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Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref BG/00914/06

Janet Davies AM
Chair, Audit Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 April 2006

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 22 March to Rhodri Morgan AM enclosing the report of the Audit Committee.

The response will be laid before the Assembly shortly. On behalf of the Assembly Cabinet, I would like to thank you and the Committee for the careful and considered way in which you undertook the investigation and produced the report.

Yours sincerely

Brian Gibbons

The Welsh Assembly Government's response to the report of the National Assembly Audit Committee's report on Protecting NHS Staff from Violence and Aggression: Committee Report (2) 02-06

The Welsh Assembly Government is grateful for the report. We welcome the findings and offer the following response to the six recommendations in the Report.

1 NHS Trusts encourage staff reporting of incidences of violence and aggression by seeking to reduce the burden of form filling for front line staff, for example by encouraging security or administrative staff to complete the forms.

Accepted - The Welsh Assembly Government both recognises the importance of Trusts reporting incidents of violence and aggression and accepts that this can often be onerous for staff in busy departments. This recommendation will therefore be taken to the All Wales Steering Group for the Management of Violence and Aggression where advice will be added to the All Wales Violence and Aggression Training Passport and Information Scheme on what Trusts must put in place to accomplish this.

Timescale 12 months

2 All information on the causes of incidents of violence and aggression – for instance, where an interview with a manager has taken place after an incident, or as part of an exit interview with staff leaving the Trust's employment – should be passed to the Trust's health and safety lead, who should analyse the causes of violence and share any emerging trends with the Trust Board.

Accepted - As with the response outlined in Recommendation 1, the Welsh Assembly Government will raise this issue with the All Wales Steering Group for the Management of Violence and Aggression and request that advice be added to the All Wales Violence and Aggression Training Passport and Information Scheme to this effect to ensure this practice is implemented throughout NHS Wales.

Timescale 12 months

3 The Welsh Assembly Government and NHS Trusts should develop sickness absence reporting systems that record work-related violence as a reason for absence.

Accepted - The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that comprehensive absence reporting is a means to aid improvements in addressing the issues of absence and will therefore ensure that this issue is addressed by the All Wales Sickness and Absence Steering Group. Further discussions will also take place between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Electronic Staff Record Project Team to include this type of absence coding within the new Electronic Staff Record Scheme.

Timescale 12 months

4 The Welsh Assembly Government uses its performance management

system to provide all NHS Trusts with benchmarking data to enable them to compare their violence statistics with those from similar trusts and departments on an annual basis and to assess their rates and performance in handling violence and aggression.

Accepted - The Welsh Assembly Government's Directorate of Performance and Operations, Health & Social Services Department, will consider how this data can be collated and used for the 2007-08 Balanced Scorecard.

Timescale 12 months

- 5 Trusts should seek to reduce the risk of violence and aggression by carrying out risk assessments on the impact of any delayed transfer on a patient's mental health, and that ward managers ensure that staff are adequately supported where a delayed transfer of care exacerbates the risk of violence from patients.**

Accepted - The Welsh Assembly Government agrees that Trusts should ensure that there are good risk assessment processes in place to address these issues. The Welsh Assembly Government will raise this issue with the All Wales Steering Group for the Management of Violence and Aggression and request that advice be added to the All Wales Violence and Aggression Training Passport and Information Scheme to this effect to ensure this practice is implemented throughout NHS Wales.

Hospital Discharge Guidance issued in May 2005 as WHC(2005)035 also emphasises the need for multi agency co-ordination and person centred planning for discharge in order to avoid poor outcomes and patient experiences that could jeopardise health and safety. Comprehensive assessment, effective communication and the need to fully engage patients and their relatives in the discharge process - taking their views into account as part of a patient centred approach to timely discharge - are all emphasised as key principles. The Welsh Assembly Government monitors compliance with this guidance via Clinical Governance Development Plans to ensure the patient experience is paramount and risks are identified and managed appropriately. Executive level awareness of delays is ensured via the monthly snapshot census of delayed transfers of care. Prior to submission of the monthly data by NHS Trusts, there is a requirement that all delays are validated by both the appropriate Trust Chief Executive and Director of Social Services. This ensures executive level awareness of the numbers of delays, and the type and length of delay.

Timescale 12 months

- 6 The Welsh Assembly Government issues guidance to NHS trusts on increasing prosecutions, working with the police, and the data protection and human rights of patients. The Assembly Government should monitor the impact of this guidance on staff well-being and on the development of effective management systems by trusts.**

Accepted - The Welsh Assembly Government will work with the All Wales Steering Group for the Management of Violence and Aggression to ensure advice is added to the All Wales Violence and Aggression Training Passport and Information Scheme to enable Trusts to achieve this. The Assembly Government will then arrange to monitor the impact of this guidance on staff

well-being and on the development of effective management systems by trusts.
Timescale 12 months