

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Members of the Strengthening and Advancing
Equality and Human Rights Steering Group

26 March 2020

Dear Steering Group Member,

In these uncertain and unprecedented times, I want to thank you for all you are doing to address the challenges we are facing in halting the spread of Covid-19 and the advice and support you provide to our communities.

Thank you very much for all you have done as Steering Group members and representatives from the private and third sectors in taking swift and pro-active steps to ensure that Governmental and Public Health advice is adhered to.

I hugely value the support and guidance the Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Right Group provides to Welsh Government. This strong relationship will continue to serve us and our communities well in the coming weeks and months. At our first Steering Group meeting on 17 July 2019 we agreed this group would be fleet of foot in identifying and responding to issues affecting people with protected characteristics and now is the optimal time to put this in practice. My officials are in contact with you and there are mechanisms in place to capture information and emerging issues you share with them. These will then be considered in the decisions and actions being taken by Welsh Government. It is also very helpful to be aware of any action being undertaken or guidance being given by your organisations and I and my officials appreciate the information you have shared so far. By ensuring good communication continues we will be able to share and disseminate information and advice quickly.

I recognise in these difficult times, people will be feeling very worried about a number of different aspects of the impact of this virus and many will be feeling particularly vulnerable. We have been mobilising and reprioritising resources to respond quickly and appropriately to support our communities and, in particular, to those who need it most.

No person should have to tolerate prejudice or hate crime and I am saddened to hear of incidents being on the increase in recent weeks. I encourage community members to report

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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.

any incidents. If anyone in the community witnesses, or are made aware of, any threatening behaviour or hate crime incidents, they can report these by contacting the police or the National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre run by Victim Support.

Victim Support has specially trained staff and volunteers who can provide tailored support for people who have experienced incidence of hate. They can be contacted by phone or by e-mail. The service is free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The service can be contacted by phone: 0300 3031 982 or by e-mail: Hate.CrimeWales@victimsupport.org.uk. Or <https://www.reportheate.victimsupport.org.uk/>

The Welsh Government is taking all possible steps to prepare Wales for Covid 19 – we are working with the three other Government administrations across the UK, with public services, private and third sectors across Wales, to plan the response and support around its impact. The NHS in Wales is working hard and preparing to look after and treat people who become seriously unwell as a result of this virus.

For latest advice and guidance, please refer to the Public Health Wales website <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>;

To be kept informed of Welsh Government developments and advice you can visit our dedicated webpage at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>.

For anyone wishing to volunteer to offer any support in any capacity during this time, they could either contact their local Community Voluntary Council or register on the Volunteering Wales portal - <https://volunteering-wales.net> (this site now includes a category for Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and search term which people can use).

If individuals need additional support, from volunteering services, for themselves, they can contact the Volunteer Centres in their area directly. Contact details are at: <https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>

The Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights Steering Group plays an essential part in ensuring that we are able to convey accurate messaging to all of our communities across Wales. The Steering Group has a crucial role in communicating vital information to safeguard and promote equality and human rights. I thank all members again for your support in such unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the first letter 'J'.

Jane Hutt AC/AM

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