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University Health Board

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SH/ALTLT
16 January 2020

Chair and Chief Executive

Ms Janet Finch-Saunders AC/AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

Petition P-05-896 Prevent Closure of Ward 35 at Prince Charles Hospital

Thank you for your letter dated 6 December 2019 in relation to the reduction of older people's mental health beds over recent years within the former Cwm Taf region. Ward 35 to which the original petition referred to, a 12 bed older adult mental health ward in Prince Charles Hospital closed at the end of July 2019 as part of a long term programme of enhancing community services under a strategic programme entitled Valley LIFE.

The programme was fully consulted upon by the Health Board in 2014 with good support from key stakeholders. The strategic direction agreed by the Cwm Taf Health Board involved a significant increase in the community resources, joint working with both Local Authorities across a range of settings. As new community services begin to embed and take effect, we look to then reduce longer stay assessment beds. The bed numbers at the start of the programme amounted to 131 across eight wards.

In each stage of the Valley LIFE programme community investment was made totalling £1 million. The beds were reduced only as demand for them lessened. The same process was followed for Ward 35.

Phase 1 of Valley LIFE completed in December 2014 and involved the closure of Ward 1 in Dewi Sant Hospital (18 beds) and the commissioning of a Single Site Assessment and Enhanced Care Unit at Royal Glamorgan Hospital (RGH – Seren & St David's wards) and the investment in 7 day Crisis Mental Health Teams. This was successfully implemented with no adverse impact on occupancy in other similar wards.

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Cadeirydd/Chair: Professor Marcus Longley Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive : Dr Sharon Hopkins

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ICwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board is the operational name of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Local Health Board

Phase 2 completed in Autumn 2016 with the closure of Dinas Ward in Ysbyty George Thomas (YGT) (19 beds). The bed reduction was enabled through further investment to increase the Psychiatric Liaison Service from 5 to 7 days per week and significant change to the function of older adult mental health wards in RGH.

Phase 3 took the approach of reducing demand on beds in YGT through investment in community services and providing a focal point for these through the development of a new Health and Wellbeing Centre on site. This phase completed in May 2018 with Fernhill Ward (19 beds) closed in December 2017 and Cambrian Ward (19 beds) closed May 2018.

To date there has been a reduction of 87 beds over a 5 year period. After each ward reduction the mental health team reviewed progress, patient & family experience and demand before commencing the next phase. Throughout the programme bed occupancy levels remained as predicted in safe range and better than the national average. The Health Board takes part in a national NHS benchmarking for mental health services and the remaining bed profile falls in well within the national average of beds per 100,000 population.

I would like to take the opportunity to assure you that this type of service change is not unique. The Health Board initially showed as having a very high number of beds in this area when benchmarking across the UK which was one of the triggers for the change. Other factors included the development of community care and alternatives to hospital as knowledge and evidence has grown about what helps people and their families.

If it would be helpful some of the team would be happy to attend the Committee to further discuss this work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hopkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Sharon Hopkins
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive