

1 in 2 of us will be diagnosed with some form of cancer in our lifetime.

Cancer survival rates are improving, but it's still the leading cause of death in Wales.

The mortality rates in Wales are the second highest in the UK.

Wales rightly spends a significant amount of money on cancer services, over £700 million a year and rising.

And my report sets out how cancer services are performing and focuses on national leadership arrangements for shaping those services and ensuring that that money is spent wisely.

Encouragingly, cancer survival rates are improving, and more cancers are being detected earlier and screening for bowel cancer is being expanded.

But cancer referrals have been increasing by about 3% a year, and the NHS is struggling to cope with that increasing demand.

As a result, waiting lists for cancer diagnosis and treatment are growing.

The Welsh Government's target is that 75% of cancer patients should start their first treatment within 62 days of the first suspicion of cancer.

However, no health board has met that target since August 2020.

Around 4 in 10 cancers could be prevented.

And we all have a part to play by looking after our own health.

Lifestyle risk factors like smoking, drinking too much alcohol, poor diet, lack of exercise.

These are all linked to increased risk of developing cancer and indeed many other major conditions.

Our work points to a need for a much stronger, system wide approach to prevention to improve the health of the population.

There are weaknesses in national strategic leadership which need to be addressed urgently to drive improvements in cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Now, the Welsh Government does have a vision for cancer services, and it's set out in its 2021 Quality Statement.

And there are also national care pathways for different types of cancer and a programme to support recovery of services after the pandemic.

But all of this is undermined by confusion over how the Welsh Government expects its vision to be implemented, and we also need to see more clarity on the respective roles of the Welsh Government and the new NHS Executive.