

Bay Health

Staff newspaper of Swansea Bay University Health Board



Jeremy Miles (left), Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, is shown around Morriston's newly upgraded burns ICU facilities by Critical Care Clinical Lead, Matthew Challis



SCAN BARCODE FOR A SELECTION OF BAY HEALTH STORIES ONLINE



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Major investment to cement centre of excellence status

A major new investment to upgrade Morriston Hospital's Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery is set to secure the centre's future for many years to come.

Welsh Government has provided £7.7m to improve facilities at the centre of excellence, which supports a population of around 10m people and covers an area stretching from Aberystwyth to Oxford, including most of South West England.

Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care Jeremy Miles recently visited Morriston to see the results of improvement work, which will equip the centre for the 21st century and cement its status as one of the busiest and most highly-regarded in Europe.

A ward previously designated for general intensive care has been completely rebuilt to provide three specialist

burns cubicles (see picture below) with shower rooms plus two new general intensive care cubicles.

Burns cubicles are highly-specialised rooms with strict temperature controls to reduce the risk of infection.



A new specialist burns operating theatre has also been created adjacent to the new ICU ward. The work ensures the Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery now has sufficient capacity with state-of-the-art facilities located all in one place.

A second stage of the upgrade, which is a long-term project, will hopefully involve the creation of a new ward and theatres for burns and plastics patients who do not require intensive care.

Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery staff are naturally delighted to be able to treat patients in the new high-spec facility.

"We're immensely grateful for this funding allocation without which we wouldn't be able to maintain a major

burns centre in Swansea Bay," said clinical director of burns service Jeremy Yarrow. "Our centre provides major burns care for a huge population across Wales and the South West of England and we regularly receive patients from all over the UK.

"The funding, if anything, has gone beyond what we could have hoped for. It ensures that we have 21st century facilities and will be able to continue to provide the services of a major burns centre well into the future."

Work began on the ICU part of the project in January and was carried out to minimise the impact on hospital patients and staff. The centre currently provides specialist care for more than 1,000 people per year – roughly half of whom are children – including patients with the most severe burns. Meanwhile more than 6,500 people who need plastic surgery, often following trauma, infection and cancer, are also treated at the centre every year.



Abi Harris, Swansea Bay University Health Board's Chief Executive

Welcome to a new edition of our Bay Health staff newspaper!

This is my first edition having joined the health board as Chief Executive this autumn.

I am extremely proud and excited to be with you at Swansea Bay and you can read more about me and my thoughts on our priorities and challenges on the opposite page.

Once again, you'll find lots of articles in this edition about the inspirational work and achievements of our colleagues across Swansea Bay University Health Board.

You can read examples of how we're leading the way both nationally and internationally as we look to find new and innovative ways to provide the best possible care for our communities.

There's a great case in point on page four, with colleagues at our Jill Rowe Neurology Ambulatory Unit in Morriston becoming the first in the UK to treat one of our patients with a new 10-minute injection to help prevent the progression of multiple sclerosis. The previous treatment option involved an IV infusion which took four hours to deliver, so you can see why this development is one to be proud of. I'm also delighted to see another aspect of our work is now very much in the spotlight, not least because we have a special anniversary to celebrate.

Our South West Wales Cancer Centre is now 20

years old and it's humbling to consider the many people and their families the centre has cared for during what is often a life-changing time.

To mark this wonderful landmark, our Swansea Bay Health Charity is supporting the centre in a major fundraising appeal, with £200,000 the target.

To find out much more about the appeal, called Going the Extra Mile for Cancer, turn to pages 8 and 9 and also, keep up to date with progress and fundraising activities on our staff intranet, our website and at the Swansea Bay Health Charity website (swanseabayhealthcharity.com).

On the subject of leading the way and being in the spotlight, I was greatly encouraged by the latest NHS Wales performance statistics which highlight the clear progress we are making as a health board.

Our Chief Operating Officer Deb Lewis was interviewed on BBC Wales news the day after the new figures were released and she did an excellent job in outlining our improved performance and some of the measures we've been taking to help us hit targets. Deb was able to explain how, as a result of hitting our target of nobody waiting more than 52 weeks for their first outpatient appointment and speeding up diagnostics, we have been able to significantly reduce the number of patients waiting more than 104 weeks for an operation or procedure.

It's great that we're still on track to get the number waiting more than 104 weeks to zero by the end of the financial year.

Many of you will have contributed to our improved performance in this area and elsewhere – it's pleasing that those efforts are now being recognised externally. It's also pleasing that those of you who live in the Swansea Bay area or have friends and family here can now be certain of a first outpatient appointment or undergoing an operation or procedure sooner than previously.

So, there's no doubt that we're on the right track but while we can be encouraged, we remain in Targeted Intervention with the Welsh Government for our

performance and we face ongoing challenges in some areas, particularly our urgent and emergency care services.

As you will be more than aware, we also face financial challenges and I know that many of you have already helped us in this area – thank you.

Below is an article regarding our recent appeal to each and every one of you to let us know if you can see a way to save money and to work smarter without compromising the care and services we provide.

I appreciate it isn't always easy to identify where we can make savings but I know that in the myriad roles you perform, you as our eyes and ears are key to spotting changes that can be made to save precious resources. You know your roles inside out; that's why if you've got any more great ideas that can save money and maybe time, we'd love to hear them

Our appeal on this front went out a number of weeks ago and I'm delighted by the response and support we've had from so many of you. It really is appreciated and underlines for me what our One Bay Way is all about. So keep them coming in!

I'm still finding my feet in my new role but I am a firm believer in collaboration and working together for us to achieve our goals as an organisation.

That's why, as well as what we do internally, I'm also conscious that we need to collaborate externally, whether that be with neighbouring health boards, our local authority partners, the third sector and other organisations like Llais (the patient advocate body for Wales).

While we're a big organisation, we cannot deliver in isolation and that's why, as well as getting around as many parts of our health board as possible over the next few months, I'll also be making a concerted effort to get to know our partner organisations. In the meantime, thank you all so much for all that you're doing, whether that be flagging up ways to save money or working hard to improve the care we deliver. It truly is appreciated and it's making a real difference.

Swansea Bay needs you... let us know if you've a money-saving idea

Swansea Bay, like all health boards, is facing a huge financial challenge - bigger than any that's gone before - and we need everyone's help.

We're currently overspending by several million pounds each month, but there's currently no extra money coming to bail us out.

