



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1030  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05613/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

5 October 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 28 September regarding correspondence the Petitions Committee has received from Camilla Watts. My officials have noted the petition relates to taking preventative measures on wireless devices in nurseries and primary schools.

My office has received several items of correspondence in the past year from Ms Watts in regards to the potential health effects of Wi-Fi. Our responses to Ms. Watts have been co-ordinated with officials from the Welsh Government's Digital Learning Division, Public Health Division, Public Health England (PHE) and Public Health Wales (PHW).

On any matters relating to the health effects of Wi-Fi, the Welsh Government is advised by PHW, who are in-turn advised by PHE. On the basis of several published studies and those carried out in-house, PHE has concluded that there are no special steps required to reduce exposure to the low levels of radio waves from Wi-Fi networks, nor any current reason why Wi-Fi should not continue to be used in schools and in other places.

PHE carried out a systematic programme of research into wireless networks and their use in schools, including measurements of exposures from networks. The results of the research support PHE's view that exposures from Wi-Fi are low in relation to the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines and when compared to similar exposure from mobile phones.

Following a joint meeting between representatives of the Welsh Government's Digital Learning Division; Public Health Division; PHE and PHW, a new advice summary has been written in conjunction with radiation experts from PHE. The advice summary can be found [here](#).

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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.

Our National Mission for Education in Wales is to provide children and young people with the skills, knowledge, experience and resilience, with digital competence an integral element to enable them to thrive in a constantly changing world.

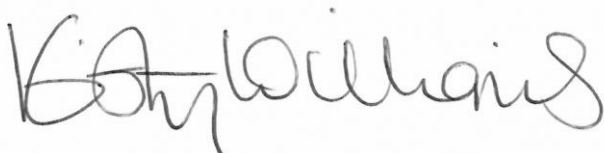
In recent years, we have made significant investment in digital infrastructure and services via a range of programmes and I am committed to continuous improvements in Education Technology (EdTech) across Wales. My officials are now focussing on how recent investment programmes are able to support schools in adopting and embedding digital learning in the classroom, as well as continuing to streamline and standardise the way digital and ICT is delivered in a school context.

Alongside this, our [Education Digital Standards](#) were created to assist schools to understand, manage and implement their digital environment – either self-managed or with assistance from their IT support partner. The information covers all aspects of managing schools' broadband usage, including network configuration, and identifies all device connectivity options available to schools.

Individual local authorities are responsible for IT within maintained schools - we are only able to offer guidance to authorities, who must then make local decisions. The PHW advice is an integral consideration of the Education Digital Standards on wireless networks. Furthermore, the health and safety aspects of any infrastructure implemented is clearly referenced in the standards, and confirms that it is the responsibility of the local authority to undertake the appropriate risk assessments.

I am satisfied that we have provided sufficient guidance to local authorities and schools to assist in their decision making when considering wireless network set ups. I am of course happy to help with any further information required by the Petitions Committee in your review of Ms Watts's request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education