



Our ref: WQ88208

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

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25 May 2023

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your recent written question asking me what assessment I have made of the impact of the number of patients in Wales who have decided to seek private treatment for chronic and acute pain upon NHS waiting lists.

Waiting times for first outpatient for pain services over 52 weeks have significantly reduced following the published commitment to reduce long waits. Data can be found on the stats Wales site: [COVID-19 recovery plan, ambitions for referral to treatment waiting times \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales) (*Pain services are recorded under both anaesthetics and pain management specialities*)

Through the national advisory group for Persistent Pain and clinical leads for pain, we are working with health boards to assess their pain services and we have been sharing best practice so that ideas can be taken from other services to improve pathways. This will in the long term further improve waiting times. We are also promoting the importance of supported self-management whilst awaiting specialist advice, including lifestyle choices and education programmes for patients (EPP Cymru). In the development of our national policy to support people while they wait, provision of services to support pain management will be a mandated element. We are already seeing pain management services form part of self-management courses across health boards.

The Welsh Government does not collect data on the number of people who may have sought private healthcare and are subsequently removed from NHS waiting lists. I remain committed to hold the health boards accountable to reduce long waits and provide services to support people suffering from both chronic and acute pain.

Yours sincerely,

Eluned Morgan AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

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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.