



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1235
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/02675/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
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04 November 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 14 July on behalf of the Petition Committee, regarding the provision of services and support for people with Acquired Brain Injury in Wales. I apologise with the delay in responding. I have noted the further comments from the petitioner and have provided responses below.

Neurorehabilitation:

Neurological Conditions Plan

There are no plans to develop a specific ABI strategy in Wales at present. However, whilst health is a devolved matter in Wales, with existing policy and mechanisms to support implementation and service improvements, we will continue to collaborate with the Department of Health and Social Care in England on the Acquired Brain Injury Strategy being developed there. This collaboration provides an opportunity for shared learning, and where relevant and appropriate to do so, this will inform our thinking and decisions going forward.

ABI Data Dashboard

The ABI dashboard Phase 1 has been released and is available to NHS Wales users.

National Clinical Framework/Quality Statement

The draft Neurological conditions quality statement is currently being considered by Welsh Government and is due to be published on the Welsh Government website later this year. The Neurological Conditions implementation group has already agreed priorities for the work for the next 12 months and is developing a workplan to ensure these are delivered. Implementation remains the responsibility of health boards and the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSCC).

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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.

National Rehabilitation Framework

The National Rehabilitation Framework is a high level strategic framework. Decisions about training staff to deliver services which meet the frameworks principles and expectations would be a decision for employers and professionals themselves. Health boards can commission training via Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) if they wish.

Rehabilitation Prescription

We note your points regarding the rehabilitation prescription and thank you for raising them.

Neurorehabilitation Services for Children

This is the responsibility of the health board in question, the clinical and the multi-professional team providing care.

Education:

We agree that parents should not need to battle for the support their child needs. The ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act is rights-based and aims to reduce the potential for conflict by removing aspects of the current system that can cause tension. As well unifying separate systems for pre and post-16, it emphasises the participation of children, their parents and young people in the decisions that affect them and in the development of individual development plans (IDPs). This should lead to a more consensual approach to planning.

All the training we have developed on the ALN system is available to everyone, in Welsh and English, on the Welsh Government's online learning platform, Hwb. It includes an [introductory e-learning course](#) on the new system for all interested parties and an [online training course](#) for those in statutory and senior leadership roles. We have also developed an online national [ALN professional learning programme](#). This programme, which is also on Hwb, is aimed at helping ALN Co-ordinators (ALNCos) and interested teachers and lecturers develop the skills they need to support all learners with ALN. The programme does not provide information and awareness training on all types of ALN. Practitioners can also opt to take their studies to a higher level by pursuing an ALN pathway on the [National Masters in Education](#). I have passed the helpful links you have provided to officials in the Education Directorate.

Local authority educational psychologists have an important role in the new ALN system as they help ensure learners with ALN receive the right support. It is essential that there are enough educational psychologists working in Wales to fulfil this role and to meet demand for the services across all corners of Wales, and bilingually. As part of ALN implementation we continue to work with local authorities to review provision and get an understanding of workforce gaps.

Over the next three years we are investing over £2.6 million to train new educational psychologists in Wales. Since 2018, the Welsh Government has funded 10 new places per year on the three-year Doctorate in Educational Psychology course at Cardiff University. An annual bursary is available to each student in the funded cohort. From September 2022, a new funding condition means that those who benefit from the fully funded training and bursary will be required to stay and work in the public sector in Wales for two years immediately after qualification. This will ensure more appropriately qualified educational psychologists enter the Welsh education system each year, with a steady pipeline to aid workforce planning.

Criminal Justice:

Criminal justice is a reserved issue under the current devolution settlement. Although we work closely with criminal justice organisations such as HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales, Policing in Wales and HM Courts and Tribunal Service, we do not have responsibility for the training provided to operational staff in these organisations. The petitioner may want to get in touch directly with the organisations involved, using the contact details provided on their websites, or to contact the Ministry of Justice directly using this link: [Start - Contact the Ministry of Justice](#)

On prison health specifically, acquired brain injuries do feature within the [partnership agreement for prison health](#) and the standards for mental health services in the prisons. The Partnership Agreement states we will aim to develop an agreed set of standards and indicators for mental health services in prison which will include brain injuries. Condition Specific Standards for brain injuries will be developed through a network approach taking learning from prison teams in Wales.

For the specific queries on provision at HMP&YOI Parc, the petitioner may wish to contact the establishment directly for the information. You can find more information on how to contact Parc at this link: [Contact Us - HMP Park \(hmpparc.co.uk\)](#)

Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury

The UK Government has commissioned the work to develop UK-wide guidance on concussion in sport and the Welsh Government, along with medical professionals from the Welsh Rugby Union and the Football Association of Wales, is engaged in those discussions.

Welfare Benefits System:

Thank you for your comments relating to what improvements should be made to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment process to ensure that it is accessible for people with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). We agree that changes are necessary to ensure that disabled people are treated in a compassionate manner and that any barriers to accessing financial support should be removed. We are still waiting for the DWP to set out what changes they intend to make to health and disability benefits and the assessment process in their White Paper which is yet to be published. Once published we will be working with DWP to determine how any new policies to be implemented will affect disabled people in Wales and take action accordingly.

It has never been more important as it is now with the rising cost of living that people are able to access all the financial support that they are entitled to, but we know people often find the benefit claiming process challenging. The Welsh Government funded Advicelink Cymru will assist people with filling in claim forms for welfare benefits and support them throughout the claiming process, including challenging adverse decisions. Advicelink Cymru can be contacted either by telephoning the freephone number 0800 702 2020 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday), or they can access information and/or speak with an adviser online by clicking [here](#)

Yours sincerely,

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

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