



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Safeguarding and Protecting Children in NHS Wales**

DATE **3 September 2012**

BY **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Health and Social Services**

I would like to update Members on Safeguarding and Protecting Children in NHS Wales.

This is a high priority for the Welsh Government and as such, I have undertaken to issue an annual statement. Safeguarding and Protecting Children in NHS Wales must remain visibly high on all our agendas. I am pleased that whilst progress has been made, inevitably there is more to do and, of course, we can never be complacent. This is the first of my annual statements to the National Assembly on Safeguarding and Protecting children in NHS Wales.

The review of the structures, functions, accountabilities and interfaces of the Public Health Wales' Safeguarding Children Service has been completed.

A stakeholder event was organised for May 2012 to assist in the work of ensuring the programme level agreement for Public Health Wales' Safeguarding Children Service reflects the ongoing role it has in supporting child safeguarding and protection activity in NHS Wales. The programme level agreement is currently being reviewed. This event also established draft terms of reference for the new NHS Wales Child Safeguarding Network. It is anticipated the Network will help ensure NHS Wales is a safe organisation for children, provide a vital bridge between strategies and arrangements at local level and national policy developments and develop the champion role and promote engagement among key players. The work of the NHS Wales Child Safeguarding Network includes:

- Clarifying the nature, roles and responsibilities of Designated and Named Professionals consequent to the reorganisation and reform of the NHS in Wales.
- Evaluation of the efficiency and efficacy of child protection and safeguarding arrangements and interventions in NHS Wales.
- Enabling best practice sharing between Local Health Boards and Trusts and other organisations.

There is now a process in place to ensure NHS Board members have received the appropriate child protection and safeguarding training. Safeguarding forms part of the Welsh Government's performance monitoring processes and is now a substantive item on the Joint Executive Team meeting agenda.

My officials have established an expert reference group that has reviewed arrangements across Wales for the training of NHS employed staff, independent contractors, volunteers and Third Sector organisations. The outcome of this work will be a recommended standard framework for safeguarding children training across NHS Wales that identifies the level of knowledge and skill for each professional role, including senior managers and medical staff. This will ensure there is a consistent approach across Wales. My officials are consulting with relevant Government departments on the outputs from the expert reference group.

We have always been absolutely clear safeguarding is everyone's business and the NHS has a key role in these arrangements alongside other partners. The Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services has already made Written Statements to the Assembly on the developing approach to safeguarding and protecting people in Wales to be taken forward in our Social Services (Wales) Bill. The Independent Commission, the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Group, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales have all reported there are sound systems in place to protect people at risk, but improvements can be made and we need to move forward and deliver on our commitment to strengthen safeguarding and protection arrangements in Wales.

The consultation on the provisions in the Social Services (Wales) Bill ended recently and our arrangements for safeguarding and protection are a key dimension of that. The Welsh Government must ensure a robust and coherent statutory framework exists to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk. We will set a strong and clear direction of travel to our stakeholders to enable this to happen. Our commitment to establish a National Independent Safeguarding Board and new Safeguarding Boards will help support an over-arching framework to improve safeguarding and protection arrangements and provide greater consistency of practice between statutory agencies and practitioners, including those within the NHS.

We recognise there is much work to do. In advance of the legislation being put in place, the Deputy Minister has asked Local Safeguarding Children Boards to begin planning now for the change by adopting a more collaborative model of working which is consistent with the arrangements being put in place for the Public Service Delivery footprint. Progress reports have been received from all Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the information shows constructive progress has been made. We will continue to engage constructively with key stakeholders, including the NHS,

on the development of the proposals to be taken forward through this important legislation.

Consultation on a new Child Practice Review framework to replace Serious Case Reviews has been completed. The new framework will create a more effective system of review and improve the culture of learning from child protection cases to support inter-agency practice. The new framework is being developed with close involvement from practitioners, and pilots have been running across Wales, some led by the NHS, to test out the proposals. Regulations to support the new framework have been made and arrangements to support its implementation are being considered. Officials have written to Local Safeguarding Children Boards and key statutory agencies to inform them that we intend to introduce the new framework in early 2013.

The Welsh Government has consulted the General Practitioner National Speciality Advisory Group and the General Practitioner Committee in the light of the new General Medical Council guidance on the responsibilities of all doctors in child safeguarding and have agreed a Primary Care Quality Assurance safeguarding framework for reporting via the All Wales NHS Clinical Network for Safeguarding.

The Sharing Personal Information Programme Board has agreed research should be undertaken to include specific consideration of information sharing within the safeguarding context. The use of the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) framework to develop Information Sharing Protocols in a safeguarding context will be evidenced and case studies reported to promote its implementation on an all Wales basis. Findings are due in March 2013.

Safeguarding and Protecting Children in NHS Wales remains a high priority for the Welsh Government and we will ensure it continues to play an absolutely vital role alongside other key agencies in ensuring children in Wales are appropriately safeguarded and protected.

This statement is being issued during recess to keep Assembly Members informed. Should Members require, I would be happy to make a further statement or answer questions on this statement when the Assembly returns.