

New eight week target for heart disease tests in Wales

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething, has approved the move after a review found the majority of tests cardiac patients need are currently not subjected to the eight week target.

From the 1st April eight additional diagnostic tests for patients with suspected heart disease will be added to the eight week target. Previously only stress test and echocardiogram were included in the target.

The additional cardiology diagnostic tests were shadow reported between April 2017 and December 2017. During this period the number of patients waiting over eight weeks for their test decreased from 33% to 17%.

The Health Secretary said:

“There has been an improvement in diagnostic waiting times in Wales in recent years, but we are committed to making further improvements. It is only right that we add these additional heart disease tests to the eight week target – this is expected to result in a significant decrease in patients waiting longer than they should for tests and means potentially very ill patients will be diagnosed and treated sooner.”

President of the Welsh Cardiovascular Society, Dr Jonathan Goodfellow said:

“The Welsh Cardiovascular Society welcomes this announcement. People suffering with symptoms of heart disease need access to quick and effective diagnosis and treatment. Providing appropriate imaging and diagnostics, in local settings, allows patients to receive the minimum investigation necessary to get an accurate diagnosis, allowing some patients to avoid unnecessary treatment.

“We’re encouraged by the improvements in waiting times since these tests were shadow reported and hope that with formal reporting health boards will address any remaining problems.”