



Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref SF/LG/7199/11

Mark Drakeford AM
Chair of the Health and Social
Care Committee
HSCCommittee@wales.gsi.gov.uk

16th

February 2012

Dear Mark,

During my attendance at the Health and Social Care Committee on 25 January 2012, I agreed to provide the Committee with the following information:

Vacant Doctors Posts in Wales

As at 31 December 2011, the NHS reported to the Welsh Government there were 201 medical (i.e. doctor) vacancies. This number was based on a vacancy being defined as "an established post which is currently unoccupied and despite actively taking steps to recruit to the post, no appointment has been made". This represents less than 4% of medical staff working in the NHS in Wales. In the last 10 years, the number of medical and dental staff employed in the NHS has increased by around 45%.

I have already provided the Committee with a summary table of medical & dental vacancies by grade as at December 2011.

Marketing Campaign to Recruit Doctors to Wales

At Committee, I briefly referred to the Marketing Campaign Reference Group which has been established. The Group are currently concluding their findings and I will write to you again to provide you with an update on the success criteria.

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Flying Start Programme

Delivery of the manifesto commitment to double the number of children who benefit from Flying Start to 36,000, is in part dependant upon an appropriate workforce being in place to expand the services, and in particular on having sufficient numbers of health visitors with a capped caseload of 1:110. This caseload allows health visitors to provide a more intensive service to support the needs of disadvantaged families, and is core to the Flying Start offer.

The provision of health visiting services at the same caseload level as currently employed (i.e. one health visitor per 110 children) will require an additional 163 new posts in order to meet the Flying Start manifesto commitment to reach an additional 18,000 children by the end of the Assembly term.

We are proactively planning and providing funding for the recruitment and training of additional health visitors to deliver the Flying Start service. The recruitment of additional health visitors has been properly costed, and a proportion of the additional £55 million allocated for the expansion of Flying Start over the next three years will be used to pay for the Flying Start workforce.

A recruitment drive is already underway to achieve the number of health visitors the expanded Flying Start programme will require.

Regulation on Cosmetic Surgery Providers

As you are aware, a high number of women have been placed at risk of harm as a result of the recent Poly Implant Prosthese (PIP) failure. In Wales we have taken firm action to ensure that the risk of harm to women who have had PIP implants is minimised.

As stated at Committee, I have written to the Secretary of State for Health, drawing his attention to the Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory (SMTL) in Bridgend. SMTL has an international reputation and is the only facility of its kind in the UK and is ideally suited to provide testing services for all medical devices on a UK wide basis. I have also encouraged the Department of Health, and other devolved administrations in the UK, to make use of this expertise and invest in SMTL's services.

In addition, I have asked the Secretary of State for Health to consider strengthening the regulation of breast implants which is currently undertaken by The Medicines and Healthcare Products Agency.

Wheelchair Services

Following the Wheelchair Review an additional £2.2m per annum is being invested to reduce waiting times for wheelchair services, particularly for children and young people.

The funding will be used primarily to double the number of clinical staff across Wales. These staff assess individuals to enable them to have the most appropriate wheelchair to suit their need. Some of the funding is being used by the British Red Cross to continue providing wheelchairs for short term loans and also undertake a pilot study to identify ways of improving referral mechanisms e.g. standardising

access criteria. It is also supporting more training for health professionals, patients and their carers.

This work is overseen by a Partnership Board chaired by the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) with representation from service users. The next meeting of the Board will be on 1 March 2012 and an annual report, detailing service improvements and waiting times will be available at the end of the financial year.

Armed Forces Veterans

I have already informed Committee we are providing £485,000 per year for the all-Wales Veterans Health and Wellbeing Service. This demonstrates further the Welsh Government's commitment to improve the health and well-being of service personnel and veterans in Wales. Welsh Health Circular 051 (2008) published in 2008 and distributed to all relevant individuals and health bodies extended the provision of priority NHS treatment from war pensioners to all veterans who have a health problem as a result of their military service.

Key to this is a NHS target for health bodies to specifically consider the needs of service personnel and veterans when planning services. Each Local Health Board (LHB) in Wales has an ongoing Annual Operating Framework target to consider the needs of veterans and armed forces personnel when planning services.

In addition, the Health Board Veterans and Armed Forces Champions will advocate for veterans and service personnel to ensure that their needs are reflected in service plans and will provide links and disseminate information between them, the new service and external groups.

Kind regards
Lesley

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Medical & Dental Vacancies by Grade - December 2011

	ABM	Aneurin Bevan	Betsi Cadwaladr	Cardiff & Vale	Cwm Taf	Hywel Dda	Public Health Wales	Velindre	Total
F1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
F2	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
St Lower	10	0	4	2	10	5	0	2	33
St Higher	7	4	2.4	14	2	2	0	0	31.4
SAS	10.45	1.5	13.4	0	11	9	0	0	45.35
Trust	0	12	5	5	1	2	0	0	25
Consultant	19	4.8	12	3	5	17	1	0	61.8
Total	46.45	25.3	36.8	24	29	37	1	2	201.55

Medical & Dental Vacancies by Speciality - December 2011

	ABM	Aneurin Bevan	Betsi Cadwaladr	Cardiff & Vale	Cwm Taf	Hywel Dda	Public Health Wales	0	Total
A&E	3.45	13.3	5	6	9	5	0	0	41.75
Anaes	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Dentistry	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	9
General Practice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medicine	13	3	13	6	9	4	0	0	48
Obs & Gynae	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	5
Paediatrics	5	2	4	4	0	6	0	0	21
Pathology	1	0	2.4	0	0	5	1	0	9.4
Psychiatry	3	3	4	0	10	5	0	0	25
Public Health	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Radiology	3	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	8
Surgery	1	3	1.4	1	0	6	0	0	12.4
Other	7	0	1	6	0	1	0	2	17
Total	46.45	25.3	36.8	24	29	37	1	2	201.55