

Mark Drakeford AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-608  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/00172/15

William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

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*Dear William,*

Thank you for your further letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding petition P-04-608 which calls for a 'full and comprehensive inquiry into the Welsh NHS'.

All health systems, both in the UK and internationally, are facing up to the same pressures and challenges of how to manage increasing demand caused by a growing older population, the development of chronic conditions and an increasing development of new technologies, clinical practices and drugs at a time when we have a responsibility to manage within our resources. Despite these pressures and challenges surveys and patient feedback consistently demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the NHS in Wales.

I would again stress that the Welsh NHS is the most closely inspected and scrutinised health service of all the four nations in the UK, with more bodies charged with ensuring quality and safety standards are maintained for patients. Despite this, where problems are identified or concerns raised the NHS and the Welsh Government will, and has, acted. The publication of the Trusted to Care report last year is clear evidence of such action. Although this dealt with concerns in two hospitals, all-Wales action has been taken in response, including a comprehensive programme of unannounced spot check visits to every acute hospital in Wales. The findings from these visits have been published for all to see.

It is also important to set in context that the Keogh report was based on the review of a small number of trusts in England; it was not an inquiry into the English NHS.

Inquiries by their very nature focus on looking back and can hinder any progress with ongoing continuous improvement. They are also very costly, with the inquiry into Mid

Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust having cost over £13 million as one example.  
Ultimately, any penny spent on an inquiry is a penny less for frontline care.

Best wishes,

Mark

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