

## **Swansea Bay University Health Board**

**September 2024**

Swansea Bay University Health Board Wales serving around 383,000 people and employs just under 12,500 people.

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### **Maternity and Neonatal Services**

- Midwifery leadership has been strengthened with successful appointments to the Director of Midwifery and the Head of Midwifery post.
- The health board has confirmed that after a three-year hiatus, they will be re-opening the midwife-led birth centre at Neath Port Talbot Hospital on Monday 16 September, as well as the reintroducing their home birth service from Monday 21 October 2024. The health board has invested £750,000 and recruited 35 hospital-based and community staff to support the reopening both services, offering families a wider choice of how and where to have their babies.
- The newly reopened birth centre at Neath Port Talbot hospital welcomed their first baby within 24 hours of opening, describing the experience as being supportive and calm.
- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales conducted a follow-up unannounced inspection of the Singleton maternity unit in April 2024 and raised three immediate assurances, two of which were completed at the time of the visit. The health board responded appropriately to the inspection findings which HIW accepted. The report recognised significant improvements to the service since their last inspection, but recognised further improvement is required to ensure women and birthing people are consistently receiving an acceptable standard of care. They found staff were working hard to provide women and birthing people, and their families, with a positive experience despite the sustained pressures on the unit.

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## Staffing

- As at March 2024, the overall full time equivalent (FTE) for staff employed within Swansea Bay University Health Board is 12,543 including 5,963 registered nurses, midwives and health visiting staff, 759 medical and dental professionals.
- Between March 2023 and March 2024, the FTE increased by 461.5 including 365 registered nurses, midwives and health visiting staff, 32 medical and dental professionals.
- The agency spend as a percentage of the total pay bill in June 2024 was 3.0%, a 2.3 percentage point reduction when compared to June 2023.
- The new Swansea Bay Nursing and Midwifery Academy has been officially launched, paving the way for significant improvements in staff development and retention. The new academy will provide the training and support for nurses to make the most of their talents and expertise and help attract and keep staff.
- Abigail Harris has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Swansea Bay University Health Board. Abi is currently the interim Chief Commissioner of the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee.
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## Issues or concerns

### Maternity and neonatal

- Maternity and neonatal services were escalated to enhanced monitoring by Welsh Government in January following a number of concerns about the service. Welsh Government officials continue to maintain oversight of the health board's maternity and neonatal services. This includes workforce data alongside a number of quality metrics as part of the enhanced monitoring escalation arrangements.
- Earlier this month the National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP) identified that the neonatal intensive care unit was an outlier at alarm level (negative outlier status by 3 or more standard deviations) for blood stream infections (2023 data).
- The health board has commissioned an independent review to assess the quality and safety of its maternity and neonatal services, and the terms of reference for the review have been published on the health board website, following a listening period with families and staff.
- Concerns have been raised by a number of individuals and organisations about the review process including the engagement with families. There has also been recent media coverage about one of the families asking the South Wales police to undertake a criminal inquiry into the events surrounding the maternity unit. The police have indicated they are undertaking a fact-finding exercise to identify if there are any potential criminal offences to investigate.

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