



Ein cyf/Our ref WQ100508 - 100509 -100511(e)

Natasha Asghar MS  
Casnewydd Islwyn

5 October 2026

Dear Natasha

I am writing in response to your Written Questions:

What steps is the Welsh Government taking to ensure that babies born in Wales have equal access to newborn spinal muscular atrophy screening compared with babies born in Scotland and England?

Will the Cabinet Minister provide an update on plans to upgrade newborn screening laboratory capacity to facilitate future participation in newborn spinal muscular atrophy screening programmes?

What estimate has the Welsh Government made of the number of babies born in Wales who may not benefit from pre-symptomatic diagnosis of spinal muscular atrophy as a consequence of delays to participating in the in-service evaluation for newborn screening?

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a rare condition, affecting around 1 in every 10,000 live births. The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) does not currently recommend routine population screening for SMA through the newborn bloodspot programme. While England and Scotland are currently participating in the evaluation, a final UK NSC recommendation has not yet been made.

Wales is not currently participating in the SMA in-service evaluation because improvements to infrastructure are required within the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Wales Programme before additional conditions can be safely introduced.

My officials are working closely with NHS partners on proposals to establish the requirements for modernising and futureproofing newborn screening infrastructure in Wales that include laboratory developments. We expect to receive advice on the proposals during the next few weeks.

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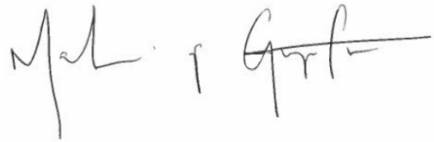
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn yr iaith honno ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

We are also engaging with SMA UK, Muscular Dystrophy UK and people with lived experience to better understand their perspectives as we consider the future development of newborn screening services in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mabon ap Gwynfor', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Mabon ap Gwynfor AS/MS**

Gweinidog Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal  
Cabinet Minister for Health and Care