# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Summary of Responses: Consultation on the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Draft Statutory Guidance** |
| **DATE**  | **29 September 2023** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services**  |

Today, I am publishing [a summary of responses for the public consultation on the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Draft Statutory Guidance in Wales](https://www.gov.wales/single-unified-safeguarding-review-statutory-guidance).

Whenever any life is lost or is significantly impacted through abuse, neglect or violence, as public agencies, we need to work together to identify what more could have been done to prevent such a tragic incident occurring and what could be done differently in the future.

Historically, devolved and non-devolved agencies have discharged their individual responsibilities of reviewing such tragedies, all of which did so using different processes, procedures, legislation, and guidance. These included Adult and Child Practice Reviews, Mental Health Homicide Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews. Welsh Government commissioned an academic review and a practitioners’ review to fully understand the complexities of review processes in Wales. Following these reviews, recommendations were submitted and agreed by Ministers and the Single Unified Safeguarding Review project commenced in December 2019.

All partners wanted to understand how these systems could be improved to eliminate the need for families to take part in an onerous and traumatising cycle of information-giving and waiting for the conclusions of multiple reviews. The shared outcome was to ensure this important information was analysed, it informed and improved practice to prevent harm and improve our public services in Wales.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, has also introduced Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews for England and Wales with pilots currently underway in Birmingham, London, and South Wales. The Welsh Government and Home Office have agreed that the Single Unified Safeguarding Review will be the vehicle to undertake such reviews during the pilot phase (and any subsequent implementation following evaluation).

Cardiff University, as part of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review project, has developed the Wales Safeguarding Repository which will hold all historical and current reviews. Using computer science, social science and machine learning technologies, the repository will provide unique pan-Wales thematic oversight and learning. The Single Unified Safeguarding Review Coordination Hub, working with Regional Safeguarding Boards will facilitate training and local, regional, national, and international learning. Together these systems will support any changes to practices, processes and cultures which will help prevent future harm.

The Single Unified Safeguarding Review is a unique and groundbreaking example of how, through collaboration and co-production across political, organisational, and geographical boundaries, we have tackled a complex shared problem and delivered a simpler shared solution. Over 190 stakeholders have been engaged in the design and delivery of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review, all of whom have put the person, families, and communities at the heart of this change in approach.

Following a pre-consultation stage, Welsh Government commenced a 14-week formal public consultation process for the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Statutory Draft Guidance on 6 March 2023, which concluded on the 9 June 2023. During that period, over 315 individuals were addressed in various forums from a wide spectrum of agencies across Wales and England.

A total of 48 responses were received during the public consultation period. All those responses have been analysed, carefully considered, and used to inform the Summary of Responses.

The majority of responses were supportive of the ethos of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review and provided valuable feedback, which will be utilised to amend and enhance our work. Key themes emerged from the consultation exercise including capacity and funding, victim and family voice, training, information sharing, partnerships, learning, governance and structure of guidance. All of these themes will be considered further and addressed either through further refinement of the statutory guidance, through the work of the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Coordination Hub or at the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Ministerial Board.

I would like to personally thank everyone who has responded to the public consultation and attended the engagement events. The Single Unified Safeguarding Review will help to ensure where any life is lost, or an individual is seriously harmed we do everything we possibly can to identify lessons and ensure they are implemented swiftly and consistently across Wales to safeguard our communities.