Welcome to the latest newsletter from Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Community Health Council (ABM CHC): the independent watchdog of NHS services within Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea.

We seek to encourage and enable members of the public to have a real influence in the design and delivery of the NHS services used by themselves, their families and communities.

We engage with patients and the public through a wide range of community networks, through visits to hospitals and clinics and through our Complaints Advocacy Service. Over the past few months we have increasingly sought feedback through online surveys and via social media—we aim to make it as easy as possible for everyone to have their say.

White Paper—Services Fit For the Future

Patients and the public in Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea may soon have a new organisation to represent their views on NHS and social care services. Proposals introduced by Welsh Government would see the abolition of Community Health Councils (CHCs) who have acted as the ‘Patient Watchdog’ since 1974.
Proposals would see a new arrangement which would span Health and Social Care. However many of the legal powers held by CHCs would not transfer to the ‘new arrangement’.

Vice Chair of ABM CHC Brian Moon said:

‘We should be using this once in a generation opportunity to strengthen the voice that local people have in the planning and delivery of services for themselves and their family, especially at a time when huge changes are proposed for our area.

Our concern is that instead we are considering a new organisation with no teeth and no remit to hear directly from the people of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea about their experiences or ideas.’

One of the most significant changes would be that the new organisation would have no role in scrutinising the NHS or holding care organisations to account.

The proposals are open for consultation and the closing date for responses is 29 September 2017. You can respond directly by:

Using the online form by accessing the following link:
https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/services-fit-future

Or - Downloading a copy of the response form from the above link and returning it either by e-mail to:
HQDMailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Or - Return by post to:
Healthcare Quality Division
Health and Social Services Group
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
CF10 3NQ

We would also like you to help us develop an alternative proposal – see page 9 for details.
Meeting dates

All our meetings are held in public and anyone with an interest is very welcome to come along.

**Full Council** - 7 November 2017, Aberavon Beach Hotel

**Local Committees**

**Bridgend** - 5 September 2017 - Glanrhyd hospital, Bridgend

**Neath Port Talbot** - 12 September 2017 - ABM CHC, Cimla Health & Social Care Centre, Cimla

**Swansea** - 19 September 2017 - Scout & Guide Hall, Brynmill

You can access our meeting schedule for the year on our website.

Member news

A warm welcome is extended to our newest members, co-opted members Mrs Margaret Austin, Mrs Elisabeth Thomas and Mr Brendan Campbell and Local Authority member Cllr Mo Sykes who join Swansea Local Committee. Local Authority members Cllr Scott Jones and Cllr Sharon Freeguard join the Neath Port Talbot Local Committee.
Farewell is bid to Cllr Edith Hughes, Cllr Pam Davies and Cllr Gareth Phillips, Bridgend Local Committee, Cllr Suzanne Paddison, Cllr Eddie Jones and Mike Rivers, Neath Port Talbot Local Committee and Cllr Jane Harris and Mary Davies Swansea Local Committee. We would like to thank them all for the work they have contributed to during their time with the CHC.

We have a number of vacancies for all categories of membership across the local committees. If you, or you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a member please get in touch.

**Complaints Advocacy Service**

We provide an independent complaints advocacy service to support people who wish to raise a concern about NHS care and treatment.

Our service is free and open to people living in Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and the Swansea.

Over the last quarter our Advocacy team has received 52 new concerns and 45 enquiries relating to clinical practice, standards of care, communication and services provided.
Stroke Services within the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board area:

ABM CHC has published a report outlining the views and experiences of stroke services.

We distributed a survey via the Bridgend Stroke Association and the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Stroke Association and received feedback from 81 stroke survivors, their families or carers.

The majority of responses were highly complementary about their care and treatment whilst being transferred to and whilst in hospital, paying tribute to the staff who they felt had treated them with compassion, were friendly and very attentive.

Sue Evans, Chair of ABM CHC explained how important it is for the CHC to highlight positive patient experiences;

‘So many people told us about the difference that staff had made at a very difficult time in their lives and about the positive impact of having a say in how and where they receive their care.

