

# Rhun ap Iorwerth

Aelod o'r Senedd dros Ynys Môn  
Llefarydd Plaid Cymru dros Iechyd a Gofal

Member of the Senedd for Ynys Môn  
Plaid Cymru's Health and Care Spokesperson

## Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN  
Rhun.apiorwerth@senedd.cymru  
senedd.cymru/Rhunapiorwerth  
www.rhunapiorwerth.cymru

**1b Stryd yr Eglwys, Llangefni**  
Ynys Môn LL77 7DU

Eluned Morgan  
Minister for Health and Social Services  
Welsh Government  
(on e-mail)

01248 723599 

@rhunapiorwerth 

@rhunapiorwerth 

/rhunynysmon 

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Annwyl Weinidog,

I am writing to you urgently, following the 'critical incident' announcement by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board yesterday, and the dire situation the health service is in at the moment. I hear daily from constituents who have been affected, and of course, there are many more stories being reported on, about patients waiting too long for emergency care over the past few days.

It is clear that the situation, and the state of our NHS is becoming increasingly worrying. Staff and patients are suffering as the unsustainability of our health and care service becomes more apparent every day. I have heard again from constituents over the last few days about very sick patients who are facing long waiting times for ambulances, including care home residents - one suffering a serious stroke on Sunday, and still waiting for an ambulance until Monday afternoon, and another falling, breaking her hip, and again having to wait over 24 hours for care.

This comes on top of other examples I referred to recently during business questions (6.12.22), when I asked for a debate in Government time to discuss the situation in our NHS. There are many examples of people being forced to wait too long for emergency care, having to wait too long in our hospital emergency units while ambulances with patients are queuing outside, and those patients then faced with being treated in corridors, or having to wait a long time to get a bed on a ward. The impact on them and the staff is substantial. It is an unacceptable and completely unsustainable situation.

We must ask how, and why, our NHS is expected to be able to operate past its maximum capacity, at all times. We no longer have winter pressures, but continuous pressures. Patients and staff therefore need to know what urgent steps are being taken to increase that capacity.

I have called many times in recent months to increase the capacity of community beds, and have argued that we are paying the price for the fact that many thousands of such community beds have been lost over the past decades. I welcome your recent announcement that several hundred new community beds will be provided, but I would also like you to consider how that capacity could be further increased in light of the current crisis. Consideration should be given to acting in a similar manner to what was done during the pandemic. We succeeded in establishing rainbow hospitals quickly at that time, and I would argue that it is necessary to think about whether it is possible to introduce a similar response now, to take the pressure off our general hospitals.

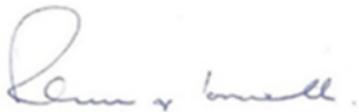
Staffing would naturally be the most important element. Indeed, our hardworking staff are the heart of our health and care services. That is why I am again appealing to you to come to the negotiating table urgently, to try to negotiate an end to the disputes and the recent strike, thereby showing staff that they are truly valued. It's imperative that salary level is a big part of that.

I received a reply from Betsi Cadwaladr yesterday giving an update on their attempt to meet waiting time targets for appointments. It is another element of the current crisis that needs a solution. I understand that there are currently over 170,000 BCUHB patients waiting for appointments. It is disappointing - but not unexpected given the current strain on our services - to hear that the health board estimates that over 21,000 people will miss the target of being seen for a first appointment by December 2022, and over 10,000 will not have started receiving treatment within 104 weeks by March 2023. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could explain what new steps the Welsh Government is implementing in order to assist them with the huge task they face.

There is no getting away from the fact that we are in a crisis situation. Staff are doing their best, but the situation is impossible, and no adequate solutions are being offered. Staff and patients need to know why they should have any confidence in what the Government is doing to restore things, and to provide the stability and sustainability that our health and care services really need.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yn gywir,



**Rhun ap Iorwerth**

Aelod o'r Senedd - Ynys Môn – Member of the Senedd