



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1528
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/01217/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

02 June 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 2 May about Petition P-06-1528: Prevent Powys patients who are treated in English hospitals from facing increased waiting times .

Health boards in Wales are responsible for the planning and delivery of healthcare services to meet the needs of their local population. In doing so, they will need to consider a range of options and may need to make difficult decisions on how this can be delivered within the financial and staffing resources available. My role and that of the Welsh Government is to set the strategic direction for the NHS in Wales.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring people in all parts of Wales have equitable and timely access to good quality healthcare services, wherever they receive their treatment. We set out the strategic requirements through the planning framework. Health boards must plan to deliver their services to meet the needs of their local population and achieve national performance targets.

Cross-border working has been in place for many years and health boards continue to build on the well-established reciprocal arrangements already in place where NHS providers in Wales and England commission services for patients who live in border communities, or for patients who need access to treatments not available locally.

I have been very clear with health boards that they should use all available resources to support the reduction of long waits, including the use of additional capacity in both NHS England and the independent sector where that is available.

I have also been clear with all NHS Wales organisations that they must deliver against their plans and that in the preparation and consideration of their plans for 2025-26, they must carefully consider the balance of their statutory duties and deficit position against the need to deliver good quality services for their resident population, in line with Welsh Government targets.

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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.

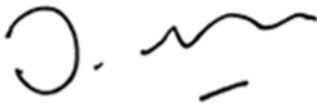
In recognition of the financial challenges experienced by Powys Teaching Health Board, the Welsh Government provided an additional £12.5m funding to the health board in 2024-25. This is in addition to the core financial allocation of over £400m awarded to the health board each year and included an acknowledgment of the additional cost to the health board of the commissioning position for Powys residents being treated in England to meet the Welsh waiting times target.

Powys Teaching Health Board was placed in 'level four' escalation for finance, strategy and planning in November 2024, due to confidence levels about the health board's financial position and its ability to meet its statutory duties relation to financial balance. The Welsh Government and NHS partners are, therefore, working with the health board to help it make the necessary improvements to deliver sustainable improvements within available resources.

The health board recently launched its ['Better Together' programme](#) which will provide the public and key stakeholders an opportunity to share their views to inform plans for the future of health services in the county. It will be reviewing each of its service areas in turn, and the first phase of the programme will focus on community and adult mental health services in 2025, with planned care and diagnostics to follow in 2026, and women and children's services in 2027.

My officials continue to monitor this situation in line with oversight and assurance arrangements in place with the health board.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a wavy line above the name and a short horizontal line below it.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care