



Ein cyf/Our ref WQ96836-7

Janet Finch Saunders MS  
Member of the Senedd for Aberconwy

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21 July 2025

Dear Janet

I am replying to your two written questions, as follows:

WQ96836: What steps is the Welsh Government taking to address record-high ophthalmology wait times?

WQ96837: Will the Cabinet Secretary set out what preparations are being made to increase capacity for ophthalmic care, in light of rising demand in the coming two decades due to increases in age-related eye conditions?

Improving ophthalmology waiting times is part of our priority work to reduce long waiting times. Between October 2024 and March 2025, long waits have reduced from 6,040 to 1,220 – an 80% improvement. This is a result of new ways of working and additional investment from the Welsh Government.

I have set out an ambitious £120m plan to reduce the overall waiting list by 200,000; eliminate all two-year waits and restore the maximum eight-week wait for diagnostic tests by March 2026. This will include funding to provide 20,000 more cataract procedures over and above activity planned by health boards.

The plan also ensures health boards take steps to transform and improve services to ensure they are fit for the future. A national clinical strategy for ophthalmology has been developed - [National Clinical Strategy for Ophthalmology - NHS Wales Performance and Improvement](#) – which sets out new ways of working and is being implemented by health boards.

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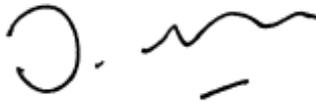
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

Some of the areas highlighted in the strategy, already being delivered include:

- Regional working to provide more treatments such as cataract procedures.
- Pathway redesign – some specialist eye care is being delivered by primary care teams, which in the past was undertaken in secondary care. The Welsh Government continues to fund the upskilling of the primary care optometry workforce through commissioning of higher qualifications to support this shift of services.
- Training staff – Health Education and Improvement Wales has established a speciality training school for ophthalmology, and jointly developed a new simulation suite with Cardiff University for ophthalmology training.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

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