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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

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Mr David J Rowlands AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales
Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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Ein cyf / Our ref: GD/SC/6461/1397

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Dyddiad / Date: 7th February 2018

Dear Mr Rowlands AM,

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

The Prescribed Medication Support Service was initially established in one County of North Wales approximately 20 years ago. Funded by Substance Misuse Services there was a recognition identified by GP's that patient's prescribed Benzodiazepines experienced addiction and struggled to reduce or abstain without support. The clinician worked closely with GP's to establish plans to gradually taper withdrawal with support in order to work towards to a goal which had been agreed with the patients. As the Service became more established there was a ground swell of support by GP's across North Wales to increase the Service offer and broaden out to neighbouring Counties, this service now covers all six Counties within BCUHB's footprint.

It was felt that the Service needed to be realigned and managed by Mental Health Services as there was recognition that this particular patient group maybe liable to experience stigma. As the model expanded to cover North Wales there was also a recognition locally that patients were also struggling to withdrawal from other prescribed medications including opiates. The Service was renamed as a Prescribed Medication Service to reflect the broadening of inclusion criteria.

In terms of sharing best practise across Health Boards in Wales the team would welcome the opportunity to promote a service that it is particularly proud of. We would also consider becoming established as a beacon site. We would be willing to identify Service Users who have received services from this Team if the committee would like to elicit their views.

Yours sincerely

Gary Doherty
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive