



**REPORT TO : Gwynedd Council Scrutiny Committee**

**FROM: Ffion Johnstone, Area Director, BCUHB**

**MEETING DATE : Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September**

**SUBJECT: Provision of Health Services in Blaenau Ffestiniog**

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## **1. Introduction**

This report has been produced in advance of the meeting of Gwynedd Council Scrutiny Committee to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the rationale for the development of the health and social care centre and the reason why the historic bed provision, minor injuries unit and x-ray service were ended in the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The report provides information on the North Wales is Changing consultation and subsequent decisions taken by the Health Board and provides an update on progress against the relevant recommendations made at that time.

## **2. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Structure**

In 2015 the Health Board changed its operational and management structure with the establishment of three geographic area teams in the west, centre and east of the area. The area teams are responsible for providing and or contracting for a range of primary, community and hospital services to meet the needs of the population.

The West Area is responsible for delivering an extensive range of services across multiple locations across Anglesey and Gwynedd. This includes the main hospital site Ysbyty Gwynedd, six community hospitals in Holyhead (Penrhos Stanley), Caernarfon (Eryri), Porthmadog (Alltwen), Pwllheli (Bryn Beryl), Dolgellau and Tywyn and a network of health centres and clinics across the two counties.

Primary Care is delivered in the West by 35 GP Practices within the four GP Cluster areas of Anglesey, Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

## **3. Background to *Healthcare in North Wales is Changing* (2012) & the Changes to Locality & Community Healthcare Services**

The key proposals for locality and community healthcare services set out in *Healthcare in North Wales is Changing* (HCiNWic) were developed following consideration of the evidence base, the case for change to services and the need to sustain reliable and consistent services for the whole population of North Wales.

In summary they proposed:

- Focusing our resources on providing **reliable healthcare services at fewer hospitals** to make sure that the services provided are consistently available;

- **Providing the same healthcare services with the same opening times within 40 minutes' drive** for as many people as possible in North Wales;
- The following **ten hospitals should act as "hubs"** in local areas, where a broad range of services can be delivered consistently and safely:
  - Ysbyty Gwynedd;
  - Ysbyty Penrhos Stanley;
  - Ysbyty Alltwen;
  - Dolgellau and Barmouth Hospital;
  - Llandudno Hospital;
  - Ysbyty Glan Clwyd;
  - Holywell Community Hospital;
  - Deeside Community Hospital;
  - Wrexham Maelor Hospital;
  - Denbigh Infirmary
- **Minor Injuries Services** to be provided at each of the "hubs" seven days a week. There will also be Minor Injuries Services provided at Bryn Beryl Hospital and Tywyn Community Hospital to meet holiday demands, and GPs may provide Minor Injuries Services in very remote areas.

**X-ray Services** to be provided at each of the "hubs" from 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday. This will provide reliable X-ray Services that make best use of the available resources.

- Using these hospitals as the "hubs" meant that services such as X-ray and Minor Injuries Services would be available within 40 minutes' drive for nearly all of the population in North Wales. If proposals for providing healthcare through the proposed "hubs" were accepted, services for people living in Blaenau Ffestiniog to include X-ray and Minor Injuries Services to be provided from Ysbyty Alltwen. It was also proposed to provide inpatient care at Ysbyty Alltwen, which is 13.5 miles from Blaenau Ffestiniog.
- Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital, Flint Hospital and Llangollen Community Hospital were not designated as hubs. It was proposed that they be replaced with primary care resource / integrated health & social care centres. (Blaenau Ffestiniog was not designated as a hub because an analysis of the admissions and use of the Hospital showed that the catchment area was largely confined to Blaenau Ffestiniog itself with a low level of admissions from the area to the west and little activity from the east or the 'rural uplands' area. Other hospital hubs draw patients from a broader catchment area.)

In addition a number of **specific local proposals** were put forward for **Blaenau Ffestiniog**:

- -the development of a new facility at Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital to provide better community services and the potential expansion of primary care services on the site.

There was absolute support during the HCiNWic consultation for the following three key principles:

- **Targeted prevention** – taking action to promote good health and prevent illness
- **Enhanced care at home** – providing more care in their own homes for people who might otherwise need to go into hospital

- **Moving care from acute hospitals to the community** – moving services into local areas to bring better results for patients

The proposals were approved by the Health Board in January 2013 following a lengthy (18 months) and detailed wide consultation process overseen by the Consultation Institute and approved by the Welsh Government's Minister for Health.

