

Vaughan Gething AM,  
Minister for Health and Social Services  
Welsh Government

10 May 2019

Dear Vaughan,

**The National Health Service (Welsh Language in Primary Care Services)  
(Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2019**

I note that the Regulations relating to the Welsh language standards for primary health care providers including general practitioners, dentists, pharmacists and opticians were laid yesterday. I also note that they are due to come into force on 30 May 2019.

I am extremely concerned that the Committee has not been given sufficient time to consider them, particularly after I emphasised how important it was for us to have more than 21 days to consider them when we looked at the previous set of Regulations in March of last year.

The need for more consideration time was made clear in our Committee report and I brought it up during the Plenary debate on 20 March. I spoke then about our frustration with the rushed timetable and the fact that our stakeholders and Members felt there was insufficient time to consider the implications of the legislation properly.

In response to our concerns, Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language said:

I am highly aware that you didn't have a great deal of time to look at this, but we have complied with the 21 days that is usually in place. However, I do accept that perhaps we can look at expanding

that, if that's created a problem on this occasion. But that's the way it's always been done. But as a point of principle, I do think that we can extend the time in future.'

Given these comments, the Committee Clerk wrote to Welsh Government officials in the Legislative Programme and Governance Unit on three occasions between December and January 'to confirm that the Committee will have more than the minimum 21 days to consult on and scrutinise the regulations.' No reply was received.

I am sure you can understand how disappointed I am therefore, at finding we have, again, been given the very bare minimum of time to scrutinise this important piece of subordinate legislation.

In fact, by setting the date for the Regulations to come into force on 30 May, which includes a Bank Holiday, Privilege Day and Recess period, you have effectively given us only 10 working days to consult our stakeholders, discuss this issue and report on it to the Assembly.

I am not prepared to compromise the work of the Committee by rushing this activity. Please can you postpone the coming into force date to the third week in June? It is essential that we have time to properly scrutinise the legislation because of the importance it has for this group of service users and primary care providers.

During the debate on the previous set of Regulations relating to primary care providers the Minister acknowledged this is a contentious issue and the need for it to be discussed thoroughly with all those it will affect.

Due to the urgency, please can you reply by email or telephone as soon as possible or ask one of your officials to speak to the Committee Clerk, Martha

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**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**  
Y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

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Howells, who can be contacted on [REDACTED] or by e-mail at

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

*Bethan Sayed.*

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**Chair of the Committee**