

Mr William Powell A.C/A.M Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA

Tywyn and District Health Care Action Group
C/O Miss Jennifer Windsor
7 Cantref, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 0BW

15th May 2015

Petition P04-479 Tywyn Memorial X-ray and Minor Injuries Unit

Dear Mr Powell,

I am writing firstly to apologise for the fact that I, as the petitioner, failed to respond to a notification, received from the committee, which indicated that the petition P 04-479 Tywyn Memorial X-ray and Minor Injuries Unit was to be included on the agenda of the hearing to be held on the 28th of April 2015. I would secondly like to ask whether you would kindly consider, at the next hearing of the Petitions Committee, the response which I am now sending. I am aware that you have received the letter of the 31st of March from Mr Trevor Purt, Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in which he informed you of the number of attendances at Tywyn and other hospitals in North Wales, during 2014, made by Tywyn residents in order to access Minor Injuries Services. The use of this data has apparently enabled the Health Board to estimate that the level of demand remains relatively low in Tywyn although we are not sure whether any other information was considered at the same time such as the range of population density in parts of Gwynedd (144 perKM) and South Merionnydd (22 per KM), the age and status of the population, the difficulties of accessing services and the impact and knock on effect that the unavailability of minor injuries services produces for other emergency out of hours services. The concern that we have is that the Health Board are indeed using this type of monitoring as a stepping stone to further reduce rather than to supply the level of Minor Injuries Service that is required in Tywyn. We would, again, like to raise the following points that we feel should not be neglected by the Health Board in estimating the level of demand.

1. In January 2013 the C.H.C urged the Health Board to reconsider it's proposal to close the Minor Injuries Unit at Tywyn at 6pm rather than 8pm in line with Ysbyty Alltwen and Dolgellau Hospital. Their objection to 6pm closing was that it was exactly the time when the service may be needed as general practice minor injury services also close at that time.
2. The Health Board itself, during the consultation stages, issued concerns that different opening hours of Minor Injuries Services at different Hospitals could present a problem by causing confusion to the public as to the availability of the service.
3. We are concerned that the confusion over differing hours of availability will, in itself, have an impact on the numbers of people who are able to successfully access the service when required. The further concern is that this will also be reflected in the monitoring of the level of attendance and demand for the service.
4. We are concerned that the effect of the unavailability of the service will encourage people to use the Out of Hours, Emergency Ambulance and Accident and Emergency Services for minor injuries while there is no other choice.
5. We feel that consideration should be given to the difficulties of accessing services in other areas that are presented through poor infrastructure of the south Gwynedd, north Powys and north Ceredigion areas where public transport is sporadic, on poor roads ,often affected by adverse weather conditions and even less available during the evening and at weekends.
6. Surveys during the last five years have revealed that of the population in South Merionnydd 20% were aged sixty five or over and living in single households and that 24% had no access to private transport.
7. Part of the Health Board's plan for the Tywyn Hospital Redevelopment scheme is to ensure that primary and community services are developed to meet the needs of the local population and to ensure that services are provided as close to the patient's home as possible,

we hope that the delivery of the Minor Injuries Services in the Redevelopment will meet these requirements.

At a meeting of the South Mierriionnydd Older People's Forum, which was held on the 29th of April 2015, Dr Higson, the Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, was invited to speak. Afterwards the members were also invited to ask questions and the first question of the inequality of opening times of the different Minor Injuries Units was raised. Dr Higson expressed concern about Tywyn and said that it would be something that he would be looking in to. The Chair of the Forum stressed how important it was to Tywyn to have the Minor Injuries Service in place from 8am until 8pm, in line with other hospitals, as soon as possible this year in order to prevent confusion for the public. We would be very grateful for your support in following up this matter, with the Health Board, as you have very generously supported the petition thus far. We hope that this item may be included in the next hearing of Petition P04-479 Tywyn Memorial X-ray and Minor Injuries Unit.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer M Windsor (petitioner on behalf of Tywyn and District Health Care Action Group)