

Eluned Morgan AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: WQ90339

Andrew R.T. Davies MS
Senedd Regional Member for South Wales Central

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22 January 2024

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your Written Question asking what I am doing to ensure that rural communities can access healthcare facilities.

Within the planned care recovery plan, we made the commitment to support new ways of delivering services closer to home where clinically safe and appropriate to do so.

During the covid pandemic, health boards introduced new and innovative ways of delivering safe care to patients, including virtual models. We are supporting health boards to build on this learning and maximise the potential of these new models to deliver care closer to home. Rural virtual centres are being explored to reduce the risk of health inequalities through digital exclusion.

We are also working closely with the primary and community care sector, and new models in eye care now allows high street optometrists to provide services that would traditionally have been delivered in the hospital setting. We are exploring the more integrated cluster-based working, reducing the need to travel to a hospital setting where appropriate.

We have invested in the development of standardised referral pathways and clinical advice and guidance platforms to deliver person-centred care closer to home by ensuring effective referrals into secondary care.

Such approaches deliver benefits not only to rural communities, but to the entire Welsh population by introducing equity, flexibility, and choice into how they will access prudent healthcare services in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Eluned Morgan AS/MS
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Minister for Health and Social Services

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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.