



Ein cyf/Our ref: WQs91535, 91536 & 91537

Andrew R.T. Davies MS  
Senedd Regional Member for South Wales Central

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21 March 2024

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your recent Written Question asking what consideration have I given to research from Cancer Research UK showing that cancer patients in Wales are waiting longer for care than in other comparable countries; how do I plan to improve treatment times in light of research from Cancer Research UK showing that cancer patients in Wales are waiting longer for care than in other comparable countries; and will I readdress current plans to lower waiting times in light of the research from Cancer Research UK showing that in Wales people are waiting longer for cancer care than in other comparable countries.

The recently published articles in the Lancet Oncology, relating to research by the International Cancer Benchmarking Partnership, describe access to radiotherapy and chemotherapy for eight types of cancer between 2011-17. It compared Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Norway, and parts of Australia and Canada. It does not reflect current waiting times for treatment.

Since this data was collected, the Welsh Government has introduced an updated cancer policy, overhauled the cancer waiting time standard, introduced updated operational standards for access to radiotherapy and systemic anti-cancer therapy, and expanded the number of training places for oncology every year for three consecutive years. In addition to this, the Welsh Government is funding the replacement of more than ten linear accelerators across Wales and providing for an additional two machines to meet the need for radiotherapy treatment; as well as having introduced the New Treatment Fund which supports more rapid adoption of newly recommended systemic anti-cancer therapies.

Cancer waiting time performance is influenced by increases in the number of people being referred for cancer investigation (up 18% in the last two years), increases in the number of people requiring treatment (up 9% in the last two years), the increasing complexity of recommended clinical practice, the competing pressures of non-cancer planned care, and the resources available to the NHS to meet this need. Despite these pressures, the NHS in Wales has absorbed large increases in cancer activity over the past three years and improved its performance by 4.5 percentage points in the most recent figures available. To

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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.

enable further improvement I have approved £2 million per year for three years to support cancer waiting time recovery as part of the national Planned Care Programme delivered by the NHS Executive.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

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