

Safeguarding week: We need to act NOW to protect children and adults at risk from abuse

To mark the start of Safeguarding Week (12th – 16th November), the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies and the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, said they remain concerned about the number of people who suffer from abuse, neglect and exploitation in Wales each year.

Statistics show:

- Nearly 3,000 children in Wales are on the child protection register because of neglect, psychological, sexual or other forms of abuse.
- Over 19,000 adults were reported to local authorities as being at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Welsh Government has taken firm action to tackle the abuse and neglect of children and adults.

In 2016, a law was introduced in Wales – the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act – which strengthens existing safeguarding arrangements for children by placing on relevant partners, such as the NHS, police, probation and youth offending teams, a duty to report where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is at risk.

The Act introduces parallel provisions for relevant partners to report to the local authority someone suspected to be an adult at risk of abuse or neglect. This is supplemented by a duty for the local authority to make enquires to determine whether any action is required to safeguard adults at risk.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“The abuse and neglect of children and adults is completely unacceptable. One of the most arrowing aspects of my role as Minister is receiving reports of children and adults who have experienced terrible abuse or neglect.

“As a government, we’ve introduced tough new laws to ensure robust mechanisms are in place to safeguard children and adults. I’m asking everyone to think about what they can do, how people act on their concerns is important because together we can all help to keep children and adults safe from abuse.”

As part of efforts to prevent abuse happening in the first place and to identify abuse when it happens, the Welsh Government is funding a new pan-Wales campaign, which is being launched this week. The theme of the Stop it

Now campaign will be to tackle child sexual abuse by providing information and learning for practitioners and to parents and carers. Nearly 1000 people across Wales will benefit from awareness raising sessions as part of the campaign.

Huw Irranca-Davies added:

“I’m really pleased the Welsh Government is working with Stop It Now! Wales to launch this new campaign, which will help encourage the people of Wales to play their part in stopping child sexual abuse.

“Together, we can and must ensure every child in Wales is safe.”

Activities during Safeguarding Week also includes a poster campaign aimed at raising awareness of the need to speak out and seek help, and where to go for that help.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

“Safeguarding Week provides a really important opportunity for us to recognise the vital role that schools play in safeguarding our children and young people. It is school staff who have daily contact with our learners, so they are in a strong position to identify signs of abuse and neglect at the earliest possible stage so that action can be taken and support put in place. The campaign will increase awareness within our school communities and also make sure that both children and young people and school staff know where to turn for help.”

“Their sacrifices and legacy will endure” – First Minister marks 100 years since the end of the First World War

The service will be attended by Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex, as guests of the First Minister. The address will be given by The Archbishop of Wales, The Most Reverend John Davies.

During the service, the congregation will hear readings from Nia Haf and Ethan Williams from Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Mari Wyn Jones from Ysgol Maes

Garmon in Mold.

Speaking ahead of the service, the First Minister said:

“Each Remembrance Sunday is an opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women who have served to protect the peace we are privileged to enjoy in Wales today.

“This Remembrance Sunday is particularly poignant, as we mark 100 years since the end of the First World War. Today, we remember the sacrifice of servicemen from Wales during the war. We also remember the countless men, women and children who played pivotal roles on the home front and shaped our society in ways no generation had done before.

“To this remarkable generation, we give thanks. Their contribution and legacy will endure.”

The Archbishop of Wales, The Most Reverend John Davies, said:

“We gather to give thanks for the end of what remains one of the most significant, brutal and wasteful conflicts in the world’s history. May today’s remembering and reflecting on the First World War lead us personally to commit positively in making every effort to make our world, our nation, our communities, the kind of place which those whose lives we honour believed they were fighting to build. Any unwillingness to make that commitment risks devaluing the sacrifices of all who have fought for justice down the centuries, not least those who will be particularly in our minds this coming weekend.”

Over the past 4 years, the First Minister has led the Welsh Government’s centenary commemoration of the First World War, Cymru’n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918.

The programme has delivered national events, exhibitions, community based activities and education programmes across Wales, inviting people of all ages to reflect and learn more about this important period in our history.

The First Minister added:

“I am proud to have been part of the commemorative programme that has fittingly marked all aspects of the First World War and the impact it had on the country. I am particularly pleased with the way people have embraced the Cymru’n Cofio programme, with communities up and down the country recognising the sacrifices people in Wales made, from large scale events such as Mametz Wood and Passchendaele, to school projects which are helping to create a

Wales-wide archive of the people from our communities who died during the conflict. The response has been remarkable.

