

PE1548/LL

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 15 November 2017

Thank you for your letter of 29 September 2017 regarding the above petition. You asked for my views on the suggestion that the 'Holding Safely' document might be a more appropriate place for the draft guidance on de-escalation and physical intervention, and whether this would be considered as part of a review of 'Holding Safely'.

In 2004 SIRCC (Scottish institute for residential child care) were asked by the Scottish Executive to produce guidance on restraining children and young people in residential child care establishments. They subsequently produced 'Holding Safely' guidance. The Holding Safely guidance was originally specifically targeted at the residential child care sector, and not at schools.

In 2008 (Who cares? Scotland) received funding from the Scottish Government for the project *This isn't the road I want to go down* designed to achieve better outcomes for young people in secure accommodation. The main aim of the project initially was to engage and build relationships however additional findings contained a lot of information about the way young people were being held.

In 2013 there was additional guidance designed to complement Holding Safely, the purpose of this additional guidance was to ensure that the key principles and practice of Holding Safely were adopted in all residential child care establishments across Scotland. This included secure care and establishments which services for children affected by a disability.

On seeking views from stakeholders, I understand that the 'Holding Safely' guidance is still universally used by the sector and this is evidenced by it being frequently downloaded from the CELCIS website. Holding Safely is but one part of a wider trauma-informed approach to the provision of care within the residential child care setting. Alongside this, practitioners use The Sanctuary Model and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy. These approaches help to create a culture where safe holds are far less frequent, however a child might nevertheless need physical support to regain their control, which Holding Safely speaks to.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Scottish Government published its refreshed national guidance, Included Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions on 19 June 2017. This refreshed guidance includes information and advice for Education Authorities on De-escalation and Physical Intervention. A copy of the Guidance can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/06/8877>.