

# Bay Health

Staff newspaper of Swansea Bay University Health Board



## Bucket loads of appreciation for our celebrity fundraisers!



There's been a changing of the guard when it comes to the celebs supporting our Swansea Bay Health Charity fundraising appeals, with local entertainer Mal Pope handing on the baton to TikTok and Instagram star Joel Oates: [Full story Page 7](#)

SCAN BARCODE FOR A SELECTION OF BAY HEALTH STORIES ONLINE



For Me, For Us, For Them... staff flu vaccination programme up and running [PAGE 5](#)



Bride's tribute to Swansea Bay staff who helped her mum make big day [PAGE 8](#)

# Right at home... new approach to help patients avoid hospital

A new approach to pre-hospital triage will help ensure more patients receive the care and support they need at home this winter.

Health board clinicians, working in partnership with GPs, NHS 111 Wales and the Welsh Ambulance Service will be able to better assess what sort of care a patient requires, ensuring they're more likely to receive the right care in the right place first time.

It means many will stay at home if clinicians decide it's appropriate, including in care homes, and community teams providing hospital at home services may bring support to them instead of patients having to travel to hospital.

This will include patients who need urgent, but not emergency care.

Patients will only be referred to hospital if it's the right

place for them and they may not need the Emergency Department (ED) as a larger number of same-day hospital services providing assessment and care are now available.

Avoiding a trip to hospital will allow many more patients to get better in the comfort and familiarity of their own home,

**Full story: Page 4**

## Introduction

# Welcome to the latest edition of Bay Health...

Once again, Bay Health showcases the many positive developments taking place across our organisation, whether that be in Primary Care, our groundbreaking work around research or planning ahead to ensure we can provide the best and most appropriate care and support for our patients over the winter months.

On the latter point, turn to page four to find out more about positive changes to Urgent and Emergency Care, and how a new approach to pre-hospital triage will help ensure more patients who don't need to be seen in hospital can receive the care and support they need in the comforts of familiar surroundings, such as their own home.

Many people, especially over winter, end up in our Emergency Department when they really don't have to be there.

With this in mind as the colder months approach, our clinicians will be working with local GPs, the NHS 111 Wales service and the Welsh Ambulance

Service to ensure more people who require our care and support get to the right place for what they need. Elsewhere in this edition, we round up the fantastic feats of fundraising which have been doing so much to support the appeals managed by our Swansea Bay Health Charity.

This year's Jiffy's Cancer 50 Challenge cycle ride was another huge success, raising £50,000 to help pay for the extras which aren't covered by NHS core funding but make a real difference to the lives of our cancer patients and their families.

The mammoth ride, which started at the Cardiff City Stadium and ended at the lighthouse at Bracelet Bay, saw more than 300 riders take part and already half that number have signed up to do it all again next year. If you saddled up for the challenge, sponsored a participant or turned out to cheer the riders on, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support. We also update you on two brilliant charity appeals; firstly Cwtsh

Clos, which has raised £150,000 to pay for the refurbishment of temporary houses at Singelton Hospital used by mums and dads who need to be close to their babies while they receive treatment in our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Then there's Cwtsh Natur, our charity's latest appeal, which is raising funds to revamp a garden and play area outside Neath Port Talbot Hospital's Children's Centre. You can find out more about both appeals, including the local celebrities who are working hard to support our fundraising, on pages 6&7.

Meanwhile on page five, we explain how we're making it easier than ever for health board colleagues to get their flu vaccination this year while we also highlight the brilliant new optometry clinic which will be helping our optometrists reduce waiting times for eye care.

There's all this and more in this edition... so go ahead and enjoy a good read!

# Have your say on how to make working for Swansea Bay better

This year's NHS Wales Staff Survey is an opportunity for you to help shape the culture of our health board and plan our services and people.

We are encouraging all staff to share their views and experiences – whether good or bad – in the anonymous survey to make Swansea Bay University Health Board a better place to work in and make you feel proud to work here.

The NHS Wales Staff Survey was due to open on Monday, October 6.

For those that did complete the survey last year, it has helped make significant changes across our health board to benefit our staff, patients and community.

Your feedback is valued and has played a big part in improving our Urgent Emergency Care, which has in turn eased the pressure in the Emergency Department - and the time spent in it by patients - but also created a safer and happier environment for staff to work in.

The launch of Brilliant Basics came following feedback from staff across different professions who found it difficult to access information related to their managerial role. To address this, the online accessible learning platform launched as a one-stop shop with easy-read toolkits focusing on the practical tasks of management. It also addresses feedback from the staff survey around variable management by providing the basic skills and confidence needed.

Furthermore, a Raising Concerns Hub has been launched while we ran a month-long campaign in

**GIG Cymru | NHS Wales**  
**Arolwg Staff | Staff Survey**  
Mae eich llais yn bwysig | Your voice matters

**Yn lansio 6**  
**Hydref 2025!**  
**Launching 6**  
**October 2025!**



October called Speak Up, following feedback that staff don't believe the health board would address their concerns if they spoke up.

The Strategic Equality Plan has been created after listening to the views of over 4,500 people, including staff, on their healthcare experiences. The feedback received was that staff were not being able to fulfil their potential due to their protected characteristics

and differences. But we are changing that. During a challenging time financially, we also have to save money, and the ideas generated from our staff can help set our approach.

The NHS Wales staff survey will be available on the Health Education and Improvement Wales website – a link will appear in a bulletin on our Sharepoint homepage on October 6.

# Uned Gobaith shuts temporarily as work starts to upgrade facilities

Initial work has begun on an important project to upgrade the roof and facilities at Uned Gobaith, the mother and baby unit (MBU) at Tonna Hospital. The work is urgently needed to address a significant leak, while the health board's Estates team will also be installing a new air cooling system after a recent review by the Royal College of Psychiatry highlighted concerns over temperatures within the unit exceeding recommended safe sleep standards. Because of the significant nature of this work, the intention is to close the unit for a six week period. A decision of this nature is only taken in compelling circumstances with the safety of patients and staff at the top of the health board's list of priorities. The MBU at Tonna Hospital is a provider of specialist mental health care, offering a 24/7 inpatient service across the South Wales region. Swansea Bay University Health Board has engaged with staff working within the unit, with patients, the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC), and Llais, which represents the voices and interests of patients across Wales. The work specific to the MBU roof was due to begin on 13th October and is scheduled for completion within 4-6 weeks. The air cooling system work will also be completed within this schedule. The health board's perinatal mental health team will continue to manage the gate-keeping requirements for admissions during this time and will also liaise with the JCC about the use of independent sector



The main entrance of Tonna Hospital

beds when required. We'd like to thank everyone who is going to be impacted in advance for their patience and understanding while the work is being completed.

