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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

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Carolyn Thomas MS,
Chair,
Petitions Committee,
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1SN

Ein cyf / Our ref: CS/CT(CE25/0453)

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Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Emma Hughes

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Dyddiad / Date: 10th July 2025

By email – seneddCovid@Senedd.wales

Dear Chair,

RE: Petition P-06-1444: Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd.

Thank you for your further letter of 21st May 2025, requesting additional information about the Health Board's menopause services, following further consideration of the above petition on 12th May 2025.

I am grateful to you for sharing the latest comments from the petitioner, Ms Delyth Owen, and I am pleased to have a further opportunity to address her concerns.

I share Ms Owen's desire to see women have access to menopause care as close to their homes as possible. Since our first correspondence with the Petitions Committee about this issue, the Health Board's ability to provide such local support has improved considerably, with a number of Consultant Gynaecologists undertaking the British Menopause Society's (BMS) Menopause Certificate.

As I indicated in my previous response, Consultants who hold the BMS Certificate are able to manage 90% of referrals for menopause support, and appointments are now being delivered in each of our three acute hospitals (Ysbyty Gwynedd, Glan Clwyd Hospital, and Wrexham Maelor Hospital).

As more of these BMS qualified Consultants are based in Ysbyty Gwynedd than in Glan Clwyd Hospital or Wrexham Maelor Hospital, there is a greater opportunity for women from North West Wales to be invited to an appointment at their local hospital.

That said, as we operate a treat in turn policy, based on our Women's Services pan North Wales capacity, it is possible that some women from Gwynedd and Môn may be invited to appointments at Glan Clwyd or Wrexham Maelor, if this means that they can be seen more quickly.

Cyfeiriad Gohebiaeth ar gyfer y Cadeirydd a'r Prif Weithredwr / Correspondence address for Chairman and Chief Executive:
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I must stress that this pan-North Wales, treat-in-turn approach has a number of key benefits, which include:

- **Fairer access** for all patients, not limited by postcode.
- **Better use of capacity** across the region, reducing delays.
- **Resilience** against local staff shortages or recruitment gaps.
- **Shorter waiting times**, as patients can be treated where slots are available.

In contrast, dividing waiting lists by geography can lead to unequal access and underused capacity.

Ms Owen has also raised concerns that not all women will be able to travel to appointments offered at venues further away from their local acute hospital. Where this is the case, the Health Board will explore options available to the patient, including the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) or financial reimbursement for using public transport to travel to an appointment.

Should patients decline to travel, and they are part of a registered vulnerable group or have additional requirements, yet are unable to access NEPTS or reimbursement for transport costs, the service will review their circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

While our BMS qualified Consultants are able to support women with 90% of menopause related issues – often with appointments at their local hospital, our three Menopause Specialists are continuing to provide more specialist advice and support to the smaller number of women (c10%) with more complex presentations, through both face-to-face and virtual appointments.

In her letter to you, Ms Owen queried whether this more specialist support was being provided in face-to-face clinics at Ysbyty Gwynedd. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to arrange face-to-face clinics with our Menopause Specialists across all three of our acute hospital sites, however, additional activity has now been introduced during the weekends at Glan Clwyd Hospital.

This arrangement is similar to how NHS bodies across Wales and the wider UK provide access to more specialist care, with services provided at regional centres, or at a limited number of venues across a smaller geographical area, in order to make the best use of resources.

Ms Owen also queried the allocation of face-to-face and virtual appointments. I can confirm that our Menopause Specialists triage all referrals and decide on the most appropriate mode of appointment, based on a patient's clinical complexity and any pertinent additional information from their clinical notes or letter of referral. Women are always asked if they are agreeable to a virtual appointment and the vast majority of patients are happy to proceed on this basis. As a consequence, we are increasing the number of follow up appointments provided on a virtual basis.



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I do hope that Ms Owen finds these additional comments helpful, and I thank her once again for highlighting this important issue. I can assure you and Ms Owen that the Health Board will continue to closely monitor its menopause service arrangements, including feedback provided by women who access care and treatment, in order to ensure that we provide the best possible experience and outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Shillabeer'.

Carol Shillabeer
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive