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# Swansea Bay University Health Board Highlights Report 2020-21



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## Chair's Foreword



Welcome to our annual report for 2020-21. I would like to start by welcoming Mark Hackett, who took up post as our Chief Executive in January 2021, and by thanking Tracy Myhill, his predecessor, for guiding the health board through what was a very difficult year for everyone. I am also delighted to welcome Stephen Spill as our Vice-Chair.

The way in which the health board has been working over the past year has been transformed by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has had a devastating impact - nearly 30,000 people across Swansea Bay have tested positive for the virus to date and, tragically, more than 1,000 have died with Covid-19. Our response to treating and mitigating the risks of Covid-19 has been at a huge cost to our ability to provide routine diagnostic services and treatments. The broader societal impacts - on the economy, on employment, on education - and the legacy of social isolation necessitated by the pandemic will be felt far and wide and for many years to come.

I would like to thank each and every member of staff for the hard work, commitment and resilience they have shown throughout the pandemic to date, often at personal sacrifice.

Sadly we have lost colleagues to the virus, and I send my sincere condolences to their families, friends and the people with whom they worked.

The commitment made by our staff has been recognised in a number of awards received this year. Rea Pugh-Davies (*pictured*) was named best nursing support worker at the RCNi Awards; our occupational health and wellbeing teams won both their respective categories at the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Awards 2020 for their responses to Covid-19 and a number of staff, including several working on the frontline, have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday and the New Year Honours lists. Well done to everyone who has won an award this year, flying the flag for Swansea Bay University Health Board.



Our response to the pandemic was in full flow by April 2020, with a dedicated command and control structure established. Just some of the measures that were put in place very quickly during the year include the establishment of two field hospitals and the design and delivery of a comprehensive test and trace system in collaboration with our local authority partners. Everyday areas within our hospitals were redesigned to provide additional and safer spaces in which to treat people, both with and without the virus, including the transformation of the outpatient department

at Morriston Hospital into additional critical care beds. All these measures contributed to our ability to deal with two very significant waves of the virus and to limit the wider spread of the pandemic.



The last quarter of the year was dominated by the rollout of the mass vaccination programme. I am incredibly proud of the progress made across Swansea Bay and very grateful to all those involved in the vaccination effort.

***Pictured:*** Banessa Khatun, 64, from Swansea, receives her first Covid vaccination on the Immbulance outside Swansea Mosque in March 2021. Also pictured is Private Josh Morris, 4 Armoured Medical Regiment.

Throughout the year, we also took the opportunity to accelerate some of our longer-term plans in order to continue to provide the best possible services to our citizens. For example, we now have a dedicated children's emergency department at Morriston Hospital, so our youngest patients have a suitable place in which to be seen when they unexpectedly need to visit us.

Beyond Covid-19, there have been some other significant achievements which are important to highlight, particularly the de-escalation from targeted intervention to enhanced monitoring. These are statuses given to health boards by Welsh Government when it feels that their performance needs extra scrutiny. The downgrading of our escalation status is recognition of the progress made prior to and during the pandemic to improve our operational and financial performance. Although we know that there is still much more to do, this is an important milestone and demonstrates that we are on the right track. We also opened Wales's first perinatal mother and baby unit to enable mums with mental health concerns to have a place to stay and receive treatment close to home and with their baby with them.

I'd like to thank you, our public, for the support you have shown us throughout this year as we have faced Covid-19 together. Not only by following the guidelines to reduce the spread but also by contributing to our fundraising schemes, in particular the Amazon wishlist, which saw thousands of essential items such as toiletries, nightwear and underwear purchased for our inpatients at times when loved ones could not visit and take in such items. The time you took to clap for your carers on a Thursday evening, along with the cards and gifts you sent in, helped our staff to feel valued and appreciated during very difficult times.

We have a long road ahead of us next year as we aim to move out of the response phase of the pandemic and into the recovery period, an aim which is becoming more realistic due to the excellent progress being made to deliver the vaccines. Our

annual plan for 2021-22 sets out a number of priorities. We know that Covid-19 will be with us for a very long time and our focus will continue to ensure we work as effectively and safely as we can. Alongside the ongoing pandemic response, the plan sets out how we will work with partners to ensure stabilisation of services and care as well as driving – where safe and appropriate, and recognising staff wellbeing – ambitious improvements in priority service areas to improve quality of care and outcomes for our population.

