

Eluned Morgan MS
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Jayne Byrant MS
Minister for Mental Health and Early Years

19 June 2024

Dear Eluned and Jayne

Prisoner healthcare

You will be aware that, towards the end of the last Senedd, our predecessor committee undertook an **inquiry into health and social care on the adult prison estate in Wales**. The inquiry focused on the provision of health and social care services and its impact on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of prisoners.

That committee's **report** made a number of recommendations to the Welsh Government which highlighted the importance of structured governance, collaborative efforts across government and health bodies, and the establishment of clear standards and pathways to address the health and social care needs within the prison system. It emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach to prison health and social care, encompassing staff education, strategic planning, resource allocation, and the integration of technology to meet the healthcare needs of prisoners effectively.

In 2022, we exchanged **correspondence** with you and your then deputy Ministers about progress in implementing the recommendations in the above report. At that time, some of the progress had been impacted by the pandemic.

More recently, we have been **contacted by Dr Robert Jones** from the Wales Governance Centre about funding for prison healthcare. His letter highlights that the underfund for prisoner

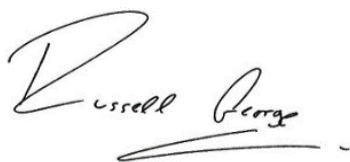
healthcare has deepened since the Committee concluded its inquiry in 2021. He states that, in the last 12 months, the cost of prisoner healthcare services in Wales increased by 29 per cent to £7,163,188, whilst the funding provided through the Block transfer remained the same as when it was set two decades ago; £2.544m.

In addition to the above, we are, of course, aware of the series of recent drug-related deaths at HMP/YOI Parc in Bridgend, which have given rise to concerns about prison safety.

These are matters that merit further consideration at this time and, to this end, I have set out a number of areas in the attached annex where I would be grateful for an update on progress. For convenience, I have included a reference to the relevant recommendation from our predecessor's report, where relevant. I would appreciate a response by **8 July 2024**.

A copy of this letter goes to Mike Hedges MS, Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee and Jenny Rathbone MS, Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee, given their respective Committees' interest in this subject area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

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

Annex

Could you provide an update in each of the following areas:

1. the inspection arrangements for HMP/YOI Parc and whether they fully align with those in place for public sector prisons in Wales (Recommendation 3);
2. since the healthcare at HMP/YOI Parc has been under the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (December 2022), the improvements that have been observed in the healthcare services provided;
3. how the MoU between the Health Board, HMPPS, and Welsh Government ensures that healthcare delivery is consistent and meets the required standards;
4. the representations that have been made to the UK Government to enable the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to question professional and clinical judgment in complaints about health services in privately-run prisons like HMP Parc (Recommendation 5);
5. the consideration that has been given to adopting the approach used in England for making pre-prison medical records available to prison health services (Recommendation 8);
6. how progress on mental health priorities will be monitored, including how the contribution of national standards will be assessed (Recommendation 10);
7. the anticipated timescales for developing a standardised clinical pathway for managing substance misuse in prisons (Recommendation 12);
8. the revised priorities and workplan for the Deep Dive Group, including monitoring access to support for prisoners with co-occurring issues (Recommendation 13);
9. discussions with HMPPS about establishing an Expert Advisory Group for Medicines (Recommendation 14);
10. regarding the agreed service specification for healthcare services at HMP/YOI Parc, the measures that are in place to ensure the quality and effectiveness of dementia screening and support (Recommendation 16).
11. the steps that have been taken towards finding a fair, sufficient and sustainable baseline for funding via the Welsh Block' for prison healthcare provision (Recommendation 21);
12. the progress that has been made in collating and reviewing the costs of healthcare provision across prisons in Wales, and when we can expect this information to be published (Recommendation 22);

13. the steps taken to monitor demand, provision and spend on social care in prisons to ensure funding issues do not prevent access to necessary care (Recommendation 23);
14. the steps taken towards identifying, developing, and publishing Wales-specific datasets on current and forecast prison population (Recommendation 25).