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## **Public Health Wales Response**

# **Response to the Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse: health sector seminar 26 – 27 September 2017**

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**Date:** 3 August 2017

**Distribution:** Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse

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**1. Please outline the steps your organisation has taken since 2015 to prevent children from being sexually abused in healthcare settings**

Public Health Wales has limited contact with children that is specifically in healthcare settings. There is clinical contact in relation to Newborn Hearing Screening undertaken in either a Health Board setting or in the home and Diabetic Eye Screening is undertaken in outpatient facilities, GP surgeries and Resource Centres.

Public Health Wales also has teams which go into schools to provide services. e.g. Healthy Schools programme.

Public Health Wales has a Corporate Safeguarding Team that supports the organisation to discharge its safeguarding responsibilities, with a scheme of delegation to an Executive lead for safeguarding. There is a programme of training in place that includes CSE and CSA awareness which highlights the risk factors and indicators of both forms of this abuse.

The National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales) is part of Public Health Wales. The team provides strategic focus, professional leadership and expert advice to NHS Wales in order to promote the welfare and safeguarding of children, and vulnerable adults, working closely with the Chief Nursing Officer, Welsh Government and Health Boards and Trusts.

Public Health Wales has guidance on:

1. Safe recruitment practices including DBS Check Eligibility 2016.
2. Whistle-blowing (Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns 2015).
3. Safeguarding Training Strategy 2014 identifies training as mandatory for health staff.
4. A policy on the use of the Internet which includes accessing social media which allows staff reasonable personal use of internet services providing this is within the bounds of the law and decency. There is also a separate NHS Wales Social media Policy that is used by Public Health Wales.
5. Public Health Wales has a Putting Things Right- Handling Concerns, Complaints and Claims Policy (which is currently under review). However, it does not contain specifics in relation to children or young people.
6. Public Health Wales has Information Governance policies and procedures in place to ensure that it can comply with the requirements of the law. In the case of confidential personal information, data is dealt with in line with the seven Caldicott principles.
7. Public Health Wales does not currently have a policy for Managing celebrity and VIP Visits, Fundraising and charity governance or volunteers.

Health and Care Standards provide a tool for health organisations to self assess and includes specific sections on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Public Health Wales works to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008, for example, contributing to Professional Strategy meetings. These procedures are

currently being reviewed with contribution from the National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales).

**2. How well does the current legislative framework prevent the sexual abuse of children within healthcare settings?**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has introduced a strengthened *duty to report* on relevant partners including health. If partners determine that a child is experiencing, or at risk, of abuse or neglect then they **must** report it to the relevant Local Authority.

It would be useful to be able to evidence how well the current legislative framework prevents CSA in healthcare settings.

**3. To what extent do the sanctions available to regulatory bodies ensure that children receiving health care and treatment are protected from sexual abuse? This includes the regulators of both:**

**a) Organisations providing healthcare services;**

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) is the independent inspectorate and regulator of healthcare in Wales and historically has undertaken some specific reviews of Safeguarding arrangements in the NHS in Wales, with recommendations for Health Care providers to implement which were subsequently monitored.

**b) Professionals delivering care and treatment.**

Public Health Wales adopts a safe recruitment process by conducting pre-employment checks on all staff recruitment. Where staff will be working with vulnerable people and/or children then appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be made prior to appointment.

Professional codes of conduct and disciplinary processes are in place.

Sanctions may not be clear to regulatory bodies other than in relation to individual cases.

**4. Are health professionals and health sector leaders provided with adequate training, support and guidance on the issue?**

Safeguarding training is mandatory within Public Health Wales and the NHS in Wales the Safeguarding Training Strategy 2014, due for review 2017, outlines which level of safeguarding training, staff require appropriate to their role. The Training strategy is consistent with the Inter Collegiate Document Safeguarding Competences 2014. Managers have responsibility to evaluate the different roles

within their department to determine the level of safeguarding training that is appropriate to the role.

Safeguarding training is available through e-learning or face to face teaching in Public Health Wales depending on the specific roles and responsibilities. Not all of the current Board have received bespoke Safeguarding Training due to their recent appointments.

Public Health Wales are able to report that Level one training compliance was at 75% at the end of year 2016 - 2017.

**5. How effectively are organisations and people held to account for the effective prevention of child sexual abuse in healthcare settings?**

In Wales, Health and Care Standards are used by each Health Board and Trust as a self assessment tool to seek and provide assurance about the quality of services provided.

Healthcare Standard 2.7: Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults is about keeping people safe by actively keeping safeguarding concerns in mind. Services should be designed, developed and adapted to ensure that wherever a child or vulnerable adults comes into contact with health services (directly or indirectly) they receive safe and effective care; their health and welfare is enhanced and promoted and they are protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This consideration must be extended to families of service users in all healthcare settings.

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/governance-emanual/standard-2-7-safeguarding-children-and-s>

It would be useful for this standard to be reported on externally so that organisations and people are held to account for the effective prevention of child sexual abuse in healthcare settings.

**6. To what extent do the responsibilities of health sector organisations to work with partner agencies help to prevent child sexual abuse in healthcare settings?**

Health organisations work closely with partner agencies in line with Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The National Safeguarding Team (NHS Wales) provides independent advice to all Regional Safeguarding Children Boards in Wales.

When concerns are raised, the Local Authority should take the lead on any investigation under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008.

**7. What impact (if any) have reforms of the health sector in England and Wales over recent years had on the effective prevention of child sexual abuse in healthcare settings?**

Not aware of any evidence

**8. What do you see as being the major opportunities for organisations in the health sector to prevent the sexual abuse of children in healthcare settings?**

- a) New legislation in Wales has been introduced and is currently being embedded into practice.
- b) The All Wales Child Protection Procedures are currently being updated in line with the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014.
- c) The above aim to prevent children from being sexually abused in healthcare settings, but there is nothing specific to this issue and it would be an opportunity to see if further guidance would assist.
- d) Clarity for health organisations about Disclosure and Barring Service checks on 3 yearly basis.
- e) Safeguarding training standard in Wales to ensure staff are accessing training, for example 95% of staff have received training at the appropriate level for their role.
- f) Health regulatory bodies to monitor responses from health organisations to Healthcare Standard 2.7.
- g) National guidance addressing recommendations from Lampard report e.g., Managing celebrity and VIP visits.

**9. What needs to happen to ensure that organisations in the health sector best protect children receiving health care and treatment from being sexually abused?**

The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 is clear on when a concern reaches the threshold to make a referral, and on how organisations that work with children should report, record and handle an allegation. However the position is much less clear when a concern falls below that threshold. A suitable policy in relation to low level concerns could encourage a more open and transparent culture, enable organisations to identify concerning behaviour early, minimise the risk of abuse, and ensure that adults working in the organisation are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the organisation

**10. Please describe the whistle-blowing measures you have in place and how you assess their effectiveness.**

Public Health Wales has a Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns 2015 which covers whistle-blowing. The use of this policy is regularly monitored by the

Human Resource Department. It has not been invoked in recent times and therefore it is not possible to comment on its effectiveness.