



Our ref: MA - P/HID/1323/18

Mohammad Asghar AM
National Assembly for Wales
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11 April 2018

Dear Mohammad,

During Assembly Questions on 7 March and on the subject of the transfer of patients to the most appropriate care settings, you referred to Welsh Government statistics covering the year April 2016 to March 2017, noting that almost 80 percent of patients delayed over 26 weeks were on mental health wards. I committed to write to you with some specific detail on what the Welsh Government is doing to reduce the number of patients who are waiting for placements that can meet their assessed mental health needs.

Firstly, I would like to set the percentage figure in a clearer context. Using the mid range of the year you referred to as an example, in September 2016 the number of delays relating to people with mental health conditions was 106, which represented 22% of all the delays in the month. Of those, 24 had been delayed for over 26 weeks. I appreciate that 24 such delays is not acceptable, but we are making progress in bringing that number down. In the last 10 months, mental health delays have reduced by an average of 9 delays per month.

It is also important to recognise that an average of 72 percent of all mental health related delays in each month over the last year have occurred where patients were waiting for placements which are able to care for people with dementia— particularly, in nursing care settings.

The Welsh Government continues to increase the level of investment in the future workforce of NHS Wales. In December 2017 there was an announcement of a £107m package to support education and training programmes for healthcare professionals in Wales.

This package includes a 10% increase in the number of pre reg nurse training places which will be commissioned in 2018/19. This increase represents funding for an additional 161 places, of which we have agreed to fund 30 additional places in the field of mental health nurse training programmes. This is in addition to the 13% increase in 2017/18; the 10% increase in 2016/17 and the 22% increase in 2015/16 and continues our investment in nurse education numbers.

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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.

We continue to spend more on mental health services than on any other part of the Welsh NHS. We expect local authorities to work with health boards to develop an integrated approach to the commissioning of care home services including long term care, short term interim placements to facilitate discharge and choice of accommodation and step down / up intermediate care beds.

We have also announced a further £10m to support the delivery of our new dementia plan and a significant proportion of this will be used to provide additional support through a 'teams around the individual' approach. Delayed transfer of care for people with dementia is identified as one of the key performance measures to monitor the impact of this approach

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Huw', with a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line underneath it.

Huw Irranca-Davies AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Gofal Cymdeithasol a Phlant
Minister for Children and Social Care