

Ein cyf/Our ref: CHA.9574
Gofynnwch am/Please ask for: Katie Jenner
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Dyddiad/Date: 6 September 2022

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Natalie Mason

Dear Natalie

Re: Question submitted to Hywel Dda University Health Board's Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Thank you for your email of 19 July 2022 in which you submitted questions for consideration at the Health Board's AGM regarding the future of Withybush General Hospital (WGH) as part of the Health Board's Programme Business Case (PBC). As you have detailed a number of questions, I will address each one of these in turn below:

1. Why is the HB not listening to the people of Pembrokeshire who say they need Withybush hospital?

Withybush and Glangwili Hospitals have served the population of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire well over many decades. It has however become increasingly clear over the last 15 – 20 years that the current configuration is no longer suitable for modern health care, leaving many services in an unsustainable position. Furthermore, both hospitals are ageing and in need of significant improvement to bring them up to standard. Our strategy, "A Healthier Mid and West Wales", was developed through significant public engagement and consultation in 2017-18 and seeks to address these issues as part of a broader change in health care, with more of a focus on prevention and population health.

As part of these plans, it is proposed a new urgent and planned care hospital is built for the south of Hywel Dda, to provide high quality and sustainable acute care for the populations of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. In addition, the repurposed Withybush and Glangwili Hospitals will continue to play an important role in the delivery of health care, including inpatient beds, outpatient clinics and the full range of diagnostic services. This will mean the majority of hospital visits will continue to be to Withybush for Pembrokeshire residents.

In the meantime, our aim is for Withybush to continue to provide high quality urgent, emergency and planned care until the new hospital is opened. We do not propose to downgrade Withybush and want to make the best use of its facilities during the time we are preparing for the new hospital; including making best use of the emergency and urgent care centre, the wards, outpatients, diagnostics and theatres.

2. Will the HB be able to guarantee that there will be no deaths or serious illness caused by the additional travelling time to the new hospital?

Our aim through the proposed changes is to improve health and reduce harm. We will work both internally and externally with our partners in the delivery of healthcare services, to minimise any risk of harm attributed to our current service delivery and to that associated with any service changes in the future.

We have undertaken, with the Welsh Ambulance Service, detailed drive-time analysis as part of our recent land selection process for the new hospital. The zone for the new hospital, between Narberth and St Clears, was originally identified as part of the strategy, to ensure we provide an emergency service that is as close as possible to being within an hour for the vast majority of communities in our area.

As planning for the new hospital progresses, we will continue to work with the Ambulance Service and others to understand the implications and opportunities for transport, including the proposed changes to legislation.

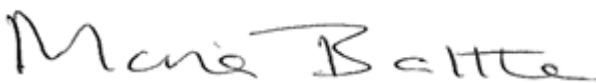
Any pathway we put in place, including transfer to an appropriate hospital, will need to be safe for our population. Our programme of transformation has been clinically led, specifically to ensure what is developed improves the safety and quality of care for our patients.

3. Can we have a vote of no confidence in Hywel Dda?

There is not currently a formal framework in place that allows members of the public the opportunity to force any motion to be discussed. Therefore, a vote of no confidence in the Hywel Dda Health Board will not have a specific result, but may influence Board members.

As Regulation 15 of the Local Health Boards (Constitution, Membership and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2009 provides, when considering a recommendation and before making a decision, the Hywel Dda Board must take account of representations made by persons who represent the interests of the community in its area. Although this probably refers to a body like the Community Health Council, this particular representation (on this occasion, your question), would be raised at the Board meeting during the Board discussion, to bring it to the attention of its members, who can consider the comments before any decision is made.

Yours sincerely



Maria Battle
Chair