspects of the care pathway, and the range of circumstances faced by children and young people, their parents, carers and those providing support to them. We drew on a wide range of evidence from expert stakeholders, and spoke extensively with children and young people to inform our conclusions.



As a Committee we have stated publicly that we believe progress needs to be made in this area as a matter of urgency. While we recognise that the remit of the JMTF Group is ultimately a matter for both Ministers rather than the CYPE Committee, we would be concerned if the introduction of any further complexity to its work reduced the pace of delivery of our Mind over Matter recommendations.

Yours sincerely



**Lynne Neagle AC / AM**  
**Cadeirydd / Chair**

