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Description automatically generated**Is there a ‘Winterbourne in Wales’?**

31st May 2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the appalling Winterbourne View scandal. The scandal shone a light on the potential of abuse of people with learning disabilities living in Assessment and Treatment Units (ATUs). Most shockingly of all, the fact that the abuse was not detected by inspectorates.

Since the broadcast of the BBC Panorama programme on Winterbourne View, there have been furth er high-profile cases of similar abuses in care settings in England such as the case of Whorlton Hall in County Durham. Further cases such as Mendip House in Somerset (a residential care setting) illustrate the fact that these issues are not limited to ATUs. Lessons have not been learned from Winterbourne.

On 14th January 2013 Gwenda Thomas, the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services at the time, published a ministerial statement laying out the Welsh Government’s plans to ensure that a similar situation did not happen in Wales. This included working with the Learning Disability Advisory Group and provisions in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act to introduce a coherent legal framework for adult protection in Wales as well as the introduction of a National Independent Safeguarding Board. However, there are still many people with learning disabilities being placed out-of-county and out-of-Wales. As long as this is the case, we cannot say for certain that there are ‘No Winterbournes in Wales’.

We call on the Welsh Government to:

1. Work with Care Inspectorate Wales and Health Inspectorate Wales to map the number of people with a learning disability who are placed in any residential setting out of their local communities or outside of Wales.
2. Commit to working with key partners on a strategy to ensure we can bring people with learning disabilities placed in all out-of-area residential services back near their families and friends if it is their wish to do so.
3. Outline what guarantees they have that people with learning disabilities are having regular care reviews and that these are Welsh led.
4. Measure what access people with learning disabilities have with advocacy services and how that information is being fed into Welsh Government.
5. Find out how many people with learning disabilities have discharge plans and if adequate preparations are being made to move people with learning disabilities back into their local communities.
6. Commit to employing people with a learning disability and their family carers in inspection reviews of care settings.