Executives and senior leaders are all wrestling with this difficult financial situation, searching for ways to rein in spending and to deliver safe services in a more cost effective way, so we can live within our means.

You'll already be aware that urgent action has been taken to improve our control – including introducing a temporary pause on some recruitment, overtime, and agency work, and taking the disappointing action to cancel the staff awards night in the Swansea Arena.

None of these decisions have been taken lightly, and we're fully aware of the impact they have on our staff.

Even though the health board's senior leaders are putting priority plans in place, they are painfully aware that there's no easy answers.

So, the call is going out again to every member of staff for ideas and suggestions to save money and offer up thoughts about more sustainable ways of working whilst maintaining safe services.

We are grateful for the ideas that we have already received in response to the CEO's mid-week messages.

These are all being assessed and considered.

We're now expanding opportunities for suggestions.

No-one understands the intricacies of how a service works better than those who are at the coalface. You may have spotted small things which could make a big difference if they were only done differently. Or you may have some sweeping ideas which could transform efficiency.

Our aim is to identify and cut out all unnecessary waste, so money isn't needlessly leaking away. If we can do this, we'll not only save money now, but have a more sustainable platform for the future.

We can achieve so much more by working together, so the support of our workforce is critical.

So please, join in this important conversation. You'll find all you need to know about how to do this on the front page of our intranet.

'Absolutely brilliant' verdict for Prehabilitation Service

A woman who underwent knee surgery has thanked the team who supported her to be as fit and healthy as possible while she waited.

Bernadette Kane, from Swansea, was referred to the orthopaedic prehabilitation service while she waited for a knee replacement.

The team offers a range of support to help keep people waiting for new hips or knees in the best possible shape for their upcoming surgery.

It ranges from weight management and exercise classes, physiotherapy, steroid injections for pain management, and mobility aids such as walking sticks or knee braces. After being referred to the service, Bernadette opted for the weight management and physiotherapy sessions.

"I have noticed I have managed to recover much quicker," she said.

"Previously I could barely get in and out of the car and I struggled to get out of the chair and to walk up the stairs.

"But now I can walk up and down my garden which has 13 steps. It took me months to do that after my right knee replacement but this one took me weeks. The service was absolutely brilliant – I can't fault it."



Bernadette (seated) with physiotherapy assistant Natalie McCarthy, musculoskeletal physiotherapist Alice Mayo, dietetic assistant practitioner Rhiannon Rogers, physiotherapist Natalia Capel and highly specialist weight management dietician Nadia Kudrjasova

'We're facing tough challenges but together, we can overcome them'

NEW chief executive Abi Harris is aiming to help Swansea Bay realise its potential while accepting there are tough challenges ahead.

Abi, who joined the health board in late October, has been delighted by the warm welcome she's already received from the SBUHB team after deciding to move on from her role as Interim Chief Commissioner of NHS Wales' Joint Commissioning Committee.

"I'm hugely enthusiastic about this opportunity and absolutely delighted to be joining the team," said Abi, who spent 11 years as Executive Director of Strategic Planning for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

"There are huge opportunities for us to deliver excellent services to the communities we serve. I see fantastic potential within Swansea Bay, with a lot of really talented and dedicated colleagues working for the organisation.

"I have already heard about numerous innovative service improvements implemented by our teams.

"But while there are opportunities, we're also facing some tough challenges and we will need to work together to face these and find the solutions."

Abi is a big believer in the benefits of collaboration and working collectively to tackle challenges, not only across health boards but with local government, third sector and university partners.

"I'm very keen to listen and learn so I'll be coming

out to meet people from the different services and I'm keen to see as many people as possible in their working environments," said Abi, a mum of one who enjoys taking any opportunity to enjoy Wales' wonderful great outdoors.

"It's important to recognise that people are working very hard at the moment, and I would like to thank everyone in the health board for the work they do every day to contribute to meeting the health needs of our patients and communities.

"I want us all to work together on how we tackle our challenges and move forward. My message to everyone is, you helped shape the health board's strategy and I am looking forward to working with you all to ensure we deliver our vision - providing great

quality care and supporting our communities to live well. "I'm particularly interested in how we improve patient pathways and think about how we work with patients to achieve the outcomes that matter to them.

"I'm keen for us to look at ways to ensure the very best experiences and outcomes for our patients and communities. I'm also really interested in how we tackle health inequities within our community.

"We know across the health board area, we have very wide-ranging levels of deprivation and health experiences. So, it's how we work collaboratively with communities, third sector partners and local authorities to tackle some of these health inequities

and deliver health improvement. I know there are already lots of examples where we are doing this, so it will be building upon and expanding some of the good work that is already happening. It's also vital to recognise we're such an important provider of healthcare within the region, delivering for neighbouring health boards and a number of tertiary services for the whole of South Wales and in some cases, beyond Wales."

Abi is confident the experience she brings will prove a great fit for Swansea Bay, having previously held key roles in strategic planning and social care for both the NHS and local government.

She explained: "The job really does feel like a culmination of the experiences I've had during my career to date.

"My time as an Executive Director with another health board in Wales will help me, as will my experience working in local government as a director of social services - particularly thinking about how we support children in their first 1,000 days, and people through their life course and into the last 1,000 days of life.

"The collaborative working experiences I've had with the Joint Commissioning Committee and the fact I'll be continuing as a member of the JCC in my new role – this is another big plus.

"I've really enjoyed working with the Chair, committee members and team to build the JCC, which came into being in April this year.

"I know the role will present tough challenges, I'm well aware there are obstacles we'll have to overcome but I'm confident we can do this together."

Innovation and improving care

Health board's role in improving early diagnosis of lung cancer

Lung Cancer is the third most common cancer in Wales and the majority of patients are diagnosed at an advanced stage, so there is a pressing need to shorten the current diagnostic pathway.

Swansea Bay is playing its part in this effort after being included in the expansion of something called the QuicDNA study. Initiated in early 2022, the QuicDNA project focuses on integrating non-invasive

ctDNA testing into the lung cancer diagnostic process. Through analysing a simple blood sample, liquid biopsies offer a less invasive and faster alternative to traditional tissue biopsies.

