

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/2081/18

Darren Millar AM
AM for Clwyd West
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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11 June 2018

Dear Darren,

I am writing to you following my questions on 23 May with details of the range of initiatives that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board offers its staff in relation to mental health support.

As you can see from the range offered these are based around preventive measures to empower staff to make informed choices regarding their health and wellbeing.

The Health Board has outlined the support both specific to the Health Board and those measures that are also available on an all Wales basis across NHS Wales. It has also confirmed its approach is based around developing supportive relationships with staff, working with compassion and empathy along with education around “developing emotional intelligence” in the way we interact with each other. Positive role modelling and effective leadership are also key to help managers to support staff and recognise signs of stress and have an understanding of mental health.

Yours sincerely,

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

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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.

All Wales:

- The Health Board has active members of the All Wales Health and Wellbeing Network which has recently launched the new health and wellbeing guidance nationally;
- Interactive health and wellbeing tools;
- Signposting staff to information and resources about health and wellbeing;
- Enabling people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and that of others; and
- All Wales documents designed to promote, support and develop ownership of improving health and wellbeing.

Specific locally:

- The Health Board has worked with Public Health Wales to deliver workshops and raise awareness of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. This has been developed by the New Economics Foundation and forms part of the Health Board's *Living Healthier, Staying Well* strategy;
- The Health Board signed *Time to Change Wales* Employer Pledge and developed an action plan in May 2017. It was launched as part of a Workforce Conference and linked with the Health Board's "Wellbeing and Equality For Everyone" initiative, signed by Chief Executive Gary Doherty. The conference included a key speaker from Stonewall and a speaker about developing wellbeing and resilience;
- The Health Board now has Staff Mental Wellbeing Champions, over 200 staff have pledged and signed up to be champions around mental health in their local areas. The purpose of the champion role is to help and support the Mental Wellbeing and Staff Counselling team to raise awareness of mental wellbeing support information and activities across the Health Board, promoting healthy lifestyles and positive mental health. Staff Champions have recently written and shared their personal stories which will be inputted into the "Health Matters Magazine" and Health & Wellbeing Facebook pages. Staff Champions will know their work areas and colleagues so will be best placed to know what will work best in their working environment and can target resources that best fit their localities. They also have a role to play in challenging the stigma around mental health and starting conversations;
- The Health Board has implemented staff wellbeing workshops, these are 90 minute experiential workshops covering key themes, such as stress, anxiety, low mood, sleep hygiene, managing change and uncertainty, and 5 ways to wellbeing. The emphasis is on self-care and developing more preventative methods and techniques to create wellbeing and decrease stress. Sessions also teach breathing, relaxation and mindfulness;
- The Health Board has a counselling advisory service, where staff can contact the CARE (Confidential, Advice, relating to, Employees) Team and request a call back from an occupational health counsellor who will respond within 24 to 48 hours of the request and have a phone conversation with the staff member to offer emotional/ psychological support, signpost to other services as appropriate and provide information around wellbeing and mental health. The Health Board also offers other counselling service, which include short focal face to face and/or telephone support;
- The Health Board has a Staff Mental Health, Wellbeing & Stress Management procedure, this includes training being delivered to staff attending workshops along with management training sessions around use of the procedure to support staff and prevent sickness absence through stress. It also encourages the use of tools within

the procedure around 5 ways to wellbeing, Wellness Action Plans, Individual Stress Risk Assessments and Group Stress Risk assessments. It raises awareness of HSE standards and preventative methods of care especially by encouraging teams to adopt the Wellness Action Plan and use as part of team building, PADR and line management meetings;

- The Health Board has introduced bespoke training development around stress and wellbeing input into departments such as Emergency Departments, Nursing and Information Technology;
- The Health Board has available to staff critical incident debrief , which offers follow up psychological support sessions following such incidents;
- Mediation is available to staff;
- The Health Board makes available Health Matters, Wellbeing Matters information documents available to all staff that provide information about key mental health issues and raise awareness around support and self care;
- The Health Board has a staff health and wellbeing Facebook Page;
- The Health Board has introduced working with teams who are facing challenges, through linking teams with the network of staff mental wellbeing champions with Listening leads and Staff Engagement Ambassadors;
- Networking and collaboration across the Health Board on such strategies as Together for Mental Health and Living Healthier Staying Well;
- The Health Board has been networking with local and national third sector and voluntary sector organisations to develop positive relationships, referral pathways and promote collaborative working enabling staff to have resources and information to make informed choices about their mental health; and
- The Health Board has agreed management and prevention of stress and anxiety related absence as one of their high impact improvement objectives for 2018/19 to keep the momentum going but also to ensure that they review and address root causes as part of the wider Workforce and OD objectives.