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Ref: P-04-150
HG/JL

14 February 2014

William Powell AC/AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Powell

I am replying to your letter to Bob Hudson, dated 26 June 2013, asking for clarification of Public Health Wales' role in relation to patient information about cancer services. Bob Hudson, as you will know, has moved on so I am replying in his place.

Firstly, please accept my most sincere apologies for the long delay in replying. The response got lost in our system and it was only your reminder which has alerted us to the fact.

A core function of Public Health Wales laid out in the establishing legislation is the requirement "to develop and maintain arrangements for making information about matters related to the protection and improvement of health in Wales available to the public." Please note that this relates to information about health, rather than services; and to the public, rather than patients.

In terms of cancer information, Public Health Wales produces comprehensive public information on its cancer screening programmes via its Breast Test Wales, Cervical Screening Wales and Bowel Screening Wales websites and via a range of other media such as social media and leaflets. Screening information is available in a variety of different languages. Specialist information materials are also available to support people with learning disabilities.

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The Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit (WCISU) is part of Public Health Wales. WCISU is the National Cancer Registry for Wales and its primary role is to record, store and report on all incidence of cancer for the resident population of Wales wherever they are treated. WCISU publishes information relating to its function on its website.

Additional information on reducing the risk factors for developing cancer and limited information on skin and testicular cancers are also available on the Health Challenge Wales website, which we manage.

In addition to providing information on cancer prevention, Public Health Wales is currently working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to host and deliver a national strategic cancer information project. The project is exploring how personalised cancer information can be developed in Wales from the point of diagnosis onwards. It fits with the Welsh Government commitment, in the 2012 Cancer Delivery Plan, to provide personalised information to cancer patients in Wales.

The first stage of the project was a service review to inform the direction of the project. There were three key stages to this review:

- A needs assessment;
- A literature review on the patient information needs of people with cancer and the effectiveness of interventions to meet these needs; and
- A review of current cancer information services in Wales.

Recommendations were discussed at a number of workshops with professionals and people affected by cancer across Wales to be taken forward in phase 2.

The Public Health Wales and Macmillan Partnership Project have also linked in with the Macmillan National Cancer Patient Experience Survey in terms of supporting the development of survey questions with regards to cancer information provision. The survey results will enable us to better understand the extent people affected by cancer in Wales are currently given the information that they require, in a format which meets their needs. They will also help measure progress on this area in the future.

Yours sincerely



Huw George
Interim Chief Executive, Public Health Wales