



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-P/VG/0378/19

Suzy Davies AM  
Assembly Member for South Wales West

[Suzy.Davies@assembly.wales](mailto:Suzy.Davies@assembly.wales)

11 March 2019

Dear Suzy,

I am writing to you in relation to comments you raised during Health Questions on 6 February, about the role of co-responders and first responders in supporting the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust to respond to emergency ambulance calls. Apologies for the delay in responding, but I have now received the necessary advice from the Trust to enable me to respond more fully.

In respect of your comments regarding the role of co-responders, the Trust has assured me that despite the ongoing Fire Brigades Union (FBU) negotiations at a UK-level, it is continuing to work closely with colleagues in all three Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) across Wales. It is hoped that this will ensure that, when co-responding is resumed upon resolution of the FBU dispute, there will be a suitably strategic platform to agree the best model of care that FRS colleagues can support the Ambulance Service with, going forward.

Turning to your concerns about community first responder (CFR) schemes, I understand that WAST currently has more than 1,200 active CFRs volunteering across Wales, with schemes in Pennard, Southgate and the surrounding areas making a significant contribution to patient care in the Gower area. The Trust was pleased to receive two recent applications from interested volunteers in the Pennard and Southgate areas, who have now completed training and are back in their communities discharging duties on behalf of the Welsh Ambulance Service. The Trust has no other applications currently pending from that area.

With regard to the training of volunteers, the Trust has changed its volunteer recruitment policy to prevent issues such as those you referred to in relation to the Bishopston and Pennard CFR schemes. The new policy is more closely aligned to that of its employees, whereby it will advertise for a course in a specific area that will back fill existing teams. This allows the Trust to target specific areas where patient need suggests CFR support would be beneficial, and ensures that it can comply with various regulations relating to the storage of personal data (i.e. GDPR) for prolonged periods of time.

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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.

The Trust has a CFR training course in Swansea planned for May of this year which will provide trained volunteers for the following areas:

- Swansea Central x 3 volunteers - this is a new team
- Gorseinon / Gowerton x 5 volunteers - this is a new team
- Mumbles x 2 volunteers - this is an expansion of the existing team
- Pennard x 2 volunteers - this is an expansion of the existing team

The Trust is also working towards the development of a new Volunteer Policy which will provide a consistent approach to all aspects of volunteering and will ensure that it can continue to support this valuable aspect of its workforce.

I hope this response provides you with the assurances you were seeking.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'V' and a long, trailing 'g'.

**Vaughan Gething AC/AM**

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