



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1012  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/05662/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

3 September 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding the provision of NHS-funded oxygen chamber therapy to relieve the symptoms of fibromyalgia.

Health boards in Wales are responsible for meeting the health needs of their population, which includes providing services for those living with fibromyalgia in Wales.

In Wales, we take an evidence-based approach to decide which treatments should be routinely available. To do this, we rely on the expert advice of NICE and our own appraisal body, the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG). These two bodies analyse the clinical benefits and the cost charged by the manufacturer to assess if the benefits are in balance with the price the NHS has to pay. In doing this, they take advice from expert clinicians and take account of patient views. NICE guidance does not recommend oxygen therapy as an effective use of NHS resources; nor are we aware of the evidence of the effectiveness of oxygen therapy for people living with fibromyalgia.

Where medicines are not routinely available within NHS Wales, a clinician may apply for the medicine on behalf of their patient through an Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR). The clinician would need to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the clinical and cost effectiveness of the proposed treatment. The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee has produced the following guidance outlining which conditions Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy should be provided for:

<http://www.whssc.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/11119/cp071.pdf>

As you will appreciate, the response to the pandemic is a fast-moving and evolving situation and the majority of resources across Welsh Government and the NHS in Wales are now directed to tackling Covid-19 and preventing a future second wave. As such, I hope you understand that at this time we are unable to consider the further investigation of oxygen therapy for fibromyalgia.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN


[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government has advisory groups that provide advice from healthcare professionals and those living with long term fatigue conditions. When normal services are able to resume, we will work together to continue the consideration of the most appropriate treatment and support for fibromyalgia patients.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping underline.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**

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