



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/04868/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

6 August 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your email of 9 July concerning the Petition P-05-936 about offering bowel cancer screening after the age of 74.

In line with UKNSC advice, the Welsh Government committed to expand the programme to include men and women aged 50-59 by 2023. The intention has been to start rolling this out in a phased manner, starting by inviting men and women from the age of 55 in April 2020.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you will be aware that the cancer screening programmes were temporarily paused in March 2020 and are now being reinstated. Bowel Screening Wales is now testing any kits that have been received into the laboratory since 28 May and participants who sent in a kit that couldn't be tested during the pause have been sent replacement kits since 1 July. The priority over the coming months is to fully reinstate the screening programme and ensure that those who are currently due to be screened are tested. Public Health Wales will be providing a revised plan for the optimisation of the bowel screening programme to the Wales Screening Committee (WSC) later this year.

As you know, prior to the pandemic the role of the UK National Screening Committee (UKNSC) was under review. The work to review the functions and remit of the UKNSC is now resuming. Until we understand the outcome of this review there is no research planned for bowel screening in people over 74 years of age. As per previous correspondence, I attach the letter received from the UKNSC in response to the letter sent by the Chair of WSC for the committee's information.

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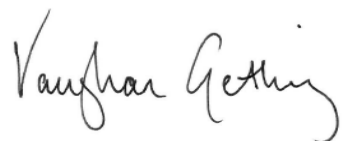
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



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Dr Heather Payne

via e-mail

27 February 2020

Dear Heather,

Further to your email dated the 24 February 2020 I can confirm that the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) position on bowel screening is that it recommends that Bowel Cancer Screening should be offered using FIT every two years to men and women aged 50 – 74 years and, where appropriate, one-off Bowel Scope (BS).

Implementation to deliver this recommendation is for each UK Health Department to lead on.

As Wales has been querying self-referral over the age of 74, it was suggested, in a previous email trail, that a meeting could be set up with Wales leading this, as it falls outside of the UK NSC's recommendation. If this comes about, I should be happy to be involved in view of my interest in bowel screening. However, unless new evidence becomes available, UK NSC will not be changing its recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Steele', written in a cursive style.

Professor Bob Steele
Chair, UK National Screening Committee