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Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: MB/EH/0753/10

Your ref:



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Dear Colleagues

I am writing to update you on progress with implementing the adult neuroscience review. I am keen that Members remain fully informed about developments.

LHBs are taking forward their regional implementation plans for the recommendations arising out of the James Steers Review of Adult Neurosciences Services.

In North Wales, the project is taking into account the known and anticipated wider service developments as the programme of work is interrelated to other work such as the future configuration of acute services and is dependent upon the planned development of Llandudno General Hospital.

Progress so far in North Wales has focussed on improving services for patients with head injuries and acute neurological emergencies. In addition they have recruited an experienced Clinical Neurophysiologist.

The main priority for implementation in relation to Rehabilitation, Continuing and Palliative Care is the appointment of a North Wales Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine. They have also instigated Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings across North Wales for progressive neurological conditions.

Progress has also been made in Mid and South Wales. The neurosurgery service is now fully integrated onto the University Hospital of Wales site, clinical staff have been transferred, new dedicated theatres facilities are fully operational and new ward facilities will become operational in January. A joint appointment of a Professor in Neurosurgery with the University of Wales, Cardiff is being progressed

which will develop the reputation of the centre as a world leader and improve its profile in research and teaching. In addition, plans are in place to meet with all Swansea GPs to formalise referral pathways to Cardiff, which will further improve processes.

The in-patient neurorehabilitation service in ABM has transferred to a dedicated area in Neath Port Talbot Hospital. The Cardiff and Swansea specialist rehabilitation units are now working closer together which allows patients treated in UHW to have their rehabilitation closer to home. The spinal surgery service model at Morriston Hospital is in place and two neurosurgeons have remained to lead this service, they will be joined by two newly appointed orthopaedic spinal surgeons from December 2010.

Progress has been made with a number of Health Boards in making locum neurology consultant positions substantive providing a firmer footing for neurology services. A business case has been prepared to increase the number of consultant neurologists in the Cwm Taf and Hywel Dda Health Board areas.

The Map of Medicine Parkinson's Disease care pathway was published in October 2010. It is anticipated that the remaining care pathways being developed will be published by February 2011.

In relation to neuromuscular services in Wales, the LHBs are in the process of completing appointments of three Care Advisor Posts. One appointment has been made in Mid and West Wales a second post is being re-advertised. Betsi Cadwaladr ULHB are currently considering this role as part of their degenerative neurological conditions work. The Cardiff and Vale ULHB is committed to the long term stability of the sleep study service and will advertise again early in 2011, in the hope that one of the recently qualified trainees will be attracted to the post.

My officials, together with the Lead NHS Chief Executive for neuromuscular services, Jan Williams, will be meeting the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign charity in January to keep it updated on progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Williams', located at the bottom left of the page.