

**Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a  
Gofal Cymdeithasol**

—

**Health and Social Care  
Committee**

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Eluned Morgan  
Minister for Health and Social Services  
Welsh Government

16 June 2023

Dear Eluned

**Dentistry**

Thank you for your response to the Committee's report on dentistry. We considered your response at our meeting on 14 June 2023, and agreed to write to you ahead of next week's debate on the Committee's report to seek clarification on a number of matters arising from your response. It would be helpful if you could address these points either in your contribution to the debate, or subsequently in writing.

**Recommendation 3:** The Welsh Government should explore options for a centralised waiting list and report back to the Committee on progress by the end of 2023. As an interim measure, the Welsh Government should ensure every health board establishes a centralised waiting list for its area by the end of 2023.

In your response to recommendation 3, you state that officials are already in discussions with Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) to scope a design for an all-Wales dental waiting list. Initial indications are that this can be delivered within the next financial year and finances have been set aside to fund the project. However, in Plenary on 24 May, you said that you hoped that a central data registry will be in place by the end of this year.

1. Can you please clarify when a centralised waiting list will be delivered.

Recommendation 5: The Welsh Government should review the data collection requirements for NHS dentists in order to simplify the process and reduce duplication. This review should be completed by December 2023 and the findings reported back to us no later than March 2024.

In your response to recommendation 5, you say that you will ask the relevant working group to review this recommendation and identify options to minimise administrative burden.

2. Can you please confirm that you will report back to the Committee with the group's findings within the timescales specified in our recommendation?

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government should ensure that the dental workforce strategy reflects the changing aspirations and the need for a wider skill mix within the workforce and is published as soon as possible. On the basis that the Minister for Health and Social Services expected to receive the draft in December 2022, the final strategy should be published no later than spring 2023.

In your response to recommendation 8, you say that the formal publication of the workforce plan has been delayed until July 2023.

3. Can you please provide further details on the content of the workforce plan and whether it reflects the changing aspirations and the need for a wider skill mix within the workforce as set out in our recommendation?

Recommendation 9. The Welsh Government should bring forward the legislative changes needed to enable dental therapists to have a performer number as a matter of urgency and provide us with a timescale for this.

In your response, you advise that following the announcement by NHS England that Dental Therapists and Hygienists will now be permitted to open and close courses of treatment, there is no longer a need for legislative change at this time, and officials are now preparing communications to health boards to clarify how this change will be operationalised for next financial year.

4. Can you please confirm whether dental therapists no longer need to have a performer number to open and close courses of treatment?
5. Can you also clarify what is meant by 'next financial year', i.e. will the change take effect from April 2024?

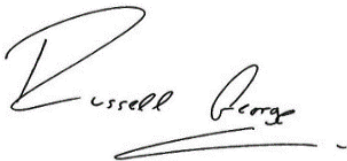
Recommendation 14. The Welsh Government should explore options for expanding the Gwen am Byth programme into other residential settings, such as care homes for younger vulnerable people, sheltered housing and extra care housing, and report back on its findings to this Committee by the end of 2023.

Your response states that since receiving the recommendation, you have established that some health boards, via their community dental services, already do engage with these types of services. Furthermore whilst the programme itself is aimed at older people living in care homes the resources are freely available through the Public Health Wales website - Gwên am byth - Public Health Wales (nhs.wales).

6. Can you please provide details of which health boards are being referred to, and of the number and type of settings?
7. Can you also confirm what plans the Welsh Government has to expand the Gwên am Byth programme in the remaining health boards?

It would be helpful if you could address these matters in your response to the debate. If it is not possible for you to cover all of these matters during the debate, we would be grateful if you could respond in writing **by 6 July 2023**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Russell George MS  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.