

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JM/00901/20

Ms Sally Light
Chief Executive
Motor Neurone Disease Association

sally.light@mndassociation.org

29 June 2020

Dear Sally

Thank you for your letter and accompanying document dated 11 June, outlining the many difficulties that carers of individuals with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) face every day; difficulties that I appreciate have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Welsh Government recognises the challenges that people living with a neurological condition including MND face and the impact it has on carers, friends and families, especially in the current situation we find ourselves in. Over the past few months concerns have been raised about accessing services, availability of treatments regarding MS, Parkinson's Disease etc. and as we move into the recovery stage of the pandemic the Neurological Conditions Implementation Group will review the concerns raised, identify gaps in services and share best practice/new ways of working. The Welsh Neurological Alliance (WNA) is represented on this group and you may wish to consider providing them with information to inform these discussions. They can be contacted at:

www.walesneurologicalalliance.org.uk.

During the current pandemic crisis we remain committed to maintaining carers' rights and ensuring their needs are considered and addressed in our planning for emergence from lock down.

We have convened a dedicated task and finish group, which includes representatives from carers' organisations, to consider emerging evidence and guidance about coronavirus as well as to discuss and hear details of the issues that are affecting carers due to the pandemic. The group will support us to consider the specific needs of a broad range of carers as and when current lockdown restrictions are eased. This group includes the Chair of the Wales Carers Alliance. Since the start of the crisis they have provided us with key information and evidence of the issues that are affecting carers now, to help us better understand the increased pressures carers are facing. The three national carers organisations – Carers Wales, Carers Trust Wales and the All Wales Forum for Parents and Carers, are also members of our Carers Ministerial Advisory Group which will be meeting again in late June, to consider plans for supporting all carers, including young carers, as we emerge from the lock down and many people return to work.

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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.

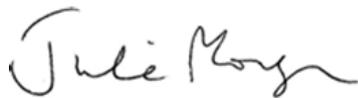
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

During Carers Week at the beginning of June, I announced additional funding of £50,000 to Carers Wales which is intended to support carers of all ages to manage the stress of their caring role. The new funding will provide more unpaid carers with professional and peer support to help them manage their mental health.

Also, back in April, three carer specific projects were awarded funding of £2.1m under the new Third Sector Sustainable Social Services grant scheme. These projects will support Carers Wales, Carers Trust Wales and Age Cymru, to improve the lives of carers of all ages. We have advised these organisations that their planned activity can be amended to support carers who are struggling at this time and have provided contact details for the organisations above.

I hope that the information provided offers some clarity on what the Welsh Government is doing to ensure the continued support of carers.

Yours sincerely

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

Julie Morgan AS/MS

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