

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 January 2017

Petitions Committee | 17 Ionawr 2017

Petition number: P-05-732

Petition title: Unacceptable Waiting Times for NHS patients in A & E Wreccsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital

Text of petition: I am petitioning the Welsh Assembly to debate and discuss and implement measures to resolve unacceptable waiting times for the Welsh people at A & E Wreccsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital. Welsh people look undermined and demoralised by this unacceptable situation.

Background

The NHS Wales Outcomes Framework 2016–17, released [in WHC \(2016\) 23](#), is used to measure delivery throughout 2016–17. The Welsh Government sets **national targets** for its emergency care services as outlined below.

Emergency departments: The targets relating to time spent in A&E departments are:

- 95 per cent of new patients should spend less than 4 hours in A&E departments from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge;
- Eradication of 12 hour or more waits within A&E departments.

The Welsh Government has published statistics on time spent in NHS Wales A&E departments for [the quarter ending September 2016](#), and these figures also show the trend over time. Figures for October and November 2016 are now available via the [NHS Informatics Service](#) and key all-Wales results for November 2016 were:

- 82 per cent of patients spent less than 4 hours from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge in November 2016;
- 2,954 patients spent 12 hours or more from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge in November 2016, meaning that 96.3 per cent of patients spent less than 12 hours from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge during that month.

The position in relation to Wrexham Maelor Hospital, the two other District General Hospitals in Betsi Cadwaladr UHB and the all-Wales figures for July–November 2016 is outlined below, together with comparative data for 2015::

Table 1: Percentage of patients spending less than 4 hours from arrival in A&E until admission, transfer or discharge.

	July 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016
Wrexham Maelor Hospital	66.4	73	72 (67.2: Sept 2015)	75 (69.8: Oct 2015)	71.6 (67: Nov 2015)
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	69.7	65.2	69.7	72.6	67.8
Ysbyty Gwynedd	80.2	78.9	78.4	81	76.6
All-Wales	83.2	84.4	82.8	82.4	82

Source: [NHS Wales Informatics Service](#)

Table 2: Percentage of patients spending less than 12 hours from arrival in A&E until admission, transfer or discharge.

	July 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016
Wrexham Maelor Hospital	95.6	95.4	96 (95.9: Sept 2015)	95.3 (94.5: Oct 2015)	94.4 (94.4: Nov 2015)
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	92	91.2	89.3	90	89
Ysbyty Gwynedd	96.3	97	96.1	96.2	94.2
All-Wales	97.4	97.6	96.8	96.8	96.3

Source: [NHS Wales Informatics Service](#)

In late 2016 the 5th Assembly Health, Social Care and Sport Committee conducted an [inquiry into the preparedness for winter 2016–17](#) of health and social care services in Wales. The Committee’s [inquiry report](#) noted the continued year round pressures on A&E services in Wales, although recognising there are seasonal spikes in demand, especially during the winter months. The Committee heard concerns from the [Royal College of Emergency Medicine](#) (RCEM) about the pressures on A&E across Wales. The RCEM has recently re-iterated those concerns; Welsh Government has noted the continuing pressures on health care services and stated it

will continue to work with the College and health experts to improve the delivery of urgent and emergency care.

This increased demand is also evident in other areas of the UK, with NHS England experiencing significant pressures in relation to A&E services.

Welsh Government Action

The Cabinet Secretary stated in his [paper to the Committee](#) for its session on 15 September 2016:

The latest published statistics show waiting times in hospital emergency departments in Wales are continuing to improve. Despite around 2,880 attendances every day, 83.2% of patients spent less than 4 hours in emergency departments being triaged, diagnosed and treated from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge. There was also a drop in the number of people waiting over 12 hours. There is more work to be done by health boards, and they are expected to work to improve patients' experiences and eliminate lengthy delays.

The Committee has also received correspondence dated 16 December 2016 from the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, who states that:

- He believes it is important to recognise that the majority of patients seen in A&E departments are treated and discharged very quickly;
- There has been improvement in the performance against the 4 hour target at Wrexham Maelor Hospital, achieving 75 percent performance against the 4 hour target in October 2016, with 'sustained improvements in waiting times at the hospital over the past 18 months';
- He hopes to see further reductions in A&E waiting times as part of the process of improving unscheduled care, and expects to see all local health boards ensure that the local emergency system is responsive across all healthcare settings to peaks in demand on their services;
- Performance against this is monitored regularly throughout the year and regular contact is maintained between Welsh Government and local health boards. This was also emphasized in the [evidence given by Welsh Government](#) to the Health Social care and Sport Committee's winter preparedness enquiry.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.