

Our ref: NB/LG/MM



lucy.geen@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

matthew.aplin@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

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Sent by email

Dear Mr Roberts

Annual Letter 2015/16

Following the recent publication of my Annual Report I am pleased to provide you with the Annual Letter (2015/16) for **Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board**.

Overall my office's caseload has increased by 4% this year, but I am pleased to say that public body complaints fell by the same amount; only the second time in a decade this has happened. However, disappointingly the NHS in Wales was the only sector in my jurisdiction that saw a rise in complaints which now count for over a third of all public body complaints; a total increase of 51% in the last five years.

As expected most complaints about the health sector related to clinical treatment in hospital but I'm pleased to see a drop in the number about clinical treatment outside hospital. Complaint handling is one area that saw a significant increase this year – over 60%. This suggests that health boards need to do more to ensure they are adhering to Putting Things Right and correctly implementing their local complaint handling processes.

This year saw an encouraging 20% increase in the number of public body complaints settled voluntarily. Once again there has been a slight drop in the number of complaints upheld by my office and just under half the number of Public Interest Reports issued. Of the seven Public Interest reports issued, five related to health boards. These reports covered a range of themes including poor management of sepsis, incorrect discharge and failure to correctly treat stroke.

Whilst an ageing population and continued austerity is placing greater strain on our health service, we must endeavour to drive up standards to improve patient experience in Wales. One way to do this is by giving patients a voice through learning from complaints. One way I intend to do this is by issuing special reports highlighting particular themes that arise from my investigations. I published the first of these in February focusing on the poor quality of out of hours care in Welsh hospitals, which called for an independent systemic review. If the new Ombudsman legislation comes in to effect this year, I plan to use own initiative powers to drive more of these thematic reports.

Last year I assigned Improvement Officers to five of Wales' Health Boards, along with an overall lead for Health, placing greater emphasis on best practice and corporate cultural development. I hope that through better engagement with these bodies there will be an improvement in complaint handling and learning from complaints; however I believe fresh legislation is required to really have an impact on ending poor service delivery. Now the Fifth Assembly is in place we will be pushing ahead with the new powers and I hope to see the new PSOW Act introduced early next year.

You will find below a factsheet giving a breakdown of complaints data relating to your health board along with explanatory notes.

This correspondence is copied to the Chair of your Health Board for consideration by the board. I will also be sending a copy to your contact officer within your organisation and would again reiterate the importance of this role. 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

Ombudsman

Factsheet

There was an increase in the number of complaints received by my office this year from 106 to 126 which takes your Health Board well above the health board average for this year. It is also concerning to see that the number taken forward to investigation doubled this year. Clinical Treatment in Hospital remains the most complained about area, followed by Clinical Treatment Outside Hospital, Continuing Care and Complaint Handling which I am disappointed to see was complained about three times as much as last year. A similar number of cases were upheld this year and once again I issued one Public Interest Report, which was about the death of a man who waited nearly a year for heart surgery. In reference to the time taken to respond to requests for information from my office, 64% took more than five weeks indicating that this is an area that needs addressing.

Improvement Officer Review

Since last summer my Improvement Officer has had regular meetings with our liaison officer and the Director of Nursing and Deputy Director. These meetings have been cordial and informative. After some initial delay, she has begun to receive reports and papers for Board and Committee meetings, and has attended some meetings. I hope this continues, and that she is able to increase her understanding of trends within the Health Board.

I hope that the changes to the way in which the Health Board handles complaints, and the introduction of PALS across the hospital sites, will result in a reduction in the number of complaints received over the coming year or so. My Improvement Officer would welcome the opportunity to contribute to any planned training relating to complaint handling, either for clinicians or complaint teams.

A) Comparison of complaints received by my office with average for health bodies, adjusted for population distribution

In total **Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board** received **126** complaints during 2015/16 compared to a health board average of **108**.

