

**P-06-1528 Prevent Powys patients who are treated in English hospitals from facing increased waiting times - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 19 June 2025**

Good Afternoon

Thank you for your reply and for outlining the Welsh Government's position in relation to cross-border healthcare provision and waiting times.

While I acknowledge the minister's explanation and appreciate the complexities around healthcare delivery and resource allocation, I feel compelled to highlight the very real and pressing challenges faced by residents living in border communities such as ours in Powys. We do not have access to a general hospital locally, and in many cases, minor injury services are not available out of hours or locally. This leaves us dependent on out-of-hours services such as Shropdoc and the general hospital in England.

Given these geographical and logistical realities, many of us receive planned care in Shropshire, Hereford or other neighbouring counties. Recent changes to align waiting time targets with Welsh Government standards are now resulting in significantly longer delays for Welsh patients—even when being treated by the same consultants in the same English hospitals as our English counterparts. This creates a strong and distressing sense of inequality.

Being told that your wait time will be substantially longer solely because you live in Wales is not only disheartening but also raises questions of fairness and equality. Early intervention is critical, and prolonged delays can lead to worsened health outcomes, reduced quality of life, and increased pressure on benefits and economic productivity due to long-term illness.

These policy changes risk deepening the disparity for residents in Powys and make many of us feel overlooked by our own government. It is not our choice that we must cross the border for care, and yet we now feel penalised for doing so. The perception is growing that we are treated as second-class citizens—spoken for but not listened to.

I urge the Welsh Government to reconsider its position on cross-border healthcare access and ensure that Powys residents are not disadvantaged due to their postcode. A commitment to equitable care must extend to everyone in Wales, regardless of proximity to Cardiff or the border.

We welcome genuine engagement and would greatly value a visit from the Health Minister to our communities to hear directly from the people most affected. We believe this would be a positive step in understanding the human impact behind these policies.

In light of the concerns raised, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with Jeremy Miles AS/MS or a representative from the Welsh Government to discuss this matter further. A face-to-face conversation would allow for a more meaningful exchange and help ensure that the

voices of those living in border communities are properly heard and understood. I hope you will consider this request and look forward to your response.

On January 25th, during a visit to Welshpool, the First Minister stated, "*I don't want to see people in Powys suffer, and I certainly don't want them to go to the back of the queue if they are going to be treated across the board in England.*" These words offered reassurance and a commitment to fairness. However, the situation we now face stands in direct contrast to that promise. **Many residents in Powys feel we are being treated as second-class citizens by the Welsh Government and further discriminated against by the health services over the border.** This isn't an isolated concern—it's a widely shared feeling across our communities. We feel we have been completely let down. Now is the time for action, not just words.

Regards

Joy