



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P/VG/0960/19

Mark Isherwood AM
Assembly Member for North Wales
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

mark.isherwood@assembly.wales

11 March 2019

Dear Mark,

I write further to the discussion in Plenary on 29 January regarding cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP)/acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) (AFM being form of AFP). Firstly I would like to reassure you that we are aware of this issue and all necessary public health action is being taken.

I can confirm that Wales has recorded two confirmed cases of AFP in 2018 but experienced a clusters of cases of AFP in 2015. The cause of these cases is currently unknown but cases of AFP in children are possibly linked to the circulation of a common virus – enterovirus-D68.

Since 2015 Public Health Wales has undertaken enhanced surveillance for enterovirus-D68 and this surveillance has shown three waves of activity in Wales. During these waves of activity enterovirus-D68 has typically presented as a common respiratory illness (sometimes severe) but there have been a small number of sporadic detections of AFP.

In response to an observed increase in incidence of AFP in England towards the end of 2018 Public Health England declared a national incident. I can confirm that Public Health Wales is engaged with Public Health England's incident team (as are Health Protection Scotland and Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Department's Public Health Agency). The incident team has reported the recently observed increase in cases to the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and is undertaking the following actions:

- Communicating with relevant clinical networks (including paediatric neurologists, paediatricians and microbiologists) to raise awareness of the possible increase and to advise on the investigation of such cases

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

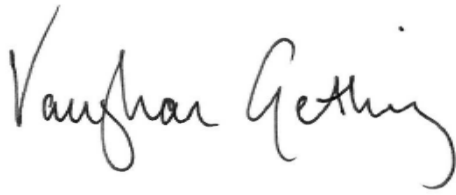
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

- Requesting reporting of suspected cases to better understand the pattern of the cases in 2018.
- Developing a set of web-page resources to sign-post clinicians to guidance on reporting, investigation and management of such cases and on infection control
- Developing up-to-date information for patients and/or parents for the NHS patient advice websites.

Public Health Wales has issued guidance to NHS Wales regarding these issues and my officials are in close contact with our experts in Public Health Wales and will keep me informed of any significant developments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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