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Minister for Children and Social Care



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/DB/11299/25

Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Buffy Williams MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee

24 January 2025

Dear Chair,

National Practice Framework/National Multi-Agency Practice Strategy for Children

One of the core elements of our Transformation Programme for Children's Social Care in Wales has been the commitment to deliver a National Practice Framework. The rationale behind developing this Framework has always been to improve consistency of practice across Wales and support a strengths-based way of working to ensure the best outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people in Wales.

A national conversation has been taking place with local authorities and their partners in the delivery of children's social services across Wales including the third sector, police, safeguarding board as well as national bodies including the Children's Commissioner. This engagement and open dialogue centred on gathering opinion and evidence about how a National Practice Framework can add the most value. In the last twelve months we have shared two engagement papers. The papers set out the aim of the Framework and how it will work in practice as well as drafts of recommended standards.

The feedback we received highlighted the critical importance of using this work to strengthen multi-agency working, based around 5 strategic standards: Multi-Agency Infrastructure, Multi-Agency Strategy, Multi-Agency Learning, Multi-Agency Governance and Multi-Agency Delivery. To reflect this strategic approach, the Framework's title has changed to the "National Multi-Agency Practice Strategy for Children".

However, further work is still required, including on strengthening shared accountability for multi-agency practice with greater clarity of roles, responsibilities and ownership of the strategy. In addition, we must have clear governance arrangements in place to oversee implementation which do not increase bureaucracy or cause confusion.

Our original intention had been to publish the Framework by the end of 2024. However, as highlighted what the feedback from this engagement has told us is that this cannot be a standalone document and further work is required to develop a joint accountability framework, practice notes and resources for front line practitioners drawing on the original

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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.

suite of standards, for example “children and young people who are missing”, with additional supporting guidance.

To allow time to strengthen the Strategy and the 5 multi-agency standards as well as develop the additional resources outlined above, we will be working to publish both the Strategy and the first set of practice notes in April this year. Further practice notes will then be published during 2025 and in April we will also begin work on the development of a joint accountability framework.

I wanted to share this update with you and emphasise the importance of getting this Strategy right and supported by the resources its needs so that it delivers its aim. I will also be publishing a written statement members sharing this timeframe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

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