

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/00853/11

Your ref: P-03-318

Christine Chapman AM

committee.business@Wales.gsi.gov.uk



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Bae Caerdydd  
Caerdydd CF99 1NA  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg: 0845 010 4400  
Ffacs: 029 2089 8131  
E-Bost: Gohebiaeth.Edwina.Hart@cymru.gsi.gov.uk

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
English Enquiry Line: 0845 010 3300  
Fax: 029 2089 8131  
E-Mail: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

22 March 2011

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 9 March in respect of petition P-03-318, relating to the proposed move of maternity and children's services from the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital to Telford's Princess Royal. I am sorry, but it would be inappropriate for me to comment directly on changes to the way that services are delivered in England.

The petition asks that the National Assembly urge the Welsh Assembly Government to fully engage in the "Keeping it in the County" consultation process. You will wish to be aware that this consultation, run by the Boards of Shropshire County PCT, The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust and NHS Telford and Wrekin, closed on 15 March. The Boards will meet later this month to consider the outcome of the consultation.

The aim of the Welsh Assembly Government is for all patients to be confident that they can access high quality, safe health care services as close to their homes as possible. Powys Teaching Local Health Board (tLHB) is responsible for ensuring this happens for residents of Mid Wales and the Welsh borders.

All patients in Wales should expect to be seen in the most appropriate place, and as locally as possible where those high quality health services are available, which is usually in Wales. However, there have been long standing cross-border arrangements in place so that Welsh residents can be referred to health services provided in England, when it is necessary. If proposals are developed to relocate services in England, Powys tLHB, together with the Community Health Council (CHC), would represent the interests of Welsh residents. Derek Smith, the Chair of Montgomery CHC, has informed me that they have been involved in the public

consultation on the proposed changes to services and I have encouraged the CHC to put forward their concerns about access for Welsh patients through this public consultation route.

The role of the Welsh Assembly Government is to ensure that the LHB is performing well and to support it where necessary and we would only become involved if there were a particular reason to do so. However, I would like to assure you that the Welsh Assembly Government is engaged in the process. Senior Welsh Assembly Government officials are in touch with the LHB and are monitoring the situation and, if necessary, I may make representations to the Secretary of State for Health in England.

I hope this demonstrates my commitment to ensuring that Mid Wales residents are able to access the health services they need, when they need it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Jones', written in a cursive style.