

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/08638/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair,
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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10 January 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 22 November on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding P-05-930 Petition for Ferryside Surgery.

The provision of adequate GP services within Ferryside is the responsibility of Hywel Dda University Health Board. I am aware that Mariners Surgery in Ferryside has taken the decision to submit a request to Hywel Dda University Health Board to close the Carmarthen Road premises and consolidate their services in to the Minafon Surgery in Kidwelly. This is a contractual issue between the Health Board and the GP practice and I am unable to intervene in this matter.

I appreciate that this is an unsettling time for patients. Hywel Dda University Health Board is engaging with patients and stakeholders as part of a consultation process on the practice application. A practice review panel will be convened to consider the application in accordance with a protocol agreed with the Community Health Council. In considering the application, the review panel will look at the reasons for the application, current patient usage, and impact on patients, public transport links and the views of patients.

We recognise that the GP system is under pressure and are working to ensure that every patient is able to access the right care at the right time. In March 2019, I announced the new Access Standards for General Medical Services, which we expect GP practices to meet by March 2021. To assist practices to meet the standards £3.76million is being invested this year in digital telephony services. We are also working closely with the General Practitioners Committee Wales and NHS Wales to make the profession more attractive whilst improving access to services and ensuring GP practice sustainability.

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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.

Wales, along with other parts of the UK, has needed to deal with GP recruitment issues. To address this, I launched a national and international *Train Work Live* campaign in 2016 to promote the benefits of training and working as a GP in Wales. As part of the campaign we introduced two incentive schemes to encourage and attract more GP trainees to Wales. Since the launch in 2016, there has been a significant increase in the fill rate for GP training. This year, a total of 186 places have been filled, surpassing the newly agreed higher target of 160 posts. This represents the highest number of recruits into GP speciality training in recent times. In June, we announced an increase to the target quota for GP training from 136 to 160, starting this autumn.

I am committed to ensuring we find practical and safe solutions to achieve a sustainable workforce, which is safer for patients and improves the quality of service that the NHS can provide.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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