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## Sgrinio Llygaid Diabetig Cymru

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## Diabetic Eye Screening Wales

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Sgrinio Llygaid Diabetig Cymru

Diabetic Eye Screening Wales

Date: 17/09/2020

Our Ref: JK/Restart Comms

Dear Colleague,

### **Restart of Diabetic Eye Screening Wales following the Coronavirus pandemic response**

As you are aware, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic response, the Welsh Government advised that some population based screening programmes take a pause from sending new invitations or reminders, including diabetic eye screening.

We have now been advised to progress with the reinstatement of our screening programmes, including Diabetic Eye Screening Wales. A phased, prioritised approach is being used to resume the eye screening programme in Wales.

Diabetic Eye Screening Wales will start to invite higher risk participants to screening clinics from September 2020. These are participants who are pregnant, newly referred or whose previous findings place them at higher risk of sight threatening retinopathy.

There has been a substantial reduction in the number of venues that are available for eye screening clinic delivery because of the changes in venue use across the majority of NHS services. Although we are able to deliver clinics in every Health Board area, some of our participants live a considerable distance from any of the venues that we have secured to support re-start.

Clinic capacity will also be reduced in order for us to be able to meet infection prevention and control guidance, in particular to allow for social distancing at all points during the appointment and allow for decontamination between appointments.

As we have far fewer appointments, it is particularly important that we are informed as soon as possible if a participant cannot attend so we can offer that appointment to someone else. We acknowledge that it will take many months for us to catch up.

We appreciate the need to reinstate the evidence based population programmes as soon as possible so as to minimise potential harm. However, we need to ensure that screening can be offered safely to participants and that we are able to promptly refer participants who would benefit from further investigation and treatment. Our phased approach will ensure that the programme can restart in a controlled manner and invite participants according to clinical priority. We are working closely with health boards across Wales to make sure there are clear pathways in place for those participants that need onward referral and continue to seek additional screening clinic venues.

This letter describes our current plans, however they depend on the capacity of health services and the Coronavirus infection rate in our communities. We will be undertaking regular assessments of the situation, aiming to keep both our staff and the public safe.

As always, we encourage people to contact their optometrist if they have any symptoms that they are worried about or notice any changes in their vision and not wait for their screening invitation or be reassured by a previous result.

For the latest information please visit our website [www.publichealthwales.org/desw](http://www.publichealthwales.org/desw) or contact our appointment booking centre on 01443 844244.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jude Kay', written in a cursive style.

Jude Kay  
Head of Programme, Diabetic Eye Screening Wales