

Grŵp Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar
Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr, GIG Cymru

Health, Social Care and Early Years Group
Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Our Ref: NW/AH/MHSOC

13 May 2026

Dear Abi

Letter following SBUHB Mental Health Service of Concern meeting – 11 May 2026

Thank you for attending the Swansea Bay University Health Board Mental Health Service of Concern meeting on 11 May and for the preparation undertaken by you and your team.

You provided an overview of the work that has been carried out over the last two years following the escalation to level 2 for adult mental health services in Swansea Bay. Whilst we acknowledged there had been some improvements, there were still areas of concern in service safety and quality alongside the ongoing issues with estate condition.

I have reflected on the discussion given the presence of high and immediate quality and safety risks - most notably the poor environment of care, persistent ligature risks, workforce gaps and the impact on patient experience and outcomes, together with the financial impact.

I believe we need to see a fundamentally revised and integrated plan that enables your Board to assure itself that these risks are being addressed holistically rather than through disconnected workstreams.

I expect the Health Board to re-present its proposals explicitly through:

- a Quality, Safety and person-centred lens, supported by a structured holistic impact assessment that considers the combined and cumulative impact of estates limitations, environmental mitigations, staffing capacity & culture, reliance on temporary controls, and the proposed model of care on patient safety, dignity, therapeutic value and outcomes.
- This assessment should test whether the system (as a whole) is safe and sustainable at each stage of delivery, not solely once longer-term investment or

transformation is realised and should make explicit the residual risks the Board is tolerating in the interim.

- It should also transparently examine the intended and unintended implications of higher-risk or contentious options, including rapid service reconfiguration or unit closure, setting out the impacts on access, patient flow, experience, equality, and staff, alongside the risks of maintaining the status quo.

As a minimum, I expect clarity on immediate safety actions, escalation thresholds, and how patient and staff experience will be protected & preserved while longer-term solutions are progressed, so that Welsh Government can be satisfied that the overall approach is proportionate to the level of risk and expenditure and provides credible assurance on quality and safety now, not just in the future.

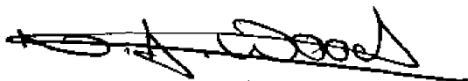
We agree the following actions

- **Swansea Bay UHB** to provide a clear summary of the funding requested, setting out what each element will deliver, the risks it mitigates (including those described as urgent), and the residual risks that remain.
- **Welsh Government / NHS Wales Performance & Improvement** to coordinate a rapid independent review of whether the proposed short-term mitigations (estates and operating model of care) provide sufficient assurance of patient safety and service continuity.
- **Swansea Bay UHB** to continue work on the stabilisation programme (including service diversions, security measures and anti-ligature works) and to ensure proposals are linked to agreed minimum standards and expected duration of benefit.
- **Swansea Bay UHB** to progress the test of fit/costing work for proposed service moves (including options to relocate Ward F from Neath Port Talbot into the vacant ward space at Cefn Coed's newer estate) and share outcomes with partners.
- **Swansea Bay UHB** to share an updated position on progress against relevant HIW recommendations and action plans (including service model and therapeutic provision) and provide a person-centred quality and safety impact assessment bringing together estates, clinical care, workforce/culture and patient experience.

I will ask the team to establish a further review meeting in a months' time to discuss progress.

I would appreciate if you could ensure Welsh Government are informed on any future developments, risks, and outcomes as the improvement actions are delivered.

Yours sincerely



Nick Wood