This speeds up diagnosis and treatment decisions, aiming to improve patient outcomes and survival rates. The project is committed to collecting real-world evidence on the value and impact of liquid biopsy

testing in cancer treatment pathways. Originally conducted at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the QuicDNA study has now expanded to include four new sites including Swansea Bay. This project not only seeks to improve lung cancer diagnostics, but also paves the way for the use of liquid biopsies in other cancer types - a transformative step in cancer care.

MS first for Swansea Bay



Emma Cullen (centre), who received the first injection, with the MS team and Jill Rowe Neurology Ambulatory Unit staff

SBUHB leading the way with new 10-minute injection

A Swansea mum has become the first person in the UK to receive a new 10-minute injection to help prevent the progression of multiple sclerosis (MS). Emma Cullen previously had to undergo an intravenous (IV) infusion twice a year which would take up to four hours during each visit.

But the medication ocrelizumab, which helps to prevent relapses and slow the progression of MS, has now been approved to be given via an under-the-skin injection.

MS, which is lifelong, happens when a person's immune system attacks their brain and spinal cord.

The immune system creates cells that attack and kill viruses in the body but for those with MS, the cells attack the nerves instead.

Ocrelizumab sticks to one type of the cells, called B cells, and helps to eliminate them to stop them reaching and attacking the brain and spinal cord. The treatment is specifically used for patients with

active relapsing MS (where symptoms can flare-up but then go away or get better) or early primary progressive MS (where symptoms slowly get worse over time).

Swansea Bay was previously involved in the original clinical trial for the drug and has now administered the first injection at the Jill Rowe Neurology Ambulatory Unit in Morriston Hospital.

After being diagnosed with MS, Emma started having the IV infusion twice a year but has now called the new method a game-changer.

"Since taking ocrelizumab, I haven't had a relapse at all and there have been no signs of any new lesions on MRI scans,"

she said. "Dr Owen Pearson rang me and explained about the new method and I jumped at it."

The new method will reduce the time patients have to undergo treatment, which will see them return to their daily activities much quicker than before. Dr Pearson,

consultant neurologist at Morriston Hospital, said: "Whereas a patient would need to spend all day on the unit, hopefully we can now treat them in a much quicker timeframe."

"They can then return to their daily activities or even return to work."

"From our point of view, it means we can treat more people a day."

"We can also shorten the time patients wait for treatment, too."

"The quicker we can treat people, the better."

Speaking of her experience of receiving the under-the-skin injection, Emma said: "I was just amazed - the 10 minutes felt so quick."

"It is a game-changer and I am so grateful to Dr Pearson and the team for allowing me the opportunity to be the first person in the UK to receive it."

"I feel very lucky and would encourage all existing and new patients to consider this new way of administering the treatment."

Alexandra Strong, the Jill Rowe Neurology Ambulatory Unit manager, said: "It is an exciting change for our patients who have ocrelizumab infusions in the unit, who in time will all receive the offer of switching to the under-the-skin injection too."



Dr Owen Pearson, pictured chatting to Emma ahead of a UK-first for Swansea Bay

Our green agenda

October / November 2024 ISSUE 12

Bay switched on thanks to solar farm success



Morriston Hospital's solar farm has marked its third anniversary by generating a third of Morriston Hospital's power and breaking the £2million barrier in savings.

The facility, based in nearby Brynwhilach Farm, went live in October 2021 as the solar farm became the first of its kind in the UK to directly power a hospital. It has proved a huge success in that time, having saved over £2.3million in electricity bills by generating its own power instead of purchasing it from the grid. Since April this year, it has saved around £650,000.

The solar farm has developed significantly since being switched on, with a new battery and extension going live in April 2024.

The battery stores excess solar power generated on the brightest days for use after the sun sets.

The extension has improved the generation of power to 5 megawatts, with 2,000 extra panels taking the amount to 12,000 in total.

These have combined to help generate a third of Morriston Hospital's power.

In terms of carbon emissions, the 2,389 tonnes of savings during three years of operating equates to the running of 75 three-bedroom houses.

Des Keighan, Assistant Director of Estates, said: "Swansea Bay University Health Board recognises, as do the public, the impact the climate has on both the health of the planet, as well as the individual."

"The NHS have the opportunity to be a major force in creating a more sustainable future. Clean air equals healthy lives and as a healthcare provider we have a duty to protect health as well as treat illnesses."

"We plan to continue to build our reputation for leading the way in sustainable performance, and our solar farm is a prime example of that."

"It has ensured a long-term renewable energy solution by displacing the need for most of our energy from off-site generation using fossil fuels. The electricity generated is used for heating, power, transport and at peak times feeding in to the grid for use in our community."

"It has been really exciting and satisfying seeing the success of the solar farm progress each year since it was switched on."

The solar farm initially cost £5.7m, with the extension costing £3.6m - repayable over 11 years - which has been funded by an invest to save grant from Welsh Government's Wales Funding Programme.

Staff recharge in new wellness garden

Fresh air and flowers are giving ophthalmology staff in Singleton Hospital a chance to reset and recharge thanks to a dedicated wellness garden.

The service's vision to develop an area next to its base in the hospital has given colleagues a space to unwind and relax outdoors during their break.

Staff have also dug deep and planted their own flowers to spruce the garden up, with a wide range of flowers adding a mix of colour.

The area has been identified as an opportunity to boost staff wellbeing and mental health.

Helen Williams, Ophthalmology Nurse Practitioner, said: "When the ophthalmology service moved into what is now known as corridor 8 in Singleton, we

inherited a small garden area. This area had been used over the years as a garden and play area for minor injuries and more recently the Surgical Assessment Unit before it moved. We decided to use it as a garden area where staff can sit and relax in their dinner breaks and it slowly developed into a wellness garden.

"It has been a labour of love over this past summer and is still in early stages. We have put in lots of seating and planted up pots and flowers - all this has been done out of the staff's goodwill."

"It is an area where staff and doctors can go to just breathe in fresh air and sit in a calm environment before going back into our busy Ophthalmology clinics."

News in BRIEF

New fibre network to give health board digital boost

A dedicated dark fibre network to 36 public sector sites throughout Swansea and Neath Port Talbot - including Swansea Bay UHB - is on the way by the end of next year. The new network will improve connectivity in the region to local authorities, healthcare and education partners.

Dark fibre network models offer practically limitless capacity and speeds, allowing significant amounts of heavy data to be stored and shared securely between public sector sites. These benefits enable better collaborative working and can help improve internal services across public sector organisations.

