

Our ref: NB/LJ/MM



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1 September 2017

Sent by email: Ms Judith Paget, Judith.Paget@wales.nhs.uk

Dear Ms Paget

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 **Aneurin Bevan 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, but 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 complaints received were at a similar level, (90 compared to 93 in 2015/16) and the number investigated dropped for a second year. Again Clinical Treatment in Hospital was the most complained about area (54), but I am pleased to see that there were no complaints received about Complaint Handling. There was one public interest report issued. PSOW intervention was required in 31% of cases.

This year, your Health Board has continued its commitment to identify complaints that can be resolved, either before or after they have been referred to my office. The number of complaints to my office last year, and those that have been resolved, is consistent with the previous year. Early resolution of complaints will continue to be an area of focus for the year ahead.

Learning from complaints remains a challenge for all Health Boards and the mechanisms in place at your Health Board to ensure that learning is shared, and any improvement sustained, is one of the areas that has been discussed over the past year at meetings between my Improvement Officer and Health Board staff. My Improvement Officer and I will be working with you on compliance, responses to draft reports and sharing learning in the year ahead.

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".

Nick Bennett

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

CC: Ann Lloyd, Chair

Sian Hanniford, 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

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Complaints Received	Health board Average
Health - Appointments/admissions/discharge and transfer procedures	7	5
Health - Clinical treatment in hospital	54	56
Health - Clinical treatment outside hospital	8	6
Health - Confidentiality	2	1
Health - Continuing care	4	7
Health - De-Registration	1	0
Health - Medical records/standards of record-keeping	2	1
Health - Other	9	8
Various Other - Other miscellaneous	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 distribution

Local Health Board/NHS Trust	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
Aneurin Bevan	6	18	33	1	11	1	17	8	0	95
Health board average adjusted for population	15	24	33	2	24	1	22	7	0	129

D. Number of cases with PSOW intervention

Health Board	Number of cases with PSOW intervention	Total number of closes 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 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