



Our ref: WQ85437, WQ85438, WQ85439

Rhun ap Iorwerth MS  
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28 June 2022

Dear Rhun,

Thank you for your recent Written Questions on liver disease, please accept my apologies for the delay in replying.

Welsh Government remains committed to ensuring that anyone with liver disease in Wales should have access to the best possible care.

Reducing the stigma associated with liver disease is crucial in preventing late presentation and diagnosis of liver disease. That is why the Liver Disease Implementation Group (LDIG) has been working in partnership with the British Liver Trust to destigmatise liver disease through education and improving public understanding of a wide range of different liver conditions.

In addition, the Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS) provides support to people who have been infected with Hepatitis C and/or HIV as a result of NHS treatment with blood, blood products or tissue in Wales. Individuals registered with WIBSS, their family members and bereaved family members can access psychological assessment and treatment concerning the emotional difficulties of being given and living with a diagnosis of Hepatitis C and/or HIV, this will include the stigma associated with liver related diseases. The hope is that by offering a specialist psychology service there will be some acknowledgement and recognition of the physical and psychological complexity and the impact on quality of life and relationships.

We also recognise the role that primary care has to play in the early diagnosis of liver disease. LDIG are keen to increase the number of FibroScan clinics in primary care settings and plan to work with their new GP advisor member to progress pilot work in this area. LDIG also acknowledge the benefits of liver fibrosis tests in primary care for chronic liver disease.

We expect the NHS in Wales to deliver care in line with standards from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) which recommend surveillance of patients with liver cirrhosis normally by means of ultrasound every six months. This should be offered to all such patients as part of routine clinical care unless co-morbidity (such as liver failure or severe cardio-respiratory diseases) would preclude active treatment of an identified liver cancer.

Obesity impacts across a range of chronic diseases which increase years lived in disability and impacts on overall life expectancy. Nearly 2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese and 28% of our children are starting primary school already overweight or obese. We recognise the impact obesity has on a range of chronic diseases including non-alcohol related fatty liver disease and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis.

Our Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy is a key commitment towards a cross-government approach to reducing obesity in Wales on a population scale and has been developed from evidence of what works. This includes developing an approach which combines individual behaviour change with environmental and system change.

The impacts on our physical and mental health have undoubtedly been felt across communities throughout Wales. We know that food and physical activity choices have been adversely impacted upon within communities where there were already existing levels of health inequalities.

I trust this provides you with the information you are seeking.

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