

P-06-1444 Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025

I have highlighted in yellow to help to see my response, as the committee kindly asked me to respond to Carol Shillabeere : 13/1/24 reply

RE: Petition P-06-1444: Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd.

Thank you for your letter of 17th October 2024, sent in your capacity as Chair of the Senedd Petitions Committee, requesting information regarding menopause services, following consideration of the above petition on 30th September 2024.

I am very grateful for the response from Carol Shillabeer to the Chair of the Senedd, however I feel that she doesn't really answer the concerns in full, it is a very good measured response but still does not answers the petitions concerns and it is also a very similar response to the previous response given by Helen Stevens-Jones and Eluned Morgan's. I feel the main concern is still to be addressed, women of North Wales need a clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd, Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor are not central to North Wales

All of the Health Board's Consultant Gynaecologists see patients with menopause related symptoms within their clinics across the region. Specialist Menopause Clinics are also offered with three Consultant Gynaecologists who are accredited as menopause specialists by the British Menopause Society. Delivered virtually and in person from Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor Hospital, these clinics offer specialist advice to patients from across North Wales who have more complex needs. Our menopause specialists also deliver regular e-advice sessions to promote menopause awareness amongst primary care healthcare professionals. Again this is not North Wales, again these clinics need to be central to North Wales, not on the English border. Why can one of these clinics not be set up in Ysbyty Gwynedd, it would not cost much to have a clinic in Bangor YG once a week and will save money travel, time off work, child care costs and care costs etc for the patients who need to access them. Wrexham is not central to North Wales patients, why cannot one consultant have a clinic in Bangor?

Six of our consultants are currently undertaking the British Menopause Society's menopause training, which will further strengthen our ability to provide specialist menopause advice closer to home for women across North Wales. This is brilliant news, will this allow for a clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd which is central for North Wales Women?, by when will these consultants be fully trained?

We are taking a number of actions to expand and sustain our ability to support this patient group, including training and education for our medical and nursing colleagues in both primary and secondary care, as well as education for women via webinars and teaching sessions. Job plans for the menopause specialists are currently being reviewed, to provide additional physical and virtual capacity across North Wales. This is brilliant news but not all women want virtual they need face to

face, the consultant needs to be nearer to the patient so less travel and disruption for the patient. How many virtual consultations have they done? What was the feedback from patients? Women need the choice and sometimes face to face is a must, virtual does not "show" how the women really is feeling, it's doesn't give the human touch which is so needed with the Menopause

Consideration is also being given to a pilot of virtual sessions with GPs, in order to review their cases and provide them with specialist advice without the need for referral into secondary care. I'm not sure what she means to pilot a virtual session? Does this mean training for GPs?

In the short-term, to increase capacity we are introducing the concept of 'Menopause Super Clinics', which include one of our menopause specialists working alongside two consultants who are currently in training. Based where? Bangor?

Turning to your question about the Welsh language, I can confirm that the service is currently undertaking a monitoring exercise to establish compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, working closely with the Health Board's Welsh Language Team. Part of this work relates to processes for establishing patients' preferred language, and understanding the language skills of staff within the service, in order to match Welsh speaking patients with a Welsh speaking health professional. If an individual required an appointment through the medium of Welsh, and a Welsh speaking health professional was not available, the Welsh Language Team would be contacted to provide simultaneous translation for the appointment. Outside office hours, the Health Board has a contract with 'The Big Word', who provide simultaneous translation services. How are they monitoring? I have never been asked what language I would prefer, I have been very lucky that there has always been a Welsh speaking nurse present at my appointments

We fully recognise the important role that patient feedback can play in informing service improvements. Feedback is collected on a regular basis from women who attend for face-to-face consultations and we have recently adapted our feedback forms to make it easier to identify menopause related responses. Please can we see the stats and evidence of this feedback where is it published? Can I please see the feedback form as I have never been asked?

Meanwhile, we have a collection of very-specific feedback from specialist clinics which is extremely positive, although delays in receiving consultation understandably remains a cause for concern. Please can we see the stats and result of this collection of feedback, as we have over 2,000 and more response as to why this service is needed in Ysbyty Gwynedd not Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor, the Facebook pages alone have hundreds of women's feedback struggling to get to these hospitals appointments and some cancel as they cannot to afford to attend due to travel cost, time family commitment etc

I hope that this response provides some reassurance about the Health Board's commitment to provide accessible, high-quality menopause services across North Wales. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me again. This response is a start but it is far from helping women of North Wales to receive a service closer to them. What is being asking for does not require funding, it's a car or train journey once a week or more to Bangor from Wrexham by a consultant

As the petition asked:

Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd

- Not everyone can afford to travel to Wrexham.
- Not everyone can afford to pay privately to go to a Menopause clinic.
- Not everyone has the time to go to Wrexham, maybe they care for children and family members etc.
- Everyone should have the choice.
- This should be on our doorstep in Ysbyty Gwynedd with more specialist services local to North Wales including regularly updates for GP's, Gynaecologists, practitioners and employers supporting them on Menopause and the benefits of HRT.

