



**Y PWYLLGOR ANSAWDD, DIOGELWCH A PHROFIAD
QUALITY, SAFETY AND EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	09 April 2026
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Perinatal benchmark to National Maternity and Neonatal assessment: The Path to Safer Beginnings
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Andrew Carruthers, Chief Operating Officer
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Dana Scott, Director of Midwifery

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)

Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

**ADRODDIAD SCAA
SBAR REPORT**

Sefyllfa / Situation

This report is presented to the Quality, Safety and Experience Committee to provide assurance on the quality and safety of maternity and neonatal services within Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB).

The report explicitly presents the Health Board's position benchmarked against the All-Wales Assurance Assessment: [The Path to Safer Beginnings in Wales](#) (2026) outlining areas of strength, key risks, and the strategic response in place.

Cefndir / Background

The Welsh Government commissioned the national assurance assessment The Path to Safer Beginnings in Wales (2026) to evaluate the safety, quality, and experience of maternity and neonatal services across Wales. The assessment identified both strengths and significant system-wide challenges, particularly in relation to workforce, postnatal care, equity, governance consistency, and neonatal service configuration.

HDdUHB has undertaken a structured benchmarking exercise against the national findings. This demonstrates that the Health Board is performing above the Welsh average in several key domains, particularly in governance, safety culture, and selected clinical outcomes.

The national report highlights that many of the challenges identified are system-wide across Wales and the wider UK, rather than isolated to individual organisations.

In response to both national findings and local intelligence, HDdUHB has developed a 5-year Perinatal "One Team" Strategy, aligned to the national perinatal workforce strategy and embedded as part of the annual planning process', providing a structured and sustainable framework for improvement.

Asesiad / Assessment

Current Position

Benchmarking against the national assurance assessment demonstrates that HDdUHB is a high-performing maternity and neonatal service, with particular strengths in:

- Governance and safety culture, including high levels of incident reporting and multidisciplinary learning
- Psychological safety, with an open, transparent culture and strong staff engagement
- Clinical outcomes, including stillbirth rates below the Welsh average
- Structured service user engagement, including Birth Afterthoughts and thematic feedback review

These strengths position HDdUHB ahead of the national baseline, where governance inconsistency, delays in learning, and workforce pressures are more pronounced.

Risk Assessment (RAG Rating)

The following risks reflect system pressures identified both locally and nationally, and are being actively managed:

		Risk Description	Mitigation / Controls
Governance & Safety	● High	Strong governance framework, embedded MDT learning, high reporting culture	Sustained governance oversight, real-time dashboard monitoring
Psychological Safety & Culture	● High	Open, transparent culture with strong staff engagement and Just Culture principles	Leadership visibility, supervision, reflective practice
Workforce Sustainability	● Moderate	Increasing acuity and complexity placing pressure on workforce model	Updated Birthrate+, workforce pipeline, rotational staffing model
Postnatal Care Quality	● Moderate	Capacity pressures impacting consistency of postnatal experience	Strengthened postnatal model, targeted improvements via strategy
Equity & Data Maturity	● Developing	Need to strengthen data visibility on inequalities and outcomes	Equity dashboard, embedding Perinatal Engagement Measures
System Learning & Externality	● Developing	Opportunity to strengthen external peer review	Exploration of peer review models, continued MDT learning
Rising Intervention Rates	● Moderate	Increasing caesarean rates consistent with national trends	Pathway optimisation, prevention focus
Digital/Data Assurance	● Low	Temporary data assurance considerations during digital transition	Informatics leadership, validation processes

Overall Risk Position

The overall risk profile is assessed as MODERATE within a high-performing, well-governed, and psychologically safe service.

Strategic Response

HDdUHB has developed a 5-year Perinatal “One Team” Strategy, aligned to the national perinatal workforce strategy and operationalised through the IMTP.

This strategy directly responds to national and local risks by:

- Strengthening workforce sustainability
- Improving postnatal care and experience
- Enhancing equity and inclusion
- Supporting a unified perinatal service model
- Strengthening governance and system learning

This provides assurance that risks are clearly understood, planned for, and actively managed within a deliverable framework.

Evidence Base

This report is informed by:

- The All-Wales Assurance Assessment (The Path to Safer Beginnings in Wales, 2026)
- HDdUHB benchmarking against national findings
- HDdUHB self-assessment and governance data

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- Take Assurance that the governance arrangements to support quality & safety of maternity services are robust, under regular review and focused on continuous improvement
- Note the Health Board’s strong performance relative to national benchmarking
- Acknowledge the identified risks outlined in the paper are consistent with national system pressures & note the mitigation and controls currently being progressed

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)

Objectives: (must be completed)

Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	3.4 Ensure the right enablers are in place to promote a positive culture of quality improvement based on best evidence.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	Not applicable
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	3. Effective 1. Safe 3. Effective

Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	6. All Apply
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	All Strategic Objectives are applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	9 Digital plan 1 Workforce Stabilisation
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022	8. Transform our communities through collaboration with people, communities and partners

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Risk Assessments
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained within the body of the report
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Ansawdd, Diogelwch a Phrofiod: Parties / Committees consulted prior to Quality, Safety and Experience Committee:	Women's and Children's CCG Governance meeting February 2026 Planned Care CCG Business Planning February 2025

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	No immediate additional financial impact identified. Actions are aligned to existing resources within the IMTP. Workforce and service developments are incorporated within planned financial frameworks.
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	Positive impact through strong governance, high safety culture, and good clinical outcomes. Risks identified to postnatal care experience and increasing acuity, with mitigation plans in place through the perinatal strategy.

Gweithlu: Workforce:	<p>Workforce pressures remain due to increasing acuity and demand. Mitigation includes Birthrate+ review, workforce planning and delivery of the 5-year Perinatal strategy.</p>
Risg: Risk:	<p>Overall risk profile assessed as moderate within a high-performing service. Key risks relate to workforce sustainability, postnatal care, and equity, with clear mitigation plans in place.</p>
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	<p>No immediate legal implications identified. Ongoing compliance with national standards, professional regulation, and governance requirements.</p>
Enw Da: Reputational:	<p>Positive reputational position as a high-performing service relative to national benchmarking. Risk remains if national system pressures are not met effectively managed</p>
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	<p>No adverse impact identified. All data handled in accordance with information governance and data protection requirements.</p>
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	<p>EqlA screening Yes Full EqlA not required at this stage</p>