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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Cadeirydd/Chair: **Emma Woollett**
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: **Mark Hackett**

gofalu am ein gilydd, cydweithio, gwella bob amser
caring for each other, working together, always improving

Pencadlys Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Atebir gohebiaeth Gymraeg yn y Gymraeg, ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at oedi.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English. Welsh language correspondence will be replied to in Welsh, and this will not lead to a delay.



01639 683302



mark.hackett@wales.nhs.uk

Dyddiad / Date: 8th March 2023

Mx Ceri Willcox
Clerk to the Council
Glynneath Town Council
Bethania Community Centre
High Street
Glynneath
SA11 5DA

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: MH/JAD

Sent via email to: clerk@glynneathtowncouncil.gov.uk

Dear Ceri

Re: Emergency Care & the NHS

I am responding to your letter outlining the concerns of Glynneath Town Council regarding NHS services within Swansea Bay, and emergency care in particular.

As your members so rightly say, historically each winter brings with it unprecedented demands, pressures and low performance levels in the NHS, which this year have been exacerbated by the continuing impacts of Covid-19, influenza and industrial action. It is because of this that Swansea Bay UHB embarked on an ambitious programme to transform our services, Changing for the Future, so that we could break this cycle.

In 2021 the Health Board undertook a public engagement on Changing for the Future, based around developing each of our main hospitals as Centres of Excellence for specific services, giving each of these hospitals a clear and unique role within Swansea Bay. This is shown in the diagram below:



Morrison Hospital will be the centre of excellence for urgent and emergency care, specialist care and regional surgical services, including complex medical interventions.

Singleton hospital will be the centre of excellence for planned care, cancer, maternity and diagnostics.

Neath Port Talbot Hospital will be a centre of excellence for orthopaedic and spinal care, diagnostics, rehabilitation and rheumatology.

This also outlined our intention to centralise all emergency and urgent care services at Morrison Hospital and so safeguard planned care capacity at Singleton and Neath Port Talbot Hospitals. Developing Morrison as the single hospital receiving all emergency and urgent patients for the Swansea Bay area has been the aspiration for over a decade, and at last this has been realised.

At the beginning of December 2022 the new Acute Medical Unit at Morrison was opened and from that date all medical patients were seen there rather than in the Emergency Department. The Acute Medical Unit has 45 beds and Same Day Emergency Care, focussed on assessment and treatment within 48 hours to avoid unnecessary admissions so that many more people can now go home instead. The wards at all three of our main hospitals were reconfigured to support these changes, including three wards at Singleton Hospital being used to locate clinically optimised patients (i.e. those who no longer medically need to be in a hospital bed).

On 23rd January 2023, all medical admissions were transferred to Morrison Hospital, with the Singleton Assessment Unit closing on 30th January, ahead of schedule. Up to 120 additional beds remained temporarily open, mostly at Singleton Hospital to ensure there was sufficient bed capacity while this reconfiguration of services was achieved.

Work is now underway to establish new services and expand existing community based services and hospital bed equivalents (such as virtual wards) to provide alternative ways of providing services, closer to people's homes. We are doing this in partnership with the Directors of Social Services from both Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils, focusing on:

- Avoiding admissions
- Hospital processes that reduce length of stay
- Management of the care of older people
- Out of hospital capacity

Alongside this we are commissioning an extra 3 theatres at Neath Port Talbot Hospital and 2 at Singleton Hospital to significantly increase the amount of planned care operations we can carry out, to reduce our waiting lists more rapidly.

It is clear that continuing to operate services as we have done over many years does not serve our staff or patients well. The transformation of our services which we have already implemented means that the impact of the pressures we have seen over recent months have not been as severe as they would have been if we had not already made these changes. We know that the risks in our services are high with staff not being able to deliver the quality of care they want to, particularly in relation to discharging medically fit patients, which needs a multiagency response, so that we can provide timely care for acutely ill patients presenting at our hospitals.

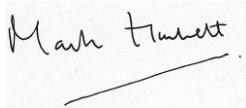
Stabilising our emergency / urgent care system, now that we have successfully implemented centralised medical admissions at Morrison Hospital, ahead of schedule, and the consequent opportunities this gives for separating planned and emergency / urgent



care, expanding planned care capacity and developing our main hospital sites into Centres of Excellence continues to be our main focus for further transforming our services to be the best we can be. We need to recognise that doing nothing is the path of greatest risk.

We know we have much more to do to deliver the high quality services we all want our local NHS to provide and are committed to doing so. Hopefully, the above information has gone some way to assure you about the significant changes we are making to our services so that we can break the cycle of poor standards of care every winter and deliver consistently high standards of care all year round.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hackett". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mark Hackett
Chief Executive

