

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on Hospices and Palliative Care
C/o Hospice UK
City Hospice
Whitchurch
CF14 7BF

10 October 2018

Dear Vaughan,

Cross Party Group on Hospices and Palliative Care Inquiry: response

Thank you for your letter dated 4 September 2018, which gave your detailed response on behalf of the Welsh Government to the Cross Party Group on Hospices and Palliative Care's Report 'Inequalities in access to hospice and palliative care: challenges and opportunities'.

Firstly, thank you for the time and consideration you gave the report and for accepting, either wholly or in part, each of the recommendations put forward. The Cross Party Group (the Group) will continue to monitor the implementation of the report's recommendations and value your willingness to work with us to improve access to hospice and palliative care in Wales.

The Group discussed your response during its meeting on 26 September 2018 and agreed our approach in taking forward our work in this area.

While the response was broadly welcomed, the Group noted that many recommendations were accepted on the basis that work in this area is already ongoing. I am pleased to see that the Welsh Government and End of Life Care Implementation Board are already taking steps to improve access to hospice and palliative care, and appreciate that developing services takes time. However, the evidence received by the Group during its inquiry was clear in demonstrating that progress in the areas we highlighted is too slow, or that information regarding progress is unavailable.

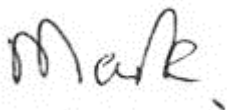
The Group further noted the lack of detail in relation to fulfilling recommendations to improve access to paediatric palliative care with disappointment. I trust that your officials and colleagues at the End of Life Care Implementation Board and health boards will be pursuing this agenda in line with the recommendations made by the Group. The Group will follow progress in this area with interest, including by targeted scrutiny of developments in the areas of 24/7 consultant and nurse cover and the availability of community paediatric nurses.

For your information, during the period until 2020, the Group will be prioritising scrutiny of:

- The provision of palliative care in care homes and the role of Regional Partnership Boards in delivering this.
- Out of hours care for people with palliative and end of life care needs, including the role of specialist 24/7 advice lines, and the equal coverage of out of hours care for children.
- The distribution and availability of community nursing services to deliver palliative care to people in their own homes or in the community, including district nurses and community paediatric nurses with palliative care skills.
- Sustainable, medium-term funding of charitable hospices and meaningful partnerships between charitable hospices and health boards.

I welcome your continued engagement with the Cross Party Group on Hospices and Palliative Care in taking forward these crucial areas, which will serve to improve equality of access for all who need it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark', with a small flourish at the end.

Mark Isherwood AM

Chair, Cross Party Group on Hospices and Palliative Care