


Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/05257/19

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Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April to the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Petitions Committee - P- 05-882 Transforming the response for older people experiencing domestic abuse – a call for action. This has been passed to me as domestic abuse falls within my portfolio. I have outlined my views below to assist in your formal consideration of this petition.

The Welsh Government is committed to tackling all forms of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to supporting all victims of domestic abuse. We all have the right to live a life free from abuse of any kind and our age or situation should not have any effect on this right. Our Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 Act acknowledges that victims can be from across the whole spectrum of society, including older people, all ethnicities, religions and beliefs and disabled people. Work to implement the Act is inclusive of the experience of all groups.

Wales has a long history of working with and for older people from the introduction of the first Strategy for Older People in Wales in 2003, to establishing the world's first Older People's Commissioner in 2008. We recognise and value the many and varied contributions that older people make to creating vibrant and supportive communities.

We worked with the Older People's Commissioner to develop "*Information and Guidance on Domestic Abuse: Safeguarding Older People in Wales*," which was published in June 2017. This provides practical advice to staff and managers on recognising and understanding the

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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.

context in which abuse of older people takes place. The guidance also raises awareness and understanding of some of the specific issues and risks faced by older people who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Implementation of the National Training Framework takes account of the needs of diverse groups. Part of this work includes the roll out of "Ask and Act" which seeks to up-skill key public service workers to undertake targeted enquiry to identify abuse. In doing so, we aim to create a multitude of new avenues through which victims of abuse can disclose their experience and get the help they need.

The experience of older people and disabled people has been taken into account in our national multi media communications work; notably through our current campaign which is focused on Control and Diverse Groups. This campaign was developed utilising stakeholder and survivor insight and reflects many of the points raised via this petition.

As part of our commitment to ensuring that the voices and experiences of survivors inform and shape the work we do, we are piloting a project to increase our understanding of how best to enable diverse groups of survivors to participate in a national engagement framework. This work is seeking to engage with those survivors we have been unable to reach through previous engagement activities and consultation, including older people. Over coming months we will be engaging with stakeholders and survivors, including with older people groups, to ensure their voices and experiences can inform the findings and recommendations of this work.

Our guidance for Commissioning of Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Services promotes high quality collaborative commissioning that delivers more consistent and effective services to prevent VAWDASV and protect and support all victims of VAWDASV across Wales. This supports our commitment to ensuring that no matter where a victim lives, whatever their age or circumstances, there is a strong public and specialist service ready to help.

In December 2018, we launched our perpetrator service standards which recognise that given the complexity of VAWDASV, a suite of services is likely to be required to address the risks and needs of VAWDASV perpetrators in Wales, with a recommendation that commissioners and services should be mindful that no single programme will be suitable for all VAWDASV perpetrators.

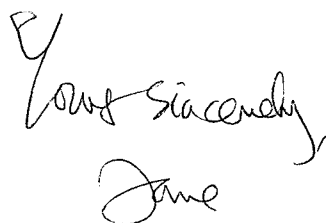
Welsh Government is currently developing a new Strategy for an Ageing Society that is rooted in the principle of co production and is placing older people at the forefront of Welsh Government policy making. The strategy adopts a rights based approach that promotes equality, social justice and empowerment across a range of policy areas.

Since June 2018, a considerable amount of engagement work has been carried out to inform the development of the Strategy. This has included the creation of five working groups to focus on transport; housing; participation, planning for the future and making rights real for older people. A total of 17 stakeholder meetings have taken place and older people participated in every meeting.

Alongside the work to develop a Strategy for an Ageing Society, we are also reviewing our current practices for engagement with older people. This review aims to ensure that we have robust mechanisms in place that enable us to reach and engage with a more diverse range of older people.

We have consulted on our new 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living' Framework and are currently analysing responses. The Framework is rooted in the Social Model of Disability and was developed through engagement with disabled people and under the guidance of the Independent Living Steering Group. It is accompanied by an action plan to tackle some of the key barriers identified by disabled people themselves, including transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places.

The consultation responses, including references to the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCPRD) will inform further work on the Framework and Action Plan before the final versions are published. We will also be strengthening some key sections of the action plan such as developing actions to support disabled people experiencing VAWDASV in Wales. We envisage that the final version will be published in Summer 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yours sincerely Jane'.

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