

Bill Powell AM
Chairman – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay

7th January 2013

Your ref: **P-04-400** **NICE Guidelines** **Action for Mental Health**

Dear Bill

I have had the opportunity to read and consider the latest response from the Minister (Lesley Griffiths) regarding our Petition and subsequent submissions.

I find it hard to express my sense of disappointment – not to mention concern - that this Petition is being taken less than seriously and that we petitioners are being treated with a lack of respect by the Minister and her department. In other words, this is a ministerial “brush off” presumably in the expectation that we will just go away!

I had hoped for better from the Welsh Assembly Government.

I don't see any point in responding to the most recent letter from the Minister as it appears to have very little to do with the issues raised in the Petition or my subsequent reply and information provided following the Minister's first response.

Instead, I would like to reiterate and raise, once more, the following:

The WAG government states as a goal – world excellence in the care of those with mental health issues. Therefore – why not implement gold standards as exemplified through the NICE guidelines?

What – if any – progression has been made in terms of agreeing SLAs with NICE – specifically as regards mental health?

I also would request a response to some of the issues made in my previous letter submitted to the Petitions Committee:

There is now a statutory requirement for service users in secondary services to have a Care and Treatment Plan. What measures or standards apply to the implementation - or failure to implement that particular care plan?

How can the Delivery Plan "support" the Strategy through "effective and (sic) measurements of the strategy outcomes" unless it specifies targets, standards and levels of accountability?

Also – I think it would be informative to have a response to the following issue from my earlier letter:

*“...the support of an independent health advocate is only available upon request and there are very few people employed in this capacity. I also wonder how an "in-patient" can be in "the community" - my belief was that the **right to advocacy** was for those receiving in-patient care whether in a "normal" hospital or in a psychiatric unit. Perhaps the Minister could be asked to clarify this issue.”* (Or admit to a mistake in the response).

Finally, as some of your colleagues (demonstrating both bravery and dignity) have come forward recently to speak about their mental health issues (David Melding, Ken Skates, Eluned Parrott and Bethan Jenkins), it seems particularly ironic that this issue does not attract the importance it merits.

With many thanks for the work of your committee,

Jane Miller Smith
Action for Mental Health Petition Group