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Artificial Limb and Appliance Service
Rookwood Hospital, Llandaff, CARDIFF CF5 2YN

9 March 2012

BY EMAIL: mark.drakeford@wales.gov.uk

Mr Mark Drakeford AC/AM
Chairman
National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Dear Mr Drakeford

**Re: Health and Social Wellbeing Committee 8 March 2012
The Posture Mobility (Wheelchair) Review**

Thank you for the opportunity to report our progress on the developments in the South Wales service yesterday. You requested a few issues about which you wanted further information:

- The additional funding allocations received in the 2011/2012 financial year (£2.2m)

The allocation to the S Wales service was £1.2m, across approximately 50,000 service users, i.e.£24.00 per head.

The allocation to the N Wales service was £700,000 across approximately 17,000 service users i.e.£41.00 per head.

We therefore do not feel that South Wales has been over allocated and that the backlog in North Wales was fairly accounted for by their enhanced allocation.

In South Wales we have carried out a capacity and demand exercise as part of the work led by NLIAM which allowed us to clearly identify the range of activities carried out by clinicians. This showed that 13% of the work they were doing could be undertaken by administrative staff. Admin staff has now been appointed and each clinician is able to see an additional 4.5 clients per week, this has enabled us to make significant inroads to our waiting times for both children and adults. North Wales has not yet adopted the same model, but we understand that they are progressing their capacity and demand work which should have similar benefits for their users.

- What investment would be required to reduce adult waits to the same level as that for children?

We hope that we were able to demonstrate that adult waiting times have benefitted from the process re-design we have adopted, we have tried to address the needs of all users not just focus on children alone. However there is a requirement for further investment to issue equipment at a faster rate is adults are to benefit from lower waits.

We receive approximately 135 new referrals for the adult team each month (800 per month to the service). Adult waiting time is currently 17 weeks to assessment. To attain the same status as the paediatric waiting list we would need an additional 1.00 whole time equivalent clinician band 6 (£46,000) and would achieve the target of 6 weeks from referral to assessment - and the over all 26 week pathway and recurring equipment costs at £250,000 pa. i.e: **Total cost £ 296,000**

- Service specification

We agree that we need to continue at grater pace, the work started by WHSSC and our service users to agree a specification. Our current funding is for essential wheelchair use, and while we make every effort to take life style and the social model of disability into consideration we are not currently funded to provide more. Technical developments in our equipment as well as user expectations are ever growing and if we are to widen the scope of practice detailed costings must be undertaken to ensure affordability, otherwise we will be in danger of providing high specification equipment to a few and nothing to others. We would therefore recommend caution in broadening the specification, as this could lead to greater inequity.

- Invitation to see the South Wales ALAS Depot

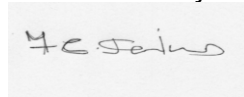
Kirsty Williams AM has recently contacted the service and we have arranged at her request, a visit to our wheelchair depot at Treforest. We would like to take this opportunity to invite you and any other member of the committee to visit us so that you can get a true picture of the scale of our undertakings.

- Remploy

Last night the closure of many of the Remploy factories was announced. We feel that the ALAS service could benefit from the skills those disabled people have acquired. It would be possible for us to undertake much of the refurbishment work we currently out source if we could obtain funding to rent a premises, and employ a number of their staff. We suggest this could be considered to offset the impact of the closure decision.

I hope you found the information pack we left helpful. If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely



FIONA JENKINS
Executive Director of Therapies and Healthscience

cc Helen Hortop, South Wales ALAS Manager, Therapies and Health Science