

Our ref: NB/MA

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To: Chair of Health Board
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Annual Letter 2017/18

Following the recent publication of my [Annual Report](#) I am providing you with the Annual Letter (2017/18) for **Aneurin Bevan University Health Board**.

The number of health complaints coming to my office and the variance in health board performance in complaint handling continues to be a concern. Whilst we saw a welcome 2% reduction in the total number of complaints, those against health boards increased by 11% from 676 in 2016/17 to 747 in 2017/18. As a result, my office organised two special seminars; one for health bodies in jurisdiction on health complaints and best practice in June 2017; and another on complaint handling culture for all public services in February 2018. At the latter event, I was very pleased to see further progress on Out of Hours services with the Rapid Response for Acute Illness Learning Set (RRAILS) project improving out of hours services in health boards across Wales, partly in response to my office's thematic report, "Out of Hours: Time to Care", on the subject.

Four [public interest reports](#) have been published in the past year. All were health-related. Whilst none of the reports were issued against your Health Board the cases raised issues which provide learning points for all health boards in Wales. I therefore urge the Board to consider whether any of the systemic failures identified in those cases provide opportunities for the Board to review and improve its service provision.

Complaints Received – Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

The number of complaints PSOW has received in the year 2017/18 about Aneurin Bevan University Health Board was 121. While this figure remains below the Welsh average (adjusted for the Health Board's population), this does represent an increase of 34% from the previous year (2016/17).

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The number of complaints investigated by PSOW in the past year is 42, significantly higher than the 26 in 2016/17, but continuing to be below the population-adjusted average of 49.

The **subjects** of complaints about the Health Board broadly reflect the Welsh average, with complaints generally being about confidentiality, patient list issues, poor/no communication or failure to provide information, and rudeness/inconsiderate behaviour/staff attitude.

The number of complaints received regarding clinical treatment in hospital has increased substantially by 37% from 54 complaints in 2016/17 to 74 over the past year.

We identify that the **services** which receive the highest number of complaints are Trauma and Orthopaedics (16) and A&E (10).

Complaints Closed – Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

The total number of complaints closed between April 2017 and March 2018 for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board was 94. 33% of these prompted an intervention by PSOW. These include upheld complaints, early resolutions and voluntary settlements.

15% of cases with the Health Board were settled either via early resolution or voluntary settlement. No public interest reports were published regarding the Health Board. However, 18% of cases were upheld in whole or in part, with only 6% of cases not upheld following an investigation.

Of the upheld cases, 10 were upheld against Royal Gwent Hospital and 4 were upheld against Nevill Hall Hospital.

For all Health Boards, agreed timescales for providing my office with evidence that agreed recommendations have been implemented were not met in 36% of cases in 2017/18. For Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, this occurred in 46% of cases. This is therefore an area in which I consider your Health Board should improve. As I share draft recommendations with public bodies for comment before they are finalised I expect any concerns about them to be raised with my office at an early stage, before a report on an investigation is finalised. Once I have issued my final report and bodies have formally agreed them I expect public bodies to implement them in full and in a timely way.

When I met with you and your Chief Executive on 30th August we agreed that officers from both our organisations would explore a pilot project to reduce the pockets of complaints about complaint handling which exist in your Health Board – for example 28% of complaints at the Royal Gwent this year were about this. I am pleased that your staff have recently met with my Improvement Officer to take this forward.

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;
- Consider whether there are any learning points from the rise in the complaints against your Health Board;
- Consider whether there are any learning points from the systemic failures identified in the public interest reports (in respect of other health boards) I issued during 2017/18;
- Continue to work with my Improvement Officer to improve complaint handling, particularly in the parts of your Health Board that generate most complaints **about complaint handling**;
- Improve your performance when complying with any recommendations I have made to improve the Board's service delivery.

This correspondence is copied to the Chief Executive of your Health Board. I will also be sending a copy to your Contact Officer within your organisation. Finally, a copy of all annual letters will be published on my website.

Yours sincerely



Nick Bennett
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

CC: Chief Executive
Assistant Director of Nursing
Contact Officer

Factsheet

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

Health Board	Complaints Received	Average	Complaints Investigated	Average
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board	121	127	37	44
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	121	140	43	49
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	186	167	70	58
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	94	118	33	41
Cwm Taf University Health Board	74	71	32	25
Hywel Dda University Health Board	109	92	38	32
Powys Teaching Health Board	42	32	8	11

B. Complaints Received by Subject with Health Board average

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Complaints Received	Health Board Average
Adult Social Services - Social Care Assessment	2	0
Complaints Handling - Health	9	12
Health - Ambulance Services	2	0
Health - Appointments/admissions/discharge and transfer procedures	7	4
Health - Clinical treatment in hospital	74	62
Health - Clinical treatment outside hospital	5	7
Health - Confidentiality	2	1
Health - Continuing care	2	8
Health - Other	9	6
Health - Patient list issues	2	1
Various Other - Other miscellaneous	4	2
Various Other - Poor/No communication or failure to provide information	2	1
Various Other - Rudeness/inconsiderate behaviour/staff attitude	1	1

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

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 Report	Grand Total
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	19	10	26	14	2	6	17		94
Health Board average (adjusted)	22	14	33	22	1	10	20	1	122

D. Number of cases with PSOW intervention

Health Board	No. of complaints with PSOW intervention	Total number of closed complaints	% interventions
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board	27	101	27
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	31	94	33
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	70	175	40
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	32	81	40
Cwm Taf University Health Board	24	65	37
Hywel Dda University Health Board	40	104	38
Powys Teaching Health Board	4	31	13

Appendix

Explanatory Notes

Section A compares the number of complaints against the Health Board which were received and investigated by my office during 2017/18, 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 2017/18 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 2017/18, with the average outcome (adjusted for population distribution) during the same period.

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 catrin.wallace@ombudsman-wales.org.uk or matthew.aplin@ombudsman-wales.org.uk