



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

CABINET STATEMENT

Written Statement: Update on cancer care in Wales

Jeremy Miles MS, Cabinet Secretary Health and Social Care

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Further to my [written statement in January about the Welsh Government's approach to improving cancer services](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-improving-cancer-care-wales#:~:text=Audit%20Wales%20last%20week%20published%20its%20%27Cancer%20Services,and%20governance%20to%20improve%20cancer%20care%20in%20Wales.) (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-improving-cancer-care-wales#:~:text=Audit%20Wales%20last%20week%20published%20its%20%27Cancer%20Services,and%20governance%20to%20improve%20cancer%20care%20in%20Wales.>), I am today setting out further details.

The National Cancer Leadership Board has been set up and meets monthly. These meetings have been chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Wales, but will now be led by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer. The board has an agreed terms of reference and a workplan, which covers:

- Delivery of the nationally-led actions in the NHS Cancer Improvement Plan.
- NHS Wales Performance and Improvement's Cancer Recovery Programme.
- The functions of NHS Wales Performance and Improvement's Strategic Clinical Network for Cancer.
- The cancer actions arising from the Ministerial Advisory Group on NHS Performance and Productivity report and recommendations.
- The Tackling Cancer initiatives for both research and innovation.

The **workplan** (<https://performanceandimprovement.nhs.wales/functions/networks-and-planning/cancer/wcn-documents/homepage/cancerplan25/>) will support NHS organisations to improve cancer performance by implementing the national optimal pathways and changing service models to improve productivity; developing datasets and digital services to improve service oversight and transparency for cancer services; and actions to improve patient experience.

My **written statement on 28 June set out how Wales will introduce a national lung screening programme targeted at those people who are at greatest risk of developing the disease** (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-national-lung-screening-programme-wales>). Work on establishing this life-saving programme has started. It is expected to cost around £13m per annum once fully implemented.

The **Quality Statement for Cancer** (<https://www.gov.wales/quality-statement-cancer-html>) has been updated to address the concerns about clarity of approach and which metrics are used to monitor cancer services. The updates set out the new leadership and existing accountability arrangements; describe the metrics that are being applied; and provide a clearer set of expectations for NHS organisations to apply in local planning.

In response to the Ministerial Advisory Group's report and recommendations, I have accepted the retention of the cancer target at the current level of 75%. This means there will be no change to the current target that 75% of people should be discharged or start their first definitive treatment within 62 days of the point at which their cancer was suspected.

The NHS is working incredibly hard to improve performance against this target, in the context of large increases in the number of investigations required, expanded eligibility for screening, and the availability of new and complex treatments.

There are signs of improvements in many health boards and for many cancer types. From a low point of 51.9% in January 2023, performance has stabilised and gradually improved to around 60%.

Health boards must do more to improve performance to reach the 75% target for all cancers and reduce the variation we continue to see between cancer types. Improving diagnosis and treatment of cancer will help to improve outcomes for people.

This statement is being issued during recess to keep Members informed. Should Members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.