



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Swansea Bay University Health Board

1 July 2026

Dear Raj,

Thank you for meeting with myself and colleagues on 7 May. This year the annual review focused on your submitted assessment against the implementation of the NHS Research and Development Framework, two years on from the initial baseline assessment undertaken in 2023.

We had a constructive and focused discussion on how Swansea Bay University Health Board is delivering health and care research against the pillars set out in the NHS R&D Framework, alongside its wider and future priorities for Research and Development across the organisation. During the meeting, we noted a number of key points of interest and propose that the following actions are taken forward.

1. We recognised that governance structures for R&D have matured over the past year, increasing the visibility of R&D at Board level and across the Health Board, although further work is needed.

Action 1: Develop a clear, action-focused communications plan to demonstrate, showcase and maximise the impact and value of research, including how this impact is translated into practice across the organisation. The plan should also set out how performance and impact will be evidenced over time, drawing where appropriate on metrics across both commercial and non-commercial research to support high-level visibility. This work must be developed in close collaboration with the Health and Care Research Wales Support and Delivery Centre communication team and completed by 31 October 2026.

2. We welcome the cancer research pathways project and its recommendations, undertaken jointly by Swansea Bay UHB and Hywel Dda UHB. We discussed the issue of patients participating in research studies moving between Health Boards without associated standard care funding transferring with them, and the resulting pressure this is placing on Swansea Bay UHB support services, particularly radiology.

Action 2: Actively use the recommendations from this project to address the identified issues. Medical Directors and R&D Directors across both Health boards should jointly develop a clear implementation plan to resolve the funding barrier, working with Directors of Finance and Chief Executives, to enable delivery of the recommendations of the wider programme of work. The plan should be submitted the Welsh Government by 30 September 2026.

3. We discussed the relationship between the Health Board and Swansea University in relation to joint Clinical Academic posts. You confirmed that there are currently no joint Clinical Academic posts in development, and that the Swansea University redundancy review has not impacted the existing cohort. We welcomed the proposal to establish a Clinical Academics Group, working collaboratively with Swansea University, as a key mechanism to actively drive this agenda forward.

Action 3: Establish a Clinical Academics Group jointly with Swansea University with a clear purpose, defined priorities, and a focus on delivering tangible outcomes, including the development of future joint posts. The Group should provide an update to Welsh Government on progress and outputs by 31 January 2027.

Please continue to keep up the good work on supporting and delivering health and care research and supporting your committed and dedicated staff. We look forward to continuing to work with you to further maximise research opportunities in Swansea Bay UHB.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Cross', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gareth Cross
Deputy Director Science, Research and Evidence Division

Attendees	
Dr Raj Krishnan	Medical Director, Executive Lead for R&D, SBUHB
Professor Steve Bain	Assistant Medical Director for R&D, SBUHB
Jemma Rogers	R&D Manager, SBUHB
Andrew Griffiths	Independent Board member for R&D, SBUHB
Liz Wonnacott	Head of Service, SBUHB
Jayne Caparros	Research Delivery Manager, SBUHB
Rob Thomas	Principal Finance Manager, SBUHB
Gareth Cross	Deputy Director, Science Research and Evidence Division, Welsh Government
Carys Thomas	Head of R&D Policy, Science Research and Evidence Division, Welsh Government
Violina Sarma	Head of NHS and Social Care Research Environment, Science Research and Evidence Division, Welsh Government
Claire Bond	Senior R&D Finance and Performance Manager, Science Research and Evidence Division, Welsh Government