



Pencadlys yr Ymddiriedolaeth, Ysbyty H M Stanley, Llanelwy, Sir Ddinbych LL17 0RS  
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Our Ref: EPM/rc  
Your Ref:

20<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Please reply to: Rose Cook  
PA to the Chairman & Chief Executive  
Direct Line: 01745 532944  
WHTN: 1713 3944

Mr W. Powell  
Committee Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Powell,

**Petition: P 04-362 Ambulance Services in Monmouth**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the petition request. Please accept my apologies for only now formally writing, this was due to an administrative oversight on my behalf.

I am therefore responding to your letter dated February 2012 regarding the petition the Committee considered at its meeting on 7 February 2012. Before I address the issues raised within the petition, I would like to make it clear that the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (the Trust) is committed to continually improving the quality and safety of the services we deliver and takes this matter very seriously indeed.

Turning to the petition, the petition requests that the National Assembly for Wales undertakes a scrutiny review into the ambulance service in rural areas, with a specific focus on Monmouth and the issues that have arisen as a result of the closure of the Monnow Vale Minor Injuries Unit; that the Minister for Health, Social Services and Children requires the Trust to provide a service of uniform standard across all rural areas; and that the Trust increases the levels of service provision in Monmouth.

I have examined each of these requests and believe that they have already been addressed through various means. First, the Welsh Government has set out clear national standards relating to the response time performance with the Trust required to achieve a national average of 65% of Category A calls to be responded to within 8 minutes and 60% within each Local Health

Board area. In respect of this, the ambulance service performance within Monmouth for the previous twelve months is set out below.

Month	Monmouthshire Cat A 8 minute performance
Jan-11	51.43%
Feb-11	62.85%
Mar-11	63.20%
Apr-11	64.71%
May-11	65.73%
Jun-11	63.12%
Jul-11	65.80%
Aug-11	65.22%
Sep-11	63.01%
Oct-11	66.28%
Nov-11	69.90%
Dec-11	54.42%
Jan-12	68.37%
Feb-12	62.54%

Second, the Welsh Government and Local Health Boards and Trusts have also undertaken a significant amount of work to understand the challenges relating to the provision of high-quality and equitable services within rural areas across Wales. This culminated in the production of the Rural Health Plan in 2009 which the Trust is currently implementing. Third, the challenges of providing services to Monmouth are well understood by the Trust through the work it has undertaken and have been highlighted within a recent Coroners report relating to a serious adverse incident which occurred in January 2011 and is the incident which gave rise to this petition. The Coroner subsequently issued a rule 43 to the WAST, Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board and Welsh Government which we have recently responded to.

I therefore feel that the collective efforts of the Trust, Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board and the Welsh Government will be better spent working together with the Monmouth community to identify and implement the actions required to achieve the levels of service required in a consistent and sustainable way.

In light of this, one of my Executive Directors and the Operational Director for South East Wales attended a public meeting held in Monmouth on 11 January at which these issues were discussed at great length. In response, the Trust has identified a range of actions which should further improve the provision of services within Monmouth. These include:-

- The ring-fencing a Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) resource for the Monmouth area by removing it from the deployment plan (completed);
- A review of the deployment plans to reduce the travelling times for ambulance resources in the Monmouth area and the number of occasions resources are called out of area (completed);

- The provision of additional High Dependency Services vehicles and crews in Monmouth to manage lower acuity patients allowing the RRV to focus on Cat A calls (completed and in operation since 19 February 2012);
- Further work with the local Town Council to continue to develop the Community First Responder Scheme (CFRS) and Public Access Defibrillator Scheme (PADs) within the community e.g. the local supermarket; (A new First Responder Team scheme is in place in Abergavenny and further work is being undertaken to identify more Community First Responder and PADS schemes);
- Further work with Aneurin Bevan LHB to reduce patient handover delays (this is ongoing);
- Further work with Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board to develop additional clinical skills and pathways of care other than A & E. The Trust, Aneurin Bevan and Cardiff and Vale Local Health Boards have introduced a Multi-Disciplinary Team of nurses, paramedics and GPs into the control centre to support paramedics in providing more care at home/on-scene and directing more patients to appropriate care pathways (implemented October 2011); and
- The Trust will continue to meet with Monmouth Town Council and the community and provide them with regular progress reports.

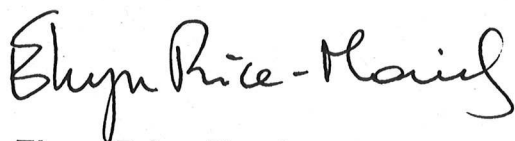
These actions were shared with the community at the public meeting on 11 January, Monmouth Town Council on 27 February and included within the Trust's response to the Coroner on 30 January 2012.

The majority of actions identified are generic ones which are also being taken forward across the whole of Wales, with a particular focus in rural areas which offer a very different challenge. In addition to this, the Trust is continuing to implement its strategy 'Working Together for Success' which will see more patients provided with treatment over the phone or on scene by skilled paramedics and nurse, and directed to pathways of care other than A & E departments. This will support the Trust in reducing the number of ambulance deployed unnecessarily and ensure that more resources are available for life-threatening calls across Wales.

I hope that the information contained above provides you with the assurance that the Trust takes this matter extremely seriously and is doing all it can to improve and sustain the quality of services across the whole of Wales. As stated previously, I believe that the challenge is well understood and that our time is best spent taking action to improve services rather than undertaking further reviews.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely



**Elwyn Price-Morris**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE