

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-04-492
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/03311/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
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7 December 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 16 November about the work of the ASD diagnosis task and finish group and seeking my views on correspondence you have received from Professor Trevor Purt, the then chief executive, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

The ASD diagnosis task and finish group was established in March 2015 to consider diagnostic services for children and adults. To support its work, the ASD national lead and development team have engaged in a range of consultation activities reaching over 1000 parents, carers and individuals who shared their views with us via surveys and workshops. The group has met four times to date and is due to provide me with advice by next February.

The terms of reference of this group have, however, recently changed as a result of the launch of the Together for Children and Young People programme (T4CYP). One of the specific work streams being taken forward under this programme is consideration of how best to meet the needs of those with neurodevelopmental issues and learning disabilities in a timely manner with the appropriate level of input from specialist Children and Mental Health Services (CAMHS). To support this work stream, I have announced additional recurrent funding of £2 million. A national steering group has also been established to provide strategic leadership and support for the delivery of high-quality services and to agree the priorities for a three-year WLGA/Public Health Wales 1000 lives improvement programme.

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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.

The remit of the group is to:

- Achieve a better understanding of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)/ Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) across all agencies.
- Agree bespoke care pathways for individuals with ADHD/ASD.
- Give timely access to those needing specialist assessment and treatment services.
- Draw together the skills of mental health, paediatrics, therapists and learning disability services.

In order to avoid duplication, the original ASD diagnosis task and finish group will now focus on adult assessment and diagnosis only. However, there will be some common membership across both groups to ensure the work is aligned and linked to the refresh of our autism strategy.

I have considered the letter from Professor Purt written in May this year. The issues raised are now being addressed through the national neurodevelopmental steering group. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) is represented on this group. I note the comments about the role of speech and language therapy, and this is being addressed by the group, as part of its consideration of the role of therapists. In addition, there is significant support going in to help BCUHB itself, which is in special measures, including appointing a new director of mental health services who will report directly to the chief executive; an experienced mental health divisional lead nurse joining the improvement team as the senior mental health and learning disability nurse; and continued support from the associated director of the Royal College of Nursing in Wales who will now focus on ensuring the health board keeps pace with the Wales-wide child and adolescent mental health services improvement programme.

Please find more detailed information about the T4CYP programme and its work streams in the attached annex.

Best wishes,



Mark Drakeford AC / AM

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Together for Children and Young People programme (T4CYP)

In February 2015, the Together for Children and Young People programme (T4CYP) was launched and informed a work-plan of activity to bring about service change and reconfiguration. The Welsh Government is working with the internationally renowned child psychiatrist Professor Dame Sue Bailey, who is providing external advice and scrutiny to the NHS as it seeks to embed cultural and organisational change within CAMHS and its partners. A number of specific work-streams are being taken forward including:

- Specialist CAMHS – this work-stream will develop a delivery and quality framework for specialist CAMHS to achieve consistent outcomes across Wales. It will be based on the Choice and Partnership Approach, a clinical system widely adopted by CAMHS services. The framework will be implemented in 2016.
- Early years and the wellbeing of children and young people –this work-stream will consider building early years resilience.
- Early intervention and enhanced support – this group will consider the concept of early intervention for a broad audience, exploring its application in supporting young people's mental health.
- The needs of those with neurodevelopmental issues and learning It will link with work to refresh our autism strategy and the ASD Diagnosis task and finish group.

Supporting these work streams, I announced additional recurrent funding of £7.65m for CAHMS including funding of £2m to support neurodevelopmental services for children.

The priority for the current financial year is to improve CAMHS waiting times and access ensuring targets for children and young people with mental illness are equitable with those required for adults. Initial proposals submitted by health boards were considered by my officials following external scrutiny and advice. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has received its full share of £1.6million which will be used to support neurodevelopmental services; improve access to local primary mental health support services; and support early intervention in psychosis and CAMHS specialist service and crisis intervention.