

9 April 2019

Management of follow up outpatients across Wales

Dear Colleague,

The Auditor General for Wales published a report on Management of follow up outpatients across Wales on 31 October 2018. As a result of growing national concerns relating to the management of follow-up outpatients, the Auditor General has undertaken initial and follow-up reviews at each health board in Wales over recent years to help define the extent of the challenges being faced and the progress that has been made in addressing them.

This report summarises the progress made by health boards since the Auditor General's initial 2015–16 review; national arrangements to improve the management and performance of follow-up outpatients and changes in the waiting list, including the volume of patients waiting on the follow-up outpatient waiting list and those experiencing a delay.

The Report found that health boards have made some progress in response to recommendations made by the Auditor General in 2015–16, but the pace and impact on reducing the backlog of delayed follow-up appointments is limited, with significant variations between specialties and health boards across Wales. The average number of patients on the follow-up waiting list has increased by 12% over the last 3 years, with the number of patients waiting twice as long as they should be

Due to the significant concerns raised in this report, the Public Accounts Committee has been undertaking an inquiry into this area, with a particular focus on ophthalmology given the significant impact that the delay in outpatient appointments has on patients and the very real risk of harm if there is not regular review of follow up patients. Copies of the transcripts of the meetings so far can be accessed on the Committee pages:

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=23266>

The evidence heard to date has raised some significant concerns about the seeming differing approaches between health boards, and the impact that delays



to these appointments are having on patients. We were particularly struck by the concerns raised by RNIB Cymru around the balance of NHS and private provision

The Committee would welcome comments from yourselves, as medical professionals on the findings of the Auditor General's work and the evidence heard by Committee to date.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ramsay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair

