



Ein cyf/Our ref: WQ93563

Sam Kurtz MS  
Member of the Senedd for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire

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12 August 2024

Dear Sam Kurtz MS,

Thank you for your written question (WQ93563): How is the Cabinet Secretary working with health boards in Wales to ensure that elective surgery for inflammatory bowel disease is completed within 18 weeks.

IBD UK is a partnership of 16 professional bodies, royal colleges and patient organisations. It has developed a set of standards which describe what high-quality care should look like at every point of a person's journey. They are also designed to remove variation in care.

Health boards are responsible for delivering health services in Wales and where people require planned surgery for the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease, I expected this to be provided in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [Quality Standard](#).

It is important everyone receives a full assessment ahead of surgery for inflammatory bowel disease to minimise the risk of complications and to aid post-operative recovery. Adopting a person-centred approach with multidisciplinary input and appropriate specialist expertise is essential to optimising outcomes. Surgery should take place at a time when the individual is feeling their best, which may, in some instances, mean that it is scheduled beyond the IBD UK recommendation of 18 weeks.

The National Strategic Clinical Network for Gastrointestinal Conditions has been set up and, as part of this, an Inflammatory Bowel Disease Implementation Network has been formed with Dr Clare Tibbatts as the IBD Clinical Lead. A Clinical Reference Group is being developed to bring together clinicians and other healthcare professionals to improve IBD services and outcomes. Waiting times for planned surgery will be one of the network's priorities.

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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.

The national planned care programme also has a national clinical implementation group for general surgery which is are working to ensure the agreement of clinically-evidenced national pathways from referral to treatment. The programme will be responsible for ensuring these are adopted across NHS Wales.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Mark Drakeford AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care