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Dyddiad/Date: October 2026

Councillor Ann Crimmings
Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Rhondda Cynon Taf

(via email : Ann.Crimmings@rctcbc.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor Crimmings

Health Visitor Dispute

Thank you for your letter of 23 September 2026 and for setting out the Council's concerns regarding Health Visiting services and the ongoing industrial dispute. I welcome the recognition within your letter of the important contribution that health visitors make to children, families, and communities across our region.

We share the Council's commitment to ensuring that children and families continue to receive the support they need, particularly those with the most complex and urgent needs. We understand the concerns raised regarding Healthy Child Wales Programme contacts and recognise why the figures referenced in your correspondence have prompted questions. The data requires careful interpretation, including the distinction between contacts identified as due and those recorded as completed specifically by Band 6 health visitors. During the period of industrial action, routine activity has been restricted in order to prioritise urgent and high-risk cases. A risk-based approach is in place

to prioritise essential safeguarding activity and support for children and families assessed as being at greatest risk. These arrangements provide qualified rather than absolute assurance: they mitigate risk but cannot remove it entirely while universal Health Visiting contacts remain reduced, particularly where vulnerability is not already known to services.

The Health Board remains committed to resolving the dispute and maintaining safe and effective services for the communities we jointly serve. As we have previously set out publicly, health visitor posts continue to be evaluated at Band 6 under the current agreed job description, and there is currently no agreed local or revised All-Wales Band 7 job description. We recognise that there are differing views on the issues underlying the dispute. The Health Board remains committed to finding a sustainable resolution and is actively considering further proposals to support this. We will continue constructive engagement with Unite, Welsh Government and through the relevant NHS Wales arrangements, with the aim of reaching an agreed way forward in the spirit of social partnership.

We also note the presentation received by the Council at the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on 23 September 2026 from striking health visitors and their representatives. We fully respect the right of staff and trade union representatives to share their experiences and concerns and understand why elected members wished to hear directly from those involved in the dispute. We are encouraged by the recognition in your subsequent letter that a range of factors may contribute to the issues identified and that conclusions should not be drawn without consideration of the full evidence. That is particularly important in the context of a live industrial dispute, where a number of the matters discussed at the Extraordinary Meeting — including aspects of the job evaluation process and the interpretation of service data — remain contested between the parties. While we respect the perspective presented to members, we are concerned that some disputed matters may have been understood as established fact before the Health Board's position or the wider evidence had been considered. We think everyone is best served when those different perspectives can be considered together. That helps elected members form the fullest possible picture and supports the open and constructive relationship we all want to maintain.

We are grateful for the Council's invitation for the Chair and me to attend a future meeting of Full Council, and we appreciate the constructive spirit in which it has been made. The Health Board places great value on its relationship with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and on the important role elected members play in representing the communities we jointly serve.

Having considered the invitation carefully, we must respectfully decline. This is not because we are unwilling to engage with the Council on the concerns raised, but because the Health Board has its own statutory governance and accountability arrangements through which the Chair and Chief Executive are held to account, including the Health Board's meetings held in public and its accountability within NHS Wales and to Welsh Government and by extension to the Senedd. We therefore do not believe that attendance at Full Council as a

formal accountability mechanism for Health Board decisions would sit comfortably with our respective governance arrangements.

We are, however, very keen that this does not become a barrier to constructive dialogue between our organisations. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Council through an appropriate partnership forum, or through a dedicated discussion between senior representatives of our organisations, where we can explain the Health Board's position, listen to the concerns of elected members and consider together how we can continue to provide assurance on the issues raised. In addition, we would be pleased to share further assurance with the three local authorities through our established partnership arrangements as the current review, validation and recovery work progresses. This can draw on the ongoing child-by-child review, safeguarding and escalation arrangements, work to understand unmet need and deferred activity, and the developing plans for safe recovery of universal provision. It will also reflect the existing oversight through the Regional Safeguarding Board and our regular engagement with local authority partners. This will enable us to keep partners informed of material developments, outstanding actions and residual risks.

We remain committed to working closely with Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils, Welsh Government, and other partners to understand and address any impact on safeguarding, early intervention, social care demand, and health inequalities, whilst supporting our workforce and sustaining services for children and families.

Thank you again for writing and for bringing these important issues to our attention. We look forward to continuing our constructive partnership and working together in the interests of the shared communities which we serve.

Yours sincerely



Paul Mears
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive