

Bay Health

Staff newspaper of Swansea Bay University Health Board



Swansea's South West Wales Cancer Centre has created a new role to help counter a national shortage of cancer specialists and potentially speed up access to treatment.

Rebecca Lloyd, currently a review radiographer in the radiotherapy department, is now training to become a consultant radiographer. The role is the first of its kind for Swansea Bay.

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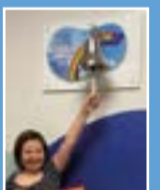


A grand design for new Neath Port Talbot theatres

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Isabella hits right note with first Swansea Bay bell ring

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CLINICAL FIRST ROLE FOR SWANSEA BAY

New Nursing and Midwifery Academy will upskill staff



Deputy Director of Nursing, Hazel Powell

Autumn 2023 sees an exciting new chapter open for Swansea Bay's nurses, midwives and healthcare support workers with the launch of the health board's new Nursing and Midwifery Academy.

Linked closely to the Florence Nightingale Foundation, the aim of the new academy is to promote quality and excellence by supporting nurses at all stages of their career to learn and grow. Key to the academy's success will be easy access to free online training, making

it much simpler for busy staff to fit continual professional development into their timetables. And it will also support preceptorship and revalidation processes.

The new academy comes hot on the heels of the launch of the purpose-built Nurse Education Training Suite at Baglan HQ, which was officially opened in May, and is another tangible show of the health board's commitment to nursing.

"The new SBU Health Board Nursing and Midwifery Academy is an exciting new

development and its launch is only the first step," said Deputy Director of Nursing, Hazel Powell.

"The academy will continue to grow in the months and years ahead to offer even more learning and leadership development opportunities for our staff. I want to make Swansea Bay the place that the best nurses and midwives want to come and work in, learn and lead – and stay."

- For the full story turn to page 6



Richard Evans, Swansea Bay University Health Board interim CEO

This is my first Bay Health editorial since I took up the position of interim Chief Executive for Swansea Bay University Health Board at the start of September.

It's a privilege to be in my new role, and I intend to build on the very solid foundations put in place by my predecessor, Mark Hackett, which gives us a continuity in leadership and approach across the health board.

I'm picking up the reins with some big opportunities but also some big challenges ahead of us all.

In the coming months we will be fully focused on delivering the ministerial priorities; they're clearly laid out, make sense and we're determined to do everything we can to achieve those. Doing so will make a real difference to our patients, either ensuring that they're seen more quickly to get their diagnosis or get their diagnosis and receive the treatment they need.

The priorities focus on building a closer relationship between the NHS and local government; improving access to primary care; better management of urgent and emergency care; improved planned care and recovery; reducing cancer waits and improving mental health and CAMHS services. You will already see some of these priorities reflected in the Living Our Values awards finalists listed in this edition of Bay Health. So much fantastic work is already going on across the health board and we want to build on that.

We're also focussing on improving flow through our hospitals, which will help us deliver more effective

urgent and emergency care and free up beds for planned activities. But to achieve this flow we will need to ensure we continue to work effectively with our partner organisations and continue to do better with discharge and getting people home.

There are currently too many patients in our acute hospital beds; many of these would receive more appropriate levels of care outside of the hospital setting. So we need to discharge patients earlier in the day and increase the numbers who go home each day. We must work with our local authority and third sector partners to ensure there are appropriate places for these clinically optimised patients, who are fit to go home because they no longer need an acute hospital bed.

There's no doubt that one of the biggest challenges that we face, like the rest of NHS Wales, is our finances.

After breaking even in the last financial year we submitted a plan to Welsh Government in April which identified a planned budget deficit of £86.6m for 2023/24.

That sum includes investing in our services as well as covering very high inflationary pressures. And while it's a planned deficit it does reflect the fact that funding is tight and demand for our services is as high as ever.

So hitting that deficit target requires us to make significant savings with our cost reduction plans and the need for us to reduce our day-to-day spending.

Neither of these is easy to achieve and intensive efforts are underway to ensure we hit that planned deficit.

In addition, all health boards in Wales are currently in discussion with the Welsh government regarding making even more savings. For us this means finding savings over and above our £86.6m planned deficit.

We're very clear that savings of this scale require service change and any additional savings required may impact on the provision of some of our services.

As a result, we're pressing for an all-Wales approach to try to address service changes where possible, so that patients across Wales are affected in an equitable way.

But while we tackle these financial challenges, we are very conscious of the need to look after the wellbeing of our staff.

To date we've focussed our efforts on filling staff vacancies,

recognising that one of the biggest threats to staff wellbeing is being short-staffed and having to continuously cover for others in pressurised situations.

Some of the work which is underway to attract and retain staff, and grow our own workforce from the local community is evidenced in stories in this edition, like the launch of the new Nursing and Midwifery Academy, new staff roles and our school visits to inspire our workforce of tomorrow.

Therefore we're tackling the root cause of that issue, recognising that filling vacancies is also more efficient as we avoid incurring more and more costs from agencies. These are some of the challenges we face but we are also clear about the longer term.

We've got a 10-year plan, which clearly sets out a vision for the health board. That vision is in part based upon the discussion that we've had around Our Big Conversation, which has been an in-depth and comprehensive conversation with our staff about the future.

Our vision is that we become a High Quality Organisation and we'll achieve that by working together in a clear and consistent manner, in what we're calling the One Bay Way.

What does that mean? It means living our values and behaviours, it means being clinically lead and empowering our staff. It means that recognising that with responsibility comes accountability.

It means being patient-centred and co-producing our services with patient groups. It means being joined up and breaking down silos within and outside the organisation.

It means increasing efficiency through increasing the quality of care we provide and improving outcomes for patients and it means adopting a population health focus and a preventative agenda.

Finally, to achieve all these things we're also going to need to make greater use of technology and digital resources. Doing all of this will set us on the road to being a High Quality Organisation.

We recognise that we won't get there overnight which is why we've set out this vision. But we've already started our journey and I'm tremendously excited about what we are about to achieve. I look forward to working with you and the population as a whole to deliver on our ambitions.

Quality is reflected by all our LOV Awards finalists

Our annual LOV Awards took place at Swansea Arena on September 7th when we celebrated staff who have gone above and beyond to champion the health board's values. The event was taking place just as we were going to press, but we have included the list of finalists for each category below.

To see who won, along with photographs and an overview of the night, please visit our intranet.

Always Improving Award

Improving the access to persistent pain services within Swansea Bay University Health Board by reducing DNAs; Establishing a Maternity Voice Partnership; Fracture Discharge Service.

Caring for Each Other Award

Rebecca Petchey; The Nutrition and Dietetic Service Wellbeing Team; SPICE service coordinator.

Working Together Award

Gavin Price and Huw Davies, Working together to improve the health and well-being of people experiencing persistent pain; Increasing the voice of

service users in our services.

Commitment to Research & Development Award

Family Psycho-education Programme for Low Secure Services (F-PEPSS); Developing and evaluating a Positive Psychology group for people living with Acquired Brain Injury; Rehabilitation Engineering Workshop Team.

Excellence in Equality & Inclusion Award

Swansea Bay Health Board Welcome Response to Ukrainian Refugees; Omobola Akinade; Calon LGBT+ & Allies network.

Excellence in Leadership & Management Award

Julie Lloyd; Sarah Lewis-Simms; Alex Gigg.

Improving Lives through Creativity Award

Patient Facing Multi-Media Campaign; Sharing HOPE – the art of healing together; CAMHS Courses – To develop a course-based program for children and young people.

Learner of the Year Award

Cassie-Jo Layzell, A Lifelong Learner; Rebecca Shaw; Nicola Jenkins.

Partnership Working Award

Covid vaccination response; Specialist Palliative Care Paramedic team; Home First Integrated Team.

Speaking Up with Compassion Award

Dr May Li; Optimising Birth: A Health Board's Commitment to Maintaining and Promoting the Role of the Midwife.

Sustainability in Healthcare Award

Lockable bike shelters; Green Theatres Group; Decarbonising Pharmacy.

The Essential People Award

Ceri Jenkins; Christine May; Essentially more than PAs.

Trainee Doctor of the Year Award

Dr Seungyoun (Carolyn) Moon; Hannah Saitch; Dr Diluka Premawardhana.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Mentor's Group; Person i Mi – Person For Me Volunteers; Emergency Department Volunteer Team.

Welsh Language Award

Eleri Ash; Haf Rees; Hannah Bendoni.

'I feel privileged to care for patients in their own homes'

Scott Day has worked as a district nurse for three and a half years. After starting out as a Band Five community nurse, he has recently been seconded into a Band Six case load-holder role and is based within the Neath Cluster District Nursing Team.

During my degree at Swansea University, I completed three placements with district nursing, two of which were in my third year.

During an open day, a few members of the district nursing team came to talk to us about what the job was like.

I was really interested in seeing patients in their home environments and managing case loads and when I came to work in the community, it made me realise it was where I wanted to be.

I decided to apply for a job, which I then started straight after my training.

Every day in the job is vastly different. We could be visiting a patient two to three times a day to assist with their insulin administration or we could visit them to monitor a wound.

It could also be to help manage gastrostomy tubes for medication or intravenous lines for people having chemotherapy to make sure it's patent for when they go back to hospital to continue their treatment.

We also provide end-of-life care, ensuring patients have the choice to have their care in their preferred place.

Up until recently, I had been working as a community nurse doing day-to-day visits but now as a case load holder, I look after the overall management of patients' care, as well as doing home visits.

I'm based within the Neath Cluster and I'd say you would normally have between 10 and 14 visits per day. But it really does depend on the complexity of each patient's needs, as well as the fact your calls can change throughout the day, so we could receive additional urgent calls, too.

For me, I really enjoy the patient interaction side of the role. I find being out in the community more holistic to each person's needs.

Within the community setting the patient becomes involved with the care given to them, empowering them and their family to make choices for their care.

When you go into people's homes you are seeing them as they are in their own environment, which is the aspect I enjoy.

You are there on a journey with them.

With palliative patients, you are there with them when they first receive their diagnosis, right through to end of their life.

It is a privilege for us to be able to do that.

It is a privilege for patients to invite us into their home



Scott Day

so we can provide their care in a place where they feel most comfortable.

New Occupational Therapy role aims to help tackle homelessness

A dedicated new team is working with a variety of partners to help prevent homelessness across Swansea Bay.

The health board has recently introduced its first homelessness occupational therapy team as part of a new multi-agency project.

Funded by the National Lottery Helping End Homelessness Fund, the project sees a number of services and agencies work together to help support people with multiple unmet needs, who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Nasiba Chowdhury has taken on the role of the health board's homelessness occupational therapist, working alongside an occupational therapy technician, to support people by looking at different aspects of their daily lives.

They form the Homeless Health Occupational Therapy team within the Swansea NPT 360 project.

"We will provide a 360 approach to each person by working together for them," Nasiba said.

"We will be working together with several agencies in a multi-disciplinary way to help meet peoples' needs and support them to gain appropriate accommodation.

"We want them to not only sustain accommodation and survive but also to thrive."

Part of Nasiba's role will be to develop the referral process and to oversee and manage referrals into the service.

Occupational therapy technician Paul Hunt will support Nasiba with carrying out assessments and interventions.

Nasiba added: "Within homelessness we could be supporting people with a range of activities, which could relate to their personal care, accessing health services, managing their finances, building skills and routines. It really depends on what the person's needs

are and what they want to work on.

"We can provide specialist assessments and interventions that will help to inform recommendations including, for example, appropriate accommodation and the level of support that may be required."

The team will be work alongside charities such as The Wallich, Crisis, Barod, Include and the Welsh Refugee Council.

One of the project's aims is to connect services and agencies so they can work together to enhance the support that is available to people.

Nasiba said: "By working in partnership with other services and agencies, we can take an outreach approach which makes it easier to engage with people and build a rapport with them and services.

"We are also able to establish a presence in the homeless community to ensure we are an accessible service."

Kristel Davies, locality lead occupational therapist, said: "The team has been making connections and showcasing the service within the health board to improve pathways and accessibility of services for this patient group.

"Having occupational therapy supporting those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness is a very exciting and much-needed development in Swansea Bay."



Nasiba Chowdhury (left) and Paul Hunt

Helping patients stay active is vital

Eleri D'Arcy, Swansea Bay's Quality lead for falls reduction, explains why Active August needs to carry on into Active Autumn and beyond, and why that's so important for patients.



Our Active August campaign this summer had an amazing response, not least because most people realise that regular exercise is great for your overall health.

But it's so important that inpatients, particularly older ones, are encouraged to be as active as possible, because of something called deconditioning.

When you stay in hospital for a long time, your body can get weaker. This happens because you're not moving around as much as usual, and it's worse for older people. This is deconditioning, and it can cause many problems for both your body and your mind.

As you get older, your body has a harder time recovering from being inactive for too long. So, when older people don't move around much in the hospital, their muscles can get smaller and their bones can become weaker. On top of this, being in the hospital can make you feel anxious and vulnerable, which can make you want to stay in bed even more. This is a natural reaction, but it's not good for your health. Deconditioning can lead to a lot of problems. One big issue is that people who get weaker from not moving around are more likely to fall. This is because their muscles aren't as strong, and their balance isn't as good. Also, when you're not moving, the pressure on your skin from lying or sitting in the same position can



Staff at our Acute Medical Unit have been helping patients stay active with a variety of fun games

cause sores that are painful and can get infected. Equally, the less active you remain for long periods the higher the risk of cardiac issues and chest infections.

The longer people stay in the hospital, the more their muscles get weaker. In the UK, statistics show that older patients who are in the hospital for a long time can lose about 5% of their muscle strength every day they're not active. This can make their stay in the hospital longer.

Additionally, when people don't move around and stay mentally active, their minds can slow down too. It becomes harder to think and remember things. This can make it tough for older folks to go back to their regular lives once they leave the hospital. Even younger patients are at greater risk of delirium and longer-term memory issues. But there's a simple thing that can help – getting dressed every day. When you

put on your regular clothes, it makes you feel more like yourself (and less like a patient). This can boost your confidence and make you want to move around more. Little actions like this can actually help you become more independent again.

It's important to change how we view physical activity in hospital. We need to encourage patients to move and do activities that can help them get stronger. Physical therapy and exercises tailored to each patient's needs can do wonders. By focusing on getting patients back on their feet, hospitals can help them avoid the risks of deconditioning.

In the end, becoming weaker in the hospital is a real issue, especially for older people. We have to make sure that staying active and engaged becomes part of hospital culture. This way, we can stop deconditioning from taking away people's strength and independence.

Sharing the success of Sharing HOPE across the UK

An initiative launched to help improve Swansea Bay staff's mental health and wellbeing is fast gaining a reputation across the UK.

Sharing HOPE is all about getting staff to talk and share stories in creative ways to reduce the impact the pandemic has had on them.

It was already shortlisted in the Improving Lives Through Creativity Award in the health board's LOV Awards (see page 3), taking place just after we went to press.

Now, on a national platform, it is a finalist for the prestigious HSJ Awards, in the Staff Wellbeing Initiative of the Year category.

Sharing HOPE has also led to Swansea Bay being shortlisted twice in the Nursing Times Awards – for Best Employer for Staff Recognition and Engagement, and Best Staff Wellbeing Initiative.

It aims to bring staff together through various arts activities, to provide a safe space where they can



open up about their experiences and access support.

Most recently the activities included beach sculpture sessions, where staff created jewellery along with sand and stone sculptures with the help of an artist.

Jayne Whitney (pictured), quality lead for suicide and self-harm prevention, is one of three health board staff leading the Sharing HOPE project.

She said: "It was in an out-of-work setting, and family and friends could go too, so it gave everyone a really good platform to express themselves.

"It was a lot of fun, but also had a serious element in terms of staff having the chance to express themselves through this form of art and discussing mental health and wellbeing if they were comfortable enough to do that.

"Sometimes it can help hearing colleagues talking about their own experiences and worries as it shows you're not alone."

Getting your jobs is key

It is more important than ever to take steps to protect the health and wellbeing of staff.

Receiving your COVID-19 booster and flu vaccinations is crucial in safeguarding staff health and wellbeing and in turn, the patients that we serve. Vaccination is a vital tool which helps to mitigate the effects of respiratory viruses circulating in the community, protects the vulnerable, and supports the resilience of the NHS and care system at a time of great pressure. Remember that you cannot catch flu or Covid from vaccinations. All they do is simply prepare your immune system if you do encounter the viruses – giving you a much better chance of either shaking them off and not getting ill at all, or if you do become sick, having a shorter and less severe illness.

So please, do not hesitate. Roll up your sleeve and become a part of the solution. Please see the intranet for more details.

New cancer role can solve a shortage

A new role has been created at the South West Wales Cancer Centre in Swansea to help counter a national shortage of cancer specialists and potentially speed up access to treatment.

Rebecca Lloyd, currently a review radiographer in the radiotherapy department, will now train to become a consultant radiographer. The role is the first of its kind in Swansea Bay.

Rebecca will specialise in urology, initially focusing on the large number of prostate cancer patients across South West Wales.

Once fully qualified, she will be able to complement the work currently undertaken by oncologists.

It's part of a workforce transformation across the health board aimed at recruiting and retaining staff and creating new career opportunities.

Radiotherapy services manager Nicki Davies explained the new role was partly to provide career progression but also to support oncologists.

"Until now, the only way you could go past the level of seniority Bec is currently working at would be to go into management," she said.

"But not everybody wants to go into management. Some want to stay patient-facing.

"This development creates an opportunity to go beyond that level while remaining purely patient-focused.

"On top of that, there is a UK shortage of oncologists at the moment. But best of all, it frees up more time for patients."

Rebecca qualified as a treatment radiographer in 2009. Since then she has worked in Singleton Hospital, where the cancer centre is located, eventually progressing to a radiotherapy review radiographer.

"I review all patients receiving radiotherapy," she said.

"This involves managing treatment and cancer side-effects such as diarrhoea, nausea and pain. I am a non-medical prescriber, prescribing medication to help get them through treatment.

"I also deal with holistic needs of the patient and help signpost them to the relevant help, depending on their individual concerns."

Rebecca said providing a gold standard of care had always been of paramount importance to her.

The new role she said meant she could continue to focus on patients but in an extended way, following them throughout the entirety of their care by taking on some of the work currently only undertaken by oncologists.

Examples include discussing treatment options, supporting the shared decision-making process and obtaining informed consent.

Oncologists can also work with the medical physics team to plan the radiotherapy treatments, review side-effects and help patients manage them. They follow up treatment outcomes too.

Rebecca already does some of this work. Once she has finished her training in 18-24 months, she will be able to do all of it. "This will help with the shortage of consultant oncologists," she said.



Rebecca Lloyd (foreground), pictured with radiotherapy services manager Nicki Davies

"At first I will focus on less complex work. With experience I will become involved in more complex cases and run my own case-load and clinics.

"I will be involved in research, trials and teaching within urology, and help develop other radiographers who want to work in extended roles.

"Being the first, I will set the standards for future radiotherapy consultant radiographers in Swansea Bay and put the foundations down to ensure these positions can flourish. I am also hoping to develop an all-Wales framework, in collaboration with other cancer centres in Wales."

Rebecca, who starts her training this month, added it might help reduce the time to get radiotherapy treatment for prostate cancer patients.

