Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA-(P)VG/2495/18

Assembly Members

2 August 2018

Dear colleague,

Enhanced Harm Reduction Centres (also known as Medically Supervised Injecting Centres)

During Business Questions on 19th June, I agreed to provide Assembly Members with clarification on the Welsh Government position in relation to the development of Enhanced Harm Reduction Centres (EHRCs) in Wales. I know that Bethan Sayed AM also raised this issue at Plenary on the 17th July.

The Welsh Government's Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse (APoSM) has published a report on 'Enhanced Harm Reduction Centres' which provides an overview of the current evidence that is available on EHRCs. I responded to APoSM acknowledging the report and a statement was also published alongside the report clarifying the Welsh Governments legal position.

The report concludes with one recommendation that states APoSM cannot, based on the evidence available, currently recommend that EHRCs are implemented in Wales. The report states that further work needs to be undertaken in this area to determine the feasibility of EHRCs in Wales.

There is currently an external group, made up of multi-agency members, who are scoping new approaches to drugs and, as part of this, are looking at EHRCs and the feasibility of one being set up in Wales. I understand that APoSM are aware of this work and monitoring developments.

The APoSM report can be accessed on the Welsh Government website at the following link: https://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/report-on-enhanced-harm-reduction-centres.pdf

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

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.

However, as the statement on the Welsh Government's web-site highlights, our position is this is not a straightforward issue and there are significant concerns about the compatibility of EHRCs with current criminal law relating to the misuse of drugs. The law in this area is a matter for the UK Government and its enforcement is a matter for the police.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
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Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services