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Ask for: Communications



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Date: 17 August 2023



Communications  
@ombudsman.wales

Emma Woollett  
Swansea Bay University Health Board  
By Email only: Emma.Woollett@wales.nhs.uk

### **Annual Letter 2022/23**

Dear Emma

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2022/23) for Swansea Bay University Health Board which deals with complaints relating to maladministration and service failure, and the actions being taken to improve public services.

This letter coincides with my Annual Report – “[A year of change – a year of challenge](#)” – a sentiment which will no doubt resonate with public bodies across Wales. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – up 3% overall compared to the previous year, and my office now receives double the number of cases we received a decade ago.

Last year, I met with public bodies across Wales last year – speaking about our casework, our recommendations, and our proactive powers. The current climate will continue to provide challenges for public services, but I am grateful for positive and productive way which Health Boards communicate with my office.

Colleagues from my Improvement Team meet regularly with Swansea Bay University Health Board to discuss compliance with our recommendations and our complaints standards work, and we would like to pass on our thanks to Erica Thomas-Howells and their team for the constructive and candid way these discussions are conducted.

926 complaints were referred to us regarding Health Boards last year – an increase of 21% compared to the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 30% of Health Board complaints - a similar proportion to previous years.

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## Supporting improvement of public services

Our [Groundhog Day 2: An opportunity for cultural change in complaint handling?](#) report issued in June, highlighted the complaint handling failings we identified in cases involving health boards across Wales during the preceding 12 months. Our recommendations to the Health Board were aimed at ensuring that, as the new Duties of Candour & Quality are introduced within your organisation, that the opportunity for a cultural change is taken - to promote openness and candour with service users and ensure there is systemic learning when things have gone wrong.

I trust that, in line with our recommendations to the Health Board, the report has or will soon be considered by your Quality & Patient Safety Committee and it will:

- review the resources available to your complaints team
- review arrangements for accurately compiling complaints data
- consider whether the option to provide staff investigating complaints with independent medical advice, is considered on a case by case basis
- reflect upon the lessons highlighted in this report when scrutinising their performance on complaint handling
- ensure that lessons learned from the PSOW's findings and recommendations are included in their Health Board's annual report on the Duty of Candour and Quality.

Despite the challenges of last year, we have pushed forward with our proactive improvement work and launched a new Service Quality process to ensure we deliver the standards we expect.

Last year, we also began work on our second wider Own Initiative investigation – this time looking into carers assessments within Local Authorities. This investigation will take place throughout the coming year, and we look forward to sharing our findings.

The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) continued its work with public bodies in Wales last year, with more than 50 public bodies now operating our model policy. We've also now provided more than 400 training sessions since we started in September 2020.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a second year, with data now published twice a year and we included information about Health Boards for the first time in 22/23. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 7% of Swansea Bay University Health Board's complaints were referred to PSOW.

I would encourage Swansea Bay University Health Board, to use this data to better understand your performance on complaints.

Further to this letter can I ask that Swansea Bay University Health Board takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Board at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Update my office on how the Health Board has complied with the recommendations in our report: *Groundhog Day 2: an opportunity for cultural change?* by **1 December 2023**.
- Continue to engage with our Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff, fully implementing the model policy, and providing complaints data.
- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

MMA Morris.

**Michelle Morris**  
**Public Services Ombudsman**

cc. Mark Hackett, Chief Executive, Swansea Bay University Health Board.  
By Email only: [mark.hackett@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:mark.hackett@wales.nhs.uk)



## **Factsheet**

### Appendix A - Complaints Received

| <b>Health Board</b>                       | <b>Complaints Received</b> | <b>Received per 1000 residents</b> |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Aneurin Bevan University Health Board     | 166                        | 0.28                               |
| Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board   | 225                        | 0.33                               |
| Cardiff and Vale University Health Board  | 137                        | 0.28                               |
| Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board | 134                        | 0.30                               |
| Hywel Dda University Health Board         | 104                        | 0.27                               |
| Powys Teaching Health Board               | 23                         | 0.17                               |
| Swansea Bay University Health Board       | 137                        | 0.36                               |
| Total                                     | 926                        | 0.30                               |



## Appendix B - Received by Subject

| <b>Swansea Bay University Health Board</b>                | <b>Complaints Received</b> | <b>% share</b> |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|
| Ambulance Services  | 0                          | 0%             |
| Appointments/admissions/discharge and transfer procedures | 5                          | 4%             |
| Clinical treatment in hospital                            | 63                         | 46%            |
| Clinical treatment outside hospital*                      | 6                          | 4%             |
| Complaints Handling                                       | 16                         | 12%            |
| Confidentiality   | 0                          | 0%             |
| Continuing care   | 0                          | 0%             |
| COVID19   | 6                          | 4%             |
| De-registration   | 2                          | 1%             |
| Disclosure of personal information / data loss            | 0                          | 0%             |
| Funding   | 0                          | 0%             |
| Medical records/standards of record-keeping               | 1                          | 1%             |
| Medication> Prescription dispensing                       | 0                          | 0%             |
| Mental Health   | 9                          | 7%             |
| NHS Independent Provider                                  | 0                          | 0%             |
| Non-medical services                                      | 0                          | 0%             |
| Nosocomial COVID  | 3                          | 2%             |
| Other   | 2                          | 1%             |
| Out Of Hours  | 0                          | 0%             |
| Parking (including enforcement and bailiffs)              | 0                          | 0%             |
| Patient list issues                                       | 12                         | 9%             |
| Poor/No communication or failure to provide information   | 0                          | 0%             |
| Prisoner Care   | 0                          | 0%             |
| Referral to Treatment Time                                | 6                          | 4%             |
| Rudeness/inconsiderate behaviour/staff attitude           | 4                          | 3%             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>137</b>                 |                |



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## Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes (\* denotes intervention)

| <b>Swansea Bay University Health Board</b>     |            | <b>% Share</b> |
|--|------------|----------------|
| Out of Jurisdiction                            | 19         | 14%            |
| Premature                                      | 16         | 12%            |
| Other cases closed after initial consideration | 60         | 45%            |
| Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*        | 22         | 16%            |
| Discontinued                                   | 3          | 2%             |
| Other Reports - Not Upheld                     | 3          | 2%             |
| Other Reports Upheld*                          | 11         | 8%             |
| Public Interest Reports*                       | 0          | 0%             |
| Special Interest Reports*                      | 0          | 0%             |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>134</b> |                |

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## Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

|   | <b>No. of Interventions</b> | <b>No. of Closures</b> | <b>% Of Interventions</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Aneurin Bevan University Health Board     | 48                          | 160                    | 30%                       |
| Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board   | 80                          | 231                    | 35%                       |
| Cardiff and Vale University Health Board  | 30                          | 129                    | 23%                       |
| Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board | 37                          | 141                    | 26%                       |
| Hywel Dda University Health Board         | 41                          | 100                    | 41%                       |
| Powys Teaching Health Board               | 5                           | 23                     | 22%                       |
| Swansea Bay University Health Board       | 33                          | 134                    | 25%                       |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>274</b>                  | <b>918</b>             | <b>30%</b>                |



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## Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Health Boards in 2022/23. These complaints are contextualised by the number of people each health board reportedly serves.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Health Board.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Health Board in 2022/23. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Health Board.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Health Boards in 2022/23. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

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