B) Comparison of complaints by subject category with Health Board average

Subject	ABM total 2015/16	Health Board Average 2015/16
Appointments/ Admissions/ Discharge and transfer procedures	12	5
Clinical treatment in hospital	75	51
Clinical treatment outside hospital	9	6
Continuing care	9	8
Medical records/ Standards of record keeping	1	1
Non-medical services	0	1
Services for older people	0	0
Services for vulnerable adults	1	1
Patient list issues	3	2
Complaint-handling	9	10
De-registration	0	0
Rudeness/inconsiderate behaviour/staff attitude	1	0
Poor/no communication or failure to provide information	0	1
Regulation and Inspection	0	0
Recruitment and appointment procedures	0	0
Other	6	7
TOTAL	126	93

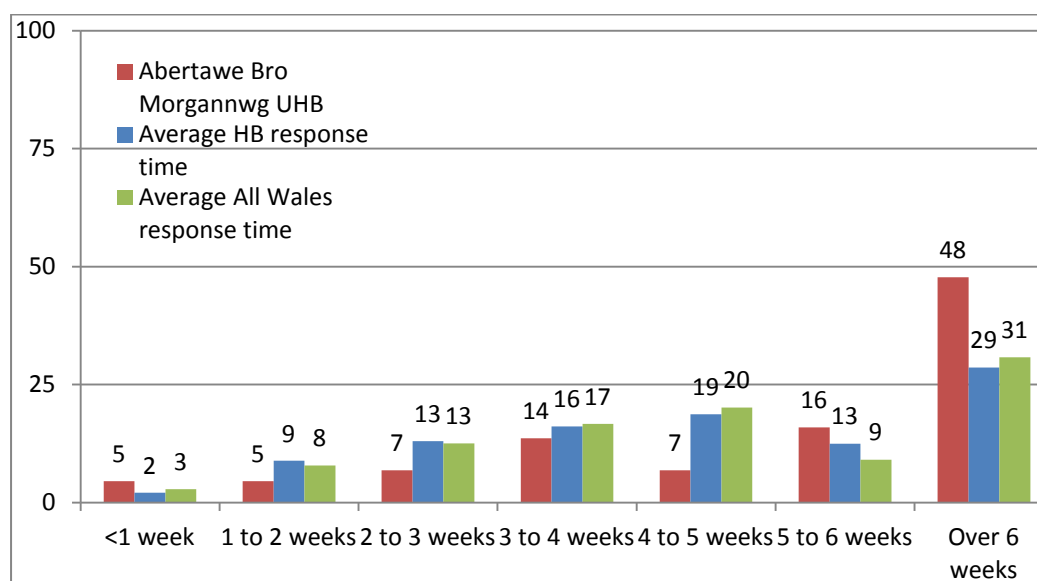
C) Complaints taken into investigation by my office with health board average

	2015/16 Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	2015/16 HB Average
Number of complaints taken into investigation	44	32

D) Comparison of complaint outcomes with Health Board average, adjusted for population distribution

Complaint Outcomes	2015/16 Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	2015/16 HB average
Out of jurisdiction	15	9
Premature	21	21
'Other' cases closed after initial consideration	33	30
Discontinued	2	1
Quick fix / Voluntary settlement	12	19
Section 16 – Upheld – in whole or in part	1	1
Other report upheld – in whole or in part	16	17
Other report – not upheld	10	9
Withdrawn	5	3

E) Comparison of Health Board times for responding to requests for information with average for health bodies and All Wales response times, 2015/16 (%)



F) Summaries

[Casebook 21](#)

201400961

201404093

201402381

201402272

201403783

201500054

Casebook 22

201405111

201404017 & 201403754

201408104

201404885

201501673

201502880

201502237

Casebook 23

201405342

201404662

201405254

201409395

201502299

201408174

Casebook 24

201405336

201409514

201500250

201502095

201501763 & 201501764

201408678 & 201408650

201501493

201502276

201502728

201503266

201503343

201503015

201504294

201503912

201504201

201408758

201505508

201506251

201504338

201504821

201501032

Appendix

Explanatory Notes

Section A compares the number of complaints against the Health Board which were received by my office during 2015/16, 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 2015/16 with the Health Board average for the same period. The figures are broken down into subject categories.

Section C provides the number of complaints against the Health Board which were investigated by my office during 2015/16 with the Health Board average (adjusted for population distribution) during the same period.

Section D compares the complaint outcomes for the Health Board during 2015/16, 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 E compares the Health Board's response times during 2015/16 with the average response times for all Health Boards and all public bodies in Wales during the same period. This graph measures the time between the date my office issued an 'investigation commencement' letter, and the date my office receives a full response to that letter from the public body.

Finally, Section F contains the summaries relating to the Health Board appearing in the Ombudsman's Casebook during 2015/16.

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 to lucy.geen@ombudsman-wales.org.uk or matthew.aplin@ombudsman-wales.org.uk