The health board expect women to travel to the nearest NHS menopause clinic in Wrexham, as they are cutting back the little support we have in Ysbyty Gwynedd, this is not acceptable and especially in the current financial crisis.

We need resource on our doorstep local to us; the health board do not meet the demands of women suffering the ordeal, misery, pain, and discomfort along with all the other symptoms of the Menopause and the impact on their family.

Welsh Government must invest more in menopause resources and services in Wales.

Women are struggling to stay in their employment, along with sometimes having caring responsibilities. Women leave work as they cannot cope with the some of the symptoms.

I would like to thank the Senedd Committee for giving the women of North Wales the opportunity to have our voice heard and listened to, we are truly grateful, hopefully we have manage a little ripple which will make a change for us, and to bring a clinic closer to us , diolch enfawr

Diolch a Cofion

Delyth Sir Fôn

I have had a look over the plan; It is a very ambitious plan which I feel needs to be tailored to an easy read format for all to read and understand.

https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/what-easy-read?psafe_param=1&gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI2pChnb7yigMVWpFQBh2nYgULEAAYAiAAEgLvfd_BwE

There are some great opportunities here, but we need to make sure the funding doesn't get wasted and it is used at grass roots for the service user. It states there will be a task and finish group to build on the discovery report, who will coordinate this piece of work and where? How will they make sure women will be heard and listen to and be able to participate? E.g. I am aware that men discuss in their work place about their partners Menopause and support each other, who will capture this? What about women who have a disability, those with awful anxiety, isolated and lonely people?..... If

there is going to be a Task and Finish group it has to be done right and have a blanket cover not just Tokenistic

This plan needs to be Jargon free, people need to understand it , we need an easy read version

Women's Health Plan for Wales launched to close the gender health gap

The plan, created by the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women's Health, part of the NHS Wales Executive, sets out how NHS organisations in Wales will close the gender health gap by providing better health services for women, ensuring they are listened to and their health needs are understood.

Where did these stats come from? Which areas

It includes nearly 60 actions across eight priority areas to improve healthcare for women throughout their lifetime, based on feedback from around 4,000 women across Wales. Is the feedback available to read from these 4,000 women?

As part of the plan, £750,000 will be spent on research for women's health conditions and women's health hubs will be set up in every part of Wales by 2026. where will these hubs be and why?

It also includes a commitment to 'Make Every Contact Count' to encourage doctors to ask women about menstrual health and menopause as part of existing appointments. This is good news

"Women's health is more than gynaecology and maternal health. I want this plan to be the start of better care for women – I want women's voices to be heard and their experiences to be recognised. It will mean women's symptoms, whatever their condition, will no longer be overlooked or dismissed." Words are great.....let's see the action

The plan, which will be added to over time, includes:

- Menstrual Health – Create specialist women's health hubs in each health board to help diagnose menstrual health conditions, increase research and develop further educational materials for everyone, including boys and men. Brilliant as we need to talk about Andropause
- Endometriosis and Adenomyosis – Provide further training of endometriosis as a chronic condition and education as part of the curriculum.
- Contraception, Post-Natal Contraception and Abortion Care – Increase online reliable information, collect further data and improve training for use of contraception such as the coil and other methods it's just not the Coil
- Preconception Health – Each health board to have a strategy on helping people to conceive, provide further training and take into account risks including mental health, epilepsy and type 2 diabetes.
- Pelvic Health and Incontinence – Improve access to online information, , engage with universities on new research and develop a pelvic floor dysfunction symptom checker.
- Menopause – Review all prescribing practices relating to HRT, develop community menopause champions and undertake research.
- Violence against Women and Girls – NHS Wales to sign up to a 'sexual safety in healthcare organisations' charter, consider VAWDASV champions in each health board and further education for all healthcare workers.

- Ageing Well and Long-Term Conditions Across the Life Course – Empower women to manage their own health needs, understand the ageing process and take preventative