



All Senedd Members

28 November 2022

Dear colleague,

I promised to write to you with an update on orthopaedics and in particular the work that has been set in train since the ministerial orthopaedic summit that I held in August.

Following the summit, a number of things have happened

- Health boards have developed action plans to implement the GIRFT (Getting it Right First Time) proposals and the national pathways. The Planned Care Improvement and Recovery Team are following these up with health boards and making sure these actions are implemented.
- The Deputy Chief Medical Officer has written to health boards to outline the position with regards to long waiting patients and that those waiting over 104 weeks should be placed in the same category as urgent patients when booking appointments.
- Progress has been seen in the number of open pathways waiting over 104 weeks, with the number at the end of September showing 16,554, the lowest it has been since December 2021. We expect to see further progress as health boards continue to implement and increase treat in turn rates, with the longest waiting patients being seen.
- For orthopaedics, latest management data shows that at an all-Wales level, treat-in-turn rate was 44% for outpatients and 33% for treatment - this compares to 26% for other specialities. An improvement since the summit.
- Activity levels, whilst not yet at levels I would like to see them at, have risen throughout the year from 52% in April to 69% in September. Day case activity levels have risen from 51% to 72% whilst inpatient activity levels have risen from 52% to 66%.

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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.

Considerable effort is being made to increase and maintain orthopaedic elective capacity over the winter months and this includes:

- Additional capacity has been made available at Prince Philip Hospital, through the installation of two new day theatres that should provide up to 4,600 additional procedures per year. The new theatres are scheduled to start working at the beginning of December.
- Swansea Bay UHB is rearranging orthopaedic services within the health board so that the majority of routine orthopaedics will be carried out at Neath Port Talbot Hospital, leaving the more complex work for Morriston. As part of the plan to increase orthopaedic activity, additional physiotherapy resource commenced at Neath Port Talbot clinics in November. A dedicated 10 bedded elective orthopaedic ward (Clydach ward) became operational in Morriston site during November to provide capacity for complex orthopaedic cases.
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg are centralising inpatient orthopaedic work at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, leaving Prince Charles site for more daycase activity.
- Cardiff and Vale has the Cardiff and Vale Orthopaedic Centre (CAVOC), which offers protected activity.
- In Aneurin Bevan UHB, the health board is looking at the way to make best use of the hospital sites, with services delivered at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, Royal Gwent, Nevill Hall and St Woolos. This includes working regionally with Cardiff and Vale and Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHBs.
- In North Wales, the health board is developing proposals to undertake additional orthopaedic activity at one of their sites whilst they continue work on designing the diagnostic and treatment hubs for the region.

Yours sincerely,



Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services