



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P-VG-2240-19

David Rees AM
National Assembly for Wales
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1 July 2019

Dear David,

Further to questions to the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd on 11 June, I am writing to provide you with an update on the role of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in the diagnosis of prostate cancer.

The diagnosis and investigation of cancer is guided by advice from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence; the two most pertinent guidelines are:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng12>
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng131>

The Welsh Government is committed to improving outcomes for cancer and our approach is set out in the Cancer Delivery Plan for Wales. This plan focuses on the need to improve early detection and timely access to high quality treatment. More information can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/cancer-delivery-plan-2016-2020>

I am pleased to report that prostate cancer outcomes continue to improve in Wales, the proportion of men surviving at least one year has improved more than ten percentage points since the 1995-99 period and stood at 96% in the 2010-14 period. The percentage of men surviving at least five years has improved 23 percentage points and stood at 90% for the same periods. Nonetheless I am not complacent with these results and important work is underway to reduce variation in how prostate cancer is investigated and treated. This includes the introduction of pre-biopsy multi-parametric MRI in every health board and the standardisation of the treatment pathway for prostate cancer as part of the introduction of the single cancer pathway.

There has been recent news coverage of a clinical trial being conducted by University College London, considering the potential to use MRI scans as the basis of a screening programme for prostate cancer for men without symptoms. NHS England has not committed to introducing this as a screening programme. Although this trial is promising, evidence from

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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.

this trial will need to be considered by the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) which provides expert advice on all screening matters to the four UK countries. Should the UK NSC recommend a national screening programme for prostate cancer, appropriate consideration will be given as to how this could be delivered in Wales.

You also asked about the national approach to diagnostic radiology. In March 2018, the Welsh Government published a Statement of Intent for Imaging in NHS Wales. The Statement described the actions required to develop modern and sustainable diagnostic imaging services, including issues such as workforce and equipment. A National Imaging Network has been established to coordinate developments and an Imaging Implementation Plan will be submitted to Welsh Government in July 2019. More information can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/imaging-services-disease-diagnosis>

In August 2018, the new National Imaging Academy for Wales was established with £3.4m funding from the Welsh Government. The new purpose-designed state of the art facility accommodates a significant increase in capacity for training junior doctors, enabling a more than doubling the number of radiologist trainees per year. Its establishment will allow for an increase in the clinical imaging workforce and the number of trained clinical radiologists in Wales, which in turn, will improve services to patients across Wales and ensure a sustainable, high quality workforce for the future.

The Welsh Government is also making significant investment in MRI equipment. During the current financial year we expect new machines to be installed at hospitals in Cardiff (two scanners), Merthyr, Aberystwyth, Swansea and Port Talbot. This equipment represents a capital investment of £16.592m.

I hope this update is helpful.

Yours sincerely

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

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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