#### **4. Implementation of HciNWic Recommendations & Delivery of Care**

As envisaged within the Welsh Government Rural Health Plan, the Health Board has sought to provide more holistic approaches to care provision rather than perpetuating a historical model of care. This includes providing more care at home, improved hours of community nursing, greater skill mix in community services, improved integration with social care and a wider range of specialist services delivered locally. The new Centre being constructed in Blaenau Ffestiniog will incorporate all of these principles.

##### **i. Why no inpatient beds ?**

In line with national and organisational strategic direction, the Health Board's aim continues to be to care for more people at home or closer to home , avoiding the need for admission to hospital wherever possible.

Inpatient Care - When the decision to close the 12 inpatients beds in Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital was made, it was agreed that six additional beds should be subsequently opened in Ysbyty Alltwn (which happened in April 2013). Since April 2013 there have been on average 79 patients with a Blaenau postcode admitted to Alltwn each year. Over four years, the average number of patients from Blaenau admitted each month to Ysbyty Alltwn is between 5.3 and 8 patients, which is in line with the additional six bed capacity opened.

Care at Home - It was also agreed that to support the care of patients with higher acuity medical needs at home rather than in a hospital setting, Enhanced Care would be rolled out across the locality in September 2013. Significant additional resources were provided in nursing, social services, third sector and admin support. In addition, a full 24/7 service community nursing has recently been rolled out across Dwyfor / Meirionnydd, after successful implementation in Arfon and Mon. There are some issues regarding robustness of cover which are currently being worked through.

Palliative Care - It is important to note that in recent years, the North Meirionnydd Community Nursing Team has been caring for more and more palliative care patients in their chosen / home environment. Previously these palliative care patients (as well as enhanced care patients) would have been admitted to hospital. Currently there are on average 11 to 12 patients at any one time receiving end of life care from the Blaenau Community Nursing Team which is the highest number of all the areas across Meirionnydd.

Nursing / Residential Home capacity - There is a shortage of nursing and residential beds across North Wales and more broadly across Wales. As a Health Board we are working closely with the independent sector, supporting homes and reviewing fees and contracts. In Blaenau Ffestiniog we have commissioned residential step up / down beds in Bryn Blodau, which are very well utilised. These beds are supported by the district nurses who now cover the whole 24/7 period. Whilst we acknowledge there are no nursing home beds in Blaenau, re-providing community beds would not be a safe or sustainable solution as these patients do not require inpatient care. With the introduction of 24/7 district nursing more patients are being nursed in their own home, with the Blaenau area seen to support higher numbers of end of life patients in their own home.

In summary, the opening of the additional six beds in Alltwn in conjunction with service improvements such as enhanced care and overnight community nursing and the establishment of three beds in Bryn Blodau Residential Care Home for step-up / down care,

respite and enablement (which have an occupancy level of 80%), ensures that there are a full range of care options in place for patients from the Blaenau area who would otherwise have been admitted to a community inpatient bed.

## **ii. Why no X-ray Services ?**

Four x-ray sessions used to be provided in Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital per week. The numbers seen were generally half the recommended level for a session, and this was unsustainable for the Radiology Service in terms of maintaining staff competences and the efficient use of resources and equipment. Bala Health Centre also lost their X-ray sessions a number of years ago for the same reasons.

An x-ray service is now available 5 days per week in Ysbyty Alltwen. We consider the distance needed to travel for an x-ray is reasonable (well within the HCiNWic 40 minutes recommended access guideline). It should be noted that the community heart scanning and heart failure service for Gwynedd was first piloted Meirionnydd and it will be delivered in the new centre in Blaenau.

## **iii. Why no Minor Injury Unit Service ?**

When the Minor Injury Unit (MIU) in Ffestiniog Hospital was running (in the hospital treatment / side room), an average of 2 to 3 patients were seen per day and most of those were for dressings or venesection (blood taking) for outpatients. This level of activity was deemed unsustainable and is in line with the findings of a report by Powys Health Board (March 2008) '*Review of the arrangements for clinical governance and patient safety within the provider services of Powys Local Health Board*'. In Section 2 on Minor Injury Services, the Report cites all of its seven MIUs in Powys as having low attendances, with only Brecon having an average of more than 10 new minor injury patients a day (sufficient to enable an emergency nurse practitioner to maintain skills). Some units had an average of up to 2 new minor injury patients per day and were "not sustainable as stand alone MIUs". The Report maintained that... "such low attendances mean that staff cannot maintain their skills".

As well as being able to access minor injury treatment during surgery hours in the Blaenau GP Practice (in line with the service provided by GP practices under an enhanced services specification), the wider Blaenau community can access minor injury services in Ysbyty Alltwen MIU (12.6 miles away, 21 minutes) Between April 2016 and the end of March 2017, 432 patients with a Blaenau postcode attended Alltwen MIU which equates to an average of 1.2 patients per day. From April to July 2017 when Alltwen MIU opening hours were extended to 10pm 7/7, 245 patients with a Blaenau postcode have attended Alltwen MIU which is on average 2 patients per day. In September it is planned for the opening hours to be extended until midnight 7/7 permanently. On average 90% patients waited less than 1 hour to be treated. In addition:

- *53 patients attended the MIU after 8pm in June 2017, compared to 9 in the same month of the previous year. 109 patients have gone to the MIU in the extended opening hours (since April 2017).*
- *The majority of patients that presented in the MIU were triaged as Standard*
- *98% found their own way to the MIU, only 2% were brought in by ambulance*
- *79% of patients were referred back to their GP*
- *93% of patients waited less than 1 hour to be treated*
- *87% of patients that came to Ysbyty Alltwen between April 16 – June 17 were discharged. 13% of patients were sent to YG ED, and 0% were admitted. )*

It should be noted that the decision as to whether any particular injury can be managed in the MIU is, however, a clinical decision to be made by the clinician seeing the patient. Hand injuries can often involve hidden damage to tendons or nerves. Increasingly facial injuries

are dealt with by specialist maxillofacial teams and it is reasonable for a minor injury clinician to refer on to a DGH if they think that is the right option for a patient. The high speed injuries generated by the mountain bike centre in Blaenau are unlikely to be amenable to treatment in a MIU. Indeed the frequency of an air ambulance response would support this.

#### iv. Implementation of the HCiNWic recommendations

The following table demonstrates how the Health Board (West Area) has been implementing the HCiNWic recommendations and describes the level of care we are already providing in Blaenau as well as the increased level of care that will be delivered when the new Centre opens at the end of September 2017.

Recommendation	Care being delivered
<p>➤ <b>The Enhanced Care at Home service is established in Meirionnydd by the end of May 2013</b></p>	<p>In line with national and Health Board strategy, more care is now being delivered in people's homes, where this is appropriate. Enhanced care (with the investment of over £250K in additional nursing, social care &amp; third sector posts) began to be rolled out in Meirionnydd in Sept 2013. All 6 GP practices in the locality are signed up to this service which cares for higher acuity medical patients at home. Although numbers are small (recognising the existing acuity of care already being delivered by Meirionnydd district nurses), the service is valued by patients, carers and GPs who appreciate the opportunity of care being provided for in their own homes rather than be admitted to hospital.</p> <p><b>24/7 Community Nursing</b></p> <p>In addition, a 24/7 district nursing service has been rolled out across Dwyfor / Meirionnydd in recent months. Initial feedback from patients is very positive, although the service is not yet robust due to staff sickness / vacancies. We are working to address this.</p> <p><b>Palliative Care</b></p> <p>The North Meirionnydd Community Nursing Team is caring for increasing numbers of palliative care patients (approx 11-12 patients at any one time) from the Blaenau area in their chosen home environment – previously both these patients and the enhanced care patients would have been admitted to hospital.</p>
<p>➤ <b>That inpatient care is provided from Ysbyty Alltwen</b></p>	<p>Following the closure of the 12 inpatient beds in Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital, six additional beds were opened in Ysbyty Alltwen (13.5 miles away / 23 mins in car). In addition 3 step up / down beds (as well as enablement and respite beds) were opened in Bryn Blodau residential home in 2015. During 2016, 66 patients were admitted to the Bryn Blodau step</p>

