

To: Janet Finch
Saunders, AM

Chair of the Petitions
Committee

Via email only

15 January 2020

Dear Chair,

Re: P-05-924 Ensure that every school in Wales has Wellbeing Ambassadors

I write in relation to the above petition, to express my support for peer-led, peer-supported mental health initiatives in schools.

The evidence from my [2019 report on cyber-bullying](#) tells us that the children and young people and teachers we spoke to rated peer-led, peer-supported initiatives as highly effective in tackling bullying. Young people also spoke about peer mentoring and support as one of their top solutions to bullying.

This reinforces evidence from the field of developmental science, which has highlighted that school based interventions often fail because they 'imply that adolescents require adult expertise and are unable to make the right choices on their own.'¹ Research suggests that promising approaches to preventing bullying and supporting wellbeing take into account young people's wish to feel respected and accorded status, which is linked with their neurobiological development.²

I particularly value this petition as it has stemmed directly from the involvement of children and young people, through their Senedd Ysgol, and reflects the importance that children and young people and their parents place on tackling bullying. This was also reflected in the results of our survey of over 10,000 children and young people, [Beth Nawr](#), which showed that tackling bullying is a key priority for them.

¹ *Dahl, R.E., Nicholas B. Allen, Linda Wilbrecht & Ahna Ballonoff Suleiman, Importance of investing in adolescence from a developmental science perspective. Nature 25770 (2018)*

² *Yeager, D. S., Dahl, R. E. & Dweck, C. S. Why interventions to influence adolescent behavior often fail but could succeed. Perspect. Psychol. Sci. 13, 101—122 (2018)*



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The importance of peer support has been highlighted by the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee in their Mind over Matter Report. Peer support and peer mentoring is also a feature of the whole-school approach draft framework.

Given that the value of peer-led, peer supported well-being initiatives are recognised by both the Welsh Government and the Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee, I hope that this petition can be brought to the attention of both as we approach the 2 year anniversary of the Committee's Mind over Matter Report.

Yours sincerely,



Sally

Sally Holland
Comisiynydd Plant Cymru
Children's Commissioner for Wales

