

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref SF/MD/0659/15

David Rees AM
Chair
Health and Social Care Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

14 May 2015

Dear David,

On 19th March I provided a response to your letter of 20th February about the Committee's Inquiry into the GP Workforce in Wales.

As part of this response I agreed to write to you again setting out the current position with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) proposal the minimum training time in all general practice programmes be extended from three to four years, with at least 24 months spent in primary care.

During the UK wide discussions about this proposal, Professor Sir David Greenaway published a report resulting from the review he had undertaken into medical postgraduate education entitled Shape of Training – Securing the Future of Excellent Patient Care. This review is set against the backdrop of the changing needs of patients across the UK and the consequent need to address more chronic illness and with patients presenting with multiple and complex conditions. This is a result of unhealthy lifestyles and an ageing population.

The Report makes a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring doctors have the appropriate skills, competences and aptitudes to meet these changing needs. It also focusses on the need to redress the balance between doctors trained to provide generalist care and those trained for more specialist care. The background and aims of the report are consistent with the requirements of NHS Wales that the workforce be flexible enough to adapt to change with patient safety, continual improvement and dignity and respect at the heart of the service provided.

The report was broadly welcomed by Health Ministers across the UK but it was agreed further work should be undertaken to consider how the recommendations within the report could be taken forward in practice. It was also agreed the question of an additional year of training for GPs should be considered as part of that wider work of the UK Shape of Training Steering Group given the proposal in the Greenaway Report was for a wider focus on generalist training,

It seems to me to be entirely appropriate that any changes proposed in relation to the education and training agenda are considered alongside each other to ensure the system works as a whole system rather than seek to make changes in isolation.

You will also be aware that since my response of 19th March, the *Health Professional Education Investment Review*, led by Mr Mel Evans has been published and is currently subject to a period of engagement with relevant stakeholders. It provides a clear overview of matters which have an impact on the future of GP workforce in Wales. In the meantime we are working with the Wales Deanery and others to identify areas where targeted periods of additional training and development would assist the current situation.

Best wishes,

Mark

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