	up / down beds (16 stepped down from YG and 50 stepped up from home).
➤ <b>The Minor Injuries Unit closes by February 2013</b>	A Minor Injuries service is available 7 days per week, 8am until 10pm (to be extended to midnight 7/7 in September 2017) in Ysbyty Alltwen. The Blaenau GP Practice is also commissioned to provide a minor injury service Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6.00pm.
➤ <b>The X-ray Unit closes by April 2013</b>	An X-ray service is provided daily Monday to Friday in Ysbyty Alltwen.
➤ <b>With the exception of inpatients and minor injuries the current services provided from the hospital building remain and are further developed falling into four areas, namely, day treatments, wellbeing and prevention, service/staff base and information and advice.</b>	<p>With the exception of inpatients, minor injuries and x-ray, all current services provided from the previous Hospital building and the Health Centre will be transferring to the new Centre. Canolfan Goffa Ffestiniog will provide a focal point for access to health, social care, third sector and wellbeing services in the community and supports the Welsh Government and Health Board's vision for the health service of providing care in the community and closer to people's homes.</p> <p>A range of new and increased sessions of health, wellbeing, prevention and information / advice services will be delivered. This includes (but is not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>New and expanded GP Practice</b> accommodation</li> <li>➤ <b>New Consultant-led and Specialist Nurse Palliative Care outpatient</b> clinics and Complementary Therapies and a range of third sector Patient and Family Support services</li> <li>➤ <b>New Specialist Nurse Heart Failure and Respiratory Clinics</b> (with existing Diabetes, Rheumatology, Ophthalmology and Orthoptic clinics) and <b>new Audiology Clinic</b> in new multi-purpose Outpatient Suite</li> <li>➤ <b>Dedicated Children &amp; Young People's suite</b> providing Consultant Paediatric clinics, more Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) sessions, weekly Incredible Years Parenting, Baby Massage and Baby Group sessions, Antenatal Clinics and increased Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy sessions;</li> <li>➤ <b>A much strengthened Learning Disability Service</b> – with a regular weekly all day Dialectic Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Service, DBT Group sessions, an outpatient Learning Disability multi disciplinary outpatient clinic, and a drop-in service for service users,</li> </ul>

	<p>parents and carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Dementia Day Service</b> which will increase to 2 days per week plus Dementia Carers Support Group</li> <li>➤ <b>A new base for Adult Mental Health and Substance Misuse</b> staff with increased group sessions</li> <li>➤ <b>New Community Dental accommodation</b> with the intention to recruit a salaried general dental practitioner – advert out currently</li> <li>➤ <b>Regular Physio, Podiatry, Speech &amp; Language &amp; Dietetics</b> sessions</li> <li>➤ <b>New Stop Smoking Wales Clinic</b> (Public Health Wales)</li> <li>➤ <b>New Tan y Maen Community Wellbeing Project : Group Mindfulness courses / Walking sessions</b></li> <li>➤ <b>New Job Centre Plus</b> – Employment Support &amp; Disability Employment Advisors</li> <li>➤ <b>Cyngor ar Bopeth Gwynedd / Citizens Advice</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Staff base</b> for Children / Young People’s Team, Mental Health, Therapies, Palliative Care and joint office accommodation for District Nursing and Social Care staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A multi-agency project team will be established to manage the implementation of the changes including the redevelopment of the current hospital building. This will build upon the initial work already undertaken with Gwynedd County Council and housing associations.</b></li> </ul>	<p>A dedicated Task and Finish Group was established in January 2013 and met weekly for four months to manage the HCiNWic changes.</p> <p>A multi agency Integrated Project Board was then established in June 2013 with wide stakeholder membership from the Health Board, the local GP Practice, Gwynedd County Council, Ffestiniog Town Council, Mantell Gwynedd, Public Health Wales, North Wales CHC, FMH League of Friends and local Housing Associations.</p> <p>This Board met monthly over nearly 18 months and developed an agreed set of service model principles, reviewed current service provision / gaps and considered future planned service provision, produced an agreed service model to inform the business case and a schedule of accommodation for new integrated health &amp; social care facilities in Blaenau. The business case was completed by the end of March 2014.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A formal business case to support the improvement to facilities is developed and submitted to Welsh Government.</b></li> </ul>	<p>A capital business case for £3.9m was developed by the Blaenau Ffestiniog Integrated Health &amp; Social Care Project Board in 2013/14 and submitted to Welsh Government (WG) (April 2014).</p>

	<p>A presentation of the business case was made to WG Capital officials in October 2015 which included executive and member representatives from both BCUHB and Gwynedd Council. The business case was formally approved by WG in December 2015.</p> <p>Construction work commenced on site in Blaenau in April 2016 and is due to be completed in late September and is expected to be open to the public in October 2017.</p>
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We believe that the above demonstrates our commitment and progress to date in meeting the recommendations set out in *Healthcare in North Wales is Changing* in delivering the level of care originally envisaged in HciNWic across the age spectrum within the wider Blaenau community.

