Welsh Language Standards (No. 7) Regulations

General Lines

- It is really important that we increase the responsibility on health boards to provide more services through the medium of Welsh in future. This is particularly important when it comes to elderly patients and very young children who find it more comfortable to communicate in their mother tongue at a time of acute stress.

- Mainstreaming Welsh language services into this sector is a huge challenge which will take time. I am confident that the pragmatic approach we have taken in these draft regulations acknowledges these difficulties whilst still moving the process of securing more opportunities for Welsh speakers to engage with the health sector in Welsh going forward.

Service Delivery Standards

- **Inpatients** will be able to indicate whether they prefer to use Welsh while they are in hospital. If so staff must be made aware of this so that they can, where possible, deal with the patient in Welsh.

- Health Boards must prepare a 5 year **improvement plan** outlining how they will work towards offering clinical consultations in Welsh.

- **Improvement plans** may focus on targeted areas, either medical areas such as mental health, dementia care or infant care or geographical areas where the need for Welsh medium health care is greatest.

Primary care

- GP surgeries run by health boards will have to comply with the new standards,

- Discussions will start with contractor representative bodies to agree Welsh language obligations through their contractual arrangements/terms of service for independent primary care providers.

- Examples of the type of duties to be placed in contracts
provide information to the Local Health Board about which primary care services the contractor is able to offer through the medium of Welsh;

take advantage of the translation service offered by the Local Health Board in order to provide a bilingual sign when erecting a sign in connection with the services it provides on behalf of the Local Health Board;

make available to patients and members of the public any Welsh language version of a document and forms provided to the contractor by the Local Health Board;

- The duties would sit within the existing contract/reporting systems, be enforceable by the LHB, and would provide clear duties in the form of contractual obligations.

General Medical Council and other Healthcare Regulators

- Social Care Wales will be included in No. 4 Regulations which are for Wales only Regulators (Education Workforce Council) and Tribunals. This is because Social Care Wales conduct fitness to practice hearings similar to the other bodies in the No.4 Regulations.

- Separate Regulations will need to be prepared for the GMC and other UK wide healthcare regulators. Including them in the No.4 Regulations would require considerable amendments and exemptions to the Regulations which would have made them difficult to understand and implement.

- No timetable has been announced for making these Regulations.

Other interventions

- Through the Welsh for Business (Cymraeg Byd Busnes) Welsh Government is piloting a project in two areas that will provide support and assistance to primary care providers to help them to increase their use of Welsh. In the first instance this will focus on GPs.

- Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol are already working towards improving the capacity with the health service to offer Welsh language services. Welsh medium teaching is increasing and medical students that are able to speak Welsh are being taught some modules in Welsh which improves their confidence to use the language in a professional setting.