



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

The Petitions Committee

Completion Report

**Summary of the Petitions Committee's consideration of
P-03-167 Wet Age-Related Macular Degeneration**

November 2008

Petition Received

28 July 2008

Ruled Admissible

28 August 2008

Initial Consideration**16 October 2008**

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await a response from the Minister for Health and Social Services.

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 16 October 2008, and Annex 2 for the letter sent to the Minister for Health and Social Services)

Further Consideration**20 November 2008**

The Committee considered a response and a statement from the Minister for Health and Social Services and agreed to close the petition as they felt the Committee was unable to progress it any further.

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 20 November 2008, Annex 2 for the response from the Minister for Health and Social Services, and Annex 3 for the statement from the Minister)

**Petitions Committee Clerk
November 2008**

Annex 1

Extracts from Petitions Committee transcripts

16 October 2008

Val Lloyd: The next petition is on wet age-related macular degeneration. It collected 141 signatures and asks us to campaign to ensure that equal treatment is given in the Vale of Glamorgan for the first eye to that currently available in Swansea. Correct me if I am wrong, but I recall the Minister for Health and Social Services saying in a letter that Lucentis was funded for a year—from August 2008 to August 2009—because new treatments were in the pipeline. So, she said that she would fund Lucentis for a year and then revisit this because of the possibility that more advanced drugs would be available.

Michael German: Have we written to the Minister on this matter yet?

Val Lloyd: We must have because this says, 'awaiting the Minister's response'.

Michael German: Yes, but there is a bit of a mix of information there if you look carefully—

Val Lloyd: I know what you are saying, but I checked that and it is a typing error.

Ms Webber: We are awaiting the Minister's response.

Michael German: Shall we wait and come back to it then, Chair?

Val Lloyd: Yes. I am just referring to the other letter from memory.

Bethan Jenkins: There was an opposition party debate on this, which is when the Minister for health made that statement.

Val Lloyd: I have seen it writing; I have it in my health folder. I refer to it because I took an interest in this matter on behalf of several of my constituents. That is why I remember it, although that is not to say that I remembered it correctly.

20 November 2008

Val Lloyd: Our next petition is another health-related one, P-03-167, on wet age-related macular degeneration. The Minister's statement has dealt with this in great depth, and I believe that that is what the petitioner was looking for. Therefore, I suggest that we close the petition, as the Minister has resolved the concerns raised in the petition.

Michael German: Can we claim a success for the committee?

Val Lloyd: I will leave that; I do not write the letters. [Laughter.]

Annex 2

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Edwina Hart AM
Minister for Health and Social Services
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: PET-03-167

12 September 2008

Dear Minister

Petition – Wet Age-related Macular Degeneration

I am writing to you on behalf of the Petitions Committee to clarify the Assembly Government's recent commitment with respect to this condition. This petition was received on 28th July, and calls for the patients suffering from this condition in the Vale of Glamorgan to have their first eye treated as is happening in Swansea. This obviously pre-dates the recent NICE announcement to recommend Lucentis for the treatment of all sufferers; however, the petitioner still wishes to pursue the petition to ask that you clarify how and when this will be rolled out across Wales.

I shall ensure your response is presented and considered by the Committee in the Autumn term.

I would be grateful if you could respond to Alun Davidson, Deputy Clerk to the Petitions Committee, and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Stefan Sanchez
Committee Clerk

Edwina Hart AM MBE

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

Our ref: EH/04482/08

Your ref: PET-03-167



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Welsh Assembly Government

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23rd October 2008

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter dated 12 September asking me to clarify the Assembly Government's commitment to wet age related macular degeneration (Wet AMD). I made a statement on 24 June about Wet AMD and have attached a copy of this statement for ease of reference. I recognise the difficulty and upset that this condition can cause for people and am glad that in the autumn we should have treatments operating throughout Wales.

I stated that all NHS Trusts must treat Wet AMD in both eyes within a timetable that will allow them to resolve problems of staffing and of suitable premises. I expect these arrangements to be in place. There will initially be nine centres operating the policy across Wales. I will be shortly making a further statement regarding the proposed delivery of new services, including where the funding centres will be and the dates that first eye treatment will commence in full across Wales.

Edwina Hart

Annex 3

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Treatment of wet age – related macular degeneration

Date: 06 November 2008

By: Edwina Hart, Minister for Health and Social Services

Since my statement to the Senedd on 24 June 2008 my officials and advisers have carried out a far reaching review of current delivery arrangements for the treatment of "wet" AMD using the drug Lucentis.

The review has revealed differences in service delivery along with a variation in commissioning.

To take this forward I set out below the proposed arrangements for service delivery.

Proposed delivery

In order to provide high standards in service delivery, addressing issues of access, whilst mindful of critical mass to sustain a quality service, it is proposed that nine (9) treatment centres should be provided, viz;

North Wales

Ysbyty Gwynedd;
H M Stanley, St. Asaph;
Wrexham Maelor

West Wales

Bronglais, Aberystwyth;
Amman Valley, Ammanford;
Singleton

South East Wales

Royal Glamorgan;
University Hospital, Cardiff;
St. Woolos, Newport

With the exception of Amman Valley, which is a new treatment centre, all the other locations are hospital based and are already treating patients.

Staffing

A new consultant is to take up post in S W Wales in November 2008 and this will ensure that the treatment for "Wet" AMD is a consultant led service.

The predicted treatment of "Wet" AMD will inevitably add pressures to ophthalmology services and I therefore propose to allow for the appointment of three staff ophthalmologists to assist in service delivery and avoid any detrimental effect upon outpatient waiting times for ophthalmology services.

Accommodation

Instructions will be issued to provide the necessary "clean rooms", if not already in existence - which is the most cost effective way to deliver the service.

Funding and Service Delivery

I have already announced that £5m has been made available, as additional funding to provide treatment for "first eye" "wet" AMD in this financial year. Additional funding for 2009/10 of £10m has been made available.

In order to expedite treatment, funding on a per case basis is proposed. This will avoid delays in submissions to treat, and allow the decision to treat to be made on clinical grounds by the consultant ophthalmologist.

Any patient who has self funded treatment for "wet" AMD will be allowed to transfer their treatment and the future costs will be met by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Service Roll Out

Patients are already undergoing treatment for "wet" AMD in the second eye. The treatment for "first eye" will commence across Wales from the 20 November 2008.

Service Development

A framework plan will be developed. It will set out:

1. A consistent fast track policy for delivery across Wales by February 2009
2. The formation of an ophthalmology commissioning task group by March 2009. The group will consider future developments in the treatment of "wet" and "dry" AMD

3. The development of an ophthalmology network across Wales. This will provide the vehicle for clinical training and expertise in the field of AMD treatment.

Appraisal

An evaluation of the service will be undertaken by advisers to ensure that all the necessary criteria are met. This will afford the opportunity to consider any modifications to the infrastructure costs and the need to streamline the service.

I will inform members in due course about how this service develops over time.