

# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Chemotherapy for Breast Cancer** |
| **DATE**  | **02 July 2018** |
| **BY** | **Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services** |

New evidence has been published which means fewer women with breast cancer in Wales will need to receive unnecessary chemotherapy

At present, women with early stage breast cancer are likely to receive surgery and subsequently be assessed for their risk of their cancer re-occurring. Women who have a low risk of recurrence are not advised to undergo chemotherapy and those with a high risk are advised to receive chemotherapy. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that women with an intermediate risk of recurrence, with hormone related disease and where the lymph nodes are not affected, should be offered a genetic test called Oncotype DX.

Following this test, roughly 50% of those tested will be scored as low risk and can avoid chemotherapy and roughly 25% will have a high risk and will be advised to have chemotherapy. The remaining 20-25% will have an intermediate score and until recently it was unclear as to whether or not chemotherapy will affect a patient’s outcome. New evidence published in the United States has demonstrated women who have an intermediate score do not benefit from chemotherapy. This means they can in future safely avoid going through chemotherapy after their surgery. It is estimated up to 100 women a year in Wales will find themselves in this category.

As well as the patients benefiting from this new evidence; health services will be able to make better use of finite treatment capacity for women who will most benefit from chemotherapy.