

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/VG/1234/18

Simon Thomas AM
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29 March 2018

Dear Simon,

I write in response to the question of why Welsh Government consulted on the termination of pregnancy provision for women from Northern Ireland, which you raised in Business Questions 6 March.

Whilst I have some sympathy with the points you raise about holding a consultation, the Welsh Government's own Consultation Guidance for Staff arguably creates a legitimate expectation that changes in policy will be informed by a consultation with relevant stakeholders and, in this instance, I was persuaded that this was an appropriate course of action.

Normally, changes in policy are subject to a prior 12-week consultation. However, I agreed a shorter period was sufficient to allow fair, effective and meaningful consultation with the relevant stakeholders. We received over 800 responses to the consultation and I am satisfied the shorter period was appropriate to enable suitable feedback.

We were not consulting about the grounds on which abortions can be provided, which are prescribed by the Abortion Act 1967, nor were we consulting about the issue of abortion in principle. We were instead consulting about a specific proposal to allow local health boards to provide abortions to a limited group of people not usually resident in their area.

This raises practical issues about access, support care, and other matters on which it would be helpful to have the views of the people affected (i.e. those providing the services, those to whom the services are being extended, and those supporting them).

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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.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services