



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-849  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/05051/18

David John Rowlands AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 19 December regarding petition P-05-849: all men in Wales should have access through the NHS to the best possible diagnostic tests for prostate cancer.

Health services are guided by the recommendations from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Until recently, NICE guidance did not include pre-biopsy MRI for the investigation of suspected prostate cancer. As a result of new clinical evidence, NICE reviewed its guidance in this area and published an updated draft guideline in December 2018 for consultation. The draft guideline recommends pre-biopsy MRI and subject to the findings of the consultation, this guideline is due to be finalised in April 2019.

You raise a number of points in your letter and I will respond to each one in turn:

### **Details of the outcome of the workshop organised by the Wales Urology Board on 12 November**

A second meeting took place on 11 January to discuss the draft guidelines, assess whether health boards were in clinical agreement with the draft guidance and to consider the practical implications for health boards of implementing the guidance once approved. Both meetings created a consensus that will help health boards to prepare for the final NICE guidance in April. Health boards do need to await the final guidance to determine exactly what local changes are needed.

### **An assessment of the current availability of mpMRI scans pre-biopsy for patients in Wales**

Cwm Taf, Cardiff and Vale and Aneurin Bevan university health boards routinely offer pre-biopsy MRI scans for suspected prostate cancer, with Cwm Taf and Aneurin Bevan providing multi-parametric scans.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto: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.

**What support the Welsh Government has given to support the adoption and availability of mpMRI scans across Wales**

The Welsh Government has asked the Welsh Urology Board to support the development of a clinical consensus while NICE is developing its final guidance, to ensure all health boards are developing plans to come into line with the final NICE guidance, including timescales and resource implications.

**What support the Welsh Government would provide to Health Boards in the event that NICE revises its guidelines to recommend the use of mpMRI scans pre-biopsy**

If NICE recommends pre-biopsy MRI, the Welsh Government would expect all health boards to consider this guidance and amend their pathways of care accordingly. The Welsh Government cannot make a decision about the most clinically appropriate pathway to investigate suspected prostate cancer. This is the responsibility of health boards and clinical leaders, based on the evidence available. We expect there to be greater consistency in service provision after the NICE guidelines have been updated.

A number of health boards have begun to amend their pathways. Health boards remain responsible for delivering the best evidence based care and must keep pace with changes in clinical practice.

**Whether you consider that there is an appropriate interim solution which would enable access to mpMRI scans for patients across Wales, such as through enabling access to private facilities for scans**

Interim solutions were considered at the meeting on 11 January. Health boards have been asked to develop implementation plans, including interim solutions and these will be reviewed once received.

I hope this information is helpful and provide reassurance that the NHS in Wales is considering how best to respond to emerging evidence and new guidance.

Yours sincerely,



**Vaughan Gething AC/AM**

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