

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-362
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05872/12

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

March 2012

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter of 21 February in regard to petition: P-04-362 Ambulance Services in Monmouth.

The Welsh Government and NHS Wales are committed to delivering safe, efficient and effective focused emergency care services, and this is applicable to rural parts of Wales as well as more urban and sparsely populated regions.

Whilst I acknowledge the petition's focus on the provision of appropriate ambulance services in Monmouthshire, and rural Wales, it should be recognised response times have improved significantly over recent times. The Monmouthshire locality has achieved well in excess of the 60% equity standard for 8 minute response times for Category A calls during 11 of the past 12 months. The standard was not met during December when demand on ambulance services escalated to record levels.

We are working closely with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and Health Boards to sustain and improve on response time performance in rural areas and across Wales. However, I feel the statement made in the petition about a high standard of ambulance provision, "...especially in rural areas such as Monmouthshire" is inappropriate. The Welsh Government and NHS Wales' objective is to provide a high quality, timely and clinically appropriate ambulance response to patients who require a response, irrespective of their location.

Turning to the closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at Monnow Vale, this decision and others about how and where services are provided in Gwent localities are the responsibility of Aneurin Bevan Health Board. However, it is important we accept services cannot be frozen in time and importantly services are not about buildings, they are about care. To ensure patients receive the best services, we need to constantly remind ourselves who these services are for and what is in their best interests and the Welsh Government is committed to working closely with communities to work these issues through.

Finally, the petition urges the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust to "...increase provision of ambulance services...with a high dependency unit and / or ambulance based within Monmouth town". The delivery of ambulance services is the responsibility of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust from within its discretionary allowance and I understand the Trust has provided a response to this request.

Thank you for seeking my views on this petition.

Regards
Lesley

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