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Powys Teaching
Health Board

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Your ref: P-04-342

19th December 2011

Sarita Marshall
Deputy Petitions Clerk
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Sarita,

Provision of Neurology Specialist Nursing in Powys

Thank you for your enquiry dated 23rd November 2011. I apologise for the length of time taken to respond to your request for information. The sections which follow describe the input of specialist nursing within Powys teaching Health Board including specialists for neurological conditions which would include the care for Powys residents with MS.

The development of specialist nurses and specialist nursing is an important aspect to the teaching Health Boards forward plans. The aim of Powys teaching Health Board is to enable the people of Powys to be treated and cared for closer to home. Instrumental to this is the role that specialist nurses will play in supporting general staff, including district nurses, community hospital nurses, doctors and others to care for patients with specific condition, including neurological conditions.

The nature of the rural setting means that creative ways of working will need to be employed to ensure that services are appropriately provided for patients and we believe that our current approach is an example of good practice. Within North Powys for example, there is currently a collaborative approach being developed to support patients with neurological conditions, with health professionals working in alliance with the Voluntary Sector. MANGO (Multi-agency Neurological Group) is working with Therapists and Nurses (generalists and specialists) in service provision.

Taking a broader approach to service provision has meant a greater use of professional expertise for patients with neurological conditions available locally. A key emphasis has been on supporting primary care in their ability to

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care for patients with neurological conditions and ensuring ease of access of opinion without resorting to referral to a District General Hospital service which often involves a significant travel for many patients. These redesigned clinics and support services so far have been positively received and as they develop further work to roll out such good practice across the rest of Powys will be important.

In relation specifically to specialist nursing, the role of specialists in our services is crucial. Given the challenges of low population numbers with certain conditions and high rurality, the broader, multi-professional approach is a model of care we are testing, with the support of patient groups and the Voluntary Sector, and our evaluation of the service development will guide future service provision.

The Teaching Health Board has had membership of the mid and South Wales Neurosciences Programme – a body formed to take forward the recommendations of the Axford report. I am pleased to inform you that as a result of the *'adult rehabilitation and supportive care'* strand of work within the auspices of this project that Health Boards in Wales have agreed to fund 2 consultant neurologist posts on a regional basis. Powys patients will be seen as part of the mid and west service. The recruitment process for these posts is underway and job descriptions have been developed.

A needs/service assessment has been undertaken by the work stream to identify sub-specialty expertise required from the new appointments. A service model for neurology developed for recommendation to the Project Board.

I hope the information supplied above helps to demonstrate the direction being taken by Powys teaching Health Board in the context of a rural population to ensure appropriate services are and continue to be provided to residents with neurological conditions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Richards', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Richards
Director of Finance