

# Re-open Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 11 Medi 2023  
Petitions Committee | 11 September 2023

Reference: SR23/5997-10

**Petition Number:** P-06-1350

**Petition title:** Re-open Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital now

**Text of petition:** We are devastated by Betsi Cadwaladr's decision to 'temporarily' close the inpatient ward at Tywyn Hospital. We want it reopened now.

The action to close this ward without any consultation or notice is premeditated and lacks transparency; it is a misappropriation of our community's public service.

Staff and patients were told on Thursday that they would be moved to Dolgellau hospital by Tuesday. No notice, no consultation, no discussion, no rationale.

If staff didn't want to move to Dolgellau they would not have a job. Tywyn is a new hospital which has excellent equipment and facilities. Our hospital has superb staff working there. Our relatives and friends have been provided with the best possible care you could wish for.

The health board have said that it is unable to recruit sufficient staff to fill posts. We want to see what evidence the health board have to show that they ever actively recruited staff for our hospital.

This hospital is a vital resource in our community.



# 1. Background

On 20 and 21 April 2023, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (UHB) published [articles on its website](#) stating that the Health Board had temporarily closed Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital and consolidated the beds at Dolgellau Hospital to ensure more robust nursing cover. The decision is said to have been made to protect the safety of the inpatients until sustainable levels of nurse staffing can be achieved.

An official from the Health Board quoted in the article stated:

We have been working hard to recruit new nurses from the surrounding area and from further afield to work at Tywyn Hospital for some time but have now exhausted all recruitment options. Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to recruit adequate numbers of nurses to provide safe nurse staffing levels across both Tywyn and Dolgellau Hospitals.

The Health Board official stressed that the closure of the ward is a temporary measure and the arrangements would be under regular review. The official went on to say that the Health Board was doing all it could to recruit to the nursing posts required to reopen the ward, and the process is likely to take several months.

The Health Board was said to be working with its Trade Union partners to explore how a small number of affected staff could be temporarily redeployed to support other health services in the local area that have not been impacted by the temporary ward closure.

Nurse recruitment and retention is currently a widespread issue. More information can be found in a [Senedd Research article](#) published in February 2023.

# 2. Welsh Government action

Correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services to the Petitions Committee on 26 June 2023 states that Betsi Cadwaladr UHB continues to pursue all possible avenues to recruit into the positions required to enable it to safely run inpatient services at both Tywyn and Dolgellau hospitals.

In the meantime, some staff have been redeployed temporarily to other service areas which has enabled some new service developments to be put in place to

support care closer to home and increase service capacity locally. Other staff have supported the development of a Treatment Room service at Tywyn Hospital.

The Minister is said to have been assured by the Health Board that it is working with its partners on an “innovative new model of service for Tywyn, which will draw on staff currently working in the community as well as staff who will be based at the hospital, all with the shared aim to restore the service that has been temporarily withdrawn at the hospital”.

The Minister highlights that this is an operational matter for the Health Board and one in which Welsh Ministers cannot intervene. The Minister attended a meeting with representatives from the Health Board, Tywyn Hospital Action Group and Tywyn Town Council on 12 May 2023, where the opportunity was provided to express any concerns and hear directly from the Health Board about its plans for the hospital.

The Health Board is also said to have assured the Minister that engagement has taken place with the new Citizen Voice Body, Llais, and that regular meetings are taking place with local councillors where progress around recruitment and service developments and opportunities are shared and discussed.

The Minister states in the correspondence that:

The health board continues to keep these arrangements under regular review and will continue in its efforts to recruit to vacancies so that inpatient services at Tywyn Hospital may be restored safely as soon as possible. The timescale for re-opening the inpatient ward at Tywyn Hospital will also remain under review and will be updated to reflect progress of the recruitment process.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.