****

**WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Children in Police Custody in Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **31 October 2017** |
| **BY**  | **Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children** |

The Welsh Government has today published guidance aimed at reducing the numbers of children who are held overnight in police custody.

The guidance was produced as part of a project set up by the Welsh Government in 2015 following concerns about the number of children and young people who were being held inappropriately in police cells overnight while awaiting a court appearance the following day. It focused particularly on children who were charged with an offence and refused bail, and who should be transferred to a secure unit or local authority accommodation under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The project involved extensive collaboration and co-operative working between all relevant agencies, including the four Welsh police forces, Youth Justice Board Cymru, local authority social services, emergency duty teams and Youth Offending Teams. It has strengthened the working relationships of frontline staff in the police and local authorities, initiated joint training at local level, and improved data collection and sharing of information between agencies.

The ‘All-Wales guidance for the appropriate management and transfer of children and young people by the Police and Local Authorities under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984’ sets out the roles and responsibilities of the police and local authorities under the legislation, and includes a model protocol for agencies to use to ensure best practice across Wales.

I am grateful for the support and input from all the organisations involved and hope this guidance helps children and young people to access timely and suitable support in the future.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/safety/publications/all-wales-guidance-for-management-transfer-children-young-people/?lang=en>