The network will be installed in and around Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

This new network - which will be fully available by December 2025 - will offer significantly improved capacity and speed, while allowing large amounts of data to be securely shared and saved.

This new connectivity infrastructure will futureproof the health board's digital capabilities.

Rebecca wins award for making a real impact

Rebecca Nix has become the latest winner of an IMPACT Award for Therapies and Health Sciences.

Rebecca, a regulatory and compliance manager, received the award during a presentation at Morriston Hospital in recognition of her expertise in the areas of governance and quality management systems, including her 'invaluable' work regarding new Medical Device Regulations.

Her endeavours have made a 'very significant' contribution to improving quality - a key tenet of our push to become a high-quality organisation - across the health board.

The IMPACT Awards, which were launched by Executive Director of Therapies and Health Science Christine Morrell last year, are aimed at celebrating the great work of individuals and teams from these professions or services who are making an impact.



Neuro rehab staff put best foot forward for new garden

Neuro Rehabilitation Unit staff have raised hundreds of pounds for the development of a sensory garden.

The staff from the Neath Port Talbot Hospital ward were joined by a former patient and patients' families on a ten mile walk from Swansea to Mumbles and back.

They raised more than £1,500 through sponsorship and a bucket collection en route, which is to go towards enhancing a sensory garden at the hospital. Ward manager Nathan Riddle said: "The garden benefits patients with brain injuries because it helps reconnect with their senses, which they sometimes lose the ability to do."

Panto star Kev's right behind cancer centre appeal after his own battle with disease

Swansea legend Kev Johns MBE knows from experience how staff at the South West Wales Cancer Centre always go that extra mile for patients.

The hugely popular broadcaster, actor, and Swans matchday announcer and hospitality host has fought his own battle against cancer – at one low point fearing he would not see another Christmas.

Fortunately, Kev had the all-clear last year, though he has ongoing treatment at the cancer centre, part of the city's Singleton Hospital.

It celebrates its 20th anniversary this month – and Kev is backing a £200,000 fundraising appeal launched this autumn by Swansea Bay Health Charity, the health board's official charity, to commemorate the landmark.

The appeal, Going the Extra Mile for Cancer, will support the thousands of patients from the Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda areas who are cared for there every year, as well as relatives and staff.

The South West Wales Cancer Centre, SWWCC, is run by Swansea Bay University Health Board and provides a range of lifesaving NHS treatments such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy. It was the brainchild of now-retired consultant oncologist Salah El-Sharkawi, who became clinical director of cancer services in 1996.

His vision of developing services locally led to the launch of a £500,000 fundraising campaign in partnership with the South Wales Evening Post to mark the turn of the millennium.

It ended up raising £1 million, triggering a £30 million investment by the health authority and Welsh Office that led to the SWWCC's establishment.

The spirit of public generosity that was so evident more than 20 years ago has continued unabated ever since. Donations are regularly received from grateful patients, families and other supporters.

A major refurbishment of the Chemotherapy Day Unit (CDU) which moved from its old home at the back of the hospital to Ward 9 last year, is now under way, paid for to the tune of £80,000 from existing charitable funds.

The centre team hopes Going the Extra Mile for Cancer will support their next big project – converting the old CDU building into a dedicated outpatient suite complete with a warm and welcoming waiting area.

The appeal is also aimed at supporting improved patient care and staff wellbeing across all wards and departments within the SWWCC.

Donations will help fund equipment, staff training, research and special projects, above and beyond what the NHS can provide.

Kev is urging everyone to support their local cancer centre by getting behind the appeal, either through donations or by organising fundraising events.

Our Going the Extra Mile for Cancer appeal, which aims to raise £200,000 for the South West Wales Cancer Centre, was launched earlier this autumn. The appeal coincides with the centre's 20th anniversary and is being run by our Swansea Bay Health Charity. It's a fantastic appeal which is aimed at raising funds to provide the extras that can make all the difference to patients and their families and may not otherwise be provided for by core NHS funding. The appeal has got off to a cracking start and to find out more and how to donate or organise a fundraising event, read on...



Kev Johns, pictured with Chemotherapy Day Unit manager Sue Rowland

The 63-year-old recently appeared in a production of prison drama Conviction, written by Mark Cainen, at Swansea's Grand Theatre.

But that was nothing compared to the dramatic turn his own life took when a routine blood test in March 2021 highlighted an iron deficiency.

Tests later confirmed he had a tumour on his kidney but also lesions on his lungs, which meant surgery was not an option.

"I had stage four cancer," he said. "There is no stage five. I had a GP look at my notes and tell me to go home and prepare my family to sign a do not resuscitate order. It was that serious.

"I remember taking my family on holiday to Disneyland Paris at a time when, in my head, I didn't have a future. Nothing had been said to make me think that – the oncology team had always been positive.

"At the time it was about managing a tumour they

couldn't get rid of, and I still had those secondary lesions on my lungs." This was in late 2022 and, for Kev, the show literally had to go on regardless of his health issues. Keeping his diagnosis private, he starred in his 25th Grand Theatre panto, Beauty and the Beast.

On his days off, Kev attended the CDU for immunotherapy treatment which cleared the lesions. That opened the way for surgery, which was carried out in Morriston Hospital last September.

He was back home a few days later and was later given the all-clear. He went on to appear in Cinderella at the Grand Theatre.

"There was such a massive difference in me from Beauty and the Beast, which was during that very difficult time, and Cinderella," he said. "Everyone will say how different I was.

"It was like a massive weight had been lifted off me, in more ways than one. I lost six-and-a-half stone in

Patients to benefit from CDU makeover

Generous donations are funding the transformation of part of the South West Wales Cancer Centre in Swansea – after patients asked for it.

The Chemotherapy Day Unit is undergoing a £80,000 upgrade to create a warmer and more welcoming environment for those receiving treatment.

Work, including a series of themed rooms, new flooring, additional treatment chairs and decorative touches such as murals, is due to finish next month. All of it is paid for by donations to the cancer centre.

Now the hope is that a new fundraising appeal, launched by Swansea Bay Health Charity to commemorate the centre's 20th anniversary, will help make another huge difference to patients elsewhere on the site.

The appeal, Going the Extra Mile for Cancer, will support the thousands of patients from the Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda areas who are cared for there every year, as well as relatives and staff.

The South West Wales Cancer Centre, SWWCC, is run by Swansea Bay University Health Board and provides a range of lifesaving NHS treatments such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy.

Until last year the Chemotherapy Day Unit, or CDU, was located in a single storey building behind the main hospital building.

However, it was too small for the CDU to expand to meet demand and so it moved to Ward 9, a former cardiac ward.

"Our new location gave us the opportunity to increase our chair capacity," said Oncology Services Manager Kate Ashton. "So, we had the space but what we did not have was the environment.

"We wanted to stop it looking like a hospital ward. It was quite cold and not welcoming. Some patients are here from first thing in the morning until the evening and it's about making it a comfortable and welcoming environment for them and their families.

"When we moved here last September, patients could see what needed to be done. We put up a board where they could write down what they wanted us to get first for them.

"Some of them took it upon themselves to do fundraising activities straight away, specifically for the purposes of improving the patient environment

weight. By choice. I was a lot thinner, which caused a lot of panic in the wardrobe department and still does!"

Kev, who still receives monthly immunotherapy at the CDU, is now getting ready for this year's panto, Jack and the Beanstalk – one of his favourites.

Held once again at the Grand Theatre, it will see him appear alongside DJ and broadcaster Scott Mills, amongst others.

"It's getting closer," Kev said. "And it's always great to welcome NHS staff to the panto. Some of the theatre staff come every year as a group and have seats fairly

Kate Ashton, main image, and inset, how the old CDU looked before work started



in the CDU. Because it is all about patient comfort, patient experience and the environment for their family and friends.

"The first time they come in, it's quite daunting. They are frightened as well.

"There are white walls, machines beeping – the last thing you want."

The CDU has been temporarily relocated to Ward 10 while the transformation is carried out.

The largest of the three treatment rooms requires the most work, including knocking out a small side-office to create a single space.

close to the front. You recognise them because you can always see the first few rows. It's great, and I know a number of staff from the CDU are coming as well."

He has vowed to do everything he can to support Going the Extra Mile for Cancer and is urging everyone in Swansea Bay and beyond to follow suit.

"Maybe you could organise a tea party, a coffee morning, maybe do a 10k or 5k run or a sponsored walk – anything to support the

appeal," he said.

"It's a remarkable centre, without doubt the best. Let's make it better and give them the support they

The old nurses' station and a corner sink unit will be removed and updated, while the flooring will be replaced, and new electrical sockets installed to provide capacity for additional chairs.

There will also be a wall mural with a seascape theme. The two other rooms require less work and will each have a new mural, one with a floral theme and the other a woodland theme.

The main corridor will also have a new floor.

Work was due for completion in the autumn. CDU Manager Sue Rowland said it would make a massive difference to patients and families.

need to do the job to help us. The staff are marvellous. Nothing is too much trouble for them. They are truly an amazing group of people.

"Not just in their professionalism but in their spirit as well. They care. The empathy they have for patients is amazing. They know their patients like friends, like family. They are incredible – all of them no matter the colour of their uniform. I can never repay them for what they did for me."

- If this story has inspired you to support Going the Extra Mile for Cancer, you can donate by going to swanseabayhealthcharity.enthouse.com/donate#!/. Find out more about the appeal, and read the latest news stories by going to swanseabayhealthcharity.com and clicking on the appeals section.

Sharon's hot water bottle horror shows why boiling water is a no-no



From left, Hannah Evans, clinical lead for burns outpatients and theatres, Janine Evans, advanced practitioner occupational therapist, Mr Nicholas Wilson-Jones, consultant plastic surgeon and Liz Brown, clinical nurse specialist. Sharon Portingale, and an image of the damage done by a hot water bottle, are pictured right and inset, below.

A woman left temporarily unable to walk after suffering burns from a hot water bottle has urged others to take care as winter approaches.

Sharon Portingale would often fill a hot water bottle with boiling water from the kettle and take it to bed with her.

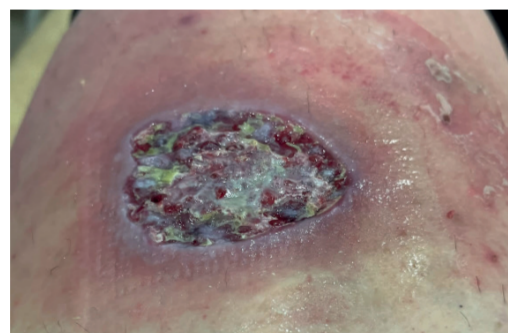
But in December 2022, the 50-year-old from Aberdare woke to discover water on her bed, as well as on the floor.

Due to nerve damage in her right leg, initially Sharon didn't realise what had happened.

But she soon discovered a large blister had developed during the night due to the heat of the hot water bottle – and then had burst.

"I always used to take a hot water bottle to bed with me and that night I had taken it to bed and put it on my feet," she said.

"During the night, it rose up the bed and was up



against my right leg, where I have got nerve damage, so I didn't feel it. It must have been in the same position near my leg for hours.

"I woke up in the morning and there was water on the bed, and I could see what had happened.

"The water was from an enormous blister on my leg that had developed through the night because of the boiling water inside the bottle, and it had then burst.

"The hot water bottle had a cover but it still managed to cause damage to my leg, even though it didn't leak water."

After attempting to clean her leg at home, Sharon then went to her local Minor Injury Unit where they cleaned and bandaged her burns.

But shortly after, the injury became infected and she was transferred to the Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery in Morriston Hospital.



Sharon added: "It got quite bad. The infection was so severe that it spread to my ankle and knee, and it meant I couldn't walk for a while. I couldn't go to work as a result."

Janine Evans, an advanced practitioner occupational therapist at the Morriston centre, said: "We have seen an increase in the number of hot water bottle burns over the last few years, particularly since the cost-of-living crisis and the rise in fuel prices. Ultimately, our main advice is not to use freshly boiled water to fill your hot water bottle.

"You should use boiled water, instead of water out of a tap, because the impurities in tap water can cause the rubber to perish. But it is important you allow that water to cool for at least five minutes before you fill the hot water bottle.

"It is also important to make sure the hot water bottle is in good condition before you even try to fill it.

"If you do happen to sustain an injury from a hot water bottle, you should apply cool, running water for 20 minutes as soon as you can which will be helpful in reducing the impact of the injury."

How to celebrate Bonfire season without a trip to A&E

Burns specialists in Swansea Bay are calling on people to take care and be sensible to avoid injuries around Bonfire Night.

