

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Russell George MS  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

[SeneddHealth@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddHealth@senedd.wales)

3 February 2023

Dear Russell,

I wrote to you in November 2022 setting out plans to ensure a renewed focus on driving forward elimination of hepatitis B and C in Wales. In doing so I committed to update you on the publication of a number of key documents.

The quality statement for liver disease was published on 30 November 2022 and sets out the Welsh Government's future vision for paediatric and adult liver services in Wales for the next decade. It will be supported by the NHS Executive and implemented through a series of health board enabling plans and collaborations with other networks and programmes:  
[The quality statement for liver disease \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

A Welsh Health Circular titled '*Eliminating hepatitis (B and C) as a public health threat in Wales – Actions for 2022-23 and 2023-24*', was issued to health boards, Public Health Wales, and substance misuse area planning boards on 12 January 2023. It contains a range of challenging actions for delivery partners and progress will be overseen by the recently established, Welsh Government-led Elimination Programme Oversight Group:  
[Eliminating hepatitis \(B and C\) as a public health threat: actions for 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 \(WHC/2023/001\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Please also find attached a written statement that has been issued to accompany the Welsh Health Circular.

I will keep the Committee periodically updated on progress in our drive to eliminate hepatitis B and C as a public health threat.

Yours sincerely

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

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.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**        **Eliminating hepatitis B and C as a public health threat**

**DATE**        **03 February 2023**

**BY**            **Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services.**

I am pleased to announce the publication of the [\*Eliminating hepatitis \(B and C\) as a public health threat in Wales – Actions for 2022-23 and 2023-24\*](#) Welsh Health Circular. This will help Wales to deliver our commitment to achieve the World Health Organisation’s targets to eliminate hepatitis B and C as a public health threat by 2030.

In recent years, we have made some real progress towards these goals. Some 4,000 people have successfully been treated for hepatitis C but recent modelling estimates there are still around 8,000 people in Wales living with hepatitis C.

Hepatitis B screening is now included in our antenatal screening programme and hepatitis B vaccination is part of the routine childhood immunisation programme, which means that acute hepatitis B infection in Wales is now rare in children. However, it remains a problem among unvaccinated adults.

Hepatitis B and C services were severely impacted by the pandemic. I am pleased this Welsh Health Circular sets out how the NHS will not only recover services to pre-pandemic levels but reinvigorate the drive to eliminate hepatitis B and C as a public health threat by 2030. There are 13 key actions for health boards, Area Planning Boards and Public Health Wales to ensure frontline services are provided with the support needed to achieve these elimination targets.

The benefits of eliminating hepatitis B and C are wide ranging, both to individuals and to wider society. By identifying and treating people with hepatitis B and C, we can prevent the development of hepatitis-related liver disease and its complications, which have a significant and detrimental impact on people’s mental and physical health. Additionally, there are significant cost and resource implications to the NHS in treating hepatitis-related liver disease.

Officials have established a Hepatitis B and C Elimination Programme Oversight Group, which includes a wide range of stakeholders to provide a renewed strategic focus on elimination and will report to the Chief Medical Officer and Ministers on a regular basis.

The actions have been developed by this group with a focus on identifying those who need testing and treatment; simplifying service delivery so testing and treatment is accessible to meet the needs of individuals, and supporting people through the testing and treatment process.

I am grateful for all the hard work that has gone into this area to date, and look forward to continued support in our drive to eliminate hepatitis B and C as a public health threat.