

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-600
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/01244/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
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30 April 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding Petition: P-04-600 Save General Practice from the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP).

I responded to the issues raised in the petition in correspondence dated 29 October 2014. This was acknowledged by Paul Myres, chair of the Wales RCGP, in a letter to the Petitions Committee on 14 January 2015. I note you subsequently wrote to the chair of the Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC) on 22 January 2015 enclosing a copy of my letter and the letter from RCGP Wales. I would be happy to follow up any further queries HSCC may have at our usual committee meetings.

As I have said in previous correspondence, I support fully general practice as an integral part of the NHS and recognise that GPs, along with other healthcare professionals across Wales, are facing increased daily pressures. You should be aware of a new two-year deal for GPs in Wales agreed by the Welsh Government and the GPC Wales.

As part of this, a number of changes and commitments for 2015-16 and 2016-17 have been agreed, which underpin the reform agenda set out in the Welsh Government's plan for primary care services in Wales. GPs will be able to spend more time caring for the most vulnerable people with complex care needs, in particular, the frail and elderly. It also strengthens cluster arrangements to deliver more effective local services, as well as a framework to assess the sustainability of GP services for people living in rural and deprived communities in Wales.

The Welsh Government is committed to continuous investment in the health service and ensuring health boards align their services to provide the maximum benefit for people within the resource available.

Investment in primary care is essential for the service. You will be aware of my announcement last year to invest £3.5m in primary healthcare services in 2014-15. In November 2014, the Welsh Government launched a new national plan for primary care. The new plan, based on the principles of prudent healthcare, aims to help to reshape the NHS by developing, and increasing the primary care workforce to provide the majority of care close to people's homes, accelerating the transfer of services from hospitals to the community, and improving the way people can access services.

The national plan recognises the importance of having a wider range of skilled staff within primary care and a workforce model where the use of the clinical skills and the abilities of all members of the primary care team is maximised. GPs will continue to have a critical and central role in the delivery and coordination of local healthcare. In addition, the leadership role of the GP will be vital in strengthening primary care clusters as agents for change in the delivery of local services.

The national plan is backed by a new investment of £10m, with £6m allocated to the 64 primary care clusters across Wales.

Best wishes,

Mark

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