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## **Bild charity responds to BBC Wales investigation into shocking abuse and neglect allegations at residential special school Ty Coryton**

**We are shocked to hear about the alleged disturbing human rights abuses of vulnerable children at Orbis Ty Coryton residential special school in Cardiff, reported by [BBC Wales today](#) (09.06.21).**

The allegations unveil a toxic culture with a complete lack of focus on improving quality of life or upholding basic human rights. Children and young people were subject to shocking abuse and neglect from the very people that were meant to care for them. The scandal comes ten years after the BBC exposed similar institutionalised abuse at Winterbourne View.

At Ty Coryton, it is alleged that children were punished for being autistic or for menstruating. Such experiences are likely to be highly traumatic for children. There was also an over-reliance on restrictive practices, with fears that that children could die as a result of a supine<sup>1</sup> restraint: “A child is going to die there... that basically is what’s going to happen” (Ty Coryton whistle-blower).

We are deeply concerned by the lack of understanding and distress being caused by such practices. If a child shows distress or concerning behaviour, they are clearly communicating that their needs have not been met, and demonstrating a pressing need to change the environment or the way they are supported to prevent such distress from continuing.

Commenting on the concerning developments reported by BBC Wales at Ty Coryton, Bild CEO Ben Higgins said: *“It is deeply disturbing that, ten years after Winterbourne View, society still fails to protect the dignity and fundamental human rights of its most vulnerable people. Too many vulnerable children are being psychologically and mentally harmed through the over-reliance on restrictive practices in some schools. There is an urgent need for radical system change to prevent this from ever happening again.”*

Professor Edwin Jones, Positive Behavioural Support Strategic Lead at Bild, and visiting professor at the University of South Wales – appeared in the BBC Wales news coverage. He added: *“We are urging the Welsh government to implement the new Reducing Restrictive Practice Framework immediately to ensure that appalling abuse and neglect cases are fully investigated, addressed and ultimately eradicated. We know that including experts by experience in the development of guidance – including people with learning disabilities and their families – is the most comprehensive way to address problems like those we are hearing about from Ty Coryton. This is widely recognised both nationally and internationally.*

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<sup>1</sup> The supine position means lying horizontally with the face and torso facing up

*“The Welsh government have played a key role in co-producing the Reducing Restrictive Practice Framework with people with learning disabilities, parents and carers and other key stakeholders – but the implementation of these has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Implementing this Framework now would be the most decisive, appropriate action the Welsh government could take on a strategic level, while simultaneously ensuring that the allegations in Ty Coryton are investigated fully. The sad reality is that we cannot assume situations like this are one-off, isolated issues. This is unacceptable in today’s day and age.”*

Bild is calling for:

- **The immediate implementation of the Reducing Restrictive Practice Framework in Wales**, following previous consultation and co-production with people with learning disabilities, families and the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN). The RRN brings together people committed to the elimination of unnecessary restrictive practices across education, health and social care
- **A statutory requirement for schools to record, report and reduce all restrictive practices** (as seen in health and adult social care in England). It is deemed vital that the Welsh Government considers further strengthening the Reducing Restrictive Framework by making it the law across health, social care and education. Currently, the lack of such legal requirements leaves children at risk of abuse and neglect.
- **Strong leadership and better regulation** of restrictive practices in school settings. Schools should only use restraint training that has been certified as complying with [Restraint Reduction Network’s ethical training standards](#). Such standards provide a national and international benchmark for training in supporting people who are distressed in education, health and social care settings.
- **Schools to be informed and empowered to adopt preventative approaches**, such as Trauma Informed Care and [Positive Behaviour Support \(PBS\)](#), to ensure children and young people have their individual needs met and respected in a proactive, person-centred and trauma-informed manner.

Bild would encourage anyone who is concerned about the practices of a provision to contact the following regulators:

- Care Inspectorate Wales – raising concerns – [www.careinspectorate.wales/contact-us/raise-concern](http://www.careinspectorate.wales/contact-us/raise-concern)
- Estyn (education and training inspectorate in Wales) – [www.estyn.gov.wales/about-us#contactus](http://www.estyn.gov.wales/about-us#contactus) or, by email, [enquiries@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:enquiries@estyn.gov.wales)
- Care Quality Commission (England-only services) – feedback on care – [www.cqc.org.uk/give-feedback-on-care](http://www.cqc.org.uk/give-feedback-on-care)
- Ofsted (to give feedback on schools in England) – [parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk)

Restraint Reduction Network Manager and Autism Campaigner, Alexis Quinn, has written a blog post with further reaction to this distressing scandal.

Read the full response here: <https://restraintreductionnetwork.org/uncategorized/restraint-reduction-network-responds-to-degrading-human-rights-abuse-allegations-at-residential-special-school-ty-coryton/>

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**-ENDS-**

#### **Media contact**

If you have a media query, or would like to speak to Bild CEO Ben Higgins or PBS Strategic Lead Professor Edwin Jones, please contact Laura Smith and Lisa Church at [lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) / [lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) or call 07467945848.

#### **Further information**

- Bild exists to champion the rights of autistic people and individuals with learning disabilities.
- Since 1971, Bild's mission has been to improve support in the community, and develop the skills and culture necessary to better understand and meet people's needs in education, health, social care settings and workplaces. It seeks to improve individual's quality of life, and bring about lasting change through evidence-based approaches.
- All behaviours have a meaning. Bild's positive behaviour support (PBS) approaches are person-centred, to make systems and support work for that person and to improve their quality of life.
- PBS aims to understand behaviours, including those that are concerning or are a challenge to services, to understand what they are telling us. As a result, the person's needs can be met in better ways. The way people are supported often has to change to achieve this, and these processes need to be regularly reviewed by all involved individuals.
- Find out more about Bild by visiting [www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)
- To find out more about PBS approaches, visit [www.bild.org.uk/about-pbs](http://www.bild.org.uk/about-pbs)

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