This is a temporary, but absolutely necessary measure and it will result in a safer and more suitable environment for everyone in the future.

## New Port Talbot dialysis centre taking shape



A state-of-the-art dialysis centre at a former Port Talbot factory is on target to open in the spring of next year.

Work is now well under way to convert Stationary House in Acacia Avenue, which has been partly demolished so the unit can be built. It is part of a £70 million investment in South Wales renal services.

When it opens, it will help relieve some of the

pressure on Morriston Hospital and allow patients to dialyse closer to home. The Port Talbot unit will feature 27 stations with a maximum capacity of 108 patients. It will also have a specifically designed training area for nurses who teach people to dialyse at home.

Its development follows upgrades of existing facilities in Morriston and in West Wales, along with a new unit in Bridgend – all funded by the

NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee via the Welsh Kidney Network. Swansea Bay renal consultant and the service's Clinical Director, Dr Clare Parker, said: "The development of a new dialysis unit in Neath Port Talbot marks a significant advancement for kidney care in South West Wales. "It is the result of years of collaborative planning between the health board and the Welsh Kidney Network."

## Urgent and Emergency Care

# Home is at the heart of care for patients as we head into winter



The infographic above outlines our approach to ensuring patients get the right care in the right place for their circumstances this winter. Meanwhile, below, scenes of ambulances queuing outside our Emergency Department are becoming a thing of the past

Home is where the heart is and it will also be where the care is this autumn and winter for an increasing number of patients.

A strengthened approach to pre-hospital triage that involves health board clinicians working in partnership with GPs, NHS 111 Wales and the Welsh Ambulance Service is boosting efforts to make sure patients get the right care in the right place.

It means many will stay at home if clinicians decide it's appropriate, including in care homes, and community teams providing hospital at home services may be mobilised to bring support to them instead of patients having to travel to hospital. This will include patients who need urgent, but not emergency care.

Patients will only be referred to hospital if it's the right place for them and they may not need the Emergency Department (ED) as a larger number of same-day hospital services providing assessment and care are now available.

"We know most older patients want rapid support close to home in times of crisis," said Dr Rhodri Edwards, a Care of the Elderly Consultant at Morriston Hospital and Associate Service Group Medical Director for Acute and Emergency Care.

"When their health and independence deteriorates,

they should have rapid access to urgent care, including effective alternatives to hospital.

"We are designing our services around the patient, not the other way around, which has many benefits including allowing them to stay in a familiar environment where they can maintain their independence and stay close to family and friends when it is appropriate.

"We've done a lot to transform our approach over the past couple of years and we have fantastic teams including our Acute Clinical Team and Virtual Wards, who provide wraparound and multi-disciplinary support in the community which has proved invaluable.

"They can provide many of the services traditionally only provided in hospital, but with the added benefit of being at home, the experience and outcomes for our patients is improved."

Dr Edwards added: "Of course, hospital care is available when it's needed and we will always consider the patient holistically, including any co-existing health conditions."

The boost to pre-hospital triage is one of the pillars

of work to reduce pressure and overcrowding in the ED, which has improved performance. In June the Welsh Government's official performance figures showed there had been a 70% reduction in the time it takes to handover patients who have arrived by ambulance at the ED in Morriston Hospital. This means that ambulances are freed up to answer calls in the community. Morriston Service Group Director

Sue Moore said: "We have seen significant progress in terms of bringing down our ambulance handover times and reducing delays and overcrowding in ED and it's not down to reduced demand this summer. But having said that, we know that the autumn and winter months will

bring challenges, so we are very much keeping our eye on the ball, continuing to refine and improve our processes. A boost to our pre-hospital triage system will further benefit patients, improving their experience and outcomes. We're also working with our partners in the local authorities and third sector to improve discharge processes to ensure that once their acute care is complete, patients receive the right support to help them return home in a timely way."





You'll be protecting our patients, your family and friends by making sure you get your flu vaccination this year

## Easier than ever to get your flu vaccination this year

It will soon be that time of year again to roll up your sleeve and get your flu vaccination – and we're making it easier than ever to ensure you're protected.

This year's campaign began on 1st October.

Unlike previous years, there will be permanent set locations across our sites with regular clinics for staff to attend.

In another change - designed to prevent staff having to attend ad hoc clinics as in previous years - a new online booking tool will enable staff to book their flu vaccination to suit their own schedules.

Our peer vaccinators will be working in a three-week window to get as many staff vaccinated as possible ahead of the flu peak. Each service/site will have posters clearly pointing out who their peer vaccinator is, and when their next session will be. Keep your eyes peeled as our peer vaccinators will also be walking the wards.

Our wellbeing champions will also be on hand to provide information and answer any questions you may have about getting vaccinated.

Rest assured, we haven't forgotten about those who are nervous or have a needle phobia. We will have measures in place to support you throughout. Just contact us beforehand for more information to arrange an appointment.

Getting the flu vaccination is the best way to ensure you remain fit and well this winter while protecting those around you.

Unfortunately, the uptake of staff flu vaccinations in Swansea Bay has fallen over the past four years. In 2020/21 63.4% of our staff received their flu vaccination, but since that time the trend has been

downward, and by the end of last winter only 32.9% of Swansea Bay staff with direct patient contact had received a vaccination (The average in Wales was 34.3%).

We must do much better than that this year. It is your duty of care to get your flu vaccination to protect not only yourself but others. Remember: Flu isn't a heavy cold, it's a highly infectious disease. For some, flu can lead to hospitalisation, permanent disability or even death. Cath Watts, Head of Immunisations, said: "It's really important for staff to come forward and get their flu vaccinations.

