



Zoe Richards  
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Dear Zoe

Thank you for your email, addressed to the First Minister, enclosing a joint statement from disability organisations. I have been asked to respond to your concerns and apologise for the delay in doing so.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring at risk and vulnerable people have the support they need. If they have no family, friends or community support, it is essential that they know where to turn for that support. Local authorities and third sector and community organisations are best placed to provide this support within their communities. We know that many local authorities are supporting people who are not shielded but are from wider vulnerable groups by providing access to emergency food or linking them up with volunteers who can help them. We are currently in discussion with local authorities about the type of support they are offering which will inform our wider strategic approach.

To assist local authorities, Vaughan Gething AM, Minister for Health and Social Services has announced an additional £40m to support adult social care in Wales to help ensure adult social care providers can maintain their care provision and be able to respond to any additional demands for care which arise. This money will be allocated to local government through the COVID-19 local government hardship fund. The situation will be kept under review and further money could potentially be made available if needed.

A package of support worth £24m has also been agreed for the third sector. The Welsh Government Third Sector Covid-19 Response Fund will support the third sector through the coronavirus outbreak. Support is also available on the WCVA's website or more locally from Third Sector Support Wales' members.

In terms of the NHS, we are taking steps to ensure that it receives the funding it needs and I'm pleased to advise that it is coping well at the moment with capacity to deal with non-

COVID-19 related urgent health issues. Steps have been taken to increase capacity to try and ensure most of the system keeps functioning, including opening up field hospitals, employing more staff and purchasing equipment to support the increased capacity. Some things have though had to be stopped or reduced such as non-urgent elective surgery and outpatient appointments.

It is though vital that should people have concerns about non-related COVID-19 health issues they should contact their GP or go to A&E as appropriate.

I know that you, and a number of the other organisations you are representing, attended the recent Disability Equality Forum meetings held on 16 and 30 April when key issues affecting disabled people in the current crisis were discussed, including some of those detailed in your statement; and members were updated on the actions being taken to address the issues raised at the previous meeting and the accessible solutions being put in place.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Xerri'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

Mathew Xerri  
Head of complex and unscheduled  
care and disabled people.