

**P-05-849 All men in Wales should have access through the NHS to the best possible diagnostic tests for prostate cancer, Correspondence – Prostate Cancer UK to Chair, 30.08.19**



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Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

We welcome the opportunity to contribute further to the ongoing discussions regarding petition P-05-849: all men in Wales should have access through the NHS to the best possible diagnostic tests for prostate cancer.

Firstly, Prostate Cancer UK wishes to acknowledge the work of the men in North Wales who raised this petition and, with the support of the North Wales Community Health Council, have helped to bring this issue to the top of the agenda. Their efforts have contributed to a situation where, in the coming months, all eligible men will have access, through the NHS, to pre-biopsy mpMRI.

Prostate Cancer UK is encouraged by many aspects of the letter the Minister for Health and Social Care sent to you as Chair of the Petitions Committee. We appreciate the efforts of the Planned Care Programme, Welsh Urology Board and Health Boards in reaching a consensus on the provision of pre-biopsy mpMRI in Wales.

We were pleased to see areas not currently providing this important diagnostic tool presenting their plans, as per the Minister's letter, in the middle of June. A series of ambitious timelines are now in place to deliver prostate cancer diagnostics in line with the recently updated NICE guideline.

We are further encouraged to see the Minister commit to "monitoring progress" and "ensure Health Boards implement this as quickly as possible."

We would appreciate details of transitional arrangements that are being implemented until pathway transformation is complete.

We have concerns around the final statement in the minister's letter – *"In the meantime, should patients seek to be investigated by private means then this must remain a private matter for those patients concerned."* We would welcome some clarification on whether this is in reference to a patient choosing to go privately (even in an area with pre-biopsy mpMRI) or if this is a proposed interim solution in Health Boards that have not yet implemented mpMRI.

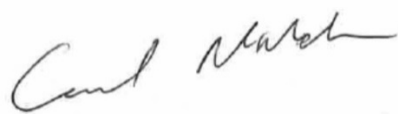
We acknowledge that Health Boards are moving towards implementing mpMRI before biopsy and fully understand the challenges that come with such a transition. However, it's not fair that some men might still have to rely on the private sector to confirm or rule out prostate cancer, when other men in Wales are routinely able to access this freely on the NHS. As we have said, we hope that transitional arrangements can be developed in the interim to ensure parity of access across Wales.

Prostate Cancer UK is championing the adoption of pre-biopsy mpMRI for all eligible men in Wales (and the rest of the UK) and we have endeavoured to support the NHS in Wales in this regard. We have regularly engaged with the Planned Care Programme, the Welsh Urology Board and individual Health Boards to help achieve this. The charity recently supported an mpMRI training event at the National Imaging Academy in June 2019, where x Radiologists attended from across Wales.

We will continue our efforts to support Health Boards as they overcome barriers to implementation of pre-biopsy mpMRI. This will involve the ongoing engagement with stakeholders across Wales to support them with their training needs and sharing of best practice. Prostate Cancer UK believe that adoption of pre-biopsy mpMRI in line with NICE guidelines will play a key role in improving prostate cancer diagnosis for men across Wales.. The charity is developing a diagnostic demand model that Health Boards will be able to use to forecast mpMRI service demand over a ten-year period, allowing them to plan for changes in local demand and the potential impact this may have.

There is a tangible opportunity for Wales to lead the way in the UK, in having every Health Board providing pre-biopsy mpMRI for all eligible men. We look forward to continuing to work with the Planned Care Programme, Welsh Urology Board and Health Boards to transform the prostate cancer diagnostic pathways in Wales.

Yours sincerely,



**Gerard McMahon**

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