

Edwina Hart MBE OStJ

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

Our ref: EH/01017/11

Your ref: P-03-156

Christine Chapman
Chair, Petitions Committee
petition@wales.gov.uk



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8 April 2011

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 March on behalf of the Petitions Committee about the development of sleep apnoea services in South Gwent and across the rest of Wales.

The provision of sleep apnoea services are the responsibility of Local Health Boards (LHBs) who are expected to put in place arrangements for services for their local populations. Aneurin Bevan LHB has assured me that work is continuing to improve the patient pathway with specialist sleep clinics established at Nevill Hall and County Hospital to help reduce its waiting times.

In tackling variation in service provision, an all Wales Sleep Apnoea Working Group, comprising of respiratory consultants delivering sleep apnoea services in NHS Wales has been established. They recently submitted a proposal for minimum clinical standards for sleep apnoea in Wales via the Respiratory National Service Advisory Group (NSAG). This document has been jointly issued by my Medical Director and the NSAG to all LHBs to help them ensure improved provision and assist them in planning for improvements.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Service Development and Commissioning Directives for Chronic Respiratory Conditions sets out a clear direction for improving respiratory services, including sleep apnoea. NLIAH's audit of the Respiratory Directives undertaken in November 2010 established that across Wales 88% of all the key actions have been full complied with by LHBs. Although

progress has been made I have asked all LHBs to ensure compliance with the Directives by the end of March 2011.

I have noted your request for the response to be sent directly to the Clerking Team. This has been passed to the relevant officials.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LW', located in the upper left quadrant of the page.