Since 2019, the Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery in Morriston Hospital has seen 60 firework-related injuries.

While some burns will heal on their own, more severe burns could require a skin graft.

Staff at the Morriston centre have urged people to take care around fireworks and bonfires this year.

Louise Ball, Tempest Burns ITU ward manager, said: "Fireworks can cause severe injury including burns, loss of fingers or sight and they can cause permanent disfigurement.

"We have seen numerous injuries over the years, nothing that has required treatment in intensive care thankfully."

People are encouraged to attend organised displays but if they can't, to buy fireworks from a licensed retailer and make sure to read the instructions first.

"We advise that fireworks should only be used in a supervised environment. The safest place to enjoy them is at an organised public display," Louise added.

"If people are going to build bonfires, they should be in a safe location with appropriate permissions. They should be an appropriate size and located well away from people, trees and properties.

"You should never light a bonfire with an accelerant,

such as petrol. If people are going to use fireworks, they should make sure to buy them from a licensed retailer and read the instructions. Make sure they are used a safe distance away from any bystanders, buildings and trees or where they may distract drivers."

People are also urged to take care with sparklers. Louise said: "Make sure children are always wearing gloves and holding them away from their body, face and other people. You should also make sure they are discarded safely into a bucket or something sturdy containing cold water, to extinguish them.

"If someone's clothing catches fire, they should drop and roll to extinguish the flames."



Pictured, from left: Community psychologist Dr Rebecca Wilson, Cwmtawe LCC lead Mike Garner, Associate Service Group Director for primary and community services Sharon Miller and Head of Psychology Dr Sarah Collier

Community service to strengthen wellbeing

A new service will see psychologists working in communities to help strengthen resilience around mental health and wellbeing.

Community psychologists will initially be based within three of the health board's Local Cluster Collaboratives (LCCs) – Cwmtawe, Bay Health and Upper Valleys.

They will seek to develop a psychological understanding of community needs, assets and factors impacting on the mental health and wellbeing of people living in each area.

The community psychology service has been introduced to help provide early intervention to improve community resilience with the aim of preventing the need for people to access clinical support.

Each community psychologist will link with organisations and services based within each of the cluster areas, as well as residents, to understand what is already available to people and what could be built on to improve wellbeing.

Dr Rebecca Wilson is the health board's first community psychologist and is based within the Cwmtawe LCC.

She said: "By learning about what is going on in the cluster, the aim is to develop a psychological assessment and understanding of the needs of the community and look at how we can build on and strengthen the relationships they have with each other to help improve residents' wellbeing."

The innovative service will see the psychologists work directly with community partners, such as third sector, social care, police, sports and community groups, to ensure earlier intervention for those who need support.

Dr Sarah Collier, the health board's Head of Psychology, said: "The community psychologists will be working with key people to meet the needs of the community and to capitalise on assets to enable people to flourish and grow.

"It is a strength-based approach where the psychologists will give guidance to community partners, help them to capitalise on their assets

and also offer support on how people can develop their skills to manage their mental health and wellbeing."

The psychologists will also spend time listening to residents to help identify

what support is lacking for them, with the aim of working together to try and make improvements. Rebecca's role began earlier this year, with more community psychologists planned in the coming months who will be based within other clusters.

Sharon Miller, Associate Service Group Director for primary and community services, said: "I look forward to working with Bay Health and Upper Valleys LCCs next as we extend the model into those cluster areas.

"Introducing community psychology is aimed at helping and supporting communities to develop and sustain services to support good mental health and wellbeing."

Team-up with mental health foundation sees patients offered free counselling

A mental health foundation has teamed up with GP practices in parts of Swansea to help provide

wellbeing support to people close to their homes.

City Health Local Cluster Collaborative (LCC) is working with the Jac Lewis Foundation to offer patients one-to-one counselling and various workshops to improve their wellbeing.

Patients registered with a GP practice within the LCC can access the support for free.

The LCC has provided funding for the foundation to provide support to patients until April next year.

The project will be delivered by the foundation's team of therapists, with patients able to self-refer, as well as being referred by their GP.

Rhys Jenkins, City Health LCC lead, said: "We wanted to be able to offer one-to-one counselling as a cluster as we found that group counselling wasn't always suited to some of our patients.

"GPs can refer patients into the service and patients are also encouraged to refer themselves too.

"The foundation will then triage patients to understand which type of support would be beneficial to them."

The Jac Lewis Foundation was set up in 2019 following the sudden death of the 27-year-old from Ammanford with its aim to provide easy access to professional counselling in the community for any age and issue.

Its Wellbeing Centre is based in Ammanford, with another hub since set up in St Helen's Road in Swansea, close to several of the LCC's GP practices.

Liz Thomas-Evans, Director of Services at the Jac Lewis Foundation, said: "The prevention of suicide is our main aim but one of our most important values is for people to be able to access support without barriers.

"We want to help support the NHS as much as possible, to be able to deliver easily accessible services."

Patients can receive up to six one-to-one counselling sessions with a therapist, which can range from cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), bereavement counselling and also eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR). The service will also offer a variety of wellbeing workshops for patients, covering topics such as stress management, coping skills and mindfulness.

The support offered to patients can be offered face-to-face, online or over the phone.



City Health LCC's lead GP Dr David Howell, cluster lead for City Health LCC Rhys Jenkins and the Jac Lewis Foundation's Director of Services, Liz Thomas-Evans

Swansea Bay staff updates

Wellbeing event highlights help and support on offer



Assistant Director of Workforce, Sarah Jenkins, holding up a poster promoting speaking up in the workplace at the staff wellbeing event at Morriston

A staff wellbeing event held in Morriston Hospital highlighted the help and support on offer across the health board and local organisations.

Hosted at the Education Centre, the event had 28 stands, varying from podiatry, smoking cessation to library services, occupational health and staff wellbeing. Also among those in attendance were South Wales Police, Maggie's and MIND.

Staff were also invited to take part in some fun games, compassionate rounds and spend time with four-legged friends thanks to Cariad Therapy Dogs. Lisa Westermarck, Senior Workforce Improvement and Efficiencies Manager, organised the event with support from Bethan Lavercombe, Wellbeing Manager and Betsy Morgan, Library Service.

Lisa said: "The event was a big success. With almost 30 stalls, which covered a wide range of services from within Swansea Bay UHB and externally from the

wider community, everyone who attended was able to take something valuable away.

