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4 October 2023

Dear Russell and Jenny

You are doubtless aware of recent press reports about female surgeons being sexually assaulted in the workplace, and are as appalled at such behaviour as I am. I asked my officials to seek assurances from all medical directors in Wales regarding the actions they have in place to prevent incidents of overt discriminatory behaviours; misogyny and/or a breach of sexual safety.

All medical directors have shared their safeguarding policies which are in line with national requirements. Not all organisations have specific sexual safety policies and those without acknowledged that they would reinforce their controls by providing staff with guidance on sexual health and well-being and outlining the process by which they can report sexual incidents. All have expressed a desire to promote a clear commitment to preventing sexualised harm.

Prior to the press reports, the NHS Wales Executive had already started to establish a National Coordinating Group for Sexual Safety in NHS Wales. The Group is utilising a task-and-finish approach to complete a brief assurance exercise, primarily in response to the report by the Women's Rights Network, *When We Are At Our Most Vulnerable*, which included a concerning high frequency of reports of sexual violence occurring in hospital settings.

The Group has focused on actions to complete the required immediate assurance functions including:

- a data collection exercise across NHS Wales organisations and Sexual Assault Referral Centres
- ensuring organisations complete a self-assessment on how they prevent sexual harm to patients and staff and how they respond where sexual harm, including criminality, is disclosed or observed.

We are widening this debate and are clear about our expectations across the wider NHS which includes the recently-published Welsh Health Circular [NHS Wales speaking up safely framework](#). The Framework contains practical toolkits, developed in partnership with our employer and trade union colleagues and, in due course, resources will be published on Health Education and Improvement Wales's Gwella platform. We will also share the sexual safety work which the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust has developed to address the use of power and influence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

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