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## Hywel Dda University Health Board review and response to the Women's Rights Network

‘Report on sexual assault and rape  
in hospitals’

**Quality, Safety and Experience Committee**

13 June 2023



- On 17 April 2023, the Health Board were made aware of a report published by the Women's' Rights Network on sexual assault and rape in hospitals in England and Wales between January 2019 and October 2022.
- These figures include patients, staff and visitors. The report highlights Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) as being in the highest 3 force areas for reported rapes and sexual assaults in hospitals.



- The Women's Rights Network investigated concerns that patients and staff were being sexually assaulted and raped in UK hospitals.
- They submitted Freedom of Information requests to all 43 UK police forces.
- Questions asked were:
  1. How many reports have been made to [POLICE] of sexual assaults which are alleged to have taken place at hospitals since 1 January 2019?
  2. How many reports have been made to [POLICE] of rape which are alleged to have taken place at hospitals since 1 January 2019?
  3. How many of the above points were reported to have taken place on a hospital ward?
  4. How many people have been charged with sexual assault/rape?
- Of the 35 forces that responded, five forces failed to provide information about the number of assaults that had taken place on hospital wards, and three did not provide information on the number of people charged or summonsed.
- The report reveals that more than 6,500 rapes and sexual assaults in hospitals have been reported to police between January 2019 and October 2022.



- The report details DPP recorded 23 sexual assaults and 6 rapes on hospital wards.
- It must be noted that these figures include other organisations who do not have acute hospitals, but do have community hospitals.
- In response to this, the Hywel Dda University Health Board asked Dyfed Powys Police to provide more detail on the data for both Health Boards.

| Police force   | % on ward | Total assaults + Rapes |
|----------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Dorset         | 85.3%     | 34                     |
| Dyfed-Powys    | 82.8%     | 29                     |
| Leicestershire | 75.5%     | 94                     |
| Norfolk        | 2.7%      | 186                    |
| Suffolk        | 0.7%      | 137                    |
| Surrey         | 0.6%      | 158                    |



# Dyfed Powys Police Data (Sexual Assault)



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- From the 23 incidents reported two related to another organisation.
- Ten incidents have affected patients
- Five incidents have affected staff
- One incident relates to a visitor alleging assault by patient
- Due to the Police accounts, it is unclear whether five of the incidents relate to either patients or staff.
- Ten occurred in acute hospitals, one in a community hospital, nine in mental health services and one unknown.
- Five x where victim declines/unable to support action – named suspect not identified
- Four x where victim supports action but evidential difficulties
- Six x where victim does not (or has withdrawn) support - named suspect
- Two x Investigation complete - no suspect identified
- Two x Summons
- One x Further investigation to support formal action - not in the public interest
- One x where offender has died



# Dyfed Powys Police Data (Rape)



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- From the six incidents reported, one related to another organisation.
- Three are recorded to have taken place in acute hospitals and one in mental health services. One cannot be identified.
- DPP have not reported on the outcomes of the rape allegations in their report.



We call upon NHS authorities to:

- Take seriously their safeguarding responsibilities, including the application of single sex exemptions for hospital wards, in order to ensure that women and girls in particular are adequately protected there.
- Take seriously their responsibilities to address sexual violence in hospitals, rather than only promote sexual safety policies that merely identify processes and procedures for reporting.
- Take seriously their responsibilities to protect staff from sexual assault while at work.
- To record appropriate data so that a better understanding of \*where\* and \*by whom\* and \*in what circumstances\* rape and sexual assaults happen on hospital property.
- To signpost clearly the procedures in place to report and record allegations of sexual assault by both patients and staff.
- To review existing safety measures and assess the need to install additional CCTV and/or door-entry systems



- All incidents of violence of any nature are incident reported and subject to investigation. We provide an immediate response to review the safeguards in place.
- A dedicated Violence and Aggression Case Manager who supports staff who have been victims of all types of assault. Staff will be supported throughout any criminal proceedings and the Health Board will pursue these wherever possible in order to seek justice for the victim.
- Services have risk assessment processes in place to assess any risk of violence including rape and sexual assault to our patients and staff.
- Upgrade to CCTV systems in Accident and Emergency (A&E), Minor Injury Unit (MIU), Acute Clinical Decision Unit (ACDU). Further improvements are planned during 2023/24 on existing CCTV coverage across the various premises.
- Door Entry (access control) systems are already installed in various locations across the Health Board Estate these include A&E, MIU, ACDU, Women and Children, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities (MHLA), Care of the Elderly.



- While there is limited identifiable data in the Police report to enable ease of triangulation, it is apparent in some cases, there is no related description in the Health Board's incident reporting system.
- DPP have given permission to share their data with relevant Heads of Nursing to try and triangulate this data with the Health Board's Incident Reporting System.
- The Corporate Safeguarding Team are confident that the Health Board is transparent in reporting allegations to Police and/or safeguarding appropriately, where they are known to the Corporate Safeguarding Team.
- Similarly any allegations made against employees, a risk assessment is put in place and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures are fully complied with. Internal processes are followed and Workforce would have those outcomes.
- Workforce colleagues are drafting slides on inappropriate behaviour to raise awareness and ways for individuals to raise this with the person before matters escalate.
- A response to the Women's Rights Network report is being drafted



- For the Quality, Safety and Experience Committee to note the update provided.



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