

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-630
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01903/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

15 July 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June about petition P-04-630 concerning the monitoring and restriction of the use of social media (including Facebook) among looked after children, in which you shared the petitioner's further comments.

I understand Christine Williams' concerns. Protecting looked after children and young people and improving their outcomes is a priority of mine. It is clear the internet through social media channels plays an important part in how young people interact and keep in touch with friends and family. This can be particularly beneficial for looked after children and young people as a way of maintaining contact with people they have become close to through placements or foster care, and this contact, where safe, should be supported. With these benefits, however, come challenges which should not be ignored. This is the same for all children but it is clear those who are vulnerable are more at risk. There are additional issues for looked after children that need to be continually considered, for example, contact with people who may pose a risk to them.

While it may be tempting to restrict or forbid internet use, this would be difficult to enforce. The internet and mobile devices are too widespread and accessible. Instead the Welsh Government supports parents and carers in taking a risk management approach. When managing risks associated with internet use it is important not to disadvantage looked after children and ensure, where possible, they are afforded the same opportunities as other children. We support a number of interventions which promote this approach including, as mentioned previously, work underway with South West Grid for Learning. Further to my last letter I can confirm tailored e-safety training is now available for social workers through the South West Grid for Learning. Officials are now considering how this could be promoted and facilitated in Wales.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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If Christine Williams would like to discuss this issue further, my officials Penny Hall (disability, children and family justice) and Andrew Wood (e-safety) would be happy to meet with her. To arrange a meeting please contact Sue Ellis 029 2080 1439 or Susan.Ellis1@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Mark".

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

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