"The ultimate aim of the event was to raise awareness on the importance of staff wellbeing and the resources that we can all access both internally and externally, and having spoken to those who attended I think we achieved that.

"Our staff work tirelessly and in some very pressurised environments and so ensuring we take better care of ourselves and each other helps us to be healthier and happier and ultimately supports providing the best level of care to patients.

"I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who took the time to come along and set up a display and helped make the event a big success.

"We're now hoping to make this an annual event and we're looking forward to seeing everyone again next year."

And the winner is... who won big at One Bay Way Awards

The first recipients of the newly-rebranded One Bay Staff Awards have been announced, with over 6,800 staff votes helping determine the winners. You can find out who has won each of the 15 categories below.

You'll find details of all those who just missed out and were highly commended on our intranet or on our website (sbuhb.nhs.wales).

The One Bay Way Staff Awards recognise the many fantastic projects, ideas, leadership developments and improvements to patient care over the past 12 months.

Always Improving Award

Winner: Developing a system to ensure continual service improvements for families in SBUHB.

Caring for Each Other Award

Winner: Occupational Health and Staff Wellbeing – Steps to Wellbeing sessions.

Working Together Award

Winner: Working across boundaries to improve wellbeing for Children and Young People.

Clinician of the Year Award

Winner: Angharad Ladd.

Commitment to Research & Development Award

Winner: Developing tools to support patients and staff in Radiology.

Delivering our Partnership Compact Award

Winner: Outpatient Parenteral Antimicrobial Therapy Multi-Disciplinary Team.

Excellence in Equality, Diversity & Belonging Award

Joint winners: Engaging BAME Nurses in higher banding positions, retention of newly recruited international staff (Omobola Akinade); Neurodiversity Staff Network - celebrating different minds.

Leadership that Lives our Values Award

Winner: Jayne Shevlin.

Learner of the Year Award

Winner: Rachel Harford.

Speaking Up with Compassion Award

Winner: Enhancing Access to Sexual Health Services for Vulnerable Populations (Lorraine O'Leary).

Sustainability in Healthcare Award

Winner: Cae Felin Community Supported Agriculture.

The Arts in Health Award

Winner: Library of Things Project.

The Essential People Award (non-clinical staff)

Winner: Julie Mock.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Winner: Sharon Harvey-Lewis.

Welsh Language Award

Joint winners: Embedding the Welsh Language into the Dietetic Irritable Bowel Syndrome Service; Hannah Thomas.

The awards has been given a fresh look this year with some categories being revised in line with our ten-year vision to become a High-Quality Organisation.

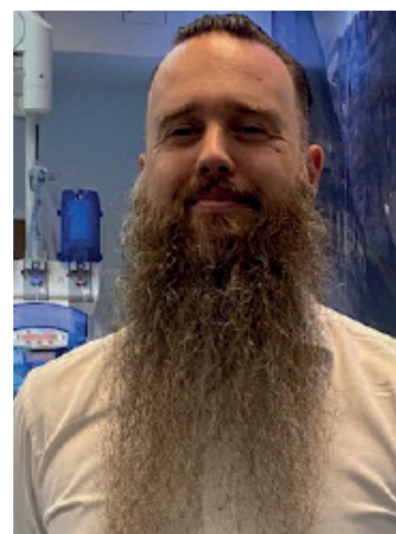
There were 163 entries submitted this year, with the winners decided by a combination of scoring from a panel and executives along with a staff vote, which attracted 6,803 votes.

Chair, Jan Williams, said: "Congratulations to all of those nominated and a sincere thank you once again on behalf of the Board to all of our staff, students and volunteers across Swansea Bay University Health Board for all you have done and continue to do."

Due to the challenging financial situation currently facing the health board and wider NHS, the decision was made not to hold a specific in-person ceremony this year.

However, in-person trophy and certificate presentations will be made across our sites soon.

- Along with the awards, senior psychologist Dr Nistor Becia has been recognised by receiving an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours list for his outstanding work in the health board's response to supporting refugees from war-torn Ukraine.



Quality care



Just some of the fascinating items from yesteryear which are proving invaluable in helping dementia patients rekindle wonderful memories. Below, a Sony Trinitron TV which was once cutting edge and below right, a selection of old newspapers documenting the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II



Treasure trove of pure nostalgia for patients

A Harry Secombe cassette, a copy of the Daily Sketch newspaper from Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation, a wooden clothes peg and hand whisk are not standard hospital equipment.

But such is the power of vintage items in helping patients with dementia recall happy memories that these donated gems and others like them will soon be seen on wards across Swansea Bay.

Boxes of nostalgia items are being collated by the health board's library service and will be available for staff to borrow for use with patients.

Trainee clinical librarian Betsy Morgan thanked staff and the public for the kind response to an appeal for items from the 1930s to the 1990s that was issued last year.

She said three or four boxes will soon be available at each of the libraries in Morriston, Singleton, Neath Port Talbot and Cefn Coed hospitals.

They will be moved around regularly, so staff have access to different items.

"These once common things can be a great conversation starter with a patient who has memory impairment," said Betsy.

"Having patients hold the items is a really tactile experience and takes them back to a period in time that might be significant for them, whether that's childhood or early adulthood. It can prompt memories

Some of the items donated

- A set of brass weighing scales and a large pestle and mortar which once belonged to a GP at a time when they would also make up and dispense their prescriptions.
- Ration books from the 1940s and '50s.
- A Kodak box camera from the 1950s.
- An ornate brass ladies glove stretcher.
- A Bakelite (early form of plastic) light switch. These were common in homes in the 1930s to 1940s.
- A 12-inch Sony colour TV from 1969-70 which, at the time, was a major technological advance in colour television sets.
- Dozens of original vinyl albums including Glenn Miller, Perry Como and Elvis.
- Commemorative cups and plates.

that can be used in therapy with clinicians."

Anyone interested in making a donation or staff who would like to use the boxes can email Betsy.Morgan@wales.nhs.uk

Help Me Quit - how our service can change your life

Tobacco is an addiction – it's not a lifestyle choice. Most smokers tell us they'd like to quit, but as smoking is an addiction, this can be a real challenge for many. However, the good news is that there is excellent – and free – support available for both staff and patients who want to stop smoking.

Evidence shows that smokers who are supported to quit are more likely to beat their tobacco addiction.

