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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Cadeirydd Dros Dro/ Interim Chair: **Emma Woollett**
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: **Tracy Myhill**

gofalu am ein gilydd, cydweithio, gwella bob amser
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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Dyddiad/Date: 13th August 2019
Ein Cyf / Our Ref: 19-G-026

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I refer to your Freedom of Information Act Request acknowledged by ourselves on 19th July 2019. Your request sought information relating to the closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at Singleton Hospital. We have enclosed a recent Board paper on this subject, along with answering your questions below:

- 1. The decision to close the unit temporarily related to work that was needed to be done to another department at the hospital. It was stated then that this closure was very short term and was connected to the work needed at the Out of Hours GP centre which was being moved. Can you please give a full explanation of the sequence of events that caused the MIU to close and also outline what the intention was at that point? Also, when did the MIU close.***

The MIU closed temporarily on 12th November 2018. The closure was in connection with £300,000 refurbishment work being undertaken at an adjacent service, the Singleton Assessment Unit (SAU). This work was in response to concerns raised by the Community Health Council and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales over the layout and general fabric of SAU. In order for the work to proceed, the MIU needed to temporarily close.

The intention was to re-open the MIU once the work on the SAU was completed, in the spring of 2019.

- 2. What has changed since then? I understand that the unit will stay closed until November when a report on its future will be made. Is this correct?***

The MIU was expected to re-open in the spring of 2019. However, during the time it was closed a number of GPs who were involved with running the service resigned. Efforts to recruit new staff during that time were unsuccessful. Clinicians raised



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concerns that the MIU would now be closed as often as it would be open, closures would be ad hoc, and they felt this would not only be a very poor service for patients, but would not be safe.

Following a meeting with the CHC, the health board decided to continue the temporary closure of the MIU until November 2019. During this time more data and information will be gathered to help develop potential options for the future use of MIU resources. Public engagement/consultation is planned to take place in the autumn.

3. A shortage of doctors is being cited as the cause. Can you please tell me how many doctors are needed to operate the centre and how many other staff. What steps have been taken to recruit staff to man this centre and what happened to the staff originally employed there.

The MIU is a GP-led unit. It requires 14 GPs (i.e. 14 dedicated sessions) to keep the unit open during its weekday and weekend opening hours. Even before the MIU was temporarily closed last November it had frequently had to shut at very short notice because of staffing issues for some time. We currently have 5 MIU GPs who provide 7 sessions between them.

Following the recent resignation of a number of GPs, the clinical lead for the service contacted all 430 GPs in the health board area, but unfortunately not one appointment resulted from this effort.

4. The MIU in Port Talbot is manned by nurse practitioners. Has consideration been given to re-opening this unit with nurse practitioners instead of doctors? If so, what is the view of the boards on that. If not, do you intend to do so.

This is likely to be one of the options considered as part of the engagement in the autumn.

5. When was the A&E department closed at Singleton? Was the MIU promised as a replacement for that?

Singleton Hospital has never had an A&E resourced and equipped like the one provided in Morriston Hospital. In 1977 a decision was made to change Singleton's then Casualty Department to a minor casualty department, and have Morriston Hospital developed as a major A&E unit. Singleton's minor casualty unit, or Minor Injury Unit as it became known, was staffed by nurses and some hospital doctors. However, over time that service also suffered from frequent staffing issues and the GP-staffed MIU model was introduced in January 2009 to try and alleviate this ongoing issue. Since that time, the GP model has also found itself dealing with regular and sustained staffing challenges.

6. How many patients did this MIU deal with during the 12 months from April 2018 to April 2019 or for whatever months that records are available for.

The unit has been temporarily closed from November 2018. The number of attendances between April 2018 and November 2018 was 2310. However, recent analysis of typical attendances over a two-week period showed that approximately 40% of these attendances were clinically appropriate for the services offered by the MIU.



7. Morriston A&E is already under immense pressure. What effect will closing this MIU have on waiting times and capacity levels at Morriston?

While the MIU has been closed, the remaining staff have been redeployed to another unscheduled care service operating from Singleton, the Acute GP Unit (AGPU).

AGPU is a unit manned by GPs which helps to triage and provide early care, tests and support for patients who might need to be admitted. These GPs have also been reviewing Welsh Ambulance Service patients due to arrive by ambulance. Using resources this way has reduced unnecessary hospital admissions and also diverted ambulance patients to alternatives forms of care. This has a positive impact on the overall unscheduled care system across the health board and helps to take the pressure off Morriston Hospital Emergency Department.

I hope this information is helpful. If you require anything further please contact us at FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk.

Under the terms of the Health Board's Freedom of Information policy, individuals seeking access to recorded information held by the Health Board are entitled to request internal review of the handling of their requests. If you would like to complain about the Health Board's handling of your request please contact me directly at the address below or register your complaint via FOIA.Requests@wales.nhs.uk.

If after Internal Review you remain dissatisfied you are also entitled to refer the matter to the information commissioner at the Information Commissioner's Office (Wales), 2nd Floor, Churchill House, Churchill Way, Cardiff, CF10 2HH. Telephone Number: 029 2067 8400.

Yours sincerely



Pam Wenger
Director of Corporate Governance

