

Vaughan Gething AM  
Minister for Health and Social Services

12 December 2019

Dear Minister

### **Everybody's Business: A report on suicide prevention in Wales**

As you know, the Committee published its report into suicide prevention in Wales in December 2018. The report included a commitment to carry out follow up work on progress in implementing the Committee's recommendations.

In July 2019, we wrote to stakeholders for their views on the Welsh Government's response to the report, and for any new/updated evidence. This consultation closed in October 2019.

We received 14 responses from a range of stakeholders including individuals and organisations, who raised some concerns about the progress being made.

The Committee would therefore appreciate an update from you in the following areas:

#### **General**

1. Could the Welsh Government set out its overall, strategic approach to implementing the Committee's recommendations. Is there a 'project plan' and can this be shared with the Committee?

#### **Recommendation 1 - Suicide prevention training framework**

2. How are the competence frameworks and other resources now available via the Talk To Me Too website being disseminated/promoted to services and to the wider public?
3. How will implementation of the training frameworks be monitored/reported?



### **Recommendation 5 - GMC guidelines on sharing information/consensus statement**

The Welsh Government response said that a Welsh Health Circular will be issued to ensure GPs are aware of the guidelines.

4. Can you please confirm whether a Welsh Health Circular been produced and, if not, what is the timescale for this?

### **Recommendation 11 – Target for first follow up after discharge from inpatient mental health care**

The Together for mental health delivery plan for 2016-19 included as a performance measure that all individuals discharged from inpatient care should have a first follow up within five working days of discharge. Evidence we received during the inquiry suggested three days was an appropriate target, although the Committee recommended a more ambitious target of 48 hours.

5. Are all health boards now implementing a three day target for first follow-up after discharge from inpatient mental health care?

### **Recommendation 12 - Targets for psychological therapies**

The Welsh Government response said performance data for access to specialist/secondary care psychological therapies would be formally reported on from April 2019. The performance data is not yet published; in response to a recent WAQ (18 November 2019), you said the Welsh Government has now started to collect the data prior to formal reporting.

6. When will performance data for access to specialist/secondary care psychological therapies be published?

A 26 week target was initially set for access to specialist psychological therapies, with the intention of reducing this in the future. Stakeholders have questioned the disparity between the 28 day target for primary mental health support services and the 26 week target in secondary care.

7. When does the Welsh Government expect to be in a position to reduce the target time for access to specialist psychological therapies?

### **Recommendation 13 - Wales-wide postvention strategy for suicide**

The Committee highlighted this as an immediate priority. The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation and said it would urgently review the postvention pathway in place in England and work with the National Advisory Group (NAG) to adapt it where necessary for Wales.



In response to a WAQ from Lynne Neagle on 17 October 2019, you said the Welsh Government would work with NAG and the newly-appointed national and regional coordinators for suicide prevention to develop a national postvention pathway for Wales, once the outcome of the bereavement services review was known. The final report of the bereavement services review was received by officials and the end-of-life care board in mid-November (and is expected to be published by the end of 2019).

8. Will the Welsh Government commit to a timescale for the all-Wales postvention pathway?

### **Recommendation 15 - Funding for support groups**

The Welsh Government response to this recommendation refers to the bereavement services review mentioned above. The response said that the review would map existing support and identify areas where further resourcing is needed.

9. Can you provide an update on the areas identified as needing further resource, and what funding will be made available to support these.

### **Recommendation 24 - Implementation of Mind over Matter recommendations**

On suicide specifically, HSCS Committee recommended that the Mind over Matter recommendation re. guidance for schools on talking about suicide and self-harm (Mind over Matter recommendation 16) should be taken forward as an immediate priority. Guidance was issued to schools in September 2019. CYPE Committee has called on the Ministers for Health and Education to ensure the guidance is effectively implemented. The guidance was welcomed by respondents to our follow up consultation, although it was suggested that suicide/self-harm prevention should be more explicitly covered in the new curriculum.

10. Can you provide an update on:
  - implementation of the guidance on talking about suicide and self-harm in schools;
  - whether will additional steps will be taken to ensure all schools in Wales are supported with clear guidance about action to take and communication with pupils and families following the death of a pupil by suicide, and;
  - how suicide prevention in schools will be supported through the new curriculum.

### **Recommendation 31 - Funding for suicide prevention**

In February 2019, the Welsh Government announced an additional £500,000 each year for suicide prevention. In your letter to the Committee of 22 May 2019, you provided some further detail about the use of this funding, including the recruitment of one national and three regional suicide prevention coordinators. Although there was limited



comment re. the additional funding in our follow up consultation responses, it was suggested that this money won't reach the ground where implementation actually happens.

11. Does the Welsh Government have a clear idea of the resources needed to fully implement the Talk to me 2 strategy across Wales, and will further, specific funding for suicide prevention be identified (for example in the 2012-21 budget round)?

It would be helpful if you could let us have your response by 31 January 2020.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dai Lloyd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dr Dai Lloyd AM  
**Chair, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee**