Thank you all once again. Keep safe.

**Emma Woollett**  
**Chair of Swansea Bay University Health Board**



## About the Health Board

Swansea Bay University Health Board cares for the health needs and healthcare for the people of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea. We look after a population of around 390,000 and have a budget of around £1 billion, employing around 12,500 staff.

We have three major hospitals providing a range of services: Morriston and Singleton hospitals in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot hospital in Baglan, Port Talbot. We also have a community hospital at Gorseinon and primary care resource centres providing clinical services outside the main hospitals.

The Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery at Morriston Hospital covers not only south and mid Wales, but the south west of England.

Morriston also delivers one of two cardiac surgery services in Wales. Other specialist services provided by the health board include cleft lip and palate, renal, fertility and bariatric surgery.

Primary care independent contractors play an essential role in the care of our population, and the health board commissions services from 49 GP practices, 31 optometry practices, 72 dental practices and 92 community pharmacies across our region.

Mental health and learning disability services are provided in both hospital and community settings for residents within the Swansea Bay region, and we provide a regional service for both learning disability and forensic mental health services.

There are four all-Wales services hosted by the health board:

- Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) – provides advanced decision-making and critical care for life or limb-threatening emergencies requiring transfer for time-critical treatment at an appropriate facility.
- NHS Wales Delivery Unit – provides professional support to Welsh Government to monitor and manage performance delivery across NHS Wales.
- Major Trauma Network Operational Delivery Network – provides the management function overseeing the major trauma network, coordinating patient transfers between the major trauma centre, trauma units and local hospitals and enhancing major trauma learning to improve patient outcomes, patient



experience and quality standards from the point of wounding to recovery.

- Lymphoedema Network – manages the Lymphoedema Network Wales National Team.

We recognise that to deliver effective health and wellbeing services for our population we must work in close collaboration with key partners, including Swansea and Neath Port Talbot local authorities, third sector organisations, universities, other health boards and our public. We place great importance on our membership of local partnership boards, including public service boards and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board.

We are also part of A Regional Collaboration for Health (ARCH), which is a unique collaboration between three partners: Swansea Bay University Health Board, Hywel Dda University Health Board and Swansea University. It spans the local authority areas of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea and aims to improve the health, wealth and wellbeing of the south-west Wales region.

## Covid-19

The main focus of 2020-21 has, understandably, been the response to Covid-19. We put in place our command and control structure on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and it remains in place to date, ensuring that we manage the pandemic, as well as continue to provide essential non-Covid services, as best we can. Some of our achievements include:

- Setting up drive-through testing centres at Margam and the Liberty Stadiums, following by walk-in facilities and mobile testing units;
- Specially designed fast-track induction programmes for new, returning and student healthcare workers so they can start work earlier and, as these take place at a large external venue, clinical areas are not taken up by the training;
- Opening a children's emergency unit designed especially for the youngest of our patients for when they unexpectedly need us;
- Creating a virtual waiting room for the minor injury unit at Neath Port Talbot Hospital, so low-risk patients can wait in their car until we are ready for them;
- Creating two field hospitals, one in Llandarcy and the other at the Bay Studios, within a matter of weeks, to provide additional bed capacity. To date, we have not needed to admit any inpatients to these hospitals. As a result, the Llandarcy site has been returned to the owners, while the Bay Field Hospital is supporting other areas of our operation, including delivering blood tests and the Covid-19 vaccination programme;





- Transforming the outpatient areas at Morriston Hospital into critical care areas, so we have extra beds to care for the sickest of patients;
- Setting up the Respiratory Assessment Unit at Morriston Hospital, which not only swabs suspected Covid-19 cases for admission or discharge as needed, but also supports those with existing lung conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, to reduce their need to come into hospital;
- Established a truly joint approach to caring for people in our community settings with local authority colleagues, and providing significant support for care homes.

