

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant, MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

10 February 2022

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 12 January regarding the use of restraints on children and young people.

My office also received the “Hope not Handcuffs’ campaign correspondence and I asked officials to make urgent enquiries in relation to the issues raised.

Upon initial inquiry, local authorities became aware of some cases where secure transport providers have used ‘soft handcuffs’ on young people.

Albert Heaney, Chief Social Care Officer wrote to Assistant Directors of Social Services and Heads of Children’s Services on 25 January seeking assurance that urgent action is being taken by each local authority to:

- Identify whether, and how many, children in their care have been subject to this practice.
- Formally review commissioning arrangements, undertake due diligence on secure transport providers and ensure procurement arrangements include a contractual obligation to operate in line with the Welsh Government Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework.

We have asked for assurances on these two matters to be provided in writing by 11 February. The Chief Social Care Officer has also written to Gillian Baranski, Chief Inspector, Care Inspectorate Wales on 25 January.

This is to ensure that the inspection process monitors whether any care experienced children or young people are subject to these practices and that due diligence has been carried out by local authorities to ensure that secure transport providers are operating in line with the Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework and that handcuffs are never used.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In July 2021 I issued a [Written Statement: Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework \(19 July 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#).

Welsh Ministers have been clear that restrictive practices have a negative impact on the wellbeing of those subject to these practices. The Framework is clear that restrictive practices should only ever be used as a last resort to prevent harm to an individual or others. The guidance is intended to help ensure that those who work with children and adults across relevant settings and services share a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and human rights.

The current issue you have raised with me reminds us that continued support for strong implementation of this policy is crucial.

I agreed advice that during the period between publication on 19 July 2021 and 31 March 2022, officials in relevant divisions should engage external stakeholders in those sectors that the Framework applies to, childcare, education, healthcare and social care. Working with sectors, commissioners and providers to raise awareness, and to consider and agree any work needed to support implementation through specific policy and support for practice in the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and beyond.

The Chief Social Care Officer wrote to Assistant Directors of Social Services and Heads of Children's Services on 10 December asking for their support in the work needed to implement the Framework.

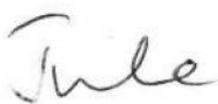
A [video](#) aimed at commissioners and providers of services and settings has been published and promoted via social media to help raise awareness. A similar video has been commissioned for those using services and will be complete by the end of March.

The indicative social care budget proposals for Safeguarding, 2022-2023 also include £35,000 to support the implementation of this policy through awareness raising and learning offers.

The justice sector including youth justice is not devolved to Wales. However the Minister for Social Justice has asked her officials to urgently consult with UK Government to better understand the position. Officials have also made our views on this restrictive practice very clear to the relevant UK Government leads.

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Minister for Social Justice, Minister for Education and the Welsh Language and the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing have all committed to work with me to ensure that our shared expectations are implemented in a way that will impact positively on the day to day lives of children and adults in Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Julie Morgan AS/MS
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