

**MEMBERS ROOM
YSTAFELL YR AELODAU**

Our Ref: VG/02614/18

01 September 2018

**David John Rowlands AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA**



Dear Mr Rowlands,

St David's Medical Centre petition, Cardiff

Thank you for your email and for considering our petition. The decision to close a well-used medical centre in my community of Pentwyn was a huge shock and we felt the issue should be brought to the attention of Assembly Members through our petition.

We first became aware of a proposal to reduce the opening hours of St David's Medical Centre in April 2018. There was no public consultation and this led to us setting up this petition and first approaching the health board.

Background to the petition

Approximately 10,000 people live in Pentwyn in North East Cardiff, with most of these people being registered at St David's. A medical centre has existed in this community since the 1980s and the current building was opened in the mid-1990s owned by the partners. Starting in the 1990s, the new community of Pontprennau started to emerge and the partners established a branch surgery for that new expanding community.

Over the years, the area continued to expand, patterns of working changed, and some of the original partners retired. At some point the former branch surgery in Pontprennau became the main surgery and St David's Medical Centre was reclassified as the branch surgery. By 2014 the present partners owned the former branch surgery in Pontprennau, whilst the retired partners owned the St David's Medical Centre.

Over the last 5 months the proposals concerning St David's medical centre have changed twice and we have been told different rationales.

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Originally patients were told that the hours at St David's Medical Centre were being reduced due to staffing issues. This prompted our original letter to Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to find out what was happening.

In June 2018 we met with officials from the health board and were told that the situation had now changed. The partners had applied for an Improvement Grant to invest in the Pontprennau site and had decided to temporarily reopen St David's full time and move the Pontprennau patients there as well. This was communicated to all patients by letter. Local councillors had not been consulted or approached in anyway by the partners, but the Health Board and CHC had been told.

At the end July, the partners revealed their intentions to close St David's medical centre. They handed out leaflets to patients when they attended clinic, put a poster outside the practice, but did not write out to all patients. As local councillors we felt we had a duty to let our community know. We encouraged people to sign the petition and raise their objections with the Community Health Council.

What is the issue?

There are significant pockets of deprivation in Pentwyn the location of St David's medical centre was picked so that it could easily serve these patients. There are high numbers of people with chronic conditions such as asthma, COPD and diabetes, and they need access to a GP. Many of our residents can't drive, so whilst they could theoretically access the Pontprennau surgery, we know in reality many will simply call 999 and rely on higher cost hospital services.

Even before the changes in April, patients regularly complained to us that it was difficult to see a nurse or a GP. Both surgeries were designed to serve approximately 5,000 patients each and yet Pontprennau is now set to support 14,000 people as that community expands further. Their concern and ours, is that it will be even more difficult to see a health care professional.

Finally it feels like the wishes of our community are being ignored and these proposals are being rushed through. Patients were not asked their opinion on options before the partners embarked on these plans, and the information they have received has only come late in the day.

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Response from the Cabinet Secretary

We are grateful to the Cabinet Secretary investigating the issue and responding to the committee. We know that primary care officials in the health board are aware of our concerns, but we are pleased that he has raised the issue with the chair of the health board. We look forward to his response.

We would like to respond to some of the comments.

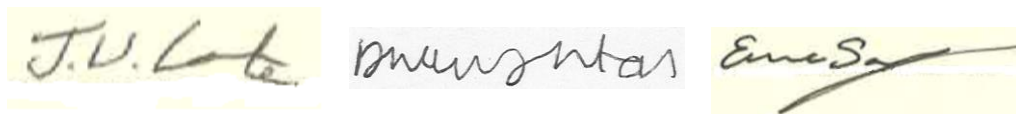
In the second paragraph he states that this is a contractual matter between the health board and the partners. I think this oversimplifies the situation as the community health council and Welsh Government have a role to play. If the single practice at Pontprennau is unable to serve the whole population, then the proposal to close St David's medical centre should be rejected, and I understand that at this point, Welsh Government would be involved.

In the third paragraph, Mr Gething talks about the Pontprennau surgery serving Pentwyn for a number of years. Whilst this is not inaccurate, it fails to take into account the fact that St David's Medical Centre was the larger main surgery until the partners recently changed the status.

In the fourth paragraph, Mr Gething raises the issue of the grant funding from the health board. As mentioned earlier this was only revealed to councillors in June at a time when the plan to close St David's Medical Centre hadn't been announced. We believe that the future plans to close the surgery should have been revealed by the partners when they applied to the health board for the improvement grant.

We hope that our letter provides some background and context around the St David's medical centre petition. If you or any member of your committee, would like any further information, please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLORS JOE CARTER, DAN NAUGHTON & EMMA SANDREY
WELSH LIBERAL DEMOCRAT COUNCILLORS FOR PENTWYN AND
LLANEDEYRN**

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