

**PE1548/OO**

Petitioner submission of 17 May 2018

Many thanks to the Deputy First Minister for his response. I am grateful for his continued support and commitment that he has made to the committee if the guidance is not effective, he will report back to the committee and consider whether a greater obligation would be necessary to ensure that the guidance is put into practice.

We are still waiting on the new Westminster Government Guidance from The Dept of Health and Department of Education on the use of restraint and seclusion in England being published after its consultation period. As soon as it has been published I will forward a copy to the committee.

The committee may be interested to know that in a freedom of information request sent to all 32 Scottish Councils to ask about the number of times restraint has been used on children in schools, so far, around a dozen councils have reported back and we have some 4000 restraints recorded. This shows that restraint is very much not being used as a last resort and is still a daily occurrence.

I am now part of the UK's restraint Reduction Network (RRN) supporting the development of the RRN Training Standards. The RRN Training Standards will provide quality standards for training in restrictive practices and use of force. They will be complimented by guidance for service providers. The standards are informed by research, best practice and guidance and will help ensure the safe use, reduction of use and best interest decision making. I am sure the RRN would be delighted to assist The Deputy First Minister to ensure the focus is on restraint reduction promoting the use of Positive Behaviour Support going forward.

In March, I was a keynote speaker at the RRN International Conference in Birmingham. I was honoured to be asked to present an award to a Calthorpe Academy for "Reducing Reliance on Restrictive Practice in Schools" Calthorpe had realised through strict recording and monitoring that their reliance on the use of restraint and seclusion had risen very sharply. After implementing a strong PBS (Positive Behaviour Support) training programme for all staff, Calthorpe Academy had an overall 85% reduction in their use of restrictive practises within a year. Now, they report almost zero use of restraint. This shows how much can be done when the right training and support is given to staff in schools.

Meanwhile, Kate Sanger co-creator of the communication passport and I have been working hard in delivering training workshops to families and professionals combining the use of Positive Behaviour Support with the Communication Passport, and this is going well.

We have our next workshop for families in Inverness next weekend.

I will continue to collect the stories from families and welcome the Children's Commissioner for Scotland's news that he is to launch a formal investigation into the use of restraint and seclusion in schools. I know that the commitment of the petitions

committee and the other organisations supporting us has gone a long way to getting this far, and I am extremely grateful for this.

I am happy to keep the petitions committee informed and would ask that the petition remains open until we have some kind of indication from Mr Swinney next year as to whether we will need to resort to statutory measures.

Thank you once again for your support.