These are just some of the examples of how we changed our general approach to ensure we were able to support patients with and without the virus. However our dedicated staff also found ways to do things differently within their own services to look after their patients:

- Rosie the Rag Doll (*pictured with her creator, Ceri Salman, paediatric physiotherapist*) was introduced into paediatric physiotherapy team, so staff could show parents how to do the exercises with their children at home when face-to-face appointments were stopped;
- Two heated marquees were set up at the older person's mental health unit at Cefn Coed Hospital, helping families have face-to-face visits with loved ones without the patients having to leave the wards when national lockdown restrictions permitted;
- Sentinel lymph node biopsies and complex skin cancer procedures, can now be done while patients are awake. Previously these procedures were carried out under general anaesthetic, but when Covid-19 meant that these had to be temporarily stopped the plastic surgery team developed a different way of working;
- The neuro-rehabilitation unit at Neath Port Talbot Hospital was relocated to a different part of the site to support the response to the pandemic. As its new home had access to outside space, this has been incorporated into patients' therapy, including the planting of a vegetable garden;



- Psychology services were re-designed to deliver assessment and interventions using virtual technology when it was not possible to provide direct face-to-face contact for both individual and group sessions. For example, the regional neuro-psychology service developed and ran a series of virtual psycho-social interventions for patients living with a brain injury with a focus on well-being throughout the pandemic.

Staff health and wellbeing has also been a key part of our response as we continue to work through what is the most challenging time:

- The hard work of the staff involved in developing and delivering occupational health and staff wellbeing services was recognised in the 'National 2020 Personnel Today, Occupational Health and Wellbeing Awards' with the health board's wellbeing service winning, 'Best Multidisciplinary Initiative' and occupational health team awarded 'Occupational Health Team of the Year (public sector)'. The health board is the first organisation to win two simultaneous awards in one year and we were shortlisted against organisations like John Lewis and Department of Work and Pensions



*Pictured: Sarah Davies, Occupational Health Senior Nurse Manager with the occupational health award)*

- Dedicated health and wellbeing services have been put in place to support staff as they work through the pandemic, including psychologists, meditation and dedicated trauma support as well access to spiritual support and recovery rooms;
- The Morriston Hospital emergency department choir became a worldwide sensation after a video of them singing the Jackson Five classic 'I'll Be There' went viral, leading to an invitation to sing with Heather Smalls on a version of her song 'Proud';

Because of the social distancing restrictions and the need to stay at home as much as possible, working virtually quickly became a necessity for us with a number of initiatives developed:

- We were the first health board in Wales to 'go live' with Consultant Connect, an app which enables GPs, paramedics and other clinical staff working in the

community to ask for consultant advice, helping to prevent unnecessary interventions;

- A number of specialties, including burns and plastics, psychology and children's services are holding virtual appointments so patients can still see their specialist without having to enter a hospital site;
- We have introduced a number of new systems which enable doctors shielding or working from home to reduce footfall to complete their ward rounds virtually ensuring they keep up-to-date with patients' progress.



*Pictured: Swansea Bay University Health Board staff at the Llandarcy Field Hospital in June 2020.*



## Finance and Performance

For 2020-21, we had budget of £1071.257m and reported an end-of-year financial position as an overspend of £24.304m. This was in line with the forecast made the start of the year however it was a breach of our financial duty to balance, as was the failure to achieve an approved integrated medium plan (IMTP – three year plan).

For the first half of the year, a much higher year-end forecast was reported to the board. This was due to the several large high monthly expenditures to respond to the pandemic and support such initiatives such as the creation of field hospitals and a testing programme. However we received £83.733m additional funding from Welsh Government, enabling the financial position to start to recover.

In terms of performance, a number of initiatives during the winter of 2019 helped to address the challenges within unscheduled care, and some progress was being seen in our performance prior to the start of 2020-21. However the pandemic has meant that we have had to change way we work, with the emergency department being redesigned to accommodate Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 patients as safely as possible. A decrease in attendances at the department was evident at the start of the first wave and performance did improve. This did not continue, as the pressures on the system continued to rise with more patients coming to the department seriously unwell, both with and without the virus. A number of initiatives were developed to support the unscheduled care system, including a temporary building in which to put ambulance patients while they were waiting to be able to come into the department to enable the vehicles to be cleaned and released for the next call and additional clerical, therapy, palliative care and social worker support for the department. A 'contact first' and urgent primary care centre were also in development towards the end of the year to reduce the number attending the hospital unnecessarily and enabling them to be seen in primary care settings instead.

