

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MB/MD/2310/14

Antoinette Sandbach, AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

20 June 2014

Dear Antoinette,

Further to the plenary session held on 13 May 2014, I would like to update you on progress towards implementation of the combined Down's syndrome screening test across health boards in Wales.

From previous correspondence, you will be aware implementation of the combined Down's syndrome screening test has proved challenging for all health boards due to capacity and logistical complexities. I am grateful for your involvement in raising awareness of this screening test and for pursuing its introduction across Wales. Your efforts and support have helped to keep this issue a high priority for government and maintained much needed momentum.

I was pleased that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board was the first health board to include the screening test in its antenatal programme.

Three other health boards have committed to start the screening test in September 2014, they are Hywel Dda, Cardiff and Vale and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg. Powys will offer the screening test once all neighbouring health boards are able to provide the service. Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf health boards are working towards implementation and not yet finalised start dates. Officials are actively encouraging these health boards to introduce the screening test at the earliest opportunity.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
correspondence.mark.drakeford@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

Printed on 100% recycled paper

In terms of raising awareness among health professionals, Public Health Wales has provided training to health board professionals likely to be involved in combined Down's syndrome screening. A total of 576 professionals across Wales have attended the training so far. The February edition of the combined Down's syndrome screening bulletin was circulated to all GP practices and informed them about the changes to screening for Down's syndrome and the need for health professionals to encourage women to present themselves to their midwife at the earliest opportunity.

Specifically in north Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board sent a letter and flow chart to all GPs about the new screening test. Community Midwives have also spoken to GPs in their areas about the new test and have been available to answer questions.

Literature provided by Antenatal Screening Wales has been changed to reflect the new test and is available for use in a range of languages.

I hope this information is useful, and thank you once again for your interest in this matter.

Best wishes
Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

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