

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-494
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/03321/14

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk

20 September 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 1 September regarding the availability of robotic assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy in Wales.

I am sorry to hear that you have not had a response from Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board to your letters and will ask the chair of the health board to follow this up.

I have read the petitioner's passionate letter and am pleased to report Wales' first unit at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff is now being used to treat patients. The unit will provide robotic-assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy to patients from across South and West Wales, and patients in North Wales will continue to access this treatment at Manchester's Christie Hospital.

We have taken the difficult decision to introduce this form of surgery for prostate cancer at an unprecedented time of austerity. England has many more units than Wales but this is to be expected as it has a population base that is more than 17 times larger. I also note the draft National Institute for Health and Care Excellence states guidance that units should treat a minimum of 150 patients per year and its machines be based at centres that are likely to treat a high volume of patients. This demonstrates the necessity of establishing robotic treatment centres only where we have sufficient demand for the treatment, ensuring that standards are high and the facility is fully utilised.

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I can assure you that patients in other health boards will be able to access the UHW service and inter-health board commissioning will ensure timely referral and treatment of patients according to their clinical need.

I hope this is helpful.

Best wishes,
Mark

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