



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

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Jack Sargeant, MS  
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**Ein cyf / Our ref:** CS/EH/CE23-L1004

**Eich cyf / Your ref:** P-06-1350

**☎:** 01745 586382

**Gofynnwch am / Ask for:** Emma Hughes

**E-bost / Email:** [BCU.CEO@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BCU.CEO@wales.nhs.uk)

**Dyddiad / Date:** 11/10/2023

Dear Mr Sargeant,

**Re: Petition P-06-1350 Re-open Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital now.**

Thank you for your letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> October, sent in your capacity as Chair of the Senedd Petitions Committee, regarding the above petition.

I am grateful for the opportunity to set out the rationale for the decision to temporarily close the inpatient ward at Tywyn Hospital, as well as the range of actions we have taken to recruit into the positions required to enable us to safely reopen the ward.

It is as a last resort that a decision was taken to temporarily close Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital in April 2023. This decision was taken to ensure the safety of patients and staff as safe nurse staffing levels could not be provided to operate a 24/7 inpatient ward facility at both Tywyn and Dolgellau Hospitals.

Whilst recruitment of registered nursing staff is a problem across the UK, it is often felt much more acutely in very rural areas, including the communities that Tywyn Hospital serves.

In the months leading up to the temporary closure significant work to recruit new nurses from the surrounding area and from further afield to work at Tywyn hospital took place. However, at the point of temporary closure there was a deficit of four Registered Nurses, one Deputy Ward Manager and one Ward Manager post. As a consequence, a safe inpatient clinical environment which provided round the clock care could not be secured. I would wish to be clear that this was a safety decision rather than a financial decision. The health board fully intends to reopen once recruitment is complete, when the safety of patients can be assured.

I am pleased to report that some progress in recruitment has been made, appointing one Registered Nurse and a Deputy Ward Manager, who have both commenced in post. However, a date for the re-opening of Dyfi Ward cannot be established until there is recruitment to the remaining three Registered Nursing posts and the Ward Manager post, for which the recruitment adverts remain open.



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Recruitment to these posts is essential to ensure a safe clinical environment. I would like to assure you that the health board is continuing to pursue all possible recruitment avenues, including nursing candidates from overseas.

In the interim, additional beds have opened in Dolgellau Hospital to support any patients from the Tywyn area. To date there have been a total of 19 patients from the Tywyn area who have required an inpatient bed in Dolgellau Hospital. At the time of writing, less than five patients from the Tywyn area are currently receiving inpatient care in Dolgellau Hospital.

The health board recognises how difficult this situation has been for affected staff at Tywyn Hospital and, together with our Trade Union partners, is working to ensure they feel well supported during this time. This included discussion with a small number of affected as to how they could support other health services in the local area that have not been impacted by the temporary ward closure.

As a result of these discussions, a small number of staff were redeployed to support the additional beds required in Dolgellau. Other staff chose to remain in Tywyn and have been working to develop additional services for the local population.

These services include:

- Tuag Adref/Homeward Bound service, which has received 40 new patient referrals since May. Home visits by the Tuag Adref team have supported these patients to remain at home, avoiding preventable hospital admissions as well as supporting earlier discharge from hospital, with low level support and rehabilitation provided at home following discharge.
- Treatment Room; providing a range of wound care and dressings amongst other treatments, with a plan to expand the service offer as staff training and competencies develop. Since the treatment room has opened there have been 425 attendances through this service to date.
- Same Day Urgent Care: Currently operating under the banner of Minor Injury Unit (MIU), which reopened on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and is now operating five days per week. To date, 200 patients have been treated through this service since opening. The same day urgent care service will be an integrated service which will provide MIU and Urgent Primary Care (UPCC) services. Recruitment is ongoing for the remaining staff to support the UPCC element of the integrated same day urgent care model.



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These services have been welcomed by the community and have worked extremely well. I hope the above developments provide assurance as to our commitment to develop and expand the range of services provided to the people of Tywyn through the introduction of an innovative new model of service.

Finally, I recognise that the temporary ward closure has caused considerable concern to the communities that Tywyn Hospital serves, as evidenced in the significant number of signatories to the above petition. The health board fully appreciates the value that local people attach to their local hospital and the ability to access safe and effective care close to their home. I know that this is especially true in more rural communities.

Since the temporary closure was announced, there has been regular dialogue with local councillors and other elected representatives; the Tywyn Hospital Action Group; Tywyn Town Council; and Llais. This has provided valuable opportunities to update on recruitment efforts, as well as discussing any other issues or concerns about local healthcare services.

I have made a commitment, along with the Chair, to attend the next public meeting of the Tywyn Hospital Action Group, with other partners including Llais so we can discuss a rounded picture of the role all services play in providing health and social care in the community.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Shillabeer'.

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**Carol Shillabeer**  
**Interim Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr Dros Dro**