

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA(P)VG/2643/19

Dr Dai Lloyd AM
Chair
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 August 2019

Dear Dai,

Thank you for your letter of 9 July requesting an update on progress following the publication of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (HSCSC) report on the use of antipsychotic medication in care homes.

You will be aware that following this report a group was established to review current data collection and reporting of antipsychotic prescribing in care homes and to make recommendations for improving surveillance. I wrote to you on 19 February providing you with a copy of the group's report.

The Chief Pharmaceutical Officer has since written to NHS organisations asking them to consider the report's findings and instructing them to take appropriate action to address them.

Progress has already been made on a number of the group's recommendations and this, along with variation in antipsychotic use, will continue to be monitored by the Welsh Government on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that any concerns regarding the prescribing of antipsychotics can be raised and acted upon in a timely manner

In regards to Recommendation 1 of the HSCSC report, we intend to further amend the National Prescribing Indicator which measures antipsychotic use. This is so that the report published annually by the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre will allow us to not only monitor the number of patients aged 65 or over prescribed an antipsychotic but also the number of those patients who are also resident in a care home. We are continuing to work with the NHS Wales Informatics Service to identify how routinely collected data can be used to further improve the prescribing indicator. Health boards now receive quarterly data on the number of patients over 65 prescribed an antipsychotic. Plans are in place to make this data available to GP practices in real time through of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework being introduced as part of the General Medical Service contractual changes I announced in June.

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.

Recommendation 2 refers to the compliance of health boards/trusts in relation to National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on dementia. As the guidelines are based on the best available evidence, health boards and trusts recognise they are expected to adhere to this guidance. NICE and the Welsh Government continue to encourage organisations to use guidelines to inform their delivery of services and patient pathways.

In addition, we have established a task and finish group who are working to assist learning and development approaches that will support alternative approaches to antipsychotic medication.

In regards to an update to Recommendation 8, Health Education Improvement Wales is currently undertaking the Strategic Review of Health Professional Education which is looking at the future arrangements for the commissioning process. This will include Speech and Language Therapists.

In addition, the Dementia Action Plan identified the need to develop an All Wales Allied Health Professional Dementia consultant. This post is currently being advertised and will focus on enabling people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible through individualised care plans. It will drive change in the way we enable people with dementia to retain control over their own lives and manage their condition for as long as possible.

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'.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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