The Help Me Quit service offers:

- Confidential and non judgemental support
- Face-to-face, virtual or phone support
- One-to-one or group sessions
- Weekly sessions tailored to your need
- Progress monitoring
- Free smoking medication

The damage that smoking does is well documented, but did you know that as well as causing serious illnesses like heart disease, cancer and stroke, smoking accounts for one in six deaths in adults over the age of 35 in Swansea Bay?

Children exposed to second-hand smoke are also at risk of developing a range of avoidable illnesses.

Quitting is so important for a wide range of reasons, but the two big ones are the huge health benefits, and the savings made.

Improvements to your health begin within hours of your last cigarette and get better with every passing day, week

and year.

It's also so expensive to smoke, and that won't get any cheaper. Consider how all that hard-earned cash going up in smoke now could instead be used for holidays, family days out or just paying rising cost of living bills. You can self refer to the Help Me Quit service, and details are below.

And whether you are a smoker or not, you can also refer patients to the service.

Please follow the '3As':

- Ask patients to establish and record their smoking status (non-smoker, ex-smoker, smoker)
- Advise that the best way to quit smoking is with support
- Act by motivating them, and referring them to Help Me Quit

Self-refer, or refer a patient to the Help Me Quit service using these ways:

- Referral form, use the QR code (right)
- Email – SBU.HMQ@wales.nhs.uk
- Telephone: 01639 684532
- Freephone: 0800 085 2219 (National Hub)
- Texting: HMQ to 80818
- Enquire in a community Pharmacy that offers the service
- Coin referral on intranet.



Charity and events

Steve rides high as he says huge thank you to Swansea Bay staff



A heart transplant survivor has raised around £2,000 for Swansea Bay Health Charity after saddling up for a mammoth off road cycle challenge less than a year after lifesaving surgery.

Steve Evans, 53, received a new heart last November because a genetic condition was causing dangerous changes in his heart rhythm.

But after making a fantastic recovery, he took part in September's British Heart Foundation's London to Brighton Bike Ride to give something back for the 'amazing' care and support he's received from Swansea Bay's Coronary Care Unit staff among others. The ride covered a challenging 61-mile route with plenty of hills to tackle.

Steve, a Swansea-based police officer, was diagnosed in 2013 with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy - meaning his existing heart was beating in an irregular, life-threatening way. He was advised to have an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) fitted in his chest. An ICD sends electrical pulses to regulate abnormal heart rhythms, especially those that could be dangerous and cause a cardiac arrest.

"I'd always been very active, especially with needing to keep fit as a response police officer. It all came as a real shock.

Steve was offered an office-based job in Swansea Coroner's Office and for the next few years, was able to lead a relatively normal life. But beginning 2017, he started to experience short periods when his heartbeat would become erratic.

The problem became more severe in 2020 when he began to suffer prolonged periods when his heart rhythm would become dangerous. This would

repeatedly trigger his ICD, causing him intense discomfort and leaving him in need of treatment in hospital.

Steve said: "I remember the first time it happened. I had seven shocks from my ICD very close together. When your ICD goes off, it's like being kicked in the chest by a horse. It was just horrendous."

Steve was placed on the heart transplant list in September 2022 and over the next 12 months, he had an anxious wait for a donor organ before a suitable match was found.

He added: "I had the transplant at Harefield Hospital in London, which is a specialist centre and renowned for treating heart and lung conditions."

Immediately after the transplant, Steve wasn't able to drive so he bought himself an e-bike to help regain his strength. And he got on so well that he decided to train for the BHF bike ride.

"I've gone from living on the edge to leading a normal life that other people take for granted," he added.

"I wanted to do something to express my huge gratitude for all the amazing care I've received. In the Swansea CCU, I have the brilliant Drs Thomas and Margulescu to thank for everything they did for me. All the staff at the unit were just fantastic."

- Swansea Bay Health Charity is the official charity of Swansea Bay University Health Board and manages a range of different charitable funds supporting a wide variety of departments and services. We work with individuals like Steve to raise money for good causes which are not covered by core NHS funding - so that together, we can make a real difference to people's lives. Contact us (see below) for more information.

What's on

Dates for your diary



October 18th

Men's Health Webinar

12-30-1pm
On MS Teams - Please email SBU.OHWBTraining@wales.nhs.uk for more details.

October 21-30th

Dementia Care Training - Skilled Cohort 38

Five day training event, from 9-4.30pm. Venue will be the Morriston Hospital Education Centre. Use this link to apply to join course: <https://rb.gy/qg5wan>

October 24th

RN Skills Day

Taking place in Room 300, Port Talbot Resource Centre. To book onto this skills day, please contact your cluster admin or team lead.

October 24th

National Institute for Health and Care Research - in person event

Venue is Cardiff University (10-4pm). This outreach event will give researchers a chance to hear more about the remit of PGfAR and PDG funding, what makes a competitive application and ask questions. This will be a full day event and the afternoon sessions will give researchers the opportunity to have a one-to-one session with a member of the PGfAR team to discuss their application ideas and receive feedback.

For more information, please see our bulletin: National Institute

for Health and Care Research to host funding webinar (sharepoint.com)

November 5th

HCSW Skills Day

Seminar Room F, Education Centre, Cefn Coed Hospital. From 9-5pm. To book onto this skills day, please contact your cluster admin or team lead

November 6th

Health Silver Commander Training

Morriston Hospital Co-Ordination Centre (HCC), 1-4.30pm. To book a space on this training, please email with your request to: SBU.EmergencyPreparedness@wales.nhs.uk

November 19th

Sepsis

On MS Teams. 9-11am. This training provides a basic understanding of Sepsis and the screening tools used suitable for MH&LD Service Group only. Please book a place by emailing Christine.Ismail-Christine.ismail@wales.nhs.uk

November 27th

Exploitation Training Day

On MS Teams. 9-11am. This training provides a basic understanding of Sepsis and the screening tools used suitable for MH&LD Service Group only. Please book a place by emailing Christine.Ismail-Christine.ismail@wales.nhs.uk

For more events for your diary, log on to the events listings on the SBUHB Intranet.



Have an idea to raise money to support staff and patients in Swansea Bay?

Contact the Swansea Bay University Health Board charity via our website: <https://swanseabayhealthcharity.com> (Registered charity number 1122805)

Bay Health

Staff newspaper of Swansea Bay University Health Board

Contact Editorial: communications.department@wales.nhs.uk