"If there is only one consultant there are only so many people they can see in a clinic. You bring me in as well and you are doubling the number of patients who can be seen. The prostate cancer service covers a large area from Aberystwyth to just this side of Bridgend. It's a huge group. My starting point will be patients with prostate cancer because that is our most common patient group. In the longer term, it will cover bladder cancer and other urology cancers. But we have gone

in for prostate to begin with as it is one of our biggest patient throughputs."

While Rebecca will work exclusively in urology, which has a large number of prostate cancer patients, it is hoped a second consultant radiographer, specialising in breast radiotherapy, will eventually be recruited.

"These are the two largest patient groups so it is where we can provide the most support to the oncologists and, most importantly, the patients," said Nicki.

Consultant oncologist Dr Mau-Don Phan said: "Becky and her team have looked after my patients undergoing prostate cancer radiotherapy for over a decade. I have always been impressed by her kind and caring attitude and professionalism.

"She developed the radiotherapy review service from scratch, and it is now an integral part of our holistic uro-oncology service.

"Her progression to the first consultant radiographer in urology is only natural.

"We have a significant workforce issue in oncology. We need to prioritise new models of working and enhance skill mix in our department to respond to the ever-increasing demand for radiotherapy."

"Being the first, I will set the standard for future radiotherapy consultant radiographers in Swansea Bay"

- Rebecca Lloyd

New Nursing and Midwifery Swansea Bay a major boost

Swansea Bay's new Nursing and Midwifery Academy, which launches on 13th September, is designed to lead to significant improvements in career development and staff retention.

The health board's Deputy Director of Nursing, Hazel Powell, is confident the academy will provide the training and support for nurses to make the most of their talents and expertise, and help attract and keep staff.

The new academy is a key component of Swansea Bay's Nursing and Midwifery Framework, which is now up and running. Career development and retention lies at the heart of the framework.

"The framework lays out what's important to us," said Hazel, who this summer was nominated as one of the NHS' 75 most influential nurses in a Nursing Times article which marked the 75th anniversary of the NHS.

"As part of this, we want to invest and support our nurses and midwives and one way we will be doing this will be through our new Nursing and Midwifery Academy."

The new academy is directly linked to the Florence Nightingale Foundation, which has been at the forefront of nurse development for nearly a century.

The academy builds on the success of the health board's existing nurse training, but a key benefit of working in partnership with the Foundation will be access to a wealth of free online training and leadership development modules.

Hazel explained that the first step will be offering a development programme for the health board's matrons, but as the academy develops nurses,

midwives and HCSWs at all stages of their careers will be supported. "We're starting with a six month development programme for our matrons, based on the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales priorities, which is really exciting. It will give our matrons the opportunity to think about and develop their professional leadership with coaching from senior nurses. This will help us shape our leaders of the future.

"We're also planning a ward manager's programme which will start next spring, and we are looking at developing our clinical supervision and preceptorship support and programmes. We're also keen to look at 'end of career' mentoring, with those senior, really experienced nurses who might want to reduce their hours but still want to be involved in supporting our emerging leaders through providing mentorship and

coaching for the ward managers, matrons and heads of nursing of tomorrow.

"We want to invest in our nurses and midwives, making development opportunities easily available and relevant. Our nurses and midwives work really hard and it's about providing that opportunity for them to develop and grow with us.

"It says in our strategy that we want to make Swansea Bay the place that the best nurses and midwives want to work in and learn and lead. "And then I want them to stay. I want them to come because it's a good place to work but then I want them to stay because it is a good place to work and we are providing excellent development opportunities that support careers to thrive and retains staff."

For more information about the Florence Nightingale Foundation go to www.florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk/

HOW ACADEMY CAN HELP SBUHB

The Academy will bring the benefits of being part of the Florence Nightingale Foundation Academy including:

- Developing leadership knowledge and skills through free unlimited access to exclusive FNF online modules (with a new module added every three months), contributing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours. Current options are Co-consulting and Innovation. FNF Academy Members are also able to influence new module development.
- Influence policy and practice on global health challenges through our thought leadership projects and FNF Subject Expert Groups.
- Celebrate our professions and the legacy of Florence Nightingale as a VIP with your own guest at our annual Florence Nightingale Commemoration Service at Westminster Abbey, London.
- Promote the next generation of nurse and midwife leaders by annually nominating an aspiring leader to become an FNF Academy Fellow. Fellows will enjoy additional and exclusive specific networking and development opportunities.
- Collaborate with other nurse and midwife members globally through our exclusive online members area.
- Participate in global partnerships with organisations from different nations to facilitate shared learning and support of the global nursing and midwifery workforce.



