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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jenny Rathbone MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff
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19 June 2023

Dear Jenny,

I am writing to clarify something I said during my statement on the Diagnostic Strategy (25 April) and in my response to oral question OQ59380 (26 April).

On both of those occasions I referred to the need to test a lot of people in order to find the relatively small number who actually have cancer. I said that in order to get to the 5 per cent, we need to test 95 per cent of the public. This percentage figure was an estimation, and this figure can fluctuate.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published cancer referral criteria. The guideline development group felt that in order to improve diagnosis of cancer, a positive predictive value of lower than 5% was preferable and decided to use a 3% threshold for referrals and urgent investigations.

However, the **current** position in Wales is as follows:

In the most recent 12-month period (March-22 to February-23), StatsWales reports there have been nearly 180,000 pathways opened on the suspected cancer pathway. We estimate that approximately 12% of opened pathways will subsequently require cancer treatment. This demonstrates the number of investigations the NHS must provide to identify cancer at the earliest possible stages.

I have copied this letter to the Llywydd for information.

Yours sincerely

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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.