



Our ref VG/0050/19

David Rees AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

3 December 2019

Dear David,

I am writing in response to your question to the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd on 15<sup>th</sup> October regarding perinatal mental health.

You noted that I wrote to the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 1 October 2019 to provide an update on progress against the recommendations in its report on perinatal mental health and I will not repeat all of the content of that letter here. For ease, I have included a link to the letter here:

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s94410/Letter%20from%20the%20Minister%20for%20Health%20Social%20Services%20-%20Update%20October%202019.pdf>

I continue to be committed to establishing a Mother and Baby Unit in Wales. The implementation of such a specialised service is complex and it is right that significant attention is given to the planning of the unit. There are a number of factors that must be taken into consideration, such as the location of the unit, the suitability of the premises and the capacity of the workforce to deliver the service. Officials have undertaken work to develop a better understanding of the demand for the service, to ensure that the new Mother and Baby Unit will be fit for purpose and sustainable. This work is being led by the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee and I know that the management group has been working closely with Swansea Bay University Health Board to develop a business case for a six bedded Mother and Baby Unit to be hosted in the region.

As I set out in my letter to the Committee, the latest indicative planning provided by the health board indicates that a Mother and Baby Unit in the Swansea region could be operational by summer 2021. As you noted, the Children, Young People and Education Committee identified this as a key recommendation to deliver better perinatal mental health services for mothers in Wales, and I am concerned about the timescales to establish the service. As a result, I have asked my officials to work with WHSSC and Swansea Bay to explore options for an interim solution, or to see if there are ways that we can accelerate planning for the permanent unit. It is key that the development of an interim solution does not delay the necessary preparatory work for the permanent unit. I can therefore assure you

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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.

that the work to ensure that services are able to provide a Mother and Baby Unit in Wales is being taken forward as a matter of urgency.

I am happy to commit to write again to provide a further update when there have been further developments in the planning process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Vaughan Gething AM**  
**Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Minister for Health and Social Services**