

Jayne Bryant MS

Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

John Griffiths MS

Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

15 July 2022

Dear Jayne, Jenny and John

Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into mental health inequalities

Further to my [letter of 6 June 2022](#), I am writing to provide a further update on the Health and Social Care Committee's [inquiry into mental health inequalities](#).

I enclose for your information summaries of the issues emerging from our [discussions](#) with people with lived experience of neurodiversity, and our [visits](#) to EYST Cymru and Barnardo's Cymru's Beyond the Blue project. These notes have been published on the inquiry webpage. I also enclose in confidence for your information a copy of the Senedd Research briefing prepared for our recent oral evidence session on 6 July.

Yours sincerely



Russell George MS

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into mental health inequalities: update

Background

The [Health and Social Care Committee](#) launched an [inquiry into mental health inequalities](#) in January 2022. The terms of reference were very broad, seeking to identify which groups were most likely to experience mental health inequalities, what barriers they face, whether Welsh Government policy does enough to recognise and address these groups' needs, and what more needs to be done.

Drawing on the evidence we received in [writing](#), through [focus groups](#) and during initial [oral evidence sessions](#), in March 2022 we decided to focus on four emerging themes: mental health and society; community solutions; the impact of mental health inequalities on people with neurodiverse conditions; and the role of the healthcare and wider workforce.

During the summer term we have taken oral evidence from stakeholders ([4 May](#), [19 May](#), [8 June](#) and [6 July](#)), held a [private informal stakeholder event](#) on the experience of mental health inequalities of people with neurodiverse conditions and their families or carers, and [visited](#) projects and services working in their communities to support people from ethnic minority communities, and children, young people and their families.

Next steps

During the summer recess, the Citizen Engagement team will hold **focus groups with frontline health staff** to discuss: how they meet the mental health needs of diverse communities; whether staff feel equipped to recognise and meet diverse needs; what barriers may inhibit more effective working; the role of prevention and the promotion of good mental health; and the mental health and wellbeing needs of the workforce itself. A summary of the findings will be published in the autumn.

We have established an **online advisory group**, comprising people with a range of different lived experiences. The group will be asked to provide its views on emerging issues at key milestones in the inquiry. We will also be asking members of the **Welsh Youth Parliament** to share their views on emerging issues.

All of the evidence we gather throughout the inquiry, including the written update we have sought jointly with the CYPE Committee on progress made on key recommendations made by Fifth Senedd committees in respect of mental health, will inform an **oral evidence session with the Welsh Government** to be held in the autumn term.