We support nurses and midwives to improve care and save lives



The homepage of the Florence Nightingale Foundation website



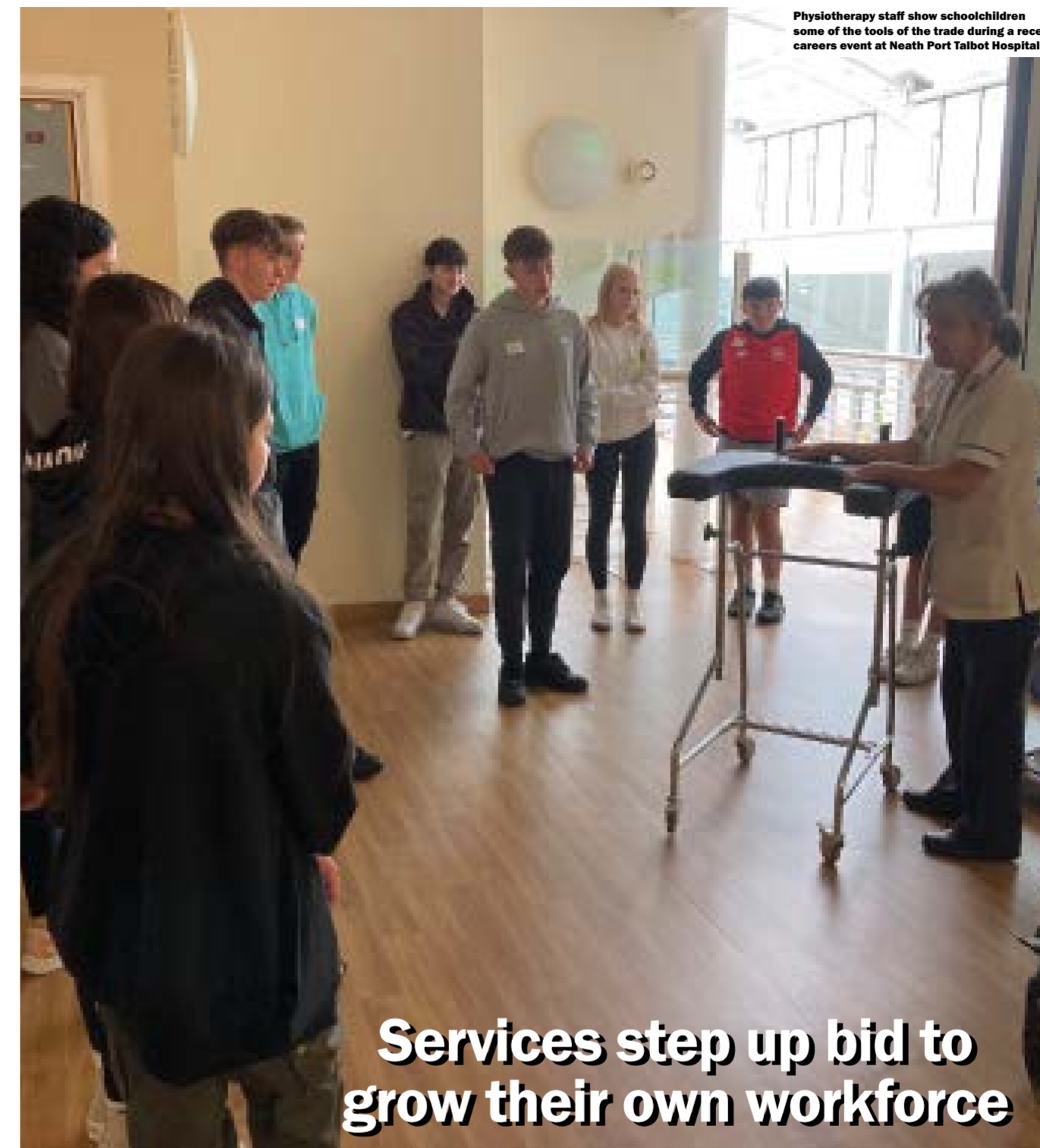
One Show spotlight on overseas nurses

The One Show recently paid us a visit to meet some of our new overseas nurse recruits and film them at work in Neath Port Talbot Hospital (see picture, left). The feature was due to air, following a summer recess for the show, in early September.

Our brilliant nurses were quizzed on their careers to date and aspirations after making the big move to Swansea Bay.

Around 200 nurses have already been recruited since June 2022 to fill the void of band 5 roles within the health board, with many arriving this year.

Academy will give



Physiotherapy staff show schoolchildren some of the tools of the trade during a recent careers event at Neath Port Talbot Hospital



Pathology training manager Laura Hart explains the work of biomedical scientists to pupils at St Joseph's Catholic School and Sixth Form in Aberavon

It's top marks for pathology staff after successful school visit

Pathology staff are top of the class with Port Talbot pupils after a successful school visit to shine a light on their vital work.

Year 9s at St Joseph's Catholic School and Sixth Form got a 'hands-on' insight into specialisms including haematology, virology and radiology after following clues to discover why a fictitious patient was feeling unwell.

Equipment including a microscope, pulse oximeter and pathology slides were brought to the school hall to introduce children to diagnostic tools as they asked questions, made notes and then presented a diagnosis.

The visit, a first for the area, was devised and run on the day by Public Health Wales in collaboration with Swansea Bay staff.

Further school visits are planned as the team steps up efforts to show just how interesting and rewarding a role in pathology or biomedical sciences can be.

The day is just one of a number of events and measures aimed at boosting recruitment for biomedical sciences at Swansea Bay, with a campaign to attract A Level students and graduates currently underway.

"This was a first for us, and I'm delighted to say it went really well," said laboratory medicine training manager Kimberly Lewis.

"It was great to have the opportunity to open up the minds of young scientists to what we do.

"It's so important we make sure we are training enough biomedical scientists for the next few decades, so we're trying to do our bit by being as proactive as possible.

"The St Joseph's visit is one of a number we are planning to help get our message out to Year 9 pupils, particularly those who are looking to take biology for GCSE. It's not widely known, but 70 per cent of all diagnoses is based on results reported by the laboratory. We want to show them the amazing career opportunities in pathology."

The school is now keen to link up again with the health board if and when future projects arise.

"The day was a roaring success and I've had some incredible feedback from both the pupils and our staff," said teacher Tilly Davies, who played a key part in organising the visit.

- For more information about career opportunities in biomedical sciences, go to SBU. PathologyBloodSciences@wales.nhs.uk.

Services step up bid to grow their own workforce

As part of our drive to create a home-grown workforce, many of our teams have been showcasing a range of NHS careers to young people.

In previous months, there have been highly successful school visits organised by staff in renal and pathology (see story, right).

More recently, physiotherapists hosted a careers workshop for young people of school age at Neath Port Talbot Hospital.

It took place in August and, despite it being the school holidays, around 30 of them attended.

There are another two events coming up in October, both at Morriston Hospital.

On Wednesday 18th October, there will be an occupational therapy workshop for people aged 15 and over.

Our OTs have been running these workshops for more than a decade and we know they have led to many attendees training to join the profession.

The following days will see a careers day showcasing speech and language therapy to anyone interested and living in the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas.

It is for students in Year 10 and above, or anyone who might be considering SLT as a career option. Places on both events are strictly by booking only, and details have been publicised through our social media. The health board also reintroduced its clinical work observation programme following a three-year hiatus because of Covid.

Over eight days, Morriston, Singleton and Neath Port Talbot hospitals hosted nearly 70 local pupils, students and graduates who shadowed various clinical teams and individuals.

Every individual taking part in these various events is potentially a health board employee of tomorrow.

And targeting the local population means it is more likely they will stay in Swansea Bay rather than move on to other areas.

Pharmacist on a mission

Julie (left) with antimicrobial pharmacists Charlotte Makanga from BCUBH, Ceri Phillips from ABUHB and Zoe Kennerley from HDUHB. Meanwhile inset, Julie is pictured during one of five hospital visits



A Swansea Bay pharmacist has visited hospitals in Africa to teach them about the importance of using antibiotics sensibly.

Consultant antimicrobial pharmacist Julie Harris visited five hospitals in Malawi to understand how their pharmacists worked.

The aim of the 11-day visit was to promote antibiotic stewardship - promoting and monitoring the use of antibiotics to preserve their future effectiveness - something Julie does in her role in Swansea Bay.

Prescribing antibiotics in a targeted way helps to reduce the risk of future resistance and minimise potential unpleasant side effects.

The trip was an extension of a project that started last year which saw Julie's colleague Charlotte Richards visit three hospitals in Malawi.

Julie said: "This year we visited a further five hospitals

in Malawi to promote antibiotic stewardship and being careful around prescribing antibiotics in hospital.

