



Paul Davies MS
Senedd Constituency Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire

Paul.Davies@senedd.wales

18 October 2021

Dear Paul,

I am writing to you in relation to comments you raised during Business Questions on 14 September, about the Welsh Ambulance Service review of its rosters and your concerns about the impact of potential resource changes in Pembrokeshire as a result of the review.

As we have witnessed across the UK and the western world, the pandemic has caused the Welsh Ambulance Service a particular set of difficulties. This includes the requirement for ambulance staff to don personal protective equipment for each ambulance response, adding on 4-6 minutes to a response on average. The pandemic has also caused additional levels of workforce absence through infection and the need to self-isolate with the latest available NHS data for June showing sickness absence rates of 10% within operational response teams of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

Notwithstanding these challenges, our policy expectation is for the delivery of sufficient ambulance response capacity to provide a timely response to all parts of Wales, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. To enable delivery of this expectation, the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee and the Welsh Ambulance Service jointly commissioned an independent Demand and Capacity review in 2018.

That review found that in order to deliver a responsive and equitable emergency ambulance service across Wales, the service must better match capacity to demand through a mix of additional recruitment of the right type staff and the delivery of a number of operational efficiencies, including a review of existing staff rosters.

The Welsh Ambulance Service has begun the process of undertaking a national review of staff rosters, which will include re-balancing of cover across all parts of Wales to ensure the most efficient use of available staffing and resources based on predicted and future demand. As you will be aware from the briefing session the Trust held with Members of the Senedd representing constituencies in Mid and West Wales on 1 October, the Trust's Chief Executive has confirmed the review has been paused in the Hywel Dda UHB area to allow consideration of more recent data and projections and ensure the right configuration of staff and vehicles in the area. The Trust will provide further information regarding any changes to cover in the area following this re-modelling exercise.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales

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.

Roster reviews are complex and sensitive and we understand the Trust has developed an agreed partnership approach with Trade Union colleagues to agree core principles and working parties to progress design and building of rosters, with implementation expected to take place from the start of the next financial year.

You will appreciate that ambulance resourcing is an operational matter and as such remains the responsibility of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. I would, however, expect the Trust to keep rosters under ongoing review to ensure there is equity of service across all parts of Wales and to ensure there is no adverse impact on responsiveness, staff and patient experience, or clinical outcomes.

I hope this response provides you with the assurances you were seeking.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

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