

P-06-1350 Re-open Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital now - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 05 June 2024

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The latest reply to the petitions committee, received in May from Carol Shillabeer, the current Chief Executive for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, is unconvincing. It does not answer many of the matters raised by the Tywyn Hospital Action Group in all four of their previous letters to the Petitions Committee. Looking at the minimal progress the Health Board have actually achieved in the past year, the outlook for health services in the Tywyn area is bleak. The Health Board have serious capability issues within their senior management teams, as their history shows. They have been shown to lack honesty and integrity and are unable to manage our public health service efficiently or openly. We know this from our experiences, from our investigations, from talking to staff and we have set out the evidence in our previous replies. The very fact that the Board closed the opportunity for the public to ask questions at their general meetings, replies to which need to be accessible and open in the public domain, proves that they fear scrutiny.

News of the recent major scandals concerning contaminated blood and post office services has shown that far too many public services are managed in a defensive and covert manner, where the interests of covering up poor management and decision making is at the expense of employees and the public. The Board has no interest in ensuring that they retain their staff and staff have left or are leaving. For example, Carol Shillabeer fails to mention that two international nurses, who currently work in Dolgellau Hospital, are terminating their contracts with BCUHB early, to go and work in Scotland. She states that the Board is holding 'workshops' where staff and the public have offered up ideas for furthering health services in Tywyn. These ideas are hardly ever realised. The board continue to promote peripheral services, such as a monthly 'wellbeing hub'. The services which were provided in 2017, such as the inpatients ward and out of hours care, remain closed. The closing the ward for patients and relatives has been a cause of severe upset and concern.

Many matters raised in the Action Group's last reply have not been answered. This includes, 'BCUHB had been considering other plans for our hospital. ulterior plans that the health board have for Tywyn Hospital need to be made public. On 28/04/23 BCUHB notes from a meeting '*Enhanced Services Action Plan*' show that '*End of life and hospice care to be considered as an option for beds at Tywyn Hospital, and 28/04/23 - to discuss Hospice Dewi Sant and Marie Curie Service in the area to follow up on previous conversations, status in progress*'. Considerable funding from donations was provided to enable the hospital to be refurbished, and the hospital is part of the public health service meeting the needs of all the people of Tywyn and surrounding areas. Additionally, the appropriate use and management of donations is a serious concern, because in March 2023, only a few weeks before its closure, over £10,000 from the Tywyn Hospital donations fund was authorised to pay for an updated patient kitchen for the inpatients ward, when in February 2023, the health board had begun planning its closure.'

There have been many opportunities for the Board to open the inpatient ward. It chooses not to open it. It chose to close it in the first place, based on a rationale which has been shown to be flawed. Please refer the previous reply about the dishonest statements it provided to the public about closing Tywyn Hospital.

The group continues to endeavour to demonstrate in our replies to the Petitions Committee how BCUHB have mismanaged our facilities and health service. There is no reinforcement of the standards and attitudes required and the continued obfuscation is a serious matter of concern. More than one year on, the Health Board do not want to reopen the inpatients ward.

As stated in previous replies 'BCUHB need to be accountable for the decisions they make on providing healthcare in the Tywyn area. We trust that the petitions committee appreciates the legitimacy of our campaign and uses its influence to ensure that our health services are reinstated to a high standard. We have a right to an efficient and effective health service, which puts patients first'.

Yours sincerely

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Tywyn Hospital Action Group