

“New streamlined process will improve quality and outcomes for cancer patients in Wales” – Vaughan Gething

The new single cancer pathway, will start from the point a patient is suspected of having cancer, rather than when the cancer is confirmed, as is currently the case for some cancer patients. It is intended that treatment should start no later than 62 days from the point of suspicion.

Implementation of the new single cancer pathway will be supported with a £3m investment from the Welsh Government from next financial year.

The new pathway will not replace the current Urgent Suspected Cancer / Non Urgent Suspected Cancer pathways at this point in time. However, health boards will be expected to dual report performance against all three pathways from June 2019.

Last November [2017] the Health Secretary announced local health boards would shadow report the new single pathway for cancer alongside the other pathways.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“Cancer has become the single biggest cause of premature death in Wales and the UK.

“It’s highly likely cancer will touch everyone’s life at some point; some will develop the disease themselves, some will watch a friend or loved one battling it – sometimes more than once.

“The NHS in Wales is consistently treating more cancer patients than ever before. We are seeing and treating more patients than ever before. In the last 12 months, 17,033 patients started definitive treatment for cancer, that’s 8.6% (1,347) more than five years ago. And 15,730 patients started treatment within the target times, that’s 8.1% (1,180) more than five years ago.

“However, we can’t get away from the fact we have not met the targets often enough but we must also recognise that around 92% of people with cancer are being treated within target time across both pathways.

“We want to ensure that anyone who experiences cancer in Wales has access to timely and appropriate treatment that will deliver the best possible outcome.

“Proposals for the single cancer pathway have been clinically led and have wide support across the clinical community. Through dual reporting of the single cancer pathway, Wales will be the first UK

nation to move towards a single waiting time measure for cancer. It is reflective of our aspiration to support early diagnosis of cancer and ensure fast and effective treatment for all patients.

“The new way of measuring people’s waits for cancer treatment will improve quality and outcomes for our cancer patients and I am confident that it is the right approach for Wales.”

Andy Glyde, Cancer Research UK’s public affairs manager in Wales, said:

“Cancer waiting times are a barometer for how the NHS is performing and this new system is welcome as it will give us a clearer picture of what is happening for patients going through a cancer diagnosis.

“The Welsh Government’s commitment to detecting cancer earlier is important. Patients diagnosed at the earliest stages of cancer are more likely to have successful treatment. For the new Single Cancer Pathway to achieve its full potential it has to be used to inform how we improve cancer diagnosis in Wales, including making sure we have the right workforce in place.”