Planned care has been particularly difficult, because all non-urgent care was stopped at the start of the pandemic, as directed by Welsh Government. While essential non-Covid-19 services are now being provided, this is still at a necessarily reduced level, and the length of time patients are waiting for elective treatment is increasing. There were fewer referrals from GPs during the first peak, which may also result in more demand once people feel more confident to start seeking help, although the use of digital solutions, such as Consultant Connect (where GPs can obtain an immediate opinion from a consultant) will tend to reduce referrals, as issues are addressed without the need for an outpatient appointment. Outpatient appointments are running at a reduced rate, although a significant number can now be provided virtually. Our primary focus throughout the year has been to limit the harm caused to those requiring elective procedures, therefore as services have restarted, patients have been seen based on clinical priority.

Unscheduled care, planned care and cancer services will be key priorities for the annual plan in 2021-22. We have also identified 5 key quality priorities: infection control; reducing falls; suicide prevention; sepsis and end of life care. It is recognised that the response to Covid-19 will continue to dominate the early part of the year, but we are also focusing on the necessary transition into recovery in order to progress these and other key priorities over the year.

## Other Achievements

While much of the year has been focussed on Covid-19, there have been other achievements of which we are proud:

- Morriston Hospital will become the first Welsh hospital to have its own solar farm when work finishes on the project this year. Not only will this reduce our carbon emissions by 3,000 tonnes each year, it will also generate £1.5m savings each year;
- We opened the first mother and baby unit in Wales to help women with serious mental health problems during pregnancy and/or following the birth of their baby. Mums have access to specialist inpatient care for them and their babies rather than having to travel to England;
- An outreach physiotherapy service is supporting stroke patients at home, helping them re-learn movements such as getting in and out of bed, helping them regain more independence and reducing the risk of needing longer-term health and social care support;
- A former ambulance has been redesigned into a mobile unit for sexual health services (*pictured below*) to provide an outreach service, particularly to those most vulnerable in local communities, such as the homeless and sex workers;





- The older person's assessment service now has its own mini-emergency department, designed to provide specialist assessments to help older people safely return home rather than being admitted to hospital. The new area is specifically designed for older patients to help them feel calmer, and there they receive a full assessment to determine any changes that need to be made to their current treatment as well as what is needed to address what brought them to the hospital to begin with;
- A new out-of-hours mental health service is being provided in partnership with the charity Hafal to provide practical, therapeutic and holistic support to people at risk of a mental health crisis, helping them to stay at home rather than be admitted to hospital;
- More than 2,000 people have signed up the Swansea Bay Patient Portal, an app which enables them to access and share information about their health and wellbeing with relatives and clinical staff;
- We developed a new way of selling land and buildings which we no longer need. Each business interested in purchasing such an asset was contacted to see how their proposed use of it fitted with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This information then helped inform the bids process, rather than just the financial amount bid. Our approach has been praised by the Future Generations Commissioner and the work to dispose of Fairfield within the grounds of Cefn Coed Hospital is to be published as a case study. We will now use a similar approach for all future disposals;
- Our patient experience team (*pictured below*) won a Patient Experience Network National Award for its work to create digital stories of patients and staff of the care we provide in order to provide learning and improvements. The team is the first in the healthcare service in the UK to have accredited digital storytelling training for staff and delivers training nationally for colleagues.



## Staff Health and Wellbeing

Our people make this health board what it is. We are truly grateful for the continued hard work and commitment seen each and every day, especially over this past year. The wellbeing and resilience of those who work for Swansea Bay University Health Board is really important, and some of the developments we have made to support, develop and recognise staff during the year include:

- Introduction of an updated wellbeing package for staff to support psychological, emotional and social welfare and health and wellbeing. A number of additional resources were offered including:
  - REACTMH® Training, to help leaders have 'psychological savvy' conversations to support their staff;
  - A new virtual wellbeing course has been launched: 'Resilient Caring the Swansea Bay Way', this resilience virtual study day is open to all staff and volunteers;
  - 'Taking Care Giving Care' is a facilitated psychological approach that serves to centre 'compassion' through everything that we do. The focus is especially on the role and impact of care for staff in any service and helps staff to reflect on working relationships, job demands and self-care and well-being;
- Implementation of a trauma management model (TRiM) within the Health Board. The TRiM Model aims to keep employees, mentally well, resilient and functioning by providing support and information and identify those who are not coping early enough to signpost them on to specialist support. It helps to break the stigma of mental health and needing to 'plough on' regardless and reduces the numbers of front line staff taking time of sick leave due to stress related illness;
- Provision of hotel accommodation for staff who were worried about of transmitting the virus to family at home;
- The first ever pre-recorded 'Virtual Living Our Values Awards' 'launched on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 6pm and was available to all staff to watch afterwards for a month, providing a well needed boost for morale. 151 nominations were received for the awards, 663 individual staff voted for those shortlisted with a total overall of 5,058 votes. The English version of the event was viewed 570 times and the Welsh version 83 times;
- Delivery of a vocational training programme - from April 2020 until January 2021, there were 134 participants with 80 securing employment with the



health board, 22 securing jobs with external organisations and 15 additional participants were planned for March 2021;

- The Apprenticeship Academy is currently a finalist in the category of 'Large and Macro Employer of the Year' from Apprenticeship Awards Cymru. At the end of January 2021, the health board had 31 apprentices in post, 11 individuals awaiting a start date, three adverts, three apprenticeships in the pipeline and 104 apprentices successful in gaining permanent posts. The Apprenticeship Academy celebrated National Apprenticeship Week by hosting a virtual visit with the First Minister. It was the perfect opportunity to highlight the benefits and successes of the programme in our organisation;
- A virtual package for the long-service awards which recognise more than 25 and more than 40 years' service commenced in March 2021 for last and this year's qualifying staff, of whom there are 604;
- The e-cwtch 12-month pilot launched in November 2020 which is peer to peer recognition in-line with the studies that suggest that gratitude and appreciation can improve well-being, physical health, can strengthen social relationships and help us cope with stressful times in our lives. It is also more economical and hygienic than sending a paper card. Since launch, 1,148 have been sent;
- The Covid-19 wellbeing and working from home survey ran June 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July. 1,633 surveys were completed and feedback has helped inform the



extension of wellbeing support including the staff wellbeing line, trauma training for leaders and managers, 'Taking Care, Giving Care' rounds and additional on-line support and training. The results also influenced the health board's approach to the development of the agile working framework which will set out guidance to support blended working for the future;

- The green spaces project in partnership with Biophilic Wales is progressing across sites starting with Morriston, Singleton and Cefn Coed hospitals for the development of outdoor areas to benefit staff and service users' health and wellbeing.

*Pictured: Deb Lewis, Service Group Director for Morriston Hospital, planting a wildflower.*



## Our Charity

All our fundraising is now managed through the Swansea Bay Health Charity, which oversees all funds and monies donated to our services. This has been an extraordinary year for donations to the NHS in general, particularly following the wonderful efforts of Capital Sir Tom Moore, who raised more than £33m by walking laps of his garden. He was not the only one to show such support and appreciation for those on the frontline and these are just some of the highlights from our charity:

- Successfully applying for more than half a million pounds worth of grants from NHS Charities Together to support our patients and staff through the pandemic;
- At the start of Covid-19, establishing an Amazon wishlist for donations from individuals to support our patients. Due to the generosity of the public and local businesses, we received over £200,000 worth of donated items, including Swansea Mosque, which delivered 200 boxes of cooked meals and water for staff at Morriston Hospital on a weekly basis for many weeks, after working alongside the health board's Muslim chaplaincy team (*pictured right*)
- Creating a JustGiving "Spread the love Swansea" campaign which has raised more than £50,000;



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**HEALTH CHARITY**

- Hosting an all-Wales fundraiser through JustGiving, raising more than £200,000, which has been distributed to all health boards, Velindre NHS Trust and Welsh Ambulance Service Trust;

- Supporting our fundraisers with new and innovative ways to raise funds, from making rainbow badges, doing garden marathons, to completing sponsored stitching;

- Launching a successful bid scheme to allow items to get quickly to the frontline, and to support larger staff wellbeing initiatives from recruiting additional staff counsellors to funding wellbeing workshops.

