

**Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol Grŵp Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a'r  
Blynyddoedd Cynnar / Prif Weithredwr GIG Cymru**

**Director General Health, Social Care & Early Years Group / NHS  
Wales Chief Executive**



**Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government**

Kirsten Heaven  
Assistant Coroner  
Coroner's Office  
The Guildhall  
Swansea  
SA1 4PE

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
14 June 2024

Dear Ms Heaven

I am writing in response to your letter of 26 April 2024 in which you provided me with a copy of a Regulation 28 Report ('the report') following the conclusion of the inquest into the death of Dr Nicholas Kim Harrison. This is a tragic case, and my sincere condolences go to all those affected.

In the report, the coroner noted several serious concerns relating to the care Daniel Harrison received, as well as actions both Swansea Bay University Health Board ('the UHB') and the City and County of Swansea Local Authority could have taken prior to the death of Dr Nicholas Harrison.

I note the report has been sent to the UHB and the City and County of Swansea for a response and action and I expect them to provide responses within your timescale that address the concerns raised. I am issuing a separate Welsh Government response to ensure lines of accountability are clear. I take the concerns raised in the report very seriously and I would like to set out the actions being taken.

In brief, since devolution began in 1999, the Welsh Ministers set the policy and strategic framework within which the NHS in Wales should operate and determine the strategic distribution of overall NHS resources in Wales. Various statutory duties are imposed on the Welsh Ministers under sections 1, 3 and 6 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 ('the Act'), including the duty to provide certain services throughout Wales, to such extent as they consider necessary to meet all reasonable requirements. These services include such other services or facilities for the prevention of illness, the care of persons suffering from illness and the after-care of persons who have suffered from illness as they consider are appropriate as part of the health service.

The Welsh Ministers have directed that Local Health Boards ('LHBs'), such as Swansea Bay UHB, perform those functions on their behalf. NHS Trusts provide

goods and services for the purpose of the health service in Wales. NHS Trusts in Wales also look after public health, and ambulance services as well as cancer and blood services.

The Welsh Ministers set the policy and strategic framework for the health service in Wales. The Welsh Ministers do not themselves plan or commission services, and do not themselves take clinical decisions about treatment for individuals nor do they provide services. NHS Wales bodies are accountable to the Welsh Ministers for the performance of their statutory duties. LHBs are responsible for planning, commissioning and delivering services for the population of its area within the national policy framework set by the Welsh Ministers. NHS Trusts are responsible for the delivery of services across Wales within the national policy framework set by the Welsh Ministers. LHB and NHS Trust chairs are appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (“the Minister”) and are directly accountable to the Minister for the delivery of services for their LHB or Trust.

I am the Director General for Health, Social Care and Early Years Group (“HSCEY”) within the Welsh Government and the NHS Wales Chief Executive. In this dual role, I am responsible for overseeing the delivery and performance of the NHS in Wales and ensuring an effective NHS planning process is in place. I am also responsible for: implementing ‘A Healthier Wales’ as the long-term plan for health and social care in Wales; ensuring progress and collaboration in respect of Prosperity for All and the First Minister’s priorities for government.

The Welsh Government has set up a National Strategic Programme for Mental Health in May 2024. This is being led by the NHS Executive, our delivery function within NHS Wales. An immediate focus for the mental health programme was the establishment of a Mental Health Patient Safety Programme, which all health boards are actively engaged in. There are five workstreams within the patient safety programme which cover procedural, relational, environmental, psychological and discharge areas.

The patient safety programme is focussing on improvements within several wards across health boards in Wales, including Ward F at Neath Port Talbot Hospital. The programme will set national standards for risk assessment and discharge planning. Planning meetings with each health board will be completed by mid-July 2024. Through our assurance functions at Welsh Government, we will ensure that recommendations made following the inspections by HIW are followed through and actioned.

I remain concerned about the failings of the UHB to provide effective and timely care to Mr Harrison, I am writing to the UHB to seek assurances against several measures, including the:

- number of patients offered a post discharge follow up within 72 hours, and the percentage that received one;
- number of staff trained in appropriate risk assessment and risk management;
- number of wards with anti-ligature assessments completed in last 6 months;

- number and % of inpatients with updated Care Treatment Plans (CTP) within 72 hours of admission - target of 95%; and
- number and % of patients with up-to-date risk assessments and risk management plans within 24 hours of admission - target of 100%.

This will be monitored at regular intervals through the UHB monthly Integrated Quality, Planning and Delivery meetings. I will also seek assurances about how other health boards are performing against these metrics. I am also aware that Digital Health and Care Wales are developing an electronic patient record that will help in the sharing of patient information.

The [NHS Oversight and Escalation Framework](#), issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care at the end of January 2024 sets out the process by which services of concern can be escalated.

I would like to thank you for bringing these issues to my attention. I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

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