



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Kirsty Williams MS  
Minister for Education  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

14 January 2021

Dear Minister,

**Re: Inclusion of CPR in Curriculum for Wales**

We are writing to you to urge the Welsh Government to include the teaching of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and other essential lifesaving skills in the new Curriculum for Wales. This follows a significant amount of work on this issue from Suzy Davies MS, and a recent constituency surgery meeting between Rob Roberts MP and the family and friends of Janene Maguire following their own campaign.

Janene Maguire was a loving wife and mother of three children, based in Gwernymynydd, Mold, who unexpectedly passed away after collapsing and having a cardiac arrest in February 2000. Sadly, nearly two decades later, Cara, one of Janene's daughter's, suffered from the same condition which caused her to have a sudden cardiac arrest in August 2020 – her heart stopped beating for more than 20 minutes. Luckily, Cara was with her friend, Michael, a former soldier trained in first aid, who was able to perform CPR until paramedics arrived – essentially saving her life. Without the knowledge of this life saving skill, it is likely that Cara would not be here today. Clearly not everyone is going to be fortunate enough to have served in the forces to learn these vital skills, so it is imperative that more people are taught CPR if we want to help save more lives like Cara's.

Consequently, Welsh Conservative colleagues both in Westminster and the Senedd are calling for CPR and other lifesaving skills such as the use and purpose of defibrillators to be included in the new Curriculum for Wales, making it compulsory for all secondary schools to teach these essential skills, just as it is in England and Scotland. It is simply not acceptable that children in Wales are being deprived of the opportunity to learn such vital skills which will equip them with the confidence and knowledge to assist in future medical emergencies.

Sadly, there are around 30,000 "out of hospital" cardiac arrests each year across the UK, with fewer than 1 in 10 of those surviving. Yet the outcome of these distressing situations can be changed for the better, with evidence suggesting that if all young people are trained with lifesaving CPR skills, nearly 1 in 4 could survive. In other countries where CPR has been taught in schools for many years, cardiac arrest survival rates are more than double those of the UK – with Norway's survival rates being as high as 25%. This highlights that investing in the teaching of these skills will directly help save lives and ensure that there is not a disparity in the survival rate of out of hospital cardiac arrests between Wales and the rest of the UK.



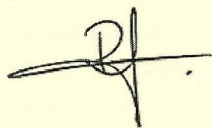
In England, the UK Government have recognised the need and importance of teaching such skills and have included the teaching of essential first aid skills such as CPR, basic treatment for common injuries and the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed, in the National Curriculum as part of Health Education. This curriculum change came into effect from September 2020 meaning it is now compulsory for all secondary schools in England to cover these topics. Similarly, in Scotland, every Scottish local authority has committed to ensuring CPR is taught in all secondary schools. This further emphasises that Wales is falling behind other nations in the UK in delivering quality education that will give our children and young people the necessary skills to face the real world.

With the new Curriculum for Wales currently being developed and prepared to be implemented in schools from September 2022, now is the ideal time to implement this change into the curriculum and require secondary schools in Wales to teach CPR training. As schools will inevitably be preparing and designing their new lessons plans and schemes of work now, it will give them enough time to ensure they have the right training and resources to be able to teach these skills correctly and consistently. In a curriculum which aspires to create 'ambitious, capable learners' who are 'ready to play a full part in life' and be 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales', surely there is no greater skill to include and learn than how to save a life.

While the Maguire family's story is deeply harrowing, it is sadly not unique and many families across Wales will have faced similar pain and loss caused by cardiac arrest. Consequently, calls to include CPR training and other lifesaving skills in the Welsh curriculum are not new. We commend the work of British Heart Foundation Cymru (BHF), the British Red Cross and St John Cymru in also campaigning for CPR to be taught in all schools so pupils in Wales have the same chance to learn lifesaving skills as their peers in other parts of the UK. While BHF have helped more than 100,000 secondary school students in Wales learn CPR through their 'Call Push Rescue' kits since 2014, it is now time to make sure every student in Wales can benefit from the teaching of first aid skills.

In these challenging times, we have a responsibility more than ever to make sure our children are getting the education they deserve. To have an education which is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and which gives our children the best chance of being well rounded citizens, it needs to include the teaching of CPR and other life savings skills. We strongly urge the Welsh Government to consider the inclusion of such skills in the new Curriculum for Wales as simply, there is no excuse for not equipping future generations in Wales with the skills to potentially save someone's life.

Yours



**Rob Roberts, MP for Delyn**

Sarah Atherton MP  
Simon Baynes MP  
Angela Burns MS  
Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP  
Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP  
Virginia Crosbie MP  
Andrew RT Davies CBE MS  
Dr James Davies MP  
Paul Davies MS  
Suzy Davies MS

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Russell George MS  
Mark Isherwood MS  
Rt Hon David Jones MP  
Laura Anne Jones MS  
Darren Millar MS  
Robin Millar MP  
Dr Jamie Wallis MP  
Craig Williams MP