## 5. Engagement

In July 2016, the Area team appointed a dedicated Engagement Officer for the West, and her work includes supporting the Area Team to co-ordinate the current and future engagement activities in Blaenau Ffestiniog. In the last 12 months she has built and sustained relationships with stakeholders and community groups and arranged bi-monthly engagement events in Blaenau Ffestiniog to keep all members of the community updated on the new build and the services to be provided.

In conjunction with the Health Board's Communications Team, a regular newsletter is now being produced for the wider Blaenau community. Five newsletters have been produced and circulated to date and more recently videos posted on our social media showing the construction of the building and interviews with staff about the services that will be using the centre

The aim is to keep residents informed of developments, including the new and enhanced services that will be available in the new Health Centre. In addition, a new local Patient Participation Group (PPG) is being planned, initially in Blaenau Ffestiniog that will provide valuable input on specific services to influence local service delivery and future service development. The aim is to focus on a particular service or client group at each meeting. It is proposed that the first priority for this Group will be Older People

Examples of the engagement events that have been held in Blaenau include:-

- In September 2016 a large engagement event was held in the Memorial Hall for the public to meet members of the Health Board, Local Authority and third sector that will be present in the new centre to discuss their issues and see the architect plans and meet officers that will be working there e.g. CAHMS, Gwynedd Council and Health Visitors.
- During November and December 2016 engagement stands in the current Blaenau GP Surgery to encourage members of the community to be part of the new PPG. This fell on National Carers Rights Day at which the Engagement Officer also highlighted the information and support available for unpaid carers in the area. (3 carers were identified not receiving any support and information was given to them for assistance)
- In February 2017 we engaged with the Ysgol y Moelwyn School Council and some of their teachers to highlight the new and enhanced services for the next generation to the pupils – again they were unaware of the number of



services that would be available to them in their community and copies of the latest newsletter were distributed.

- In May 2017 there was an informal engagement stand in the Blaenau “Eurospar” to engage with local residents in an informal setting which resulted in supporting a young mother who needed support on accessing CAMHS services for her teenage son.
- In June 2017 the CHC undertook a survey of patients’ experience of the local GP services in the town.
- We have also been invited to be part of the local childcare provider “Caban Bach” family fun sessions in the future to engage with young parents and families to highlight the new and enhanced services that will be in the centre.

There is also ongoing engagement with the third sector through Mantell Gwynedd, who is represented on the Blaenau Project’s Service Transition Group and with Age Cymru who are currently running a Living Well Centre in Blaenau. The Engagement Officer has also been working with local third sector and other agencies in order for Jobcentre Plus Officers, CAB Gwynedd Officers to be present in the Centre to offer their services to the community in a new setting, as well as Tan y Maen Centre (Mental Health), Alzheimer’s Society and (to be confirmed) the Regional Substance Misuse service which is led by Gwynedd County Council. This will offer a “one-stop shop” of services that will support the community’s medical, health and wellbeing needs and through CAB and Jobcentre Plus access to support on benefits and access to employment/training.

Finally, the Health Board is currently developing a longer term overarching Clinical Services Strategy (“Living Healthier Staying Well Strategy”) setting out its strategic vision and how it will provide healthcare for the medium to longer term. As part of this Strategy we will be developing a programme of engagement across North Wales. This will ensure we continue to learn from feedback and patients’ experiences and will inform service improvements for people across the age range.

## **5. Conclusion**

Healthcare in North Wales is Changing (2012) set out a clear direction of travel for services in the Health Board area and significant progress has been made to date in progressing the recommendations at a local level in Gwynedd.

While people are generally supportive of providing more care at home and bringing services out of hospitals closer to the population, the decision to close beds, the minor injury unit and x-ray department were contentious decisions in the Blaenau area, and has to a large extent obscured the potential and scope of the new development to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century accommodation for the town and area, from where a significant range of health, social care and third sector services will be provided from October 2017.

With the opening of the new centre we believe that people’s experience of the new environment and the services provided will allay people’s concerns about the changes and that it will go along way to keeping them well and as independent as possible for as long as possible.