



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

1 May 2009

Dear Colleague

RURAL HEALTH PLANNING – IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY ACROSS WALES

I am pleased to announce that the Minister for Health and Social Services has approved the document “Rural Health Planning – improving service delivery across Wales”.

This is a One Wales commitment to “develop and publish a Rural Health Plan, ensuring that the future health needs of rural communities are met in ways which reflect the particular conditions and characteristics of rural Wales”. To address this a Ministerial Steering Group was established in February 2008. Over recent months, the steering group has taken evidence from the public and key stakeholders to inform its work.

This document is grounded in strong evidence of world-wide best practice, as well as community views of current and future needs. It identifies the need for more creative ways in which primary and community services are provided in rural areas outside traditional models of care and are flexible and responsive to needs. The work has identified three key themes: access to services, the need and opportunities for closer service integration and community cohesion and engagement.

The consultation period will run for sixteen weeks and to support this process a number of key questions have been outlined in a separate proforma to help structure all responses.

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We welcome your feedback on the document and have included a response proforma to help you in this process. The closing date for all responses is **Friday 21st August 2009**. All responses should be submitted electronically to ruralhealth@wales.qsi.gov.uk or in writing to:

**Community Health Strategy and Development,
Health Strategy Division,
Welsh Assembly Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ**

Please note, the Welsh Assembly Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this consultation document. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of its author are published along with the response, as this gives credibility to the consultation exercise. If you do not wish to be identified as the author of your response, please state this expressly in writing to us.

I look forward to receiving your responses.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen Howson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Helen Howson
Senior Strategy Advisor
Department for Health and Social Services**