



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07789/19

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Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 11 September on behalf of the Petitions Committee about petition P-05-905 on an Independent Judicial Inquiry into the reorganisation of services within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board is responsible for the provision and delivery of safe and sustainable health care services on behalf its local population, within the resources available. You will be aware that the Health Board is implementing changes which were publically consulted on in 2014 and agreed as part of the South Wales Programme.

The consultation focussed on consultant-led obstetrics, paediatrics and emergency medicine which would in future need to be provided at fewer hospitals across south Wales to ensure sustainability and provide the best possible care for patients.

There were a number of outcomes to the consultation that were significant for the Royal Glamorgan Hospital including changes to the development of the hospital as a beacon site for acute medicine and the establishment of a Diagnostic Hub. These changes have been implemented.

The Health Board is also developing an Integrated Healthcare Strategy which will set out its longer term strategic direction, including the wider implications of the Bridgend boundary change, where responsibility for healthcare services in the Bridgend County Borough Council (Bridgend CBC) transferred to the newly formed Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board on 1 April 2019.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

You raised a number of specific areas and I will respond to these in turn as follows:

Maternity

The move of obstetric and neonatal services from Royal Glamorgan Hospital to the new state of the art facilities at Prince Charles Hospital took place in early March. Consultant-led maternity and neonatal services are now delivered at Prince Charles Hospital; and the Royal Glamorgan Hospital is a Freestanding Midwife-led Unit. Obstetric, Special Baby Care Unit and paediatric services are also provided at the Princess of Wales Hospital, the provision of which transferred to Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB on 1 April following the Bridgend boundary change.

Paediatrics

As part of the implementation of the South Wales Programme it was agreed that inpatient paediatric services currently delivered in both Princes Charles Hospital (PCH) and the Royal Glamorgan Hospital (RGH) would be consolidated into a new unit at PCH. At the RGH a new Paediatric Assessment Unit would be established. These moves were due to take place in June 2019 but have been postponed. The Health Board is taking the opportunity to look at how their wider services are delivered as they develop their Integrated Healthcare Strategy.

A&E

In view of the ongoing work around the development of their Integrated Healthcare Strategy, the Health Board will be reviewing a range of services and considering options in response to the South Wales Programme, including the emergency services provided at the Royal Glamorgan.

I have been assured that the Health Board will continue to engage with its stakeholders on any future service change proposals to ensure patients receive safe, sustainable high quality health care services.

I would also like to take this opportunity to confirm there has been no removal of A&E consultants from the Royal Glamorgan Hospital to Prince Charles Hospital, as this is a matter which has been raised with me previously

GP/Primary Care Services

I understand there are a number of GP Practices in the Rhondda that regularly employ locums, but no more than is the case elsewhere in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, or in fact the rest of Wales. Many GPs are choosing careers as locums as opposed to salaried GP or partner working because of the flexibility offered. In many cases GP locums in the Rhondda tend to work regularly in a small number of practices as they enjoy the benefits of team working and the continuity of seeing the same patients.

The Health Board directly manages two practices, both of which are located in the Rhondda, (New Tynwydd/High Street Treorchy and Ferndale/Maerdy). Reliance on locums has reduced considerably over the last 6 months in both of the practices, due to the Health Board successfully recruiting more salaried GPs. The GMS contract for 2019/20 includes a new incentive to promote partnership working as a career. The Partnership Premium scheme provides an incentive for partnership working linked directly to the sessional commitment of the GP.

Trips and falls by the elderly resulting in fatality whilst hospitalised

The Welsh Government is taking a co-ordinated approach to falls policy work in Wales and a number of substantial national and local initiatives are underway to address the issues of falls, ranging from prevention through to treatment.

With regard to falls in hospitals the Welsh Government uses clinical audit to benchmark and measure performance relating to falls. A Falls and Frailty Fracture Audit Programme (FFFAP) Strategic Group has been organised to improve the quality of service provision for frail and elderly people across Wales and highlight the findings and recommendations from national clinical audit and outcome reviews.

Out of Hours

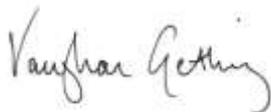
In common with the rest of the UK, there have been challenges in GP out of hours cover and in response the Health Board is developing a new approach. This will be based on a more detailed understanding of demand and capacity, which will include the use of a multi-disciplinary team. You may also be aware that the 111 service will be a key component of the Primary Care Model for Wales in tandem with the development of a range of services delivered in the out of hours period. The 111 service (which already serves the Bridgend area) will be rolled out across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area before the end of the financial year and will provide further support for primary care out of hours, and with it greater national alignment for the call handling and clinical triage.

Access to services out of hours will increasingly be co-ordinated through the NHS 111 service improving access through better signposting to clinical advice and treatment 24/7 using a free to call number and other multimedia/digital opportunities. There will also be greater regional and national working to meet the demand for critical advice and treatment at peak times.

Cardiac Services

Cardiac Services provided by the Health Board will continue to be delivered as normal and there are no immediate plans for change at this point in time.

Yours sincerely,



Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services