



Our ref: WQ92316

Andrew R.T. Davies MS
Senedd Regional Member for South Wales Central

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9 April 2024

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your recent Written Question below:

Will the Minister make a statement on the reasons that 586,500 individual patients were waiting for treatment in January, an increase of 2,500 patients compared with December.

The growth of the overall waiting list reflects the number of people who are newly referred for tests or treatment.

The headline NHS waiting lists statistics, from which performance measures are derived, are based on patient pathways. Since individual patients can have multiple open pathways, the number of individuals on waiting lists is lower. Estimates for individuals waiting are based on management information and are subject to greater uncertainty than the headline statistics.

While the headline pathways-based figures fell slightly in January, the estimate for individuals waiting increased, because more people joined a waiting list than left waiting lists, according to the management information. Though the figures for pathways and individuals waiting tend to follow very similar trends, they are both affected by data validations and revisions. This means we should not expect to see precisely the same change in these measures from one month to the next.

For both measures, it is important to consider the trends over time rather than focusing on individual data points. Recent months have seen falls in both patient pathways and the number of individuals on NHS waiting lists in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol