



Our ref: NB

Ask for: Communications

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Date: 7 August 2019

 communications  
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Judith Hardisty  
Interim Chair of the Board  
Hywel Dda University Health Board

**By Email Only**  
judith.hardisty@wales.nhs.uk

Dear Ms Hardisty

### **Annual Letter 2018/19**

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2018/19) for Hywel Dda University Health Board. This year I am publishing my Annual Letters as part of my Annual Report and Accounts. I hope the Board finds this helpful and I trust this will enable it to review its own complaint handling performance in the context of other public bodies performing similar functions across Wales.

As you will note from my Annual Report, Hywel Dda is one of the four health boards in Wales which has continued to receive the highest number of complaints. I am concerned that 42% of cases which were dealt with involving the Health Board last year required intervention by my office (whether in upholding a complaint or settling a complaint). This intervention rate has risen from an already high 38% during 2017/18. Also, over 17% of the complaints I received about the Health Board involved complaint handling.

You will be aware that I recently raised serious concerns with the Chief Executive about the Health Board's failure to honour a settlement agreed with my office. I highlighted similar concerns in last year's Annual Letter, despite the fact that I had already issued a Special Report for such a failure (the first of its kind involving a Health Board in Wales). I am concerned that deadlines agreed with my staff have not been met. More importantly, the failure to meet agreed timescales will inevitably diminish a complainant's trust in the ability of the Health Board to openly and honestly respond to complaints.

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Having discussed my concerns with the Chief Executive I have been reassured that the Health Board is committed to improving the position. I will be monitoring the Health Board's performance closely over the coming year and I and my staff will provide support and guidance if that would be helpful. In particular, I look forward to visiting the Health Board in September to receive an update on the actions the Health Board has agreed to take to prevent this situation happening again.

Of the ten public interest healthcare-related reports I issued last year, two concerned care and treatment delivered by your Health Board. One concerned serious failures to monitor a baby's development during pregnancy and labour. The second report concerned the management of specialist paediatric services which had been commissioned from the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. I will also be following up on these recommendations to ensure they have been complied with in practice.

The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 has now been introduced. I am delighted that the Assembly has approved this legislation giving the office new powers aimed at:

- Improving access to my office
- Providing a seamless mechanism for complaint handling when a patient's NHS care is inextricably linked with private healthcare
- Allowing me to undertake own initiative investigations when required in the public interest
- Ensuring that complaints data from across Wales may be used to drive improvement in public services for citizens in Wales.

I am very much looking forward to implementing these new powers over the coming year.

**Action for the Health Board to take:**

- Present my Annual Letter to the Board to assist Board Members in their scrutiny of the Board's performance
- Reflect upon the findings in the Public Interest reports I have issued and positively act upon my recommendations to improve services
- Work to reduce the number of cases which require intervention by my office
- Work with my Improvement Officer to improve complaint handling, particularly in the parts of the Health Board which generate most complaints about complaint handling

- Inform me of the outcome of the Health Board's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters by **31 October 2019**.

This correspondence is copied to the Chief Executive of your Health Board and to your Contact Officer. Finally, a copy of all Annual Letters will be published on my website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Bennett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Bennett  
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

CC: Steve Moore, Chief Executive  
Roger Smith, Contact Officer

## Factsheet

### A. Complaints Received and Investigated with Health Board average adjusted for population distribution

Health Board	Complaints Received	Average	Complaints Investigated	Average
Hywel Dda University Health Board 2018/19	109	96	20	23
Hywel Dda University Health Board 2017/18	109	92	38	32
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board	139	132	35	32
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	134	146	38	36
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	194	173	44	42
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	102	123	28	30
Cwm Taf University Health Board	75	74	22	18
Powys Teaching Health Board	26	33	3	8

### B. Complaints Received by Subject with Health Board average

Hywel Dda University Health Board	Complaints Received	Average
Health - Complaint Handling	19	12
Health - Appointments/admissions/discharge and transfer procedures	4	4
Health - Clinical treatment in hospital	61	70
Health - Clinical treatment outside hospital	8	8
Health - Confidentiality	1	1
Health - Continuing care	1	4
Health - De-Registration	2	0
Health - Medical records/standards of record-keeping	3	1
Health - Non-medical services - food, cleanliness etc	1	0
Health - Other	5	5
Health - Patient list issues	4	3

**C. Comparison of complaint outcomes with average outcomes for health bodies, adjusted for population distribution**

Local Health Board/NHS Trust	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early Resolution / voluntary settlement	Discontinued	Other Reports - Not Upheld	Other Reports - Upheld in whole or in part	Public Interest Reports	Grand Total
<b>2018/19</b>									
Hywel Dda University Health Board	23	11	27	26	1	5	20	2	115
Health Board average (adjusted)	15	12	25	19	1	8	19	1	100
<b>2017/18</b>									
Hywel Dda University Health Board	24	10	22	23	2	6	16	1	104
Health Board average (adjusted)	14	9	22	14	0	6	13	0	80

**D. Number of cases with PSOW intervention**

Health Board	No. of complaints with PSOW intervention	Total number of closed complaints	% intervention
Hywel Dda University Health Board 2018/19	48	115	42%
Hywel Dda University Health Board 2017/18	40	104	38%
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board	54	139	39%
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	49	128	38%
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	86	210	41%
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	37	107	35%
Cwm Taf University Health Board	27	82	33%
Powys Teaching Health Board	10	17	59%
Powys Teaching Health Board – All-Wales Continuing Health Care cases	7	16	44%

## **Appendix**

### **Explanatory Notes**

Section A compares the number of complaints against the Health Board which were received and investigated by my office during 2018/19, with the Health Board average (adjusted for population distribution) during the same period.

Section B provides a breakdown of the number of complaints about the Health Board which were received by my office during 2018/19 with the Health Board average for the same period. The figures are broken down into subject categories.

Section C compares the complaint outcomes for the Health Board during 2018/19, with the average outcome (adjusted for population distribution) during the same period. Public Interest reports issued under section 16 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005 are recorded as 'Section 16'.

Section D provides the numbers and percentages of cases received by my office in which an intervention has occurred. This includes all upheld complaints, early resolutions and voluntary settlements.

### **Feedback**

We welcome your feedback on the enclosed information, including suggestions for any information to be enclosed in future annual summaries. Any feedback or queries should be sent via email to [communications@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:communications@ombudsman-wales.org.uk)