

Eluned Morgan MS
Minister for Health and Social Services
Welsh Government

2 March 2022

Dear Eluned

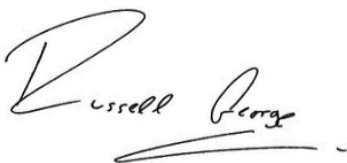
Follow up questions on winter planning after scrutiny session on 10 February 2022

Thank you for attending our meeting on Thursday 10 February and responding to our questions.

Following the evidence session, Members agreed write to you with follow-up questions on the issues outlined in the annex to this letter.

We would be grateful for a response by 25 March 2022.

Yours sincerely



Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Annex: follow up questions on winter planning after scrutiny session on 10 February 2022

Following the scrutiny session on the impact of the waiting times backlog on people in Wales who are waiting for diagnosis or treatment and the Welsh Government's Health and Social Care Winter Plan 2021 to 2022 on 10 February 2022, we would welcome further information on the matters listed below. We would be grateful to receive your response by 25 March 2022.

Vaccination programme

During the evidence session, we asked what plans were being made to resource the vaccination programme going forward, particularly in terms of reducing disruption to services through redeployment of staff. You said that it had been necessary to be reactive, particularly in mobilising quickly to administer the booster programme and that there were still some uncertainties around the vaccination of children under 12 and the effect of waning. Since the evidence session, the Welsh Government has announced the expansion of the vaccination programme to children aged five to 11 who are not considered to be at clinical risk.

1. Can you tell us what impact this is likely to have on the vaccination programme and how it will be resourced. Also, can you tell us what, if any, contingency plans are in place, should there be the need for another rapid roll-out.

Review of winter plans

Your paper stated that 'a wider review and evaluation of winter arrangements will be undertaken, [...] and will seek to identify and learn from areas of notable practice in addition to the challenges experienced by RPBs in implementing plans'. Judith Paget told us that the details for this review had not yet been firmed up but that she expected it would happen around April or May.

Are you now in a position to confirm how this review will be carried out, who will be involved and when it will take place.

Impact of short-term funding for winter pressure

We raised with you the concerns of stakeholders about the impact of short-term funding for winter pressures, particularly on the ability to recruit and train staff. We also raised the possibility of not having a winter plan, but rather an annual plan where more elective surgery is carried out in the spring and summer, leaving the autumn to winter period more free for work on winter pressures.

You said that this was something that should be considered. We would welcome your further thoughts on this suggestion.

Can you provide assurance that the health boards' IMTPs include adequate planning for seasonal impacts (including winter pressures and the potential impact of summer heatwaves).

4.