

Jenny Rathbone MS
Member of the Senedd for Cardiff Central

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May 2025

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 23 April, about the endometriosis and patient experience stakeholder meeting in Swansea, and the concerns raised by the group.

We recognise the difficulties women with endometriosis face. Improving women's healthcare is a priority.

Thank you for sharing the information about neuropelvelogy, I understand this is an emerging field of medicine. In Wales, treatment and diagnosis pathways have been developed based on National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE guidelines outline a number of treatment options which can be tried according to the circumstances of the individual. The options should be discussed between the clinician and the individual. As you point out, it is important that women's voices are heard in discussions regarding their care and treatment.

In relation to waiting lists, in November, the Cabinet Secretary provided £50m to reduce the longest waiting times. This was additional investment to support health board plans. As of February 2025 (the latest figures available) waits over two years have reduced by 89% for gynaecology pathways since April 2022. We are committed to reducing this further.

We have provided recurrent funding to appoint specialist endometriosis nurses in every health board. We are aware there has been a gap due to long-term sickness absence in Swansea Bay University Health Board and maternity leave in Hywel Dda University Health Board, although contingency arrangements have been put in place.

We recognise improvements are needed in the care received by women with endometriosis. While there are areas of good practice across Wales, not all clinicians have the confidence and expertise to correctly identify and attribute endometriosis symptoms, as well as provide ongoing care and support. There is a clear need for improvements in training, skills and awareness, as well as specialist advice and treatment where this is required. This is a priority area in the Women's Health Plan.

Endometriosis was discussed at a Ministerial gynaecology summit in July 2024. The report from that event is now available on the Welsh Government website. Actions relating to endometriosis have been incorporated into the Women's Health Plan.

The timely diagnosis and management of menstrual health conditions including endometriosis will be supported by the pathfinder women's health hubs, which will be available in every health board area in Wales by March 2026.

Welsh Government officials are also working with the Women's Health Network and the Joint Commissioning Committee to explore establishing specialist services in aspects of women's health including endometriosis.

The NHS in Wales operates a formal complaints procedure called Putting Things Right, and this also applies in Swansea Bay University Health Board. If there are concerns about how complaints have been handled, these can be referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Murphy AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

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