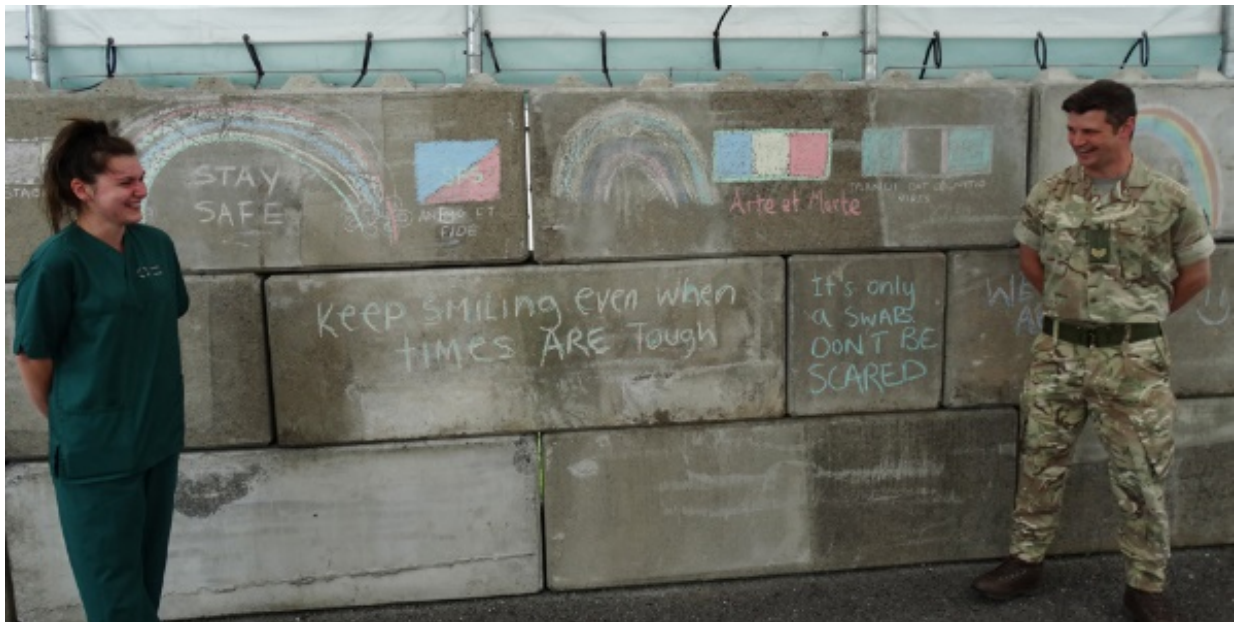
## Next Year

This has been an incredibly challenging year for the health board. Much has been achieved but there have also been areas in which more work is needed, and these provide blocks on which to build for 2021-22. As the year comes to end, the annual plan for the next one is being finalised and sets out what we hope to achieve over the next 12 months. Just some of our goals include improving patient experience through better safety and quality and less harm, focusing on healthcare acquired infections, sepsis, end-of-life care, falls, suicide prevention and improving outcomes and clinical standards.

We are also aiming to rejuvenate our hospitals as well as our primary care, community and therapy services to link improvements in a number of areas, including cancer and emergency medicine. There are also plans to transform mental health and learning disability services and improve the financial position, as well as provide better staff experience at work.

A critical priority is to create a sustainable urgent and emergency care system but we also recognise that we need to improve the rate at which we provide planned care, as people are now waiting longer. This will be a longer-term plan but we need to start thinking about how we address the backlog now.

All this is not forgetting the continuing need to respond to Covid-19, as cases still remain high in the communities we serve, with some needing admission to our hospital. While we are hopeful that we will be able to start our recovery from the pandemic in the second half of 2021-22, our response to the pandemic will remain a focus for us.



*Pictured: healthcare support worker Melissa Hughes and Sgt Tom Ratcliffe, 14<sup>th</sup> Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare), at the Margam testing facility in July 2020.*