



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Mr William Powell AC / AM
Chair of Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Ein cyf / Our ref: TP/BH/3952/445

Eich cyf / Your ref: P-04-492

☎: 01248 384910

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Linda Hughes

E-bost / Email: linda.hughes@wales.nhs.uk

Dyddiad / Date: 15 May 2015

Dear Mr Powell

PETITION: P-04-492 DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM IN CHILDREN

Thank you for asking me to comment on this Petition. It is of course a concern that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) are not currently able to ensure timely diagnosis for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder nor are we able to fully comply in all areas with NICE Guidelines.

It appears over the last few years that the demand for ASD assessment has significantly increased. It is the view of our Clinicians that this is partly due to an overall lowering threshold for diagnosis and also greater awareness within the broader children's services of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

In BCUHB there is significant variation in waiting times for diagnosis. Our shortest waits are in Conwy, where the waiting times are 21 weeks and our longest waiting times are in North East Wales where waiting times for an Autism Spectrum Disorder assessment are 129 weeks.

It would be helpful to have policy guidance on the relative contributions of Community Child Health/Community Paediatrics and on the other hand Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

As demand has increased for urgent mental health assessments and also the necessity of complying with the Mental Health Measure there has been a tendency for Autism Spectrum Disorder assessments to be seen as routine and non-urgent work. Waiting times for Autism Spectrum Disorder assessments, particularly when led by CAMHS services, have therefore been adversely affected by our efforts to meet the urgent demands upon our CAMHS services.

There is significant variation in the region in terms of the contribution of Speech and Language Therapy.



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A clear focus on the NICE guidelines paying attention to the role of Speech and Language Therapy, timely diagnosis and the interface between CAMHS service and Community Child Health would therefore be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Purt', written over a horizontal line.

Prof Trevor Purt
Chief Executive