

Our ref: NB/LJ/MA



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1 September 2017

Sent by email: Mrs Allison Williams, Allison.Williams4@wales.nhs.uk

Dear Mrs Williams

Annual Letter 2016/17

Following the recent publication of my Annual Report I am delighted to provide you with the Annual Letter (2016/17) for **Cwm Taf University Health Board**.

Overall my office's caseload has increased by 13% this year, with public body complaints seeing a 3% increase.

Once again there has been a further rise in the percentage of health complaints, from 36% to 38%.

As expected most complaints about the health sector related to Clinical Treatment in Hospital whilst there has been a drop in the number about Clinical Treatment Outside Hospital for the second year running.

It is concerning that of the seven health boards, compliance with the timescales for providing my office with evidence that agreed recommendations had been completed varied from 53% to just 33% provided within the targets set. My office will be looking closely at compliance levels over the coming year.

During 2016/17, I produced six public interest reports and one 'special report'. All but one of the investigations were health related and worryingly, three of the cases were against the same hospital – Ysbyty Glan Clwyd run by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. The special report, issued against Hywel Dda University Health Board for failing to implement my recommendations following an early resolution, was the first of its kind against a health board, and underlines the need to comply with commitments made through early resolution in the same way as I would expect for recommendations arising from upheld complaints.

The remaining public interest report related to a local authority's role in overseeing the savings of looked after children.

Earlier this year I issued a thematic report entitled [Ending Groundhog Day: Lessons from Poor Complaint Handling](#). This highlighted cases from across devolved public services in Wales where investigations by public bodies have been inadequate and failed the service user. The report emphasised the need for effective governance across the Welsh public sector, robust staff training and improved methods of data collection. If you have not considered the report I would encourage you to do so.

In June my office held a seminar for the health sector on complaint handling. The seminar brought together complaints staff from health boards and trusts across Wales to share their experiences and best practice in complaint handling. The main outcome of the day was support for the establishment of a complaint handling network similar to that seen in Scotland, and we hope to see this established over the coming months.

I continue to place importance on the improvement function of my office. Last year I assigned Improvement Officers to several bodies and this will continue in 2017/18. In engaging with these bodies we hope to see ongoing improvements in complaints handling, learning and putting things right, along with the governance arrangements necessary for continuous improvement.

I am hopeful that the National Assembly will shortly be introducing new Ombudsman legislation that will help drive up standards. It is important Wales continues to adopt best practice in complaint handling and public service improvement and does not get left behind.

In reference to your Health Board there has been a marked increase in the number of complaints received (76 this year compared to 60 in 2015/16). Clinical Treatment in Hospital (52) and Continuing Care (8) were the most complained about areas. Out of the six public interest reports issued this year, one was against your Health Board. PSOW intervention was required in 34% of cases.

My Improvement Officer (IO) has found a positive approach to the management of complaints within your Health Board, which has been driven by a number of changes over the past year – both in terms of processes and personnel. In particular the Head of Patient Experience & Concerns is keen to engage openly and constructively with my IO and this positive approach is encouraging for the future.

In order to address historic concerns regarding delays in responding to requests for information from my office, your Health Board has introduced a regular “Deep Dive” meeting, at which every outstanding case with my office is discussed by senior members of the Concerns Team and managers. Your Health Board also holds a quarterly Concerns Scrutiny Panel, comprising of an independent member, a Community Health Council Representative and several director-level members of staff, at which the Concerns Team present various reports for scrutiny. Your Health Board has welcomed my Improvement Officer’s attendance at these meetings, which has been valuable in demonstrating the commitment it has to transparency and improvement. This approach is now ensuring better defined management oversight of the current caseload and allows for timely escalation of issues to senior managers when necessary. Whilst there remains room for improvement in this area, the current financial year is already showing encouraging progress in this respect and I look forward to further strides being made over the coming months.

However, although improvements have been made in terms of more timely provision of information to inform my investigations, I am concerned at ongoing delays in the completion of compliance tasks in satisfaction of recommendations arising out of my reports. My IO will continue to monitor this over the remainder of the year and work with you to improve performance in this respect. I am, however, confident that the openness and willingness to engage displayed by your Health Board over the past year will maintain and build upon the improvements already made.

You will find below a factsheet giving a breakdown of complaints data relating to your Health Board. This year we have included a new set of statistics regarding Ombudsman interventions. These include all cases upheld by my office as well as early resolutions and voluntary settlements.

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

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

CC: Chris Jones, Chair

Claire Adams, Contact Officer

Factsheet

A. Complaints Received and Investigated with Health Board average adjusted by population

Health Board	Complaints Received	Average	Complaints Investigated	Average
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board	94	115	26	31
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	90	127	26	35
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	192	151	61	41
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	91	106	26	29
Cwm Taf University Health Board	76	65	23	18
Hywel Dda University Health Board	113	84	23	23
Powys Teaching Health Board	20	29	0	8

B. Complaints Received by Subject with Health Board average

Cwm Taf University Health Board	Complaints Received	Health Board Average
Adult Social Services - Other	1	0
Complaints Handling - Health	3	9
Health - Appointments/admissions/discharge and transfer procedures	1	5
Health - Clinical treatment in hospital	52	56
Health - Clinical treatment outside hospital	2	6
Health - Continuing care	8	7
Health - De-Registration	2	0
Health - Medical records/standards of record-keeping	1	1
Health - Other	4	8
Health - Patient list issues	1	1
Various Other - Rudeness/inconsiderate behaviour/staff attitude	1	1

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

Health Board	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	'Other' cases closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement	S16 Report - Upheld - in whole or in part	Other Report Upheld - in whole or in part	Other Report - Not Upheld	Withdrawn	Total Cases Closed
Cwm Taf	12	15	18	0	9	1	14	2	0	71
Health board average (adjusted)	8	12	17	1	12	0	11	4	0	66

D. Number of cases with PSOW intervention

Health Board	Number of cases with PSOW intervention	Total number of closed cases	% of cases with PSOW intervention
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Board	42	107	39
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	29	95	31
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	91	194	47
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	23	93	25
Cwm Taf University Health Board	24	71	34
Hywel Dda University Health Board	37	102	36
Powys Teaching Health Board	4	24	17

Appendix

Explanatory Notes

Section A compares the number of complaints against the Health Board which were received and investigated by my office during 2016/17, 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 2016/17 with the 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 2016/17, 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 the PSOW 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 to lucy.john@ombudsman-wales.org.uk or matthew.aplin@ombudsman-wales.org.uk