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**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**  
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

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**National Assembly for Wales**  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Vaughan Gething AM  
Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh Government

16 January 2019

Dear Vaughan,

**Perinatal mental health in Wales: follow up scrutiny**

Thank you for attending the Committee's session on 10 January to discuss the implementation of our perinatal mental health recommendations, published in October 2017.

The Committee welcomes the steps taken to establish a Managed Clinical Network for perinatal mental health, and the recent appointment of a clinical lead for that Network. We also welcome the ongoing work to strengthen the support available via community perinatal mental health teams.

Notwithstanding these advances, we were deeply concerned by the lack of progress in relation to the establishment of mother and baby unit provision in Wales. It is now 15 months since we called for urgent action in this area, and over 18 months since both the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) and the Welsh Government sought to assure the Committee that a shortlist of options was under consideration and decisions on a way forward imminent. While we recognise the complexities of balancing the level of demand with the maintenance of adequate levels of specialist support, it is not acceptable that we are still without adequate provision for those mothers and babies most severely affected by perinatal mental ill health.

We were also concerned to learn that while some progress has been made in relation to the collection of perinatal mental health data, full and comprehensive data sets will not be available until 2022. Given the importance of using data to understand demand and service performance, we believe this work needs to be accelerated as a matter of priority. Without this information, we believe challenges relating to designing adequate service provision



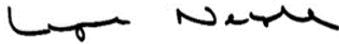
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will remain difficult to overcome. Despite stated aspirations to achieve parity between mental and physical health, we are sceptical that a wait of this length for the development of data sets relating to physical ill health would be acceptable.

We welcome your offer of six-monthly updates on progress in relation to the implementation of our recommendations. However, to enable us to maintain adequate, robust and fair scrutiny of your actions in this area, we request that you set out at this stage an indication of the milestones you expect to reach, on a six monthly basis, between now and the end of this Assembly. We further welcome your offer to provide the first of these updates at the end of this financial year, mapping provision and demand for services in different settings. On receipt of this update we will consider whether we need to undertake additional follow-up work, including whether drawing progress to the Assembly's attention in a Plenary statement will be necessary.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AM**  
**Chair**

