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**GIG
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Our ref: **ABUHB 23-204**

Tuesday 29 August 2023

Jenny Rathbone MS | Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Sent by email to: SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Dear Jenny Rathbone MS

Inquiry into the public health approach to preventing gender-based violence

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (the Health Board) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Senedd Equality and Social Justice Commission's requests to set out what procedures the Health Board has in place for handling allegations of gender-based violence (GBV) raised by or against employees, and to provide views on the Inquiry's terms of reference.

The Health Board recognises GBV is a major public health issue which cuts across the whole of society as well as being a fundamental violation of human rights. Although primarily experienced by women, the Health Board recognises that men too can experience abuse. This should not be neglected in response and prevention efforts.

The Health Board values all its employees and acknowledges that they have a right to work in an environment that is safe, promotes equality, dignity at work and encourages individuals to treat each other with respect. Furthermore, the Health Board expects a high standard of behaviour from its employees, treating patients, their families, and the public with dignity and respect at all times. Safeguarding is part of this expectation and is everybody's responsibility. It is an integral component of providing high quality services. This is reflected in professional codes of conduct, the Health Board's Values and Behaviour Framework and in job descriptions.

The Health Board has an ethical and legal responsibility to take reasonable steps to promote equality and reduce the risk of GBV and take action where incidents occur or allegations of abuse are raised. Supporting those who work for the Health Board, looking after each other and fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging is essential; and how we will do this is detailed in our Strategic Equality Plan 2020/24, Equality and Diversity Policy and People Plan for 2022/25. As part of this, we need to recognise that some staff may be the victims or perpetrators of GBV.

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg heb oedi.
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Aneurin Bevan yw enw gweithredol Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Prifysgol Aneurin Bevan.

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and we will respond in Welsh without delay.
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is the operational name of Aneurin Bevan University Local Health Board.

Procedures the Health Board has in place for handling allegations of gender-based violence (GBV) raised by or against employees

The Health Board has a robust Framework of Policies and Procedures to enable appropriate action when these circumstances occur in order to discharge its statutory requirements and appropriate accountability for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse (this is relation to employees, patients and the public).

This Framework ensures that the Health Board:

- assists and supports employees requesting help in addressing problems arising from GBV; ensures confidential and sympathetic handling of situations arising from GBV;
- articulates a clearly that the actions of employees who perpetrate abuse, within or outside work, is unacceptable; and
- provides a framework for addressing the behaviour of employees who may be perpetrators of abuse and who may pose a risk to other employees or patients within the context of their work.

The most significant items are included below:

- All-Wales Respect and Resolution Policy
- All-Wales Domestic Abuse Protocol
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: A workplace Policy for Supporting Employees
- Incident Reporting Policy
- Disciplinary and Procedure
- Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Handling Violence and/or Aggression (Internal Sanctions) Policy and Procedure
- Procedures on the Management of Concerns raised by patients and their representatives (Complaints)
- Upholding Professional Standards in Wales

Copies of any policy, procedure or plan are available to view by request.

Our Corporate Safeguarding Team provide support, training and organisational advice on policies and procedures for safeguarding, set out in the legislation and codes of conduct and behaviours required of employees of the Health Board.

In addition, all staff are required to complete mandatory *Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence* eLearning every three years.

Views on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

The Health Board is reassured that the Senedd Equality and Social Justice Commission recognise GBV as an intersectional issue and has widened its terms of reference to ensure full consideration of the specific challenges faced by individuals with intersecting protected characteristics experiencing abuse and the inequalities in experience of violence. Any approach to GBV must be explicitly inclusive.

Although it is widely recognised that GBV is disproportionately perpetrated by men, and women and girls are disproportionately victimised. Men and boys can also be the target of GBV, and is vital that the language used in the terms of reference reflects this point.

The Health Board look forward to reviewing the outcoming of the inquiry, as an opportunity to transform our organisational responses to GBV by considering how we can better systematise support for victims, early intervention, prevention and address related access and health inequality issues. Our aim is to work together

with partners to ensure the most efficient and effective response to preventing serious harm caused by such types of abuse for the wellbeing and safety of our staff, patients and the public, both now and in the future

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nicola Prygodzicz
Prif Weithredwr | Chief Executive