“I hope through the work that has taken place over the past four years our current and future generations will gain a greater understanding of the significance of the events of the First World War and avoid the mistakes of the past. That would be a worthy legacy of this programme of commemoration.”

The Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 programme has been extended to 2020.

Secondary schools commemorate the First World War

Using modern production techniques, the 14-18 NOW arts project have collaborated with the Imperial War Museums (IWM), BBC and Peter Jackson, to restore and colourise previously unseen footage from IWM's extensive archive.

The Welsh Government has supported the project through its *Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914-1918 programme of commemoration for the centenary of the First World War with a £25,000 grant. This helped ensure that supporting materials for the film would also be available in Welsh.

Aberdare Community School tested the learning resources in their History lessons, enabling 14-18 NOW to adjust and finalise them before they were circulated to all schools across Wales.

Kirsty Williams today joined pupils in Aberdare Community School to find out more about their involvement in the project and to see the new film.

Speaking at the launch today, she said:

“I have been encouraged by the way in which people have engaged with the First World War commemorations and particularly the number of projects that have been undertaken by young people across Wales.

“I'm pleased we were able to support the 14-18 NOW project to develop resources which accompany this documentary and engage schools. It's so important we continue to recognise the sacrifice made by those young men a hundred years ago.”

They Shall Not Grow Old will be screened in cinemas and schools across the

UK, before being broadcast this Sunday 11th November at 9.30pm on BBC2.

[£14.7 million EU funding to boost work schemes in the South Wales Valleys](#)

The Nurture, Equip, Thrive scheme is a new project which will help more than 2,000 under-employed people return to full employment and help people with work-limiting health conditions or disabilities to stay in work, return from sick leave or take on career development opportunities.

Led by Torfaen Council, the scheme, which is backed by £5.8 million of EU funding, will offer mentoring, coaching, careers advice, skills development and childcare and transport to help people into sustainable employment.

The South Wales Valleys will also benefit from an extra £8.8 million of EU funding to extend 2 existing projects – Working Skills for Adults and Bridges into Work II, led by Torfaen Council in partnership with Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil councils.

Working Skills for Adults will receive an extra £3.2 million to help employees gain new skills to improve their job security and career prospects. The scheme has already supported more than 2,000 people in the area to enhance their careers.

The Bridges into Work II project will be supported by an additional £5.6 million of EU funding to deliver training and mentoring to improve the skills and employability of long-term unemployed people. The funding will help around 4,880 people over the next 4 years.

Professor Drakeford said:

“It is vital we continue to invest in the areas which need it most, removing barriers to work, reducing in-work poverty and helping people move towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

“EU funds have already helped thousands of people throughout the South Wales Valleys improve their chances of getting a job. This extra investment will help build on this success.”

Councillor Anthony Hunt, leader of Torfaen Council added:

“Torfaen Council is delighted to be leading the Nurture, Equip, Thrive project, helping residents of the South Wales Valleys find work that meets their needs, particularly people with work-limiting

health conditions and disabilities.

“We will work with local employers to improve diversity and equality in the workplace and make changes to improve the health and wellbeing of all staff.”

This builds on the work of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys and the priorities highlighted in the Our Valleys, Our Future delivery plan, including a commitment to close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales.

[Wales to provide termination of pregnancy services to women from Northern Ireland](#)

Termination of Pregnancy is governed by the Abortion Act 1967. At present, Termination of Pregnancy is available to anyone ordinarily resident in Wales, or those that require emergency treatment while in Wales. It can only be carried out in an NHS hospital or a licensed clinic.

In Northern Ireland (NI), the 1967 Act does not apply and Termination of Pregnancy is only permissible in very limited circumstances, for example if a woman's life is at risk or there is a permanent or serious risk to her physical or mental health. Rape, familial sexual abuse (incest) and fetal abnormality are not circumstances in which termination can be performed legally in Northern Ireland.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Our view has always been a woman from Northern Ireland, in Wales, should be able to access Termination of Pregnancy on the same basis as women in Wales.

“We anticipate the number of women from Northern Ireland accessing these services to be low and health boards have assured us they are able to absorb this provision within existing resources.

“I have asked my officials to conduct a review of the position after six months.”

To ensure the efficient delivery of this provision to Northern Ireland women and to ensure equitable service is provided to women in Wales, guidance on accessing termination of pregnancy provision in Wales will be published on

the NHS Direct website.