



Ein cyf/Our ref: WQ83330

Andrew R T Davies MS
Senedd Regional Member for South Wales Central

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20 September 2021

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your Written Question asking to make a statement on whether the Welsh Government intends to hold more health data centrally.

There are vast amounts and different types of health data available. Patient records are only a fraction of the health data that is collected within the NHS. For example health data includes performance data, aggregated health data, information on medicines, prescriptions, laboratory tests, resource use, outcomes, details about diseases, as well as wider information that can affect people's health, such as socioeconomic, climate and pollution monitoring data.

We are committed to helping the NHS in Wales to make the most of the health data they collect as we know that better data and better use of data leads to better decisions and better outcomes for patients and the health and care service. This may therefore lead to the NHS holding more of its health data centrally as well as locally. We are also committed to improving data sharing within the health service, to improve access to the data for those who need it and to avoid patients and clinicians having to record the same information many times.

Patient records are stored in many databases in Wales, some local, such as specialist clinical systems, some national, like the master patient index. Many organisations process patient health records to ensure the right information is available at the right time for patient care. GP held patient data is currently stored in GP systems and controlled by individual GP practices.

There are a number of potential benefits for holding GP records along with other NHS data centrally within the NHS service. For example, it would enable early identification of health problems for individuals, support better planning and delivery of health services, and provide a better platform for health research. Large scale data is essential to make use of artificial intelligence and other new digital analytics technologies.

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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.

To make health and care data available to those who need it within the NHS, Welsh Government is investing in the development of the National Data Resource (NDR). The NDR is a major digital transformation programme, which is managed by all Health Boards and Trusts in Wales. It aims to make it easier to join-up health and care data from various sources, for use within the health and care service in Wales.

Confidentiality of patient records and overall security of personal data will continue to be our priority. We are committed to being transparent about privacy and the use of data. We promise to engage with our stakeholders, the medical profession, patients and the public as we develop our proposals for how the NHS in Wales will store, use and share health data.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

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