"Every week we will be publishing league tables of services and sites, to show how uptake is going and which services are in the lead.

"Keep an eye on the intranet to find out how and where you can get protected against flu this year.

"The flu vaccination offered to staff cannot give you flu.

"It is your responsibility to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your patients, your colleagues and your own family."

### Flu facts:

- The vaccine offered to staff can't give you flu – it has no live virus
- You might feel achy afterwards – that's just your immune system kicking in. It doesn't last long
- Last year's vaccine won't protect you now – the flu virus keeps changing, so the vaccine must too.

Want more information? Contact the Immunisation Team on [SBU.Imms@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:SBU.Imms@wales.nhs.uk)

**For me. For us. For them.**

## Charlotte's a star turn following award

Ward manager Charlotte Thomas' compassionate leadership has been rewarded with a Cavell Star.

The Neath Port Talbot Hospital nurse leader (pictured) was nominated

following feedback from her staff on Ward A. The award, from the Cavell Nurses' Trust charity, honours those who demonstrate exceptional care and go above and beyond their usual duties in their role.

Charlotte was presented with the award by Cheryl Gooding, Deputy Head of Nursing for Surgical Services NPTSSG, Taylor North, HCSW ward A, and Tracy Jones, Matron for Surgical Services NPTSSG.

Tracy nominated Charlotte following feedback from her staff who said her compassionate and dedicated leadership is an inspiration, nothing is too much trouble and she is always willing to help and provides support to all areas of the division.



## Former dentists are all smiles after fundraising

Two senior citizens both fought back to fitness after battling cancer and have raised thousands for the department which helped them.

Lifelong friends Geraint Jeffreys and Wayne Richards trained together as dentists and had long careers taking care of patients' oral health in Swansea, before their retirement.

Geraint, aged 75, needed the support of the South West Wales Cancer Centre at Swansea's Singleton Hospital after prostate cancer diagnosis, while 73-year-old Wayne was also a regular visitor for treatment of cancer in his tongue and neck.

But having been successfully treated, both men undertook significant physical challenges – taking part in a triathlon and undertaking a 125km walk.

In addition, they turned their hands to fundraising, by hosting an evening of entertainment at the Langland Bay Golf Club, with an auction and raffle, which collected an incredible £12,540.

"I'm hugely proud of the way the NHS in Wales looks after people with serious difficulties. So my friend Wayne and I wanted to do something big as a way of thanking everyone."

## Find out more about how to become an OT

A showcase workshop for people interested in an NHS career as an occupational therapist will take place this autumn.

It will be held in Port Talbot Resource Centre, Baglan, on Wednesday 15th October 2025. The event is open to anyone aged 15 and over.

Swansea Bay's occupational therapists (OTs) have held these events for more than 12 years.

To book your place at the workshop, which runs from 10am-3.30pm, email [aimee.collier-rees@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:aimee.collier-rees@wales.nhs.uk) or [sarah.gates@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:sarah.gates@wales.nhs.uk).

## Touch rugby players score big to deliver real bonus for charity

A women's touch rugby tournament scored a remarkable success by raising more than £23,000 for Swansea Bay's very own cancer centre.

The inaugural Touched by Cancer event, in aid of the South West Wales Cancer Centre at Singleton Hospital, was staged at the Talbot Athletic Ground, the famous home of Aberavon RFC.

With the sun shining and spirits high, 16 all-women teams came together from across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot for a day filled with sport, solidarity and fundraising.

It opened with a moving tribute – a minute's silence to remember loved ones lost to cancer followed by a minute's applause in honour of those still fighting.

Crowds of supporters enjoyed live music, food vendors, local stalls, and a charity raffle and auction. Broadcaster, actor and Swans match day announcer Kev Johns MBE compered the event.

Kev, who has himself been treated at the cancer centre, interviewed representatives from Swansea Bay Health Charity, Aberavon RFC, main sponsor Tomato Energy, and two inspiring cancer survivors.

First place went to the Resolven Hillbetties with Ferry Renettes taking second place and Bryncoch Bronchettes coming in third.

Special recognition went to the Baglan Bombshells, who were crowned Fundraising Champions, raising an outstanding £4,040.

The Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Alan and Jan Lockyer, were in attendance, meeting every team and taking part in a cheque presentation to celebrate the £23,000 raised.

Proceeds are going to the Going the Extra Mile Appeal, which aims to raise £200,000 for the South West Wales Cancer Centre, or SWWCC.

Run by Swansea Bay University Health Board, the SWWCC provides a range of lifesaving NHS treatments such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy. It celebrated its 20th anniversary last year and Going the Extra Mile was launched by Swansea Bay Health Charity to commemorate the landmark. The appeal will support the thousands of patients from the Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda areas who are cared for there every year, as well as relatives and staff.

Touched by Cancer organiser Cathy Stevens of Swansea Bay Health Charity said: "The whole day was emotional but also joyous.

"We're so grateful to everyone who took part, donated, and supported this event. It was a powerful reminder of what our community can achieve when we come together."

You can find out more about the appeal by logging on to the Swansea Bay Health Charity website here: <https://swanseabayhealthcharity>.

# Riding high! Jiffy's hard yards to help



Over 300 riders approach the finish line at Bracelet Bay after undertaking the mammoth Jiffy's Cancer 50 Challenge ride from Cardiff

Jiffy's Cancer 50 Challenge bike ride proved an enormous success with more than 300 cyclists digging deep to complete a mammoth trip from Cardiff City Stadium to Bracelet Bay in Mumbles, raising funds for both the South West Wales Cancer Centre in Swansea and Velindre Hospital.

This was the fifth time the ride has taken place and thanks to the amazing efforts of saddle-sore participants and the generous sponsorship of supporters, at the time of writing the event was only a few pounds short of hitting its £50,000 fundraising target.

Every penny goes towards helping fund the incredible, life-saving work of both the Singleton Hospital-based cancer centre and Cardiff's Velindre Hospital.

After the success of this year's ride, cyclists are already signing up for next year's event, which is scheduled to once again see riders pedal from Cardiff to Swansea on August 16th.

So if you fancy a challenge, perhaps want to improve your fitness while also making a real difference to cancer patients, their families and friends, then why not join in? You can register by scanning the QR code, which is inset to the picture above.

As for this year's event, riders gathered in the Welsh capital at a time of the morning when most of us are still in bed to tackle a journey taking them west from Cardiff, through Vale and Glamorgan lanes, around the outskirts of Porthcawl and on through Port Talbot before reaching Swansea.

After refreshments at the Secret Bar and Kitchen on Mumbles Road, everyone re-grouped before riding the final five or so miles around the bay to the ultimate

destination of the Lighthouse at Bracelet Bay.

Complete with a police escort, the convoy of cyclists made for an impressive sight before arriving to be greeted by cheering crowds and proud family and friends.

Led by Welsh rugby legend, Jonathan "Jiffy" Davies, the ride brought together people from all walks of life - united by a common cause. Another legendary rugby figure, Alun Wyn-Jones, was among the participants.

Jiffy, whose family has been personally touched by the excellent care these centres provide, said: "Both of these charities mean a lot to me.

"The support they offer to patients and families across Wales, including my late wife and many close friends, is truly exceptional.

"They fund care, services, and projects that provide comfort and hope when people need it most. We're incredibly lucky to have them, and I'll keep encouraging as many people as possible to get behind these amazing causes."

Besides putting in the hard yards on the bike, numerous riders went above and beyond in the fundraising stakes, with one participant, Richard Morgan, raising an incredible £4078 while Team Rhondda Tri chipped in an impressive £1038.

"We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors Andrew Scott Ltd and UPRISE BIKES, to our volunteers, marshals, event organisers, medics, our friends at Velindre Cancer Charity, and every single person whose enthusiasm and commitment made the day an unforgettable one," said Swansea Bay Health Charity Support Manager Lewis Bradley.

# cyclists once again do the South Wales cancer patients



Above, riders line up outside Cardiff City Stadium at the start of the Jiffy's Cancer 50 Challenge while below left, Jonathan 'Jiffy' Davies delivers a pre-ride pep talk while another Welsh rugby legend, Alun Wyn Jones, is all smiles (bottom right) after completing the ride



## TikTok star Joel to support new charity appeal Cwtsh Natur

Swansea Bay Health Charity has launched an ambitious appeal to raise £200,000 to create an oasis of nature, where children and young people attending hospital can feel safe, calm and develop new skills.

Called Cwtsh Natur, the appeal aims to provide funds to turn a neglected outdoor space into a fantastic new facility boasting gardens and play, therapy and learning areas behind Neath Port Talbot Hospital's Children's Centre.

The site will be used by both the hospital's Children's Therapy Team and Swansea Bay's CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service).

And the campaign has already received a significant boost following the news that TikTok personality Joel Oates, along with his mum Clare, have agreed to get involved in promoting the appeal.

Joel, who has Down syndrome, received care and support at the Children's Centre when he was younger. Clare recalls how the centre became a "familiar, safe place" where Joel attended physiotherapy and consultant appointments, describing the staff as "welcoming, kind, and fun," making hospital visits something he looked forward to.

Joel has built a following of over 80,000 on TikTok and 12,900 on Instagram, where he shares his life with warmth, humour, and positivity.

His mum Clare said: "This charity is so important to us. The Children's Centre made a huge difference to Joel's early years, and we'd love to help raise awareness so that children can benefit from a calming, fun, and therapeutic outdoor space for years to come."

For more information or to support the Cwtsh Natur appeal, visit the appeal webpage at <https://swanseabayhealthcharity.com/appeals/cwtsh-natur/>

## Cancer care

### Artist's legacy lives on at Swansea cancer centre where she was treated

An artist's legacy will live on at Swansea's own cancer centre where her work has helped bring a splash of much-needed colour.

Maureen Craddock, from West Cross, was treated at the Chemotherapy Day Unit, or CDU, part of the South West Wales Cancer Centre at Singleton Hospital, before passing away in 2021.

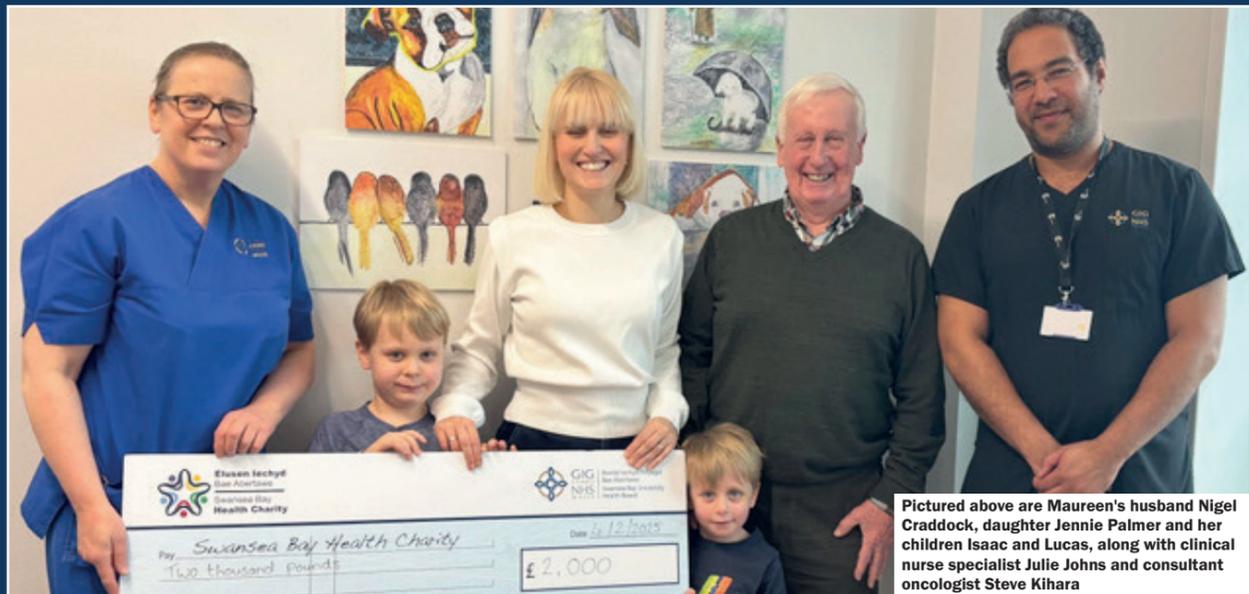
She was a keen artist, and her family have donated a series of her paintings to the CDU. Not only that but they have donated a four-figure sum towards the cost of new murals at the unit.

