



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales' Petitions Committee
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff
CF99 1NA

30 March 2020

Dear Janet,

Petition P-05-936 Offer Bowel Cancer Screening After the Age of 74

Thank you for your letter of 24 February about the petition on bowel cancer screening submitted by Andrew Lye.

As the petition states, in Wales there is no provision for asymptomatic people over the age of 74 to opt in to the screening programme, unlike their counterparts in England and Scotland. Older individuals in Wales and Bowel Cancer UK have also raised this lack of parity as a concern directly with me. I met representatives of Bowel Cancer UK on 13th January 2020 to discuss their concerns.

I understand that the current evidence base for screening people over the age of 74 is insufficient to enable the UK National Screening Committee to balance benefits and harms and make recommendations. I therefore wrote jointly with Bowel Cancer UK to the UK Screening Committee to state that we consider that the development of an evidence base to allow proper consideration of the case for extending the screening programme beyond the age of 74, or for allowing older people to opt in to screening as they do in England and Scotland, is a matter of urgency.

We have asked the Committee, as a first step, to let us know: how they believe the existing evidence base could be strengthened; whether any steps are being taken to fill gaps in research, and if so, what they are. We await the Committee's response.

Yours sincerely,

Heléna Herklots CBE
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

03442 640 670

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau yn Gymraeg

Adeiladau Cambrian
Sqwâr Mount Stuart
Caerdydd CF10 5FL

Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff CF10 5FL

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.