



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-854
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/05386/19

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

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19 February 2019

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February regarding Petition P-05-854 Make Learning Disability (LD) training mandatory for hospital staff from the Paul Ridd Foundation.

The Improving Lives Programme worked in partnership with key stakeholders to establish the key priorities for action across key policies and services which impact upon the lives of people with a learning disability. The overall aim of the health actions is to reduce health inequalities, avoidable and preventable deaths and increase wellbeing and quality of life for people with a learning disability.

This cross-government programme of work contains the following actions which aim to improve the health outcomes of people with a learning disability in a general hospital setting:

Health Secondary Care:

- To ensure reasonable adjustments are made for people with a learning disability through using care bundles, having LD champions, system flagging and increasing the number of learning disability liaison nurses across Wales; and,
- To ensure traffic light systems / health passports are put in place and roll-out of the health equalities framework.

To support the delivery of these actions work is currently being developed to:

- Ensure reasonable adjustments are made in hospital settings to support people with learning disabilities and their families to access mainstream services;
- Undertake the systematic reviews of deaths, adverse events and near misses to learn lessons and contribute to the continued reduction of health inequalities.
- Develop and embed LD specific healthcare standards into the NHS Wales Health and Care Standards and the NHS Outcomes and Delivery Framework;

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- Support the roll-out of the Health Equalities Framework across the NHS in Wales; and,
- Review and strengthen specialist service provision across NHS Wales to improve access to appropriate provision (step up/down and secure accommodation) closer to home.

I hope to be in a position very soon to announce funding to support this work.

To underpin the achievement of these actions I am committed to supporting the improvement in knowledge and skills of health care staff to ensure the needs of people with learning disability are met within general hospital settings.

Work has begun to scope out an educational framework, similar to that developed for staff caring for people with dementia, as part of the Improving Lives Programme. I want to ensure we have considered all opportunities to ensure a positive impact on the health outcomes of people with a learning disability is achieved, rather than simply to consider the merits for and against mandating awareness training of staff. To this end, I expect the work to consider providing comprehensive information on meeting the needs of people with a learning disability in NHS Wales induction training (this would in effect provide mandated training for all new employees); developing and mainstreaming a range of quality assured learning and development materials available for all staff; and providing targeted training for staff in key roles.

The Paul Ridd Foundation has developed awareness training for hospital staff wishing to become learning disability champions. The team undertaking the work, located in the 1000 Lives Improvement Team in Public Health Wales, are working with the Foundation to build on their approach.

I am aware that other parts of the UK are also considering the educational needs of its health and social care staff, including an eight-week consultation currently underway in England. We will look with interest at the outcome of these activities to consider any applicability to the Welsh health and care system.

I am fortunate to be supported by the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory Group. There is representation on the group from many health related bodies including the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Wales, Welsh Therapies Advisory Committee, Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Committee, Public Health Wales and Learning Disability Nursing as well as people with a learning disability, their families and carers and other key stakeholders. I will look to them, in the coming months to provide me with guidance in relation to how we best support learning and development of staff in general and achieve the health improvement outcomes sought by the Paul Ridd Foundation.

Yours sincerely,



Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services