



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/06868/19

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

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

1 July 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 13 June regarding petition P-05-849: all men in Wales should have access through the NHS to the best possible diagnostic tests for prostate cancer.

Patients in Wales should have access to investigations for cancer in line with clinical guidance and this should be delivered consistently across Wales. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published its revised guideline on the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer in May 2019. This confirmed that Health Boards should be delivering pre-biopsy mpMRI for the investigation of suspected prostate cancer.

Two Health Boards in Wales had already started to provide this investigation and one Health Board was providing pre-biopsy but not to the mpMRI standard. In recognition of the emerging evidence and NICE's review of its guidance, the Welsh Government had convened a series of three workshops to bring the clinical community together to create a consensus on the best way forward and to enable local planning to comply with any revised guidance. At the most recent workshop in June, Health Boards not providing investigation in line with the revised guidance were required to submit and review outline implementation plans.

These plans have been reviewed and further work will take place to change local practice. This programme of change will be overseen by the Imaging Network and Urology Board. It is my expectation that all Health Boards will come into line with guidance by the end of the financial year, potentially earlier. I will be monitoring progress closely.

While Health Boards are transitioning to this new service model, people with suspected prostate cancer will continue to be investigated in line with the extant clinical pathways.

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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.

While I appreciate it is desirable for appropriate patients to be offered pre-biopsy mpMRI, I must accept that Health Boards will need to put in place the relevant equipment, training and capacity to do this. Now that we have arrived at a consensus, it is my role to ensure Health Boards implement this as quickly as possible. In the meantime, should patients seek to be investigated by private means then this must remain a private matter for those patients concerned.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services