



Ref: DDG/jld

31 January 2013

Naomi Stocks
Clerk of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Naomi

I refer to the letter from your Committee Chair reference P-04-424 dated 14th December 2012.

The Wales Deanery is accountable to the UK Regulator, the General Medical Council (GMC) in accordance with the Medical Act 1983. The Deanery is required to ensure that training posts meet the published GMC standards and approved quality monitoring and assurance processes are in place to deliver this within Wales.

With regards to the withdrawal of posts from Neath Port Talbot Hospital this decision followed two years of discussions and negotiation with the Health Board.

The Deanery initially met with Clinical Directors, Consultants and the Medical Director of Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMuHB) in April 2010 to discuss issues around staffing on-call rotas at Neath from August 2010 following recruitment issues.

In December 2010 the Deanery committed to work with the Health Board to develop a sustainable model for the middle grade tier and agreed an interim solution.

Over the past few years the Deanery has monitored the training posts in Neath, feedback has revealed issues around :

- Consultant / Senior Supervision
- the lack of adequate/appropriate unselected medical intake
- the overall quality of teaching was rated to be poor
- Royal College exam pass rates

The 2012 GMC Trainee Survey identified 8 patient safety concerns in Neath Port Talbot Hospital.

In August 2012 following detailed discussions with the Health Board the decision was made to remove the 6 Core Medical Training year 1 posts from Neath and place them in Princess of Wales (1), Singleton (1) and Morriston (4) hospitals.

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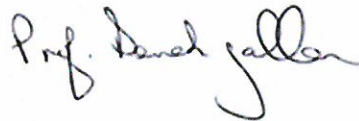
With regards to your query about whether staffing issues are acting as a driver for service reconfiguration across Wales I can only comment for training. Throughout the UK there are difficulties in recruiting to certain specialties.

Recruitment gaps impact heavily upon rotas which then puts undue service pressures on the trainees, to the detriment of their educational experience. It is the Deanery's recommendation, based upon findings from the Temple Report, that rotas should have 11 participants to prevent vulnerability from recruitment gaps, less than full time (LTFT) training, sickness absence, out of programme training opportunities and maternity leave.

For most specialties trainees are placed across 15 Units in Wales where rotas consist of less than 11 participants. This therefore means that our trainees in these specialties are spread too thinly across too many hospitals. For more information on this area you may wish to access the evidence provided by the Deanery to the Health and Social Care Committee at their meeting on the 10th January 2013.

The aim of the Wales Deanery's Programme of Reconfiguration is to develop and deliver training programmes which are high quality, sustainable, attractive to potential applicants and appropriate for the future needs of the Health Service in Wales.

Yours sincerely



Professor Derek Gallen
Postgraduate Dean and Head of School

Copied to: Professor Peter Donnelly, Deputy Dean
Dr Helen Baker, Associate Director - Secondary Care
Dr Chris Callander, Sub Dean - Quality
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