"We have been focusing on antibiotic prescribing in the UK for a long time but Malawi is really only just getting started on its journey.

"We did an in-country visit so we could understand the challenges they face and make sure the hospital management will be supportive of the pharmacists as they start this work.

"We met the lead doctors, nurses and pharmacists in each hospital and they took us on a tour of some of the wards so we could understand how their systems worked.

"We also went to the hospitals' pharmacies to understand how they work and what type of antibiotics they have access to and some of the challenges they face too." Zomba Central, Queen Elizabeth Central,

Mchinji District, Dedza District and Ntcheu District were the hospitals visited during the visit.

The project will see each of them carry out an audit to understand which antibiotics have been prescribed and why. Staff will then be trained to increase awareness around antimicrobial stewardship, so they understand the need to be careful when prescribing antibiotics to ensure they continue to work for as long as possible. They will then repeat their audits to see if their training has helped to reduce or change antibiotic prescribing within their hospitals.

"The hospitals have a very inconsistent supply of antibiotics," Julie added.

"They have limited access to the range they can use and quite regularly have significant periods where they can't get hold of antibiotics.

"Antibiotic resistance and the fact our antibiotics are becoming less effective over time really is a global problem. The support we can offer from countries like the UK, and the experience we've got to date, will help countries like Malawi to start working on it quicker and more effectively.

Independent prescribers helping to find an antidote to GP pressures

Community pharmacies are working in more ways than ever to make it easier for people to receive care closer to home.

Independent prescribers can give advice, make referrals and prescribe medication to patients for a number of different ailments. This can help release pressures from GP practices by assessing appropriate patients without the need for an appointment.

It is a developing service which is not yet available in all community pharmacies, with 18 independent prescribers currently in the Swansea Bay area.

The Welsh Government's objective is to have an independent prescriber within every community pharmacy in Wales by 2030. Consultations are held in a private room and the independent prescriber will

discuss symptoms and decide whether it would be best to offer advice only, treatment or make a referral to a GP or other healthcare professional.

Community pharmacists must complete an accredited course to qualify as an independent prescriber. Each will have chosen certain ailments or conditions, such as urinary tract infections, to specialise in.

Changes to pharmacists' education also mean that from 2025 newly qualified pharmacists will leave university as independent prescribers.

Utilising the full range of skills and knowledge of independent prescribers will help enhance access to care and improve patient flow, so easing NHS pressures. There are national plans in place for

community pharmacies to offer even more clinical services in the future.

Sam Page, Head of Primary Care at Swansea Bay University Health Board, said: "Independent prescribers enable patients to be seen within a community pharmacy for prescribed services.

"The pharmacist will take the patient into the consultation room to understand what their concern is. If it is within the pharmacist's area of expertise, they will assess the patient's suitability for treatment which may include an examination.

"The pharmacist will ask them about their symptoms and can prescribe accordingly. This helps to release pressures on GP practices while providing care close to patients' homes."

3D printing provides a bolus bonus for cancer treatment

3D printing is providing an even higher quality of care for patients undergoing radiotherapy at the South West Wales Cancer Centre in Swansea's Singleton Hospital. It is being used to create boluses, accessories that ensure the optimum dose of radiotherapy for cancers close to the surface of the head or neck. Not only is this better for patients, but it is also saving radiotherapy staff time, freeing them up to do other important work.

For most types of radiotherapy to the head or neck, patients wear a mask, sometimes called a shell. It is made of thermoplastic, which is warmed and moulded to follow the exact contours of their skin. The shell holds their head and neck still and in the right position for the most accurate, effective treatment. However, for some cancers a bolus is required to provide an additional layer during radiotherapy. Previously these were made out of moulded wax and had to be fitted to the mask by hand.

But this was time-consuming and far from perfect as there could be gaps left between the bolus and mask. Now the investment in a 3D printer means the bolus can be created literally at the press of a button. The idea originally came from advanced radiotherapy physics technologist Rhys Jenkins after he read about it in a professional magazine.

"When the photons used in radiotherapy enter the skin, they do not provide 100 per cent of the dose straight away," Rhys explained.

"Instead, there is a build-up effect. For skin cancer or other superficial head and neck cancers, such as those of the parotid gland, which are close to the skin, this build-up would happen deeper, and we would miss quite a bit of the target with the required dose. So, the bolus acts like tissue material. The build-up happens there, so by the time it gets to the patient's skin it has reached the dosage you want."

The shape, depth and positioning of the bolus is all designed during the treatment planning stage. Until recently it had to be hand-formed from wax, taking anything up to an hour to make.

However, this could leave air gaps. And as the bolus had to be manually pushed into place, there was no guarantee it was the same shape as that designed on the planning system. There were other drawbacks too. Sometimes the bolus would be dropped, or the brittle wax would crack, and another would have to be created.

The investment in a 3D printer has changed all that. It was introduced with the support of Swansea Bay's maxillofacial laboratory team, who have had extensive experience of using 3D technology over many years.

"They helped us decide on what printer to buy and helped us get set up as well," said Rhys. "So, we have developed our own in-house service.

"We just create the bolus on the treatment planning



Advanced radiotherapy physics technologist Rhys Jenkins, pictured with a 3D printed bolus

system and then the printer basically prints exactly what we designed. As it is an exact copy of what we want, it fits onto the shell like a jigsaw piece.

"The main advantage is the improved accuracy and improved confidence that what we have planned on the system is in the exact same place.

"Because, with the old method, forgetting all the air gaps, we were not that confident in how we were positioning it as well. There were so many steps where errors could be introduced, but this has negated most of them.

"We've reduced staff time as well, so we have made the process a lot more efficient.

"Some of these boluses take one to two days to print. But that's not staff time. We just set it to go ahead and then come back when it is finished, and it frees up your time for other things."

Senior radiographer Catherine Davies said the move

to 3D printed boluses had been a positive step for patients and for staff.

"For staff, this bolus is easier and quicker to fit, is unbreakable and is shown on our daily patient scans to adhere perfectly to where it is intended - and stays there," she added.

"Patients benefit from the quicker application as they are on the bed for that little bit less.

"They also tell us they do not feel it being placed on the treatment shell, as this new type of bolus does not require moulding to the shell."

Singleton-based consultant clinical oncologist Russell Banner said the team at the South West Wales Cancer Centre had always used innovative solutions to improve patient care.

"The 3D printing has enabled highly accurate and quality assured boluses to be produced from 3D planning scans, minimising uncertainty and bringing the dose to where we need it," he said.

"The printer even prints overnight to ensure there are no delays in the treatment pathway."

