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Ein cyf/Our ref MB/MD/4161/14

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6 October 2014

During First Minister's Assembly Questions on 23 September 2014, you raised a specific question relating to recommendation 3 of the Trusted to Care Report, and implementation of this recommendation by Abertawe, Bro Morgannwg University Health Board. I was asked to provide a reply.

My officials have sought clarification from the Health Board on progress in implementing this recommendation. The Trusted to Care Review Team did not, of course, suggest the introduction of 'concerns clinics'. These clinics had already been previously introduced in the Princess of Wales Hospital by the Health Board as part of its complaints handling process.   The Review Team did, however, suggest the establishment of a Professional Standards Task Force which could provide a more constructive and practical approach to enabling and supporting staff than current processes, with its emphasis on 'whistleblowing.'

In terms of progress to date against recommendation three the Health Board has confirmed that one of the immediate actions taken following the publication of the Report was to remind all professional groups of their obligations and responsibilities under their relevant code of professional practice – both in terms of their own actions and in relation to those of other professional colleagues. These standards are clear and unequivocal. However, the Health Board recognised that some individuals can feel uncomfortable reporting poor practice and consequently it has introduced a campaign to help to make this easier.

The "See It, Say It" campaign has been introduced across all sites within the Health Board with the aim of making it as simple as possible for patients, relatives, carers and staff to report issues of concern, so they can be dealt with quickly and problems can be 'nipped in the bud'. This approach provides a dedicated 24 hour voicemail number, email address and text number where staff, the public, patients and relatives can report any instances of poor care or wrongdoing they have witnessed. All issues raised are picked up within 24 hours and highlighted to the appropriate senior manager for action, and progress checked and recorded centrally. Issues are mapped to different geographic areas to ensure that any patterns of concerns are identified. All issues can be raised anonymously or people can leave their details if they wish to receive feedback.

To assist staff in feeling confident to raise concerns, and to receive comments and criticism more positively, the Health Board has arranged a range of leadership sessions aimed at Ward Managers and other clinical leaders to provide support for them in tackling issues of poor practice, receiving feedback and taking action on issues raised.

As part of the development of its care standards for older people the Health Board has sought public involvement through a series of staff and stakeholder workshops. Alongside this it has been developing its values and behaviours framework which sets clear standards and expectations for services which the public can expect to receive and staff know they will be expected to deliver. The Health Board is planning a series of events in November to develop the values and behaviour statements jointly to ensure the standards developed are built on public involvement.

I hope this reassures you that the Health Board is taking this recommendation, and in particular the issue of encouraging whistleblowing, seriously within its organisation. Welsh Government officials continue to work with the Health Board to ensure the recommendations are being implemented in full and that the quality of care and patient safety remains at the fore front of the Health Board's Response to all the Trusted to Care recommendations.

Best wishes

Mark Drakeford.

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