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Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: MA/EM/4242/21

Russell George MS
Chair
Health and Social Care Committee

SeneddHealth@senedd.wales

20 January 2022

Dear Russell,

Thank you for your letter of 24 November regarding expert academics' perspectives on the key issues emerging in relation to Covid-19 recovery, and the importance of clinical research. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

In relation to the findings of the committee and the discussions with academics on the importance of clinical research in Wales and that healthcare moves to an evidence based or evidence generating model, the Welsh Government, particularly through Health and Care Research Wales is actively engaging with researchers across many clinical and academic settings across Wales.

During 2021, I signed up to a UK-wide vision *Saving and Improving Lives: the future of clinical research delivery* to create a patient-centred, pro-innovation and digitally enabled clinical research environment, which empowers everyone across the NHS to participate in delivering research and ensures that patients from across Wales and the UK are supported to take part in research that is of relevance to them.

Health and Care Research Wales is working with all NHS organisations to ensure research is embedded in the NHS in order to create a research-positive culture in which all health and care staff feel empowered to support and participate in clinical research as part of their job. Further work is needed to create the step-change required and a programme of work will continue throughout 2022.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Health and Care Research Wales also funds a number of research centres of excellence across Wales. With a strong focus on knowledge mobilisation, Centres are building research capacity, providing impact beyond academic through the translation of their research findings into practice, policy and education. There are plenty of examples and therefore I share a few recent ones to provide a flavour of the work underway.

For example, as part of the Covid-19 pandemic response efforts, researchers at the Wales Centre for Primary and Emergency Care Research (PRIME Centre Wales) were able to utilise knowledge they had gained from trials such as the NIHR-funded CARiAD RCT to support the development of recommendations for the Welsh Government End of Life Board on teaching unpaid carers to give as-needed subcutaneous medication for breakthrough symptoms in people wishing to be at home when they die.

The Health and Care Economics Cymru Centre recently published a study establishing the preferences and concerns, healthcare service use and cost of dialysis options for patients in Wales. Based on the study results, education programme changes were made in local health boards in Wales to empower patients to make informed decisions about their dialysis modality more quickly and to ensure sustainability of current service provision.

The Director of the PRIME Centre, Professor Adrian Edwards, is also the lead at the Wales Covid-19 Evidence Centre (CEC), which was setup in March this year to ensure the research evidence base is up-to-date and relevant to Wales, this is a key aspect of the centre's work, providing analysis of crucial scientific evidence to help tackle some of the new health and social care challenges created by the pandemic.

Findings from the CEC reviews are being fed directly into Welsh Governments Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and are informing decision making in relation to Covid-19 and Covid-19-recovery. Some of its key findings have included, face coverings and the benefits these have on the prevention of Covid-19 transmission, the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of health and social care workers, Covid-19 infection and vaccination in pregnant women and the transmission of Covid-19 in closed and semi-closed spaces and outdoors.

In regard to the Wales Wellbeing Covid-19 survey highlighted in the committee's letter, it was one of a number of data sources used to help understand the impact of the pandemic on mental health in Wales.

The results from the first wave of the survey were discussed by the Mental Health Incident Group, consisting of Welsh Government policy officials and NHS mental health services. The results from the second wave were included in a research summary that was circulated among policy colleagues and members of the Together for Mental Health Delivery and Oversight Board, supporting members to keep abreast of the latest evidence and data on the issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

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