

“Better understanding the diseases of today will help us develop the personalised treatments of tomorrow” – Vaughan Gething

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, has launched a new Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy, which is designed to ensure people across Wales have access to quicker, more accurate diagnosis by enabling clinicians to better understand a patient’s individual disease by analysing their genes. This will help clinicians develop targeted treatments for individuals, rather than provide treatment that’s designed for the population as a whole.

It also sets out plans to apply the latest techniques for improved disease prediction and gain a better understanding of disease outbreaks.

In addition, the strategy will develop research in genetics and genomics, grow knowledge and skills amongst the NHS and non-NHS workforce and build strategic partnerships in genomics for precision medicine.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“New genetic and genomic technologies are allowing us to develop a much more detailed understanding of the link between our genes and our health.

“The strategy I’m launching today has the potential to revolutionise medicine and public health; it marks a move away from reductionism and moves us towards a new era of precision medicine.

“It will enable patients across Wales to access this new technology and shorten their ‘diagnostic odyssey’. Our strategy is not just about providing new test results; it is also about the care and support that patients need in accessing these services and providing them with the information that they need to make the right decision for themselves and their condition, armed with the most accurate, up-to-date and considered information available.

“For instance, our understanding of the genetic basis of cancer now supports the provision of targeted therapies to patients. In lung cancer, four genetic markers have been identified and these allow clinicians to give the treatments most likely to stop the growth of tumours, shrink them and lengthen quality and duration of life.”

The Genomics for Precision Medicine Strategy is underpinned by £6.8m Welsh Government funding and was developed by the genomics taskforce, which includes the Welsh Government, NHS Wales, the Third Sector and higher education institutions.