



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1250
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00366/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

31 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January on behalf of Andrew Wallace regarding a petition to open a district general hospital with A&E facilities in mid Wales.

The Welsh Government sets the strategic direction for health services in Wales, with Powys teaching Health Board being responsible for the planning and delivery of healthcare services which meets the needs of the population they serve. I would of course expect the health board to ensure its population has timely access to safe, sustainable, high-quality healthcare in the most appropriate setting.

Due to the size of the population and the rurality, it is not considered viable for there to be a district general hospital in Powys. The very rural nature of Powys means that the majority of local services are provided locally, through GPs and other primary care services, community hospitals and community services. The health board is looking at repatriating a number of outpatient services and bringing them closer to home and are using in-reach services, which means that patients don't have to travel. It also carries out a number of day case procedures locally, and it is generally only inpatient treatments where patients need to travel to a general hospital. However, the health board continues to explore how it can further develop these services.

In terms of the provision of ambulance services, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) recognises the historic challenges of delivering equity of service across all parts of Wales, particularly in rural areas where it is difficult to predict the focus of demand and road networks can impact on the speed of response.

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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.

In 2018, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee (EASC) jointly commissioned an independent demand and capacity review to inform future configuration of resources and staffing across Wales. Informed by the recommendations from this review, the Trust began the process of undertaking a national roster review in April 2021, to ensure its staff and resources are best placed geographically to deliver a responsive and equitable emergency ambulance service across all parts of Wales.

The roster review is part of a suite of improvement actions informed by the demand and capacity review which are being implemented by the Trust in collaboration with health boards and other partners, all of which impact significantly on the service provided to patients. These include:

- Increased investment;
- Increased capacity, including recruitment of frontline staff;
- Improved internal processes;
- Increased focus on reducing handover delays; and
- Increased clinical pathways.

In a recent stakeholder briefing issued to all Members of the Senedd, the Trust's chief executive provides assurance that every area of Wales will benefit from increased resources following the review, though the make-up of vehicles (i.e. emergency ambulances, rapid response vehicles (RRVs)) operating in those areas may change in line with the review's recommendations, and resources may operate at different times and from different ambulance stations than currently.

A rural impact assessment has also been undertaken, which demonstrates that all counties designated as rural by Welsh Government (Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys) will receive investment; i.e. an increase in staff numbers to support timely ambulance response in those areas.

The new rosters for all stations in Wales will begin to be implemented from September 2022 and I expect the Trust to keep rosters under ongoing review to ensure there is equity of service across all parts of Wales and no adverse impact on responsiveness, staff and patient experience, or clinical outcomes.

Should changing circumstances within Powys, such as an exponential growth in population suggest the future need to establish a full district hospital, it would be for the health board to consider in the first instance.

I hope this information is helpful for you and your petitioners.

Yours sincerely,



Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services