

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Your ref P-05-699
Our ref VG/05837/16

Mike Hedges AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

21 August 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August, seeking my views on the petition raised by Angharad Roche.

I am committed to ensuring that all patients in Wales have equitable access to treatment that has proven clinical and cost effectiveness. This evidence-based approach utilises the independent expertise of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG), which undertake robust, comprehensive appraisals of new medicines. It is our responsibility to ensure NHS resources are invested where the proven benefits are in balance with the cost. All medicines recommended by NICE or AWMSG are made available routinely where clinically appropriate. Since AWMSG was established in 2002, 84% of medicines appraised have received a positive recommendation and, in the last financial year, 96% of medicines appraised have been recommended for use in Wales.

We will continue to place the appraisal process at the centre of our evidence-based approach to medicines in Wales, ensuring people have access to effective treatment for their illness or disease. The new treatment fund I announced in July will support this approach by providing early access to innovative medicines, which offer new treatment options to people with life-long and life-limiting conditions. This new investment will provide health boards the time to plan and prioritise future funding from within their budgets. Work is progressing to refine the criteria and mechanisms needed to manage the fund effectively. I anticipate the fund will be operational by December.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@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.

Where a health professional believes a particular treatment that is not recommended is the most suitable, an application can be made under the NHS Wales protocol for the *Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR)* process. This process involves an assessment of the clinical suitability for a non-recommended treatment with supporting evidence showing why the individual patient will gain more clinical benefit from it than the evidence base suggests; usually referred to as clinical exceptionality.

It is right that we have a process in Wales to enable access to treatments and devices not normally available via the NHS. Each health service in the UK has such a process, with clinical criteria to determine accessibility. The IPFR process has been streamlined and improved following the review in 2013-14. Last month, I announced my intention of arranging a further review looking specifically at the clinical exceptionality criteria and revisiting the issue of reducing the number of IPFR panels we have in Wales. The review will be undertaken by an independent panel and will draw on the expertise and experience of the system in Wales, including that of patients, and bring a fresh perspective from outside Wales. We have made good progress to establish the panel and I will be updating the National Assembly at the end of September.

Taken together, these measures build on our evidence-based approach to accessing new medicines and will help to ensure that patients in Wales have access to equitable treatment wherever they live.

I hope the committee finds this information helpful in considering Ms Roche's petition and may I suggest the committee considers the full text of my announcement "Access to New Medicines" dated 12 July, a copy of which is enclosed?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vaughan Gething'.

Vaughan Gething AM/AC

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport