

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-04-342
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/07018/11

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

29th
November 2011

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 15 November regarding petition P-04-342 about MS Nurses.

I am aware of the serious nature of Multiple Sclerosis and would like to reassure the petitioner of the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring Health Boards provide the highest standard of care possible for people who suffer from MS, including access to specialist neurological nursing care. It is our intention to ensure all patients get access to the right staff, in the right place, at the right time.

Ultimately, Health Boards are responsible for planning and funding services for people with MS. Health Board actions to implement the recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Neurosciences include work to address the roles of specialist nurses, and ensure patients have access to the nursing care they need, as close to home as possible.

I am unaware of any proposal to reduce the current number of dedicated MS nurses. The 2010-11 NHS Wales Annual Operating Framework did not require NHS organisations to reduce the percentage of senior nursing staff. The Framework actually stated 'all organisations are expected to work towards achievement of a 3% reduction in staff in Agenda For Change Bands 5 and above, with a reflected increase in staff in Bands 1 to 4, per annum, between 2010 to 2013 and a 10% increase in the proportion of staff providing services in a community setting, to be achieved between 2010 to 2013.'

This target was not seeking primarily to reduce posts at band 5 and above, nor was it specific to nurses. It was set principally to support organisations with workforce redesign to ensure skill mix reflects actual service delivery needs. The aim is to increase the number of support staff to ensure skilled health professionals have more time to utilise their higher levels of expertise most appropriately. This would include enabling nurses to specialise in care for specific conditions such as MS.

Regards
Lesley

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