

Public Questions pre-submitted to Health Board 28 September 2023

Question	Raised by	Answer
<p>The health board have appointed 2 band 5 nurses from overseas to Dolgellau Hospital; at the same time the board maintain that band 5 nurses are required at Tywyn before the inpatient ward can be reopened. The health board have also stated that they do not know when or if further recruitment of overseas nurses will take place for Tywyn. The health board continues to prioritise Dolgellau over Tywyn. Please explain.</p>	<p>Tywyn Hospital Action Group</p>	<p>Both Dolgellau and Tywyn Hospitals have had ongoing vacancies and recruitment difficulties over the past few years. Safe staffing for inpatient services due to the 24/7 nature has remained the priority at both sites and consequently services such as Minor Injury Units (MIU) were temporarily closed and staff redeployed to work on the wards. Following successful recruitment the Tywyn MIU has reopened, however the Dolgellau MIU remains closed as we continue to try to recruit to the vacancies.</p> <p>In April this year the decision to consolidate ward staff on the Dolgellau site was based on the ability to maximise the number of beds for the south Meirionnydd area. The Dolgellau site provides the biggest inpatient bed capacity, currently at 18 beds with an option for further increase in bed numbers. The maximum number possible in Tywyn would be 16 beds, thus the Dolgellau option provided the better option in terms of maximising bed capacity and mitigating the overall risk of the reduction of beds due to the temporary loss of bed capacity in Tywyn.</p> <p>As noted two additional overseas nurses have been appointed to work at Dolgellau Hospital which has filled the remaining vacancies for the ward. This take the total of overseas nurses now employed in Dolgellau to four, with no current vacancies for the ward. It should also be noted that on appointment the overseas nurses were offered employment at both Dolgellau and Tywyn, however the nurses chose Dolgellau Hospital. We are currently awaiting confirmation of our success in recruiting an additional two overseas nurses and if successful these nurses will take up posts in Tywyn.</p>

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		<p>Whilst inpatient beds and related staffing have been consolidated on the Dolgellau site, this decision was made in the context of ensuring a maximum provision of beds for the area, whilst the Tywyn inpatient ward was temporarily closed. Other non in-patient services have developed in the interim in Tywyn (such as Tuag Adref, Treatment Room and the reopening of the Minor Injury Unit), however these service are not currently in place at Dolgellau.</p>
<p>Employing agency nurses on longer contracts is an additional option for the health board. If the 2 band 5 nurses had been assigned to Tywyn, then the 3rd band 5 nurse still required could have been an agency nurse until further recruitment had taken place. In addition, no current up to date adverts for the band 5 positions can be found online. Why isn't the health board exploring every possible avenue to recruit nurses?</p>	<p>Tywyn Hospital Action Group</p>	<p>Agency staff were contracted to work at Tywyn Hospital in the weeks leading up to the decision to temporarily close the inpatient beds. The unreliability of the agency staff, often not attending for their booked shifts at short notice/on the day, was not a safe or reliable way to staff the inpatient ward. The unpredictability of the agency staff in attending for shifts placed an additional pressure on permanent staff to cover the shifts on their days off and annual leave, this was a major contributory factor in the decision to temporarily close the inpatient beds at Tywyn. We have a duty of care to our staff and ensuring their wellbeing, this was a major contributory factor in the decision to temporarily close the inpatient beds at Tywyn.</p> <p>All avenues are being progressed to recruit including national adverts: Dates that the Band 5 post for Tywyn has been out to advert:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. March 23- closing date 23/03/23- No suitable candidates 2. April 23- closing date 17/04/2023- No suitable candidates 3. May 23- Closing date 08/05/2023- No suitable candidates 4. May 23- Closing date 29/05/2023- Interviews held 08/06 and post appointed too. Delays in re-advertising following interviews due to a period of time where Trac was unavailable and the need to progress with some actions within the system to progress appointment prior to being able to re-advertise post. 5. July 23- closing date 16/08/2023 – No suitable candidates

