

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/00449/13

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

18th April 2013

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 8 April concerning four petitions relating to Hywel Dda Health Board's proposals for service reconfiguration in West Wales.

As you are aware, the Health Board published its final proposals on 15 January, and the plans were referred to my predecessor by Hywel Dda Community Health Council (CHC) for determination on 25 February. Following due consideration was determined that the CHC's submission failed to satisfy key requirements of the *Guidance for Engagement and Consultation on Changes to Health Services*.

The guidance makes clear that Health Boards and CHCs must work together to ensure safe and sustainable services are provided across the whole of their area. The CHC is obliged to recognise maintaining the status quo may not be an acceptable response and must work with the LHB to agree how such services can be maintained within available resources. Local resolution must be sought wherever possible and referral to Welsh Ministers should only be made as a last resort. Where particular proposals are judged not to be in the best interest of health services in the area, the CHC must propose alternative solutions for providing safe and sustainable services to their local community.

The CHC's submission did not satisfy these key requirements and my predecessor wrote to its Chair on 14 March, requesting the Council resume its dialogue with the Health Board. Following a request from the CHC, I agreed to extend the deadline for referral of any outstanding issues to me to 19 April. I also asked Professor Marcus Longley to work with the Health Board and CHC to help facilitate these discussions and bring the matter to a conclusion.

Best wishes

Mark

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