

Councillor Susan Jones
Convener, Adult Services Scrutiny Services
Panel

By E-mail

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Our Ref: MC/WN
Your Ref:
Date: 20th December 2021

Dear Councillor Jones,

Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel

Thank you for your letter following the Scrutiny meeting of 30th November. Whilst you haven't requested a reply, as the situation is changing rapidly, and it will be a while before our next meeting, I thought it worth updating you in the interim.

Significantly more is known now of the Omicron variant of Covid, and what we are expecting is that although its effects on individuals is little different to the Delta variant, it will spread through the population at a very rapid pace, as fast if not faster than the first 2 waves. In Wales we are a little behind other parts of the UK in its spread, but we are certain it will affect us, probably around the middle of January.

This will mean significant staff absence alongside an increase in pressures on services. This will be felt most acutely in hospitals, but pressure on the whole care system will rise, and you are already aware that it significant right now. We are advising all staff to take their booster jabs, and those who haven't had one or two of their first batch are being urged to get them. This will bolster staff resilience. We have spoken to Trade Union's, so they are fully aware of the scenario we are facing, and have spoken at large staff meetings (virtual), asking that they stay safe, observe the rules and guidance about wearing PPE, keeping 2m, washing hands, and all the other recommendations, and do so both at work and in their private lives. Alongside this staff are being encouraged to take the leave they are entitled to, so that the breaks refresh them and reduce the burn-out effect over work can cause.

Visiting is being reduced at Care Homes, and all news and decisions from Welsh Government are being passed on so they are clearly understood by all. The combined effect of all measures announced now and anticipated in the near future are designed to reduce the absolute peak of Omicron infections, reducing the possibility of system failure and services being over-run, and the catastrophic effect that would have, even if it only lasted a couple of weeks.

We will of course give a much fuller update at our next scheduled meeting.

Yours sincerely



**Y CYNGHORYDD/COUNCILLOR MARK CHILD
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