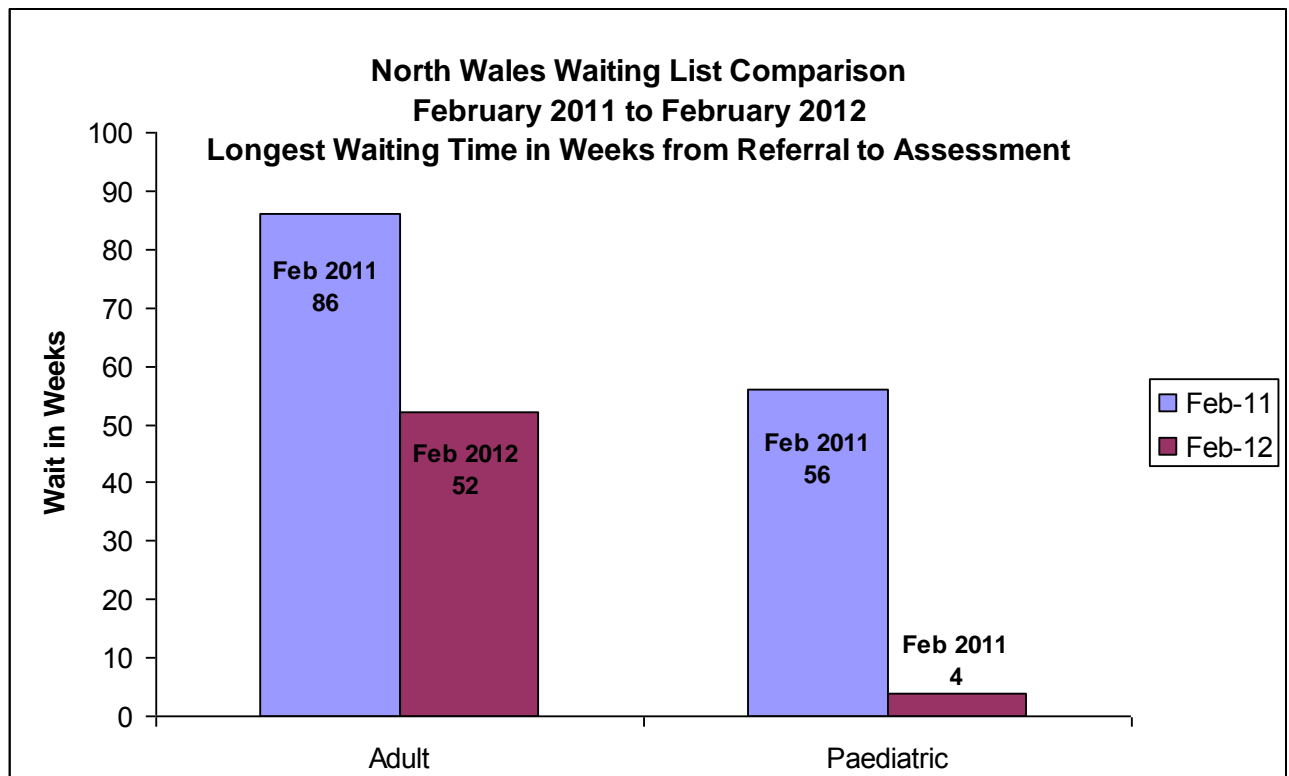


**North Wales Posture & Mobility Service  
Additional Response to Health & Social Care Committee  
March 2012**

**Requested Information**

1. similar data from North and South Wales I would be grateful if you could provide the current waiting times for adults and children in North Wales from referral to assessment and assessment to delivery.
2. your definition of “repair” (as referred to during the discussion on the approved repairer’s success in achieving its targets);
3. your thoughts on the trajectory for the development of services in North Wales over the next 12 months;
4. your thoughts on the 3 key areas where further progress is needed (as this was not covered formally at the beginning of the session); and
5. a copy of the allocation letter received from the Welsh Government following the rejection of the North Wales service’s bid for resources to support adult services.

**1. Data**



Comparison data for Assessment to Delivery is not available for North Wales due to the IT system being implemented in December 2012 and therefore previous data is in a different format. The measuring of the first stage of the pathway has been implemented and stage 4 will be implemented by April 2012.

## **2. Definition of Repair**

### **Approved Repairer Service**

The performance data presented at the inquiry related to the Approved Repairer's response times to requests for repair of standard wheelchairs; they will replace standard wheelchair parts e.g. those available from the manufacturer. These parts can be held in stock or order as required.

### **Modifications**

Adaptations that are made to standard wheelchairs to meet the specific requirements of the client (e.g. footrest length reduction, armrest replacement, postural support, customised seating systems) may need modification or repair. These are carried out by the Posture & Mobility service and usually require an assessment of the problem by a clinician or engineer and the modification being re-manufactured or a new solution provided. These are not carried out by the Approved Repairer.

## **3. Trajectory for the development of services in North Wales over the next 12 months**

The main outcome in service improvement over the past 12 months has been to reduce the longest waiting time for access to the service for both adults and children. The wheelchair service and rehab engineering service have been merged to form one Posture & Mobility Directorate with a Clinical Director appointed. Plans for the next 12 months include full restructuring of the service including appointment of key staff to ensure sustainability of the waiting times and safe and effective delivery of service.

The aspiration of the service is to achieve a referral to delivery pathway of 26 weeks.

