

Pencadlys Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe

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Swansea Bay University Health Board Headquarters

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

📞 01639 683302

Dyddiad/Date: 10th May 2024

Sion Wyn Evans
Arweinydd Polisi ac Ymarfer / Policy and Practice Lead
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru/ Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Adeiladau Cambrian/ Cambrian Buildings
Sgwâr Mount Stuart/ Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff /Caerdydd,
CF10 5FL

Sent via email only to: sion.evans@olderpeople.wales

Dear Sion,

Re: Recommendations from report: Access Denied – Older people's experiences of digital exclusion in Wales

Many thanks for your letter dated 30 January 2024 regarding Swansea Bay Health Board providing a response to recommendations made in the report: *Access Denied – Older people's experiences of digital exclusion in Wales*. My sincere apologies for the delay in providing this response.

The 5 recommendations with Swansea Bay Health Board's responses are outlined below:

- 1. Ensure that services that they provide or for which they are responsible are available to an equivalent standard for people who are not online or do not have a smartphone.**

Health Board response:

As previously reported, the Health Board will continue to work to the principle of ensuring people who are not able to access online services or smartphones have alternative and equal access to services. Services such as booking office, blood tests and sexual health offer both online and phone lines for people to access.



Further work will be explored with other services in the health board to identify any areas where there is a discrepancy in executing this principle.

2. Display phone numbers for public enquiries clearly on the home page of websites and make sure that websites comply with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Health Board response:

Display phone numbers for public enquiries clearly on the home page of websites and make sure that websites comply with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Accessibility: The website is designed in line with Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018, but we are regularly auditing it and improving it to meet the regulations as closely as possible. We are aware, however, that there are some content which may not be fully accessible. Please see this link for the full website accessibility statement: <https://sbuhb.nhs.wales/use-of-site/accessibility-statement/> which gives more details.

Contact telephone number: The health board has multiple hospitals and sites, so it is not practical to have just one contact telephone number. There is a page on our website called 'Contact Us' which gives details of telephone numbers for different sites, and also information regarding regular inquiries: <https://sbuhb.nhs.wales/about-us/contact-us/> This 'contact us' page is part of the 'About us' section, which is on the website home page, and is first on the 'About us' dropdown list – see attached image

3. Ensure that a member of the Board at each Health Board leads on digital inclusion, that feedback is regularly sought (including by the use of relevant committees and internal structures), and that this issue is reported upon in annual reports and strategic equality plans.

Health Board response:

The Health Board Member who leads on Digital Inclusion is the Director of Digital.

The health board receives feedback from a number of sources including Llais, Primary Care and also our well-established Accessibility Reference Group and Accessibility Focus Groups (both groups include people with disabilities who shared their lived experiences and test documents, building etc from this perspective) who provide updates regarding any potential issues faced from a



accessibility point of view (this will include disabilities, sensory impairments, digital exclusion etc)

As part of the development of our strategic equality plan and objectives, we have considered the feedback around engagement on various services over the last few years and digital exclusion was a theme that was raised that as an organisation we need to focus on and make sure we get right.

Over the coming year we will be doing some work to inform our disability action plan and by its very nature this will include older people and through this intersectionality we will be able to identify the key issues for the most vulnerable and develop solutions to address the issues raised.

4. Use the Digital Service Standards for Wales (developed by the Centre for Digital Public Services) and involve older people, especially people not online, in the design of services, systems and relevant research from the beginning to co-produce better and more accessible services and policies.

Health Board response:

The Health Board recognises that a large minority of our population do not have the necessary access, skills, motivation and trust required to be able to utilise digital services. It understands that 15% of residents in social housing are less likely to have internet access, 27% of people do not demonstrate the skills required to complete basic digital tasks and that 19% of people with disabilities do not personally use the internet.

With this in mind the Health Board's new digital strategy, which is currently being finalised, highlights the fact that digital inclusion matters and that digital transformation and redesign processes must be conscious never to exclude patients from healthcare on the basis of digital ability. It states that a number of settings will need both digital and non-digital options available to meet the needs of the people. Furthermore, in designing patient facing digital services the health board must ensure the design is as intuitive and accessible as possible e.g. multi-lingual, device agnostic etc to maximise adoption. Patient facing services should be simple to use with no training.

The strategy encourages digital uptake, however, in evaluating digital interventions for inclusivity, recognises that it is critical to preventing a two-tier health system emerging, where those with poor digital access are excluded from aspects of the health service. SBUHB will work together with national and local partners e.g. Digital Inclusions Alliance Wales, Digital Communities Wales and Local Authorities to deliver the Digital Inclusions Charter and improve the digital literacy of our citizens and patients.

The Health Board has also signed up to the Regional co-production framework and would work with people including our ARG / AFG to inform the development of this work

5. Restore access to hard copy leaflets and information across all sites where this has not already returned post-pandemic.

Health Board response:

The Health Board will work with services to ensure that hard copies of leaflets and information is available across all sites. In addition will also make sure it is kept up-to-date and meets health accessibility guidelines and is also available in Welsh.

I trust this letter provides some assurance that the Health Board takes Digital Inclusion very seriously and while continuing to make advancements in the use of digital ways of working to improve services, equity of service provision for those unable to interact with the us digitally will remain a key focus.

Yours sincerely



Richard Evans
Interim Chief Executive
Swansea Bay University Health Board