The murals formed part of a major upgrade of the CDU. This followed its move from a single storey building at the back of Singleton to Ward 9 within the main hospital building in 2023.

The upgrade was designed to make the former cardiac ward a warmer and more welcoming environment for chemotherapy patients.

It included a series of themed rooms, new flooring, additional treatment chairs and decorative touches such as murals. All of it was paid for by generous donations to the cancer centre.

Maureen's husband Nigel Craddock and daughter Jennie Palmer visited the CDU to donate the £2,000, raised by family and friends, along with a series of paintings of dogs and other animals – all Maureen's work. Jennie said: "We came to the idea of donating some pictures because mum did a lot of paintings when she retired down here. "We've got many of



Pictured above are Maureen's husband Nigel Craddock, daughter Jennie Palmer and her children Isaac and Lucas, along with clinical nurse specialist Julie Johns and consultant oncologist Steve Kihara

them in the house, but we thought it would be better if more people were able to benefit from them."

During their visit, Nigel and Julie were reunited with consultant oncologist Steve Kihara and clinical nurse specialist Julie Johns, who both cared for Maureen during her time in the CDU. Jennie, who had travelled from Poland with her two young children for the occasion, said they decided to raise money for the CDU as they wanted to do something more lasting.

Nigel added: "Maureen was never unhappy at the thought of coming up for chemotherapy, because of

the wonderful people on the CDU.

"She always had stories to tell when she came back, and it made her happy." Last autumn, Swansea Bay Health Charity, the health board's official charity, launched a fundraising appeal to mark the 20th anniversary of the South West Wales Cancer Centre, or SWWCC. Called Going the Extra Mile for Cancer, the appeal aims to raise £200,000 to support patients, families and staff.

**You can find out more about the appeal and the wider work of our charity by turning to pages 6&7.**

## Bride thanks Swansea Bay staff for helping mum make big day

A bride raised a toast at her wedding to four Swansea Bay staff for ensuring her mum was able to watch her walk down the aisle on her special day.

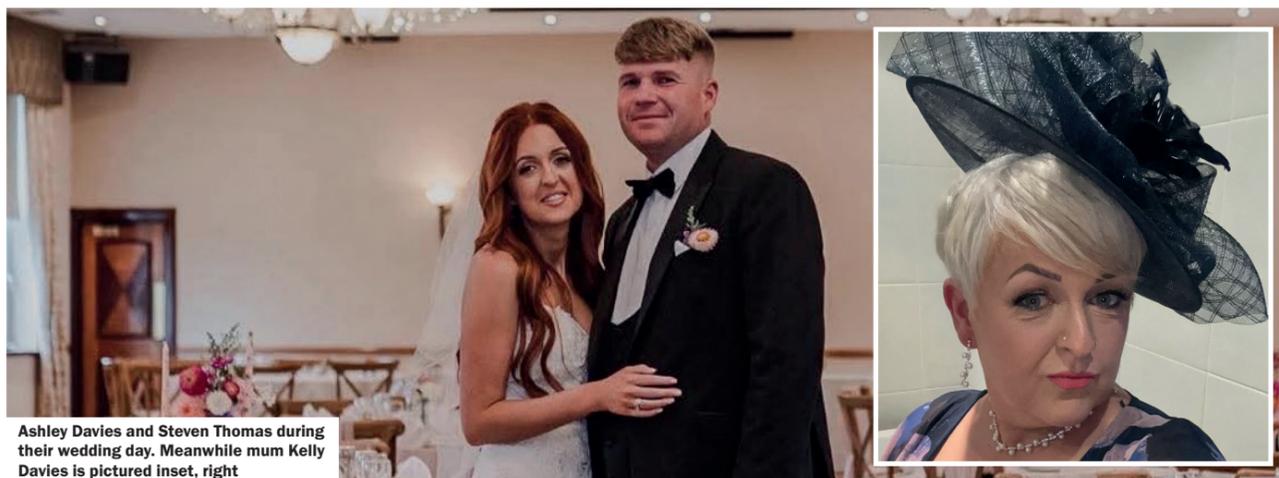
Ashley Davies and her partner Steven Thomas tied the knot at the Towers Hotel in Jersey Marine, but the bride was keen for the spotlight to be on her mum Kelly and the health board staff she said saved her life.

Ashley's mother Kelly watched her daughter walk down the aisle after overcoming cancer. She has been undergoing treatment for the past three years, including surgery and chemotherapy, after being diagnosed with mucinous ovarian cancer - a rare type of ovarian cancer.

The happy couple were due to get married earlier this year, but delayed it to ensure Kelly would be well enough to watch her daughter exchange vows.

Ashley broke tradition to give a bride's speech to talk about the importance of having her mum in attendance, while highlighting the quality care and treatment given by Nicholas Gill, Consultant Urologist; Rachel Jones, Consultant Oncologist; Kerryn Lutchman-Singh, Consultant Gynaecological Oncologist and Nagindra Das, Consultant Gynaecology Oncologist.

Ashley, a stroke secretary based in Morriston Hospital, said: "My mum has been through a lot in the last three



Ashley Davies and Steven Thomas during their wedding day. Meanwhile mum Kelly Davies is pictured inset, right

years, and it was so important to myself and Steven that she was there to watch us get married.

"I could never have imagined having to get married without my mother by my side. At one point, there was a strong possibility that this would have been the case.

"Without every single person that has helped care for my mother in one way or another, she would not have been with me for my wedding day. Their amazing care, compassion and support has really gotten us through what has been an awful few years." Previously a carer for Swansea Council, Kelly initially attended Morriston's Emergency Department after

having experienced pains similar to a hernia. Scans discovered she had mucinous ovarian cancer, and she underwent chemotherapy at Singleton Hospital along with operations at Morriston and Neath Port Talbot. Kelly is now having regular check-ups since being given the all clear from cancer in December 2024. While she is keen to move on from her cancer battle, she will not forget those who helped her during her treatment.