### **Paediatrics**

Paediatric services have had resources allocated to achieve stages 1 and 4 of this pathway. In the next 12 months we aim to achieve the following:

- maintain waiting times of 6 weeks to assessment and 8 weeks from delivery to fitting
- establish regular reviews for children
- improve procurement processes
- streamline pathways

### **Adults**

Adult services have also seen an improvement in waiting times due to improvements implemented for paediatrics such as the introduction of IT systems, validation of waiting lists and admin processes around referral management. Without additional resources we aim to achieve the following:

- apply RTT rules
- streamline processes and pathways
- improve communications regarding referrals

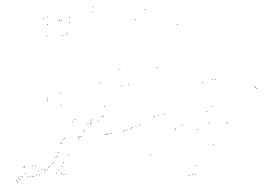
These actions may improve the longest wait position but not to the extent of meeting the 26 week pathway target. Further resources are required to make a significant improvement to waiting times. A previous bid of £405K was submitted for adult funding in order to reduce the wait time for assessment to 26 weeks. The aspiration of meeting the new target of 26 weeks from referral to delivery, establishing reviews for certain categories and improving repair service will require further investment. We plan to work with WHSSC to create a delivery plan and calculate resources required. Early calculations are in the region of £1M.

#### **4. 3 key areas where further progress is needed**

- **Adult Waiting Times**  
to achieve acceptable waiting times as discussed in 3 above
- **Communication**  
Significant progress has been made in communication between North and South services; between service and referrers, clients and repairers. Work is progressing well with NLIAH regarding service user engagement. However, we believe that further progress is required over the next 12 months to fully engage with community therapists, referrers and clients in order to improve relationships, quality of referrals, understanding of service delivery and client needs.
- **Specification and Criteria**  
Progress has been made with services at Partnership Board level in order to specify the service; however, there is a need for more detailed specification and criteria in order to improve clarity of service delivery to both clinicians and clients.

#### **5. Allocation letter**

Allocation letter attached



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Mary Burrows,  
Chief Executive  
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board  
Ysbyty Gwynedd  
Penrhosgarnedd  
Bangor  
Gwynedd LL57 2PW

Eich cyf: Your ref:  
Ein cyf: Our ref:

18th April 2011

Dear Mary

**RE: £2.2m ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR POSTURE AND MOBILITY SERVICES -  
WHEELCHAIRS**

In November 2010, the Minister announced an additional £2.2m per annum for wheelchair services as part of the draft budget proposals. This follows the Minister's acceptance of all recommendations in the review of All Wales Posture and Mobility services, completed in October 2010.

Further detail was provided to the Minister indicating the improvements required to reduce the assessment and delivery times for wheelchair provision, in particular, for children and young people. This detail was based on information provided by both service providers. A press notice was released on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February announcing this recurrent additional funding.

As you are aware, the Posture and Mobility services are currently funded through WHSSC, having been mapped from HCW, although the services for wheelchair provision are only provided by Cardiff and Vale and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Boards.



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL  
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

In his letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, Steve Elliot, Head of Financial Planning and Management HSSDG, set out the additional revenue allocation for wheelchair services indicating this funding is ring fenced to the two providers. The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to make you aware of the criteria the Minister has set for this allocation. This was set out in the press notice issued in February where the Minister announced the funding would be used 'primarily to double the number of clinical staff across Wales to assess children and young people to enable them to have the most appropriate wheelchair to suit their need and support more training for health professionals, patients and their carers. The funding will also support better waiting list management which will result in an improved service for both adults and children who require wheelchairs'. With these additional resources, the Minister will expect the Children and Young People's National Service Framework standards on waiting times for assessment and delivery to be met by the end of March 2012.

Both Health Boards have identified the increase in clinical staff required to improve services. The enclosed attachment sets out the allocation according to that delivery pathway, as well as waiting list process improvement. Although service improvement work has already centred on closer working on an All Wales basis, the funding has obviously been allocated on an organisational basis. For your Health Board this funding is £0.700m rec.

The allocation above excludes funding for residential training events provided by the third sector. This allocation to the third sector amounts to an All Wales allocation of £0.100m and will be allocated and processed through the Health Boards. This funding is currently held by WAG and will be made available once detailed plans on training requirements and agreements with third sector providers are known.

With regard to short term wheelchair loans, the British Red Cross are the main providers. They indicated that demand for wheelchairs for short periods is increasing, between 5 and 10 per cent every year. Therefore, £0.100m will be provided to them to set up a joint pilot with Health Boards to inform future provision. This will be overseen by the Deputy Director of Therapies in Betsi Cadwaladr uHB, who chairs the recently established group, looking at closer working partnerships. The pilot will centre on identifying referral sources, option choices, and improved ways of working, including data sharing between the NHS and BRC together with improved communication systems. The aim is to establish more efficient ways of providing short term loans across Wales, particularly benefiting users by providing clearer signposting of equipment availability, centres where these can be made available and processes for their return when no longer required. This funding will initially be provided in 2011-12 only, with allocations in future years considered once the outcome of the pilot is known.

The Minister has also indicated that as part of wider efforts to improve palliative care services, funding is made available to ensure that palliative care patients who need wheelchairs receive an improved service. Officials have been in discussion with Professor Ilora Finlay and £0.080m will be made available, non recurrently to carry out a patient satisfaction survey. The evidence provided by users and carers will help inform future planning of services. This funding will be allocated via Velindre NHS Trust.

I am in the process of setting up visits to both ALAS where detailed discussions regarding the allocation of this funding can take place. In the meantime if you require further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely

**ELEANOR SANDERS**  
**HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE GENERAL**

c.c. Dan Phillips, Director of Planning, Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee

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