This makes a massive difference to people and we hope that the NHS look at where services are working well and share those lessons across the service.’

The CHC report identifies the negative impact on patients when care does fall below these standards.
There were instances where treatment had been delayed causing distress when the patient felt the delay may have led to a poorer prognosis.

The CHC identified discharge as one area where people are more likely to experience difficulties and call on the Health Board to do more to ensure that patients have access to information about what to expect and who to contact for support. They ask that the Health Board take action to routinely gather patient feedback in this area so that lessons can be learnt.

They ask too that the Health Board maintain a focus on patient flow between A&E and ward to ensure that delays are avoided.

**Dementia Care (One Single Thing) National report:**

In January 2017 the Welsh Government launched its consultation “Together for a Dementia Friendly Wales”. The consultation sought views on developing and implementing a national dementia strategy for Wales.

Following the launch CHCs decided to undertake a wide engagement exercise to gather views and ideas from people across Wales on improving NHS services for people with dementia and their carers.

CHCs across Wales asked people whose lives have been touched by dementia one question:
“What one single thing could the NHS do better to support people with dementia?”

We received over 500 suggestions (mainly from carers) and our reach through social media was over 70,000 impressions. We used what people told us to inform our response to the Welsh Government’s consultation.

People shared a wide range of ideas for improving services for people living with dementia. Some of these suggestions could be taken forward by the NHS independently, while others would need to be taken forward in partnership with others.

We hope that all bodies involved in the development and delivery of services for people living with dementia will use the report to consider where and how they might improve.

**ABMU Health Board ‘So tell us what you think’ mental Health Engagement events:**

ABM CHC attended a series of confidential listening events, where the health board were looking to gather information to help develop and shape Adult Mental Health services across their health board area.

We asked members of the public who attended whether they felt they had had the chance to say everything they wanted to say and if so did they think their views were listened to.

These responses were gathered in a report and shared with the health board.
Our current work and how to get involved:

We continue to work through our programme of engagement and scrutiny. We are currently looking to receive feedback from members of the public on:

- awareness of and experiences of the 111 service
- services received following discharge from hospital
- GP services and awareness of ‘Choosing Wisely’

ABM CHC members have been talking to people in hospitals, at supermarkets and talking to individual groups gathering this feedback. If you would like to contribute further please talk to us by contacting our office or by completing the surveys online at ‘Survey Me.’ (see links below)

- 111 — [http://svy.at/pfno](http://svy.at/pfno)
- Leaving hospital — [http://svy.at/ppno](http://svy.at/ppno)
- GP services and Choosing Wisely — [http://svy.at/pjno](http://svy.at/pjno)

Visit outcomes:

Our members have visited hospital wards, departments and GP surgeries over the last couple of months.

Members undertook visits to Stroke and Elderly Care wards to ask people about the food they were given and their wider experience of mealtimes on the ward,
following issues raised by patients and carers during the engagement on Stroke services.

**Outcome** — Overall the feedback we received was mixed, highlighting differences between hospital sites. The majority of patients told us their dietary needs were catered for.

Across all sites patients told us that they did not always have the opportunity to wash their hands before eating. Our report asks the Health Board to consider how people, particularly those who are unable to get out of bed unaided, can be offered the opportunity to clean their hands before every meal.

**Work with us to develop an alternative proposal for a strong people’s voice**

We believe a new, strong and meaningful peoples’ voice body should be designed and developed in Wales, for Wales. We should learn from others’ approaches and experiences and build on what is valued within our own current arrangements. CHCs are keen to work with others to build a consensus around a new model for the future. We would love to hear your views on the proposals and would welcome the
opportunity to meet as many interested groups and organisations as possible to develop an alternative proposal. One fit to deliver on the things that matter most to local people.

Time is short for us all to consider and respond to the proposals in the White Paper as the consultation ends on 29 September 2017. We would be grateful if you would share this with others so that together we can create a stronger peoples’ voice for the future.

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