She said: "Everyone involved in my care meant I could watch my daughter walk down the aisle and get married, which meant the world to me."

## Think smart, think savings

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### Overseas recruitment drive comes to successful end



A recruitment drive aimed at filling hundreds of nursing vacancies in Swansea Bay has ended after reaching its goal.

Since the programme started six years ago, 569 nurses have been recruited from around the world – bringing a wealth of knowledge, expertise and culture to complement the staff already in place across the health board.

The majority of the nurses have gone into roles within adult acute care areas, paediatric and neonatal, theatres, cancer services, ITU, maternity and mental health services across our hospitals.

It leaves the health board in the fortunate position of now having a very low level of vacancies for Band 5 registered nurses.

Boosting nurse numbers not only ensures the health board can deliver better care to patients, it has also cut demand on bank and expensive agency staff to fill vacancies, which is helping the health board financially.

Head of Nursing Education and Recruitment, Lynne Jones, said: “The international nurse recruitment programme, alongside UK domestic recruitment, has been a huge success.”

## New medication transfer system delivers great results for patients

A new transfer system is ensuring medications are following patients more efficiently as they move through different departments and wards at Morriston Hospital – improving care and also delivering carbon and cost benefits.

Following a trial, steps have now been taken to ensure medications – which included

tablets, inhalers and insulin - follow patients swiftly after their transfer from the Emergency Department (ED) to another ward, with a member of the pharmacy team collecting them on a daily basis between Monday to Friday.

In just a week, medications totalling £800 were returned to patients who had moved wards. Scaled up over the course of a year, that will mean around £41,600 of medication will be given back to patients who were prescribed it; or restocked and used for other patients. Reducing the risk of medication being wasted, in terms of energy savings, that's 6,000kg



Members of the pharmacy team who have been involved with the launch of the new medication scheme

of CO2 equivalent saved – which equals 12 return trips in a car from Land's End to John O'Groats. The trial was led by pharmacy staff Daniel Greenwell, Clare Williams, Sophie Rogers and Joseph Penaluna.

Daniel said: “The analysis revealed that medications were frequently being left behind in ED.

“While medications

that aren't transferred are typically returned to pharmacy stock, this process is less efficient.

“The ED is an incredibly busy environment, and when an inpatient bed becomes available patient transfers need to happen quickly.

“Medications can easily be left behind in this process, but our intervention aims to address this.

“We are now looking to work with ED colleagues to improve medication transfer during out-of-hours periods and weekends, as failures during these times can still lead to missed or delayed doses.”

## Event showcases positive steps

Crucial public services helping to support people of all ages across Swansea continue to be strengthened, according to a new report.

Action that's seen local children get the best possible start in life, our amazing natural environment protected and enhanced and strengthened connections in our communities are all helping Swansea become a great place to live.

Swansea's Public Services Board (PSB) brought together representatives from across the city to celebrate achievements highlighted in its annual report and the PSB action plan which sets the next phase of work to improve life for residents.

The PSB Partnership Forum staged at the Swansea.com stadium welcomed partners from health, emergency services, education, charities, and community groups to reflect on progress and strengthen collaboration.

Chair of the PSB is Cllr Andrea Lewis, joint deputy leader of Swansea Council. The event showcased how joint working is helping to make Swansea a fairer, greener, safer, and healthier place to live.

## In fond memory of our colleague Mark

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of our friend and colleague, Mark Simpson. On 5th August 2025, Mark passed away following a bravely fought illness.

Mark (pictured) worked in the NHS for over 40 years across a wide range of finance roles and locations. For the last 25 years Mark has served as the Finance Manager for the Research and Development department. The department will not be the same without him.

Mark will be remembered for his warmth, kindness and unique sense of humour.

He was someone who always made the office a brighter place to be.

Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with his family at this sad time.

## Firefighters benefit from training session

Morriston Hospital recently welcomed the latest cohort of recruits from Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service for a unique training session on the helipad.

This first-of-its-kind collaboration, coordinated by the Estates Department, gave the recruits the opportunity to practice the safe and effective use of firefighting foam in a realistic hospital environment.

The training is designed to prepare them for potential incidents involving helicopters and other high-risk scenarios. These joint exercises are a vital part of building strong partnerships between emergency services and healthcare teams.



## Primary Care

Members of staff from the Bay Health and City Health Local Cluster Collaborative's virtual wards



# Virtual wards reach milestone as care at home shows big benefits

More than 12,000 patients have now been supported by Swansea Bay's virtual wards service.

The service was initially set up as a pilot project in November 2021 but proved so successful that it was later rolled out with a virtual ward now running within all eight Local Cluster Collaboratives.

Virtual wards provide wraparound support in the community to people with complex health and social needs.

Rather than a ward being made up of hospital beds, the patient's own bed becomes part of a virtual ward, meaning they still receive face-to-face care but in the comfort of their home.

A multi-disciplinary team made up of health and care professionals, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists and therapists, discuss how to plan and manage each patient's care, ensuring face-to-face assessment and intervention is completed.

Digital technology is used to pull the large teams together virtually, making communication and care planning more efficient and effective.

GPs and other community services can refer to the service, which also has a hospital in-reach team that works with hospital staff to identify patients who can go home under the care of the virtual ward, instead of being admitted.

This creates bed space for other patients and prevents the deconditioning associated with hospital stays for this group of patients. It also ensures a patient's health is optimised before handing them to the care of their GP.

So far, the virtual wards service has prevented approximately 4,000 hospital admissions (an approximate figure due to complexities around

## Physiotherapists helping with the little things

Patients coming to the end of their lives are being helped to do the little things that mean so much by a designated team of physiotherapists offering a rapid response service.

Sitting with their family for a meal, or spending time in their garden are examples of small but hugely meaningful pleasures that people in their final days often need support to achieve.

The physiotherapy project runs in the Bay Health Local Cluster Collaborative (LCC), which covers areas including Sketty, Uplands, Killay, Mumbles and Gower.

It sees physiotherapists visit end of life patients in the community to help them with issues around pain,

mobility, positioning and to alleviate symptoms, such as breathlessness.

