# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Publication of the Maternity Care in Wales – A 5 Year Vision for the Future**  |
| **DATE**  | **03 July 2019** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething AM, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

The foundations for health and well-being start with pregnancy, birth and the early days of childhood. Women and families in Wales deserve to have a positive supportive experience of maternity care at this momentous time in life. Whilst this is true for the vast majority of women and children in Wales, I am aware as seen in the experience of many families in the former Cwm Taf Health Board that sometimes this is not always the case.

Building on the aims of the ‘Strategic Vision for Maternity Services in Wales (2011)”, work has been ongoing over the last two years to develop a fresh five year Vision to direct and inform an equitable, prudent approach to maternity care provision across Wales for all women regardless of complexity and ensuring collaborative team working. Further to this work, following the publication of the Royal Colleges report into the former Cwm Taf Health Board maternity services, senior midwives, obstetricians, anaesthetists and allied professionals from every Health Board across Wales have come together to ensure the Vision also takes into account the actions recommended by the review team.

This Vision has been the result of many people coming together to refresh our model of maternity care-based on the current available evidence, best practice as well as feedback from frontline staff on how best to improve existing services. Key to the development of this fresh Vision has, however, been the engagement of mothers and families. The commissioned survey in 2017 of ‘Your Birth, We Care’ gathered women’s experiences of maternity care in Wales and it captured the views of over 4000 new mothers who gave birth in the previous year. The report presents a picture of women’s experiences of planning for birth, as well as their experiences during labour. The survey have provided us with a clear understanding of what women value in maternity care, and service changes required to deliver quality, safe effective services.

To meet the aspirations of women and their families across Wales, the Vision aims to provide a prudent approach to maternity care provision, providing women with the services, expertise and options enabling the choice required to optimise their birth experience and outcomes. By involving a wider approach to public health issues within health boards and at wider population levels, the Vision aims to support women to be healthy before and during pregnancy enabling them to achieve birth in the environment of their choice. In turn this can help to reduce the impact of inequalities which can have longer-term health consequences for families, securing the best possible outcomes for mothers, babies and communities.

The Vision provides us with the route map to deliver high quality and safe services which secure improved health and wellbeing for mothers and babies in the short, medium and long term. It is however only the start, following the launch of the Vision it is intended that clinicians, healthcare professionals, women and their families will continue to come together to ensure the aspirations of this Vision are delivered over the next five years. Key work streams related to the themes of the Vision will be established to ensure the aspirations are translated into deliverable national and health board actions which have measureable outcomes and ongoing evaluation.

The Maternity Care in Wales – A 5 Year Vision for the Future document can be accessed through the following link:

<https://gov.wales/maternity-services-strategy-2019-2024>