



Ein cyf/Our ref : WQ84537/WQ84538

James Evans MS
Member of the Senedd for Brecon and Radnorshire

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1st March 2022

Dear James,

Thank you for your recent Written Question asking me what measures I am taking to reduce ambulance waiting times.

The Emergency Ambulance Services Committee (EASC) continues to work with the Welsh ambulance service and local health boards to deliver a range of immediate and sustainable actions to support improvement. These actions are focused on better management of 999 demand in the community, increased capacity, responsiveness to people with time sensitive complaints and ambulance patient handover.

As part of the EASC delivery plan, developed in July 2021, safe patient cohorting is currently operating as a temporary measure at Morriston Hospital and the Grange University Hospital to enable patients to be offloaded and ambulance resources released prior to being taken into emergency departments.

At a meeting of the EASC Joint Committee in November 2021, health board chief executives committed to two 'red lines' to reduce handover delays:

- No ambulance handover will take more than 4 hours
- Reduction of the average lost time per arrival by 25% from the October 2021 level at each site (from 72 minute to 54 minutes at an all Wales level)

The Chief Ambulance Services Commissioner has written to Health Board Chief Executives to re-emphasise these commitments and will work with them to prepare improvement plans for each site.

I expect health boards, as joint commissioners of ambulance services, to work with the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust (WAST) to understand local challenges and agree collaborative actions to ensure patients within their communities receive a safe and timely response. That means a whole system approach, ensuring ambulance crews are available to respond when needed.

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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.

In 2018, the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust and Emergency Ambulance Services Committee jointly commissioned an independent demand and capacity review to inform future configuration of resources and staffing across Wales. The review highlighted a requirement to better match capacity to demand through a mix of additional recruitment and the delivery of a number of operational efficiencies, including a review of existing staff rosters.

Last year, the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust began the process of undertaking a national roster review, as part of a suite of actions, informed by the recommendations of the independent capacity and demand review.

The national roster review process is intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of rosters and ensure staff and resources are best placed geographically to deliver a responsive and equitable emergency ambulance service across all parts of Wales. The new rosters for all stations in Wales are being developed in partnership between WAST management teams and staff, facilitated by an external roster company. This work is ongoing and is being taken forward in partnership with staff, Trade Union colleagues and commissioners.

I expect the revised rosters to begin to be implemented from September 2022, and for the Trust to keep rosters under ongoing review to ensure there is equity of service across all parts of Wales and to ensure there is no adverse impact on responsiveness, staff and patient experience, or clinical outcomes.

We remain committed to ensuring there is equity of access to health and care services which are safe, sustainable and deliver the best possible clinical outcomes for communities across all parts of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

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