They also support patients to achieve goals they may have, which could include helping them to sit in a chair to have a meal with their family, time outside in their garden or enabling them to sleep in their own bed. Bay Health LCC provided temporary funding for the pilot project, which has enabled a more rapid and enhanced offer by specialist palliative care physiotherapists based out of Ty Olwen.

The physiotherapists travel to patients' homes across the cluster, to help support them to remain at home in their final days, accessing support quickly and reducing the need for hospital admissions.

predicting admissions). Neil Hapgood, service improvement manager for Swansea Bay's virtual wards, said: "The service acts as an essential bridge between primary care, secondary care and community services by bringing together staff from across the health and care system to collaborate on the planning and delivery of care.

"This seamless approach prevents delays, allows high quality care to be delivered as prudently as possible and ensures Swansea Bay is moving in the direction of national policy.

"As well as treating the patient's primary problem, virtual wards also carry out a full comprehensive geriatric assessment to optimise the patient's care and their ability to live well at home.

"This can include falls prevention work, advanced care planning and medication reviews.

"Patients that leave hospital under the care of virtual wards are 70 per cent less likely to be readmitted than those that don't, showing the value in this holistic approach."

Data collected by the service showed that 98 per cent of patients were confident the virtual wards met their needs at home, and 98 per cent also felt they were involved in discussions about their care.

Dr May Li, virtual wards GP, has been involved in the service since its conception.

She said: "I am immensely proud of the wraparound service it provides to a very vulnerable cohort of patients in our community.

"It is one of the few services which provides a seamless link between our primary care and secondary care interface which is an incredible asset for our health board."

# Dental practice all smiles after winning sustainability award

A Neath Port Talbot dental practice has received national recognition for its dedication to becoming more sustainable.

GCG Dental Practice in Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen had already achieved a gold award as part of the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme.

Introduced by Public Health Wales, the scheme is made up of clinical and non-clinical actions that primary care staff can implement within their practices to become more environmentally friendly.

As more actions are implemented, the practices can achieve bronze, silver and gold awards.

Now, the dental practice has been named the winner of the Greener Primary Care category at the NHS Wales Sustainability Awards, held at Swansea Arena in June. Staff were awarded for a waste reduction quality improvement project they implemented as part of the scheme.

Yvette Powe, dentist at GCG Dental Practice and dental lead for Cwmtawe and Upper Valleys Local Cluster Collaboratives, said: "We decided to focus our project on waste as it is something the whole dental team contributes to in and out of surgery, so it would create a team approach.

"We discovered we were producing 20kg of clinical waste per week, which we aimed to reduce to 18kg within six months.

"We also reviewed the contents of some clinical waste bags and discovered they mainly consisted of gloves, swabs and treatment waste, such as patient bibs, which we expected. But we also found lots of patient cups and paper towels which helped us realise we were inappropriately producing clinical waste and could change this."

While reviewing the contents of clinical waste bags, staff also found that more than 400 sterilisation pouches, used to sterilise mirrors and probes, were being disposed of each week.

Instead, staff introduced storage containers for the mirrors and probes to help reduce the number of sterilisation pouches needed, while still adhering to cleaning protocols. Another step the practice took



GCG Dental Practice staff with Swansea Bay ED consultant and Sustainable Clinical Lead Sue West-Jones (far left), and Acting Assistant Director of Planning & Partnerships Commissioning and Sustainability Hannah Roan with Sustainability Planning Manager Hayley Beharrell (both far right)

## Swans healthy eating goal

Scores of schoolchildren are onside with healthy eating after a team-up between primary care staff and Swansea City AFC Foundation.

The youngsters learned how to prepare and cook nutritious meals after joining the Jack to a Chef programme.

City Health Local Cluster Collaborative (LCC) provided funding for the foundation, the Championship club's charitable arm, to help teach schoolchildren the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Five primary schools and a secondary school within the LCC area, which covers the south-east and central areas of Swansea, took part. The five week course offered a mixture of both theory and practical aspects around nutrition and cooking.

was to contact the manufacturer of the sterilisation pouches, who advised if separated, they could be recycled.

"We also found around 250 plastic cups were being disposed of a week," Yvette added.

"As a result, we introduced reusable stainless steel cups. We had to readjust the spittoons, which patients use to rinse their mouths, so the water could be dispensed into the new cups. It was a very successful implementation and a visible change for the patients, which received a lot of positive feedback."

As a result of the team's work, within six months they were able to reduce the number of clinical waste bags per week from five to four – a reduction of 20 per cent.

Over the following two years, this reduced again and the practice now consistently produces just two bags of clinical waste a week, weighing around 8kg – a 40 per cent reduction.

Yvette said: "The results have been very positive and the changes we made have been fully incorporated into our daily practice."

## Optometry clinic focused on boosting patient access

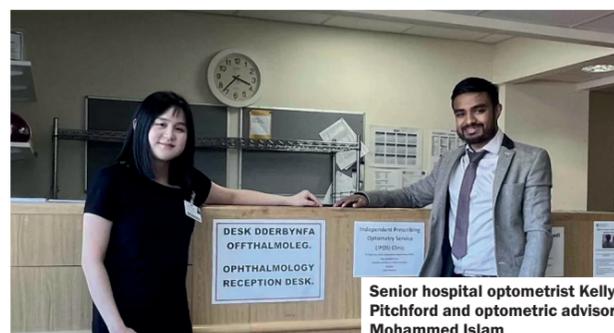
Optometrists are honing their skills and helping to reduce waiting times for patients as part of a new teaching facility in Neath Port Talbot.

The teach and treat clinic helps to train optometrists, who will be able to provide the independent prescribing service to patients in future.

Staff train qualified and registered optometrists who are studying for their independent prescribing qualification. This allows optometrists to diagnose, manage and treat a range of eye conditions.

It means patients can often receive their care sooner and closer to home as it takes away the need for them to be referred to hospital.

Students who come to the clinic, based at Neath Port Talbot Hospital, would have already completed theoretical examinations as part of their university



Senior hospital optometrist Kelly Pitchford and optometric advisor Mohammed Islam

course. Kelly Pitchford is the senior hospital optometrist who provides the training at the clinic.

