

P-05-936 Offer Bowel Cancer Screening After the Age of 74 – Petitioner to Committee, 15.06.20

Many thanks for the documents you sent to me. They are most interesting and suggest they back up the comments I raised in the initial petition.

I am reminded of the old adage that says it's sometimes easier not to do something than to actually do it. I had this feeling whilst reading the response from the Health Minister, Vaughan Gething, who seems to prefer to sit on the fence as research studies had not proven its benefits. Yet nothing seems to be happening to conduct that research.

However, I must congratulate the Minister in saying that he wishes to see bowel screening to be extended to those aged 50 to 59. But I ask, when does he intend to announce this? I know Senedd elections are due in less than 11 months time, but we cannot wait for that to be a manifesto promise as 900 people, every year, are dying in Wales, from bowel cancer. Or, 75 die every month.

The papers suggest that I am not the only person raising the issue of extending bowel cancer screening beyond the age of 74. Mrs Probert eloquently expressed her view as did the Older People's Council for Ynys Mon. So this suggests people are coming forward, but it seems to be getting no further. Then my petition was launched.

Bowel Cancer UK **STRONGLY** believe there should be parity across all 4 nations and concludes that we should allow those over the age of 75 to self refer back into the Welsh Bowel Cancer Screening Programme.

In conclusion, I am saying that whilst my petition won't halt all 75 deaths every month in Wales, the sooner it's introduced, we see some gradual drop in numbers and I hope the Welsh Government will at the same time extend the scheme to those aged 50 to 59 and actively promote its take up. A double whammy.

If the Minister is holding back as he awaits research, he should get it commissioned and then make a decision in due course on whether or not to retain the new policy. But then evidence seems to suggest that the current policy **IS** ageist as I asserted in my petition.

I hope the Petitions Committee will adopt the petition and ask the Minister to take action as soon as possible. I thank you for sending me the documents and for allowing me to participate in this form.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Lye