

Vivienne Harpwood, Cadeirydd / Chair
Ffon / Phone: 01874 712502
E-bost / Email: Vivienne.Harpwood@wales.nhs.uk

**Carol Shillabeer, Y Prif Weithredwr /
Chief Executive**
Ffon / Phone: 01874 712659
E-bost / Email: carol.shillabeer2@wales.nhs.uk



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Bwrdd Iechyd
Addysgu Powys
Powys Teaching
Health Board

Mr D J Rowlands AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

27th February 2018

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Dear Mr Rowlands

**Re: Petition P-05-784 Prescription drug dependence and withdrawal -
recognition and support**

Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) has worked with partners in Powys to build an understanding of what treatment responses are required for individuals. This is to ensure that the right support is in place, whether this be for their physical health or mental health.

Under the auspices of the 'Together for Mental Health' agenda, a number of significant developments have taken place to widen the range of responses in Powys. This includes PTHB's involvement in the European 'Mastermind' project, aiming to make high quality treatment for depression more widely available for adults suffering from the illness, through the use of digital technology. Over the past two years PTHB has been embedding computerised cognitive behaviour therapy, known as 'Beating the Blues', to the county with good success.

However, during 2017/18, an increase in the number of people who are experiencing prescribed medication dependence has been identified through Primary Care Clusters across Powys and the substance misuse commissioned provider service, Kaleidoscope. Although these numbers are low, we recognise the need to ensure we minimise the occurrence of dependence, the impact this

Pencadlys
Tŷ Glasbury, Ysbyty Bronllys,
Aberhonddu, Powys LD3 0LU
Ffôn: 01874 711661



Headquarters
Glasbury House, Bronllys Hospital
Brecon, Powys LD3 0LU
Tel: 01874 711661

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth Gymraeg
Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys yw enw gweithred Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol
Addysgu Powys



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Powys Teaching Health Board is the operational name of
Powys Teaching Local Health Board

has on individuals affected and to strengthen our existing approach including the consideration of the referral pathway and support available in the county.

The issue has therefore been considered at a strategic partnership level. The Powys Area Planning Board brings together all those who share the responsibility of delivering, and improving, efficient and effective harm reduction services in Powys and they considered the issues described above at their last meeting in December 2017. The response has been to put in motion a process of proactively identifying need, which includes engaging with people with first-hand experience of this kind of dependence as part of their future service user involvement strategy. The outcomes of this work will help us determine a model for Powys that enhances the current support available and ensures we work with GPs to understand prescribing patterns.

PTHB has a Pain and Fatigue Management Service within a Centre for Long Term Condition Management, where a biopsychosocial approach is adopted. This encompasses all aspects of a person's life and intervention is focused on what is important to them as an individual. Due to the nature of the service, medication reduction tends to be focused on prescription pain medication. Individual medication plans are a collaboration between the individual, in-house prescribing Clinical Nurse Specialist, Therapists, GP and if required support from the Health Board Medicines Management Team. Medication reduction within the service is carried out as part of an intervention package.

The aims of the interventions are to provide the opportunity for individuals to develop skills to manage their long term health conditions, building on the assets they already have and increasing their confidence in self management skills to expand their resources. The principles of the approach are to develop and establish these skills prior to embarking on a medication reduction plan. This is always carried out at the pace and feedback of the individual.

Within the Pain and Fatigue Management service, interventions are offered in a variety of formats to optimise compatibility with an individual's lifestyle and ensure access in a timely manner. The telehealth service enables individuals to access programmes via Skype and have individual consultations with Therapists in a convenient manner. Other options range from community programmes through to a 2 week residential programme. The residential programme enables individuals to intensely focus on the development of self management techniques and often results in a reduction of pain medication.

Further discussions with Welsh Government on how we might work together to address other issues, such as a joint approach to tackling the availability of online prescription drugs, and achieve consistency of approach between Health Board areas would be useful. Further to this, the funding that Area Planning Boards receive from Welsh Government commissions a local substance misuse service to treat and support people with alcohol or illicit drug addiction but does not extend to providing a service for prescribed drug dependence and any updates or guidance on reviewing a national treatment framework would be appreciated.

I hope that this overview is helpful for the Petitions Committee's deliberations but if any further information is required please do let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Shillabeer".

Carol Shillabeer
Chief Executive