She said: "All of these students have completed their theoretical examinations, and the next phase is to attend a placement. During the sessions, they gain practical knowledge and can build up a portfolio

to show that they've seen the required number of patients.

"Once they have completed the practical element, they go back to university to complete the third phase of their training which is a final examination.

"If they qualify then they can apply to be able to prescribe in the community."

Maisie Evans qualified as an optometrist from Cardiff University in 2019 and now works at Bater & Stout Opticians, in Morriston.

She has since received training at the teach and treat clinic as part of her postgraduate qualification.

"The clinic is an excellent way for independent prescribing students to learn and familiarise themselves with conditions they will be seeing in the community," she added.

## What's on

### Dates for your diary

September 30

**Morrison Major Trauma - Level 1 trauma for Emergency Nurses**  
From 9am to 5pm at Morrison ED.

Level 1 trauma training for emergency nurses is crucial for preparing them to handle life-threatening situations effectively, and is designed to ensure that emergency nurses are well-prepared to handle the complexities of trauma care, ultimately improving patient outcomes and saving lives. Please contact Nicola. Bromham@wales.nhs.uk to book your place.

September 30

**Fraud Awareness seminar**  
From 1-2pm, Seminar Room 9, Morrison Hospital.  
To find out how to book your place, contact Matthew. Evans20@wales.nhs.uk

October 1

**Steps to Wellbeing - Act on Anxiety**

The Occupational Health and Staff Wellbeing service has developed a range of sessions which we invite you to join. These are open to all staff, students and volunteers.

The aim of the 'Steps to Wellbeing' sessions is to work with you to share useful, applicable, and evidence-based techniques, to promote being healthy in work. If you have any queries please email SBU. OHWBTraining@wales.nhs.uk

October 8

**Social Services Training -**

**Child Neglect**

From 10am to 4pm, Room 111, Guildhall, Swansea.

This training day will consider the complexities of child neglect legislation and policy, neglect statistics and outcomes of research, professional curiosity, recognising, responding to and assessing neglect and approaches and skills when working with children who have experienced neglect. If you would like to book a place, please email Social.ServicesTraining@Swansea.gov.uk.

October 17

**Men's Health Group**

From 12.30 - 1.30pm

Calling all male Health Board staff, join us once a month for advice, support, or just a chat.

If you would like to attend on a monthly basis, please email SBU.OHWBTraining@wales.nhs.uk, including your job title and preferred email address, and we will send you an invite.

October 23

**Tissue Viability Fundamental Skills Day (adult RGN/RMN event)**

From 8.30am - 5.30pm at Singleton Hospital.

To provide staff opportunities to benefit from shared experiences and to challenge, improve and confirm existing practice. Please book using the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fundamentals-of-tissue-viability-swanea-bay-uhb-adult-rgnrmn-event-tickets-8550073109?aff=oddtcreator>

For more events for your diary, log on to the events listings on the SBUHB Intranet.

#### A NEW Swansea Bay knitting club is helping staff unwind during lunchtimes.

The Knit and Natters club is held in Baglan HQ every other Thursday, and all are welcome to join in.

Club founder, Deb Longman, said knitting is known to help improve mental health.

Research shows the popular pastime can reduce anxiety, depression, chronic pain and slow dementia.

Deb said: "We have just started Knit and Natter at lunchtimes once a fortnight as a way to promote active mindfulness, as a way to de-stress and relax.

"We are so busy in the health board – at home I find knitting a really good way to de-stress after a long day, it allows your mind to focus on something else.

"Mindfulness is so important but I'm not one who can sit and meditate – it doesn't work for me. But knitting has the same kind of effect. It has proven mental health benefits.

"It keeps your mind active and prevents mental decline – it's really good for your cognitive health as well as relaxation.

"It's also a really good way to get to know your colleagues."

## Help us by helping yourself

Carys Williams, who put the booklet on how to prevent deconditioning together



## New chapter as booklet helps with deconditioning

A new booklet aimed at helping people combat deconditioning has been launched in Swansea Bay.

Deconditioning is the process where a lack of physical activity during hospital stays can have significant negative consequences for patients, especially in older people. Patients lose physical and cognitive abilities within hours if actions aren't taken to prevent deconditioning.

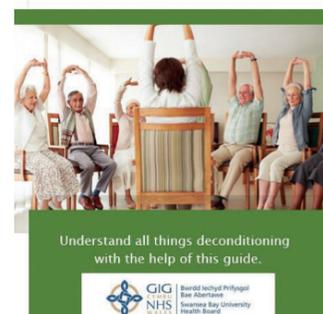
It causes harm to patients and can prolong their hospital stay and prevent them getting back to their home and family. It can also have long-term consequences.

The new booklet suggests a series of gentle physical exercises that patients can attempt to help slow down or prevent deconditioning, helping them to recover and be discharged more quickly.

It also provides guidance on what to take with you to hospital and how your family can support you.

The booklet, 'How to Prevent Deconditioning', was put together by then Cardiff University Occupational Therapy student, Carys Williams, during a placement in Morrison Hospital Emergency Department. Carys, who has since qualified and works as an Occupational Therapist in Cardiff's University Hospital of Wales,

#### HOW TO PREVENT DECONDITIONING



said: "I am thrilled that the work undertaken during my time working in Swansea Bay will be utilised to support families and patients.

"Our hope in creating this resource was to provide our service users, and the wider population, with a better understanding of deconditioning and its effects. By providing simple, holistic strategies, and providing links to useful community services, we hope we can begin to empower patients and families to engage with their recovery whether they are on the ward or at home.

"Providing this leaflet as soon as service users enter the front door will also hopefully support the goals of both health professionals and service users and help strengthen recovery outcomes. It was a wonderful opportunity to create this resource and I thank SBUHB for their encouragement and support."

Eleri D'Arcy, Swansea Bay's Falls Quality Improvement Lead, said: "I'm really pleased to see the launch of this informative and accessible booklet on hospital deconditioning, created by former student Carys Williams.

"It's a fantastic resource that will support both patients and staff and offer practical advice."



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: <https://swanseabayhealthcharity.com> (Registered charity number 1122805)

## Bay Health

Staff newspaper of Swansea Bay University Health Board

Contact Editorial: [communications.department@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:communications.department@wales.nhs.uk)