

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04- 587
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01067/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
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16 April 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your further letter of 17 March on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-587 – a Dedicated Support Team for Myalgic Encephalitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) and Fibromyalgia (FM) Sufferers in South East Wales, and the report and recommendations of the ME/CFS and FM task and finish group.

With regard to the petitioners' concerns that ME/CFS and FM are viewed as psychological as opposed to neurological conditions, the consensus of the task and finish group was that the clinical lead for these conditions should not sit in mental health. The group noted that, although mental health services have transferrable skills and understand case management, placing the lead in mental health services is inappropriate, causes stigmatisation and has tended to lack the multi-disciplinary team approach which is required. Psychologists on the group stressed their role was in supporting patients to manage the impact of the illness, and not about treating it as a psychological disorder.

Together for Health – a Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan for Wales was published in May 2014 and, although ME/CFS is not mentioned specifically in the delivery plan (along with a number of other neurological conditions), it is covered by it and is recognised as a neurological condition by the World Health Organisation.

A copy of the plan can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/strategies/neurological/?lang=en>

The establishment of an all-Wales implementation group to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach is under way. Clinical leads nominated by each health board at the request of my officials will be attending the first implementation group meeting on 13 May.

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In line with the recommendations from the task and finish group report, health boards must produce a draft three-year action plan for 2015-18 by June 2015, and a final plan by September 2015. Annual progress reports will also be required by the end of each financial year.

I hope the Petitions Committee finds this information helpful.

Best wishes,

Mark.

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