



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**24<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

### **NORTH WALES HEALTH WATCHDOG – LESSONS LEARNT REVIEW BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD**

The North Wales Community Health Council (NWCHC), the independent health watchdog for North Wales, has reacted to a report published today by the Welsh Governments Public Comments Committee (PAC) which highlights slow progress with improvements to some health services in North Wales, despite the health board being placed under special measures since 2015.

Geoff Ryall- Harvey, Chief Officer of the NWCHC said ‘The NWCHC has played a significant part in this review, with senior figures of our organisation having attended the Senedd to provide verbal and written evidence. We have also supported a number of the Tawel Fan families to provide their evidence to the Committee.’

‘We totally agree with the recommendations made within the PAC report. The call for additional help for the health board is something that the North Wales Community Health Council has been asking for for some years.’

‘In March of last year, we wrote to Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, to reflect the real growing concerns of the NWCHC that the Health Board was yet to emerge from its period in Special Measures. In that letter we said that ‘There is a belief amongst NWCHC members that Special Measures is now the ‘*new normal*’ for the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and appears to have lost its impact. We are not the only people who believe this. Our members’ extensive contact with the public during our widespread public engagement sessions confirmed that there is lack of public confidence in the current health board being able to