



Our ref: WQ87809

Jane Finch-Saunders MS  
Senedd Constituency Member for Aberconwy

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Dear Janet,

Thank you for your recent written question asking me to confirm why the pre-operative assessments have been extended from being valid for 6 weeks to 16 weeks in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

I note you also raised this matter during questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales, and Trefnydd on 14 March.

Health boards have their own pre-operative assessment process based on national guidelines as part of their governance models for surgery. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has made pre-operative assessments valid for 16 weeks rather than 12 weeks. The Health Board has determined that it is rare for a patient's condition to change significantly between weeks 12 and 16. Therefore, the extension will avoid the need for patients whose surgery could not be scheduled within the 12-week period to make a repeat visit to hospital for a further assessment. This reduces inconvenience for patients and releases capacity to assess other patients. All patients will be re-assessed for fitness for anaesthesia and surgery on the day of surgery.

The Planned Care Programme for general surgery is working with health boards on the consistency of their pre-operative assessment processes.

Yours sincerely,

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

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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.