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		<p>Following the last cycle of recruitment the post has had to go through due process again as establishment control approval had expired. Renewed establishment control approval has been sought and the advert will appear on line again in the next few days.</p> <p>Alongside the adverts, we have also trialled targeted social media campaigns via Facebook, which has been aimed at registered nurses in particular, in an attempt to increase awareness and interest in the vacant posts.</p> <p>Local flyers, posters and banners to advertise opportunities to work for BCUHB places and distributed locally over the past few months, and more recently for the Race the Train event. This is being done via the targeted social media campaign.</p> <p>As noted overseas recruitment is also being pursued and we are awaiting the outcome of the recruitment for the Tywyn vacancies.</p>
<p>Why hasn't the health board passed the lists of accommodation provided by Tywyn Town Council to prospective appointees? And why hasn't the health board taken up any of the accommodation options themselves, as health board representatives stated they would be at the public meeting held in May</p>	<p>Tywyn Hospital Action Group</p>	<p>We have been very grateful for the support the local community has shown in recognising the accommodation issues faced by those wishing to relocate to the Tywyn area. The list of available properties kindly provided to us has been shared with applicants, and we have received feedback from members of Tywyn Town Council that they have been supporting ongoing accommodation enquires from individuals who have been in contact. The Health Board is not acting in any intermediary manner other than sharing the information with candidates/applicants. We have continued to flag accommodation as an ongoing issue with local councillors, AM and MP representatives, both availability and affordability, as a potential barrier to attracting new staff to the area especially for the lower paid pay bands.</p>

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<p>Can the board confirm that the fortnightly recruitment meetings with councillors, the AM and MP are still taking place, bearing in mind that Tywyn hospital's inpatient ward has now been closed for 6 months?</p>	<p>Tywyn Hospital Action Group</p>	<p>Regular meetings have been held between local councillors, AM/MP representatives, initially on a fortnightly basis and now taking place on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Schedule of meetings held to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th April 2023 15:30-16:30pm • 28th April 2023 10-11am • 12th May 2023 10-11am – Meeting cancelled due to visit at Tywyn Hospital with Health Minister Eluned Morgan, councillors present at this meeting. • 26th May 2023 10-11am • 9th June 2023 10-11am • 23rd June 2023 10-11am • 7th July 2023 10-11am • 21st July 2023 10-11am- Meeting cancelled following visit with the Chairman on the 18th July to the site where an update was provided, councillors and MP present at this meeting. • 4th August 2023 10-11am- Agreed to change from fortnightly meeting to monthly meetings • 1st September 2023 10-11am – at this meeting the following two meeting dates were agreed and will take place 13th October and 10th November 2023
<p>A chart analysing health services provided at Dolgellau and Tywyn compiled by The Community Hospitals Trust, attached, shows that health services at Tywyn have been drastically reduced since 2017. Please provide details of the plan for reinstating these services to get us back at least to the provision of 6 years ago.</p>	<p>Tywyn Hospital Action Group</p>	<p>We are unable to provide a full response in the timescale. This information will require further review and investigation, noting also that some services, notably consultant led services, are provided by Hywel Dda. We will respond in full once we receive the information from the various services – both internal and external to BCUHB.</p>
<p>Tywyn hospital garden remains a wasteland. The health board completely demolished the existing garden 6</p>	<p>Tywyn Hospital</p>	<p>We have been fortunate to have received grant funding to provide dementia friendly outdoor/garden facilities for all our community hospitals. Tywyn Hospital</p>

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<p>months ago when it closed the inpatient ward. The garden had been created and nurtured by local volunteers, with donations used for garden ornaments, plants and shrubs. A special opening event took place in 2019. The garden was a beautiful sanctuary used by patients, staff and visitors.</p> <p>There has been no active work to complete whatever the board was intending. If the board has a plan for replacing this valuable feature, please provide all the exact details and schedules for completion.</p>	<p>Action Group</p>	<p>is one of the first sites to benefit from this funding and work is progressing well. Original planting and memorial items including benches have been removed from the garden area for safekeeping during the makeover process, and will be returned to the garden on completion of the scheme scheduled for early October.</p>