



GIG
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Cadeirydd/Chair: **Emma Woollett**
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: **Mark Hackett**

gofalu am ein gilydd, cydweithio, gwella bob amser
caring for each other, working together, always improving

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Atebir gohebiaeth Gymraeg yn y Gymraeg, ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at oedi. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English. Welsh language correspondence will be replied to in Welsh, and this will not lead to a delay.

Cais Rhyddid Gwybodaeth / Freedom of Information request **Ein Cyf / Our Ref: 23-D-047**

Your request relates to the ongoing suspension of the Home Birth service within Swansea Bay Health Board.

We have been working hard to develop proposals to revise our midwifery staffing model so that the Birthing Centre at Neath Port Talbot Hospital and the Home Birth Service can be reopened. These services were temporarily closed due to the lack of midwifery staff to run all of our services and the need to ensure safe services at Singleton Hospital. These plans have been finalised to ensure safe services linked to changes to the service model, workforce modernisation and expansion of community midwifery birthing numbers. These will ensure effective, safe midwifery services and we will be investing £750,000 in these services over two years to secure this, which will increase community services, meet Birthrate Plus standards and improve the number of mother's birthing at Neath Port Talbot Hospital.

An organisational change process is underway for midwives providing care at Singleton Hospital. We have also recruited new Maternity Care Assistants who will support midwives and allow them to spend more time doing what only they can do. The first cohort of 14 Maternity Care Assistants includes eight existing Swansea Bay staff from across the health Board, as well as new recruits. They will spend one day a week on the Certificate of Maternity Care programme in Swansea University and the rest of the time working with midwives and maternity staff to develop skills and achieve competencies. We are fortunate to have obtained the services of transformation midwife Dr Sarah Norris, who created the bespoke training programme. Further work is underway on reconfiguring our community midwifery service, including reopening our temporarily closed services. There will be an 8-week public engagement process on these changes.

You asked:

1. Provide me with the figures relating to numbers of FTE midwives per population employed by SBUHB



Pencadlys BIP Bae Abertawe, Un Porthfa Talbot, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR / Swansea Bay UHB Headquarters, One Talbot Gateway, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR

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Swansea Bay University Health Board is the operational name of Swansea Bay University Local Health Board

As at 19th May 2023, midwives in post within SBUHB were as follows;

Midwives	Headcount	FTE
Grand Total	215	174.51

Of these, we currently have 47 midwives working in the community:- This is a WTE of 30.31.

Currently 8.36 WTE are on secondment or maternity leave.

Swansea Bay UHB covers a population of around 390,000 in the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea areas.

2. I would also like to see a copy of the minutes from the meeting where this decision was first made

The decision to suspend the home birthing service (as well as the standalone midwifery unit at Neath Port Talbot Hospital) within SBUHB was made in July 2021 as a response to critical staffing levels within Community Midwifery teams. To operate the service on reduced staff numbers would mean putting both staff and patients at risk.

Please find here the papers from the Quality & Safety committee in October 2021 reporting on the status and the actions taken to mitigate risks to staff and patients where possible - sbuhb.nhs.wales/about-us/key-documents-folder/quality-and-safety-committee-papers/quality-and-safety-committee-papers-october-2021/3-2-maternity-services-critical-staffing-levels-pdf/

The minutes from this meeting can be found here - sbuhb.nhs.wales/about-us/key-documents-folder/quality-and-safety-committee-papers/quality-and-safety-committee-papers-november-2021/2-3-qs-minutes-26-10-2021-pdf/

Please find attached additional minutes from an escalation meeting on 06.07.2022 advising of the ongoing suspension of home births.

We have also included a copy of the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists guidelines for midwife-led care, which SBUHB utilise and use to guide best practice when making decisions for the safety of staff and patients alike.

As at July 2023, our Community Midwifery staffing risk level is still rated at 25 (high) due to the unavailability of this staff group. The Home Birth service and midwife-led unit at Neath Port Talbot hospital remain closed for this reason.

