



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/03473/18

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Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 12 October regarding the shortfall in the rheumatology workforce in Llandudno Hospital and wider rheumatology provision across north Wales.

Health Boards in Wales are responsible for providing appropriate rheumatology services which meets the health needs of their population based on an assessment of local need.

I have been copied into the response from Gary Doherty, Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), addressing your and the BSR's concerns about staffing levels and workforce planning across north Wales. In his reply, Mr Doherty acknowledges that BCUHB is experiencing difficulties recruiting to key posts but that it is working to resolve this. Mr Doherty also advises that the Health Board is undertaking review of rheumatology services across north Wales to identify how it can deliver an effective and sustainable service in light of the ongoing workforce challenges.

In my recent response to your Written Assembly Question (WAQ) I indicated that I would write to the Health Board asking it to reply to your concerns but given that you and the BSR have now received a response from Mr Doherty, I no longer feel that this is necessary. You will also be aware from my response to the WAQ that the Welsh Government is currently refreshing the commissioning directive for arthritis and chronic musculoskeletal conditions. Work is progressing well with producing the updated document and we are aiming to issue a consultation on the draft proposals in the spring.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vaughan Gething".

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services