"Patients benefit from the quicker applications as they are on the bed for that little bit less"

- Catherine Davies



Miles of smiles for kids

Bell ring is music to the ears for Isabella and family

A new end-of-treatment bell at Morriston Hospital is helping children who have been battling cancer to ring in better times.

It's been installed in the paediatric oncology shared care unit, which gives local patients the opportunity to have part of their intravenous chemotherapy in Swansea Bay instead of the primary centre in Cardiff.

Isabella Minney, nine, from Penclawdd in north Gower, was the first to ring it.

Her mum Julia, who was there with Isabella's brother Oliver and dad Gareth, said: "The staff who have treated Isabella and helped us all through her treatment have been incredible. They have been so supportive and understanding and I don't know what we would have done without them."

Isabella was diagnosed with leukaemia in March 2021 and Julia praised her resilience throughout the tough treatment, which included daily oral chemotherapy and intravenous therapy every four weeks.

Her final treatment was administered in Morriston Hospital in July.

Angela Gallagher, paediatric oncology outreach nurse specialist, said: "Children with cancer have been receiving part of their intravenous chemotherapy here in outpatients in Morriston Hospital for the past three years, administered by myself and Jackie Quigley.

"They ring the bell on Rainbow Ward in Cardiff, but we now have our own bell for the patients to ring when they have their last dose with us.

"Isabella is an amazing inspiration and has been all throughout her treatment for leukaemia."

The bells are provided through the charity End of Treatment Bells.



Isabella Minney, pictured with mum Julia, dad Gareth and brother Oliver

TV character visit is picture perfect for children's ward

Stars of children's television proved compulsive viewing when they paid a surprise visit to Morriston Hospital.

Iggle Piggle, from CBeebies's In the Night Garden, and JJ, from Netflix's CoComelon, popped in to the hospital's children's ward to cheer the youngsters up.

The visit was arranged by Lisa Morgan, developmental and therapeutic play specialist for children's services, with help from Swansea company, Crazy Characters, who waved their usual fee for the visit.

Iggle Piggle called in to see Louie, who was celebrating his first birthday having been in hospital since birth. His mum, Rhiannon Phillips, said: "He loves In the Night Garden - it's all he will watch.

"It's brilliant that the staff and the company have done this for the children's ward. It's amazing.

"I don't think he really knew what was going on but I will show him the pictures when he's older."

Rhiannon added that the family hoped for an even better present soon.

She said: "Louie has been in hospital since the day that he was born.

"He's recently had an operation and hopefully he will



Kelly Vemkaih, mother of 14 months old Miles, appreciated the visit of JJ from CoComelon

be discharged soon." Kelly Vemkaih, mother of 14 months old Miles, appreciated the visit of JJ.

She said: "He loves CoComelon and was just watching it on his tablet actually.

"He definitely recognised who it was. He loves JJ.

"It makes such a difference. Not just for the children, but for the staff as well. It makes a difficult time a little bit easier."

Lisa Morgan said: "We've got some children on the ward who have been with us for a while so we thought, just as something a little extra, we would try to arrange

a character visit - of their favourite choice. Louie really loves Iggle Piggle and Miles loves JJ.

"We're really grateful - it was really kind of Crazy Characters. It put a smile on everyone's faces."

Meanwhile the children's ward was also visited by Mark Kennedy from Carmarthenshire Therapy Dogs and his gentle 7-year-old bullmastiff, Olga.

The visit was arranged to put a smile on the faces of the young patients and reduce some of the anxiety that may surround a hospital stay but the staff were equally lifted by Olga's visit. Mark said that Olga, previously a show dog who has come fourth in Crufts, was on her first hospital visit.

He said: "This is the first children's ward she's been to but she has been to a few primary schools to work with children with behavioural difficulties or disabilities. She's very non-reactive.

"Sometimes a child will grab hold of her but she doesn't react at all. She very intelligent and seems to understand."

Lisa Morgan added: "We just wanted to do something different for the children, something therapeutic, different to normal play."

Tackling waiting lists

September / October 2023 ISSUE 06

Building for the future... how NPT's new theatres took shape

Building an extension is never without its challenges - especially when that extension is to a busy working hospital.

A new block housing three state-of-the-art operating theatres has been seamlessly grafted onto the side of Neath Port Talbot Hospital, taking the total number of theatres there to eight.

Representing a total investment of £21 million, the extension gives the health board the extra capacity needed to really get to grips with unacceptably long waits for orthopaedic surgery.

Approval was granted in May 2020, following several years of design and other preparatory work. Just 13 months later, on June 15th this year, the finished building was opened by Health Minister Eluned Morgan.

Despite being 20 years younger than the main hospital building, the new extension looks like it has always been there. Not surprisingly, achieving that perfect match involved a huge amount of planning and hard work.

Someone who knows that all too well is Danny Flynn of Swansea Bay's capital planning department, who was the project manager.

The new theatres, which are modular in design, were built off-site at the same time as extensive groundworks were being undertaken. This included re-routing underground cables and pipework, and engineering to prepare the foundations. It's recovered waste ground so we had to put piles into the ground to sit all this on," Danny explained.

"At the same time the factory units were being built. Dovetailed work was progressing in tandem with this, to get to the point where you could deliver the buildings and complete the work beneath the ground ready to sit the buildings on.

"It was quite an intense period. By definition, as soon as the clock starts and firm orders are placed it is literally a race to get to site to get the groundworks prepared."

As Neath Port Talbot is a PFI hospital, the Swansea Bay team worked closely with the PFI contractors as well as main project contractors and the theatres manufacturer - and with hospital staff.

Danny paid tribute to the support from Neath Port Talbot's divisional manager Susan Jones and from theatre staff, particularly matron Kim Stephens and orthopaedic speciality manager Jade Rouse.

"They have their own difficult and demanding day jobs to do but they helped a great deal in interfacing to us as a team and developing the project," he said.

"We had to upgrade the existing HSDU (Hospital Sterilisation and Decontamination Unit). More throughput means more equipment, more trays going through, so a larger facility was needed.

"That was a standalone scheme of its own within the hospital, right in the middle of the existing theatres,



Capital planning project manager Danny Flynn, pictured outside the new theatres complex at Neath Port Talbot Hospital. Pictured below, left, the interior of one of the theatres and right, health minister Eluned Morgan unveils a commemorative plate at the site

which brought a set of its own very demanding constraints.

"Working in the middle of a live theatre environment is very, very difficult. There were very exacting demands placed on the team to do that work safely and

appropriately without risk of infection.

"There was also an issue in late delivery of the new electrical supplies. The route was 300 metres through a live hospital environment again, all along the hospital streets and corridors, which made it slow and difficult work in itself.

"We were probably three weeks late bringing the electrical supplies in and

that in itself brings a lot of problems because until the electricity is switched on in the building, you can't do any commissioning of any plant.

"We needed to get the electrical supplies in ahead of all the commissioning period. Unfortunately, we had to delay the electrical supplies at exactly the wrong moment in time. That moved everything back by three weeks and compressed the commissioning programme."

The 37 individual building modules were delivered over a five-day period just before Christmas last year. This was followed by around 12 weeks of extended site work to complete the buildings and then another four to six weeks of commissioning.

"There is a lot of work in commissioning any new building

ready for use. With theatres it's a particularly fine, finite line," Danny said.

"Every system in the theatres has to be absolutely right. You cannot have failures. You need to prove, and know and understand, for instance, that the fire alarms work without issue, the nurse call works without issue.

"You have to demonstrate everything in full before you can commit to performing major procedures on people. It's a unique environment and a unique task that is being undertaken in those rooms."

As well as the three theatres, the extension includes five pre-assessment rooms, staff changing areas, rest rooms and a seminar room. All are finished to the highest possible standard. Danny said that, as project manager, a significant part of his role involved taking a critical look to identify and deal with problems. Now those problems are in the past, he can enjoy a different perspective.

"It is quite humbling to know and to understand that now patients are being treated in space that we considered essentially our house and home for the last six to eight months," he said. "For me as a project manager, all projects are a series of issues to resolve, pressures to

meet, concerns to address, and to mould this all together moving forward.

"It was good to get to the end of it, and it was particularly good to get such a sensitive scheme across the line, especially with the challenges that were there quite late in the day. Now

the building will take over its own life. We've brought about the construction period and now it's the treatment and service delivery that will follow over many years to come.

"So many patients will have life-changing surgery there. It will massively change and transform people's lives.

"I do get a sense of satisfaction out of that."



What's on

Dates for your diary



Sept 11th-17th
Hypo Awareness Week (Think Glucose campaign)

NPT Block A, ground floor meeting room

Sept 12th
REACT Mental Health - How to have psychologically savvy and supportive conversations with colleagues

Sept 26th
The Floor Game - Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response

TIME: 1.30-3.30pm

TIME: HCC, Morryston

Sept 13th
RGN Community Continence/Catheterisation study day

Oct 3rd

TIME: 9am-4pm, Port Talbot resource centre main training room

Maternity and Neonates Summit 2023

TIME: 12pm - 3.30pm, Teams - book on at <https://forms.office.com/e/JXgmX4Wb7L>

Sept 14th

Tailored adjustments for managers (SBU Occupational Health)

Oct 5th

Patient Flow workshop - managers pathway

TEAMS. book on at <https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/SBUPeerVaccinators@wales.nhs.uk/bookings/s/>

TIME: 9am to 4.30pm, Lecture Theatre, NPTH

Sept 14th

Patient Safety Congress

TIME: 1pm-4pm, Lecture Theatre 1, Morryston Education Centre.

Oct 11th

Paediatric Directorate Major Incident Exercise & Action card Walk Through (Target Group - Paediatric Directorate Action Card Holders)

TIME: 1pm to 4.30pm, Education Centre, Morryston Hospital, Seminar Room 6.

Sept 18th

Menopause Cafe, Neath Port Talbot Hospital

TIME: 2pm-3pm, SBU

Booking - Confirmation details to: Damian Jones, EPRR Manager - SBU. EmergencyPreparedness@wales.nhs.uk

Charity and events

Darren rides out to thank the team helping him to recover



Darren Lewis hands over a cheque after raising £986 for Wales Air Ambulance

A motorcyclist who suffered a serious brain injury got back on a bike to thank the team helping him on his road to recovery.

Darren Lewis suffered a life-changing brain injury after being thrown from his motorbike while out riding in Mumbles in May 2021. His skull was fractured in five places after a dog ran out between two parked cars.

He was treated by a Wales Air Ambulance crew of Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service medics at the scene.

He was flown to University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, before being transferred to the Neuro-rehabilitation Unit at Neath Port Talbot Hospital.

Although Darren, from Swansea, has made significant progress, he has lifelong difficulties that affect his daily life.

But he has been supported by the Community Brain Injury Service, which provides speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, clinical psychology, rehabilitation and music therapy.

Darren took to a pedal cycle to ride from Dunvant Rugby Club to Mumbles, raising money for brain injury

unit which helped him.

He was joined by his stepfather, his son Deon, aged 13, plus Rob May, generic technician with the Traumatic Brain Injury Service, and two other riders.

"We did the ride during the warm weather, and I think we lost about 20 stone between us," Darren said.

"I had to stop at Blackpill because it was very tiring for me. I had to get off the bike and walk for a stretch. But I was determined to do it to say thanks to everyone who has helped me through the hard times."

He also managed to smash his fundraising target, collecting a total £986, and returned to the unit to hand over the funds. And he is now planning a visit to the Wales Air Ambulance base in Dafen, to meet the crew who helped him.

Swansea Bay Health Charity community support officer Cathy Stevens said: "I am so proud of Darren for completing this challenge and raising funds to support patients in our Brain Injury Service.

"When I first met Darren, his target was to raise £200, which he absolutely smashed.

"Well done Darren and thank you."

Record numbers for Jiffy ride

The third annual Jiffy's Cancer 50 Challenge broke records as riders hit the roads to raise money for cancer services in Swansea and Cardiff.

In perfect sunny conditions, the event attracted 600 cyclists - the most in its short history - as it doubled last year's total of participants.

They received fantastic backing from the public, with over 400 in attendance for the group finish in Swansea's Bracelet Bay.

Presented by Wales rugby legend Jonathan Davies, the cycle challenge raises significant funds each year for the health board, specifically for the South West Wales Cancer Centre in Singleton Hospital and Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff. This was the first year three

different distances were introduced, and it proved a big success with riders of all ages and abilities. Over £48,000 has already been raised but that figure is expected to increase as more sponsorship money is collected over the next few weeks.

- Swansea Bay Health Charity (registered charity number 1122805) is the official charity of Swansea Bay University Health Board.
- It plays a vital role in raising money for projects and activities that support patients, whilst it also supports a range of projects to improve the working conditions and support available to staff.
- For more information, visit the charity's website (see below).



Jonathan 'Jiffy' Davies toasts a successful day with Swansea Bay Health Charity staff, family and friends while below, riders make their way to Bracelet Bay and the finish line of the Jiffy's Cancer 50 Challenge ride



Bay Health



Staff newspaper of Swansea Bay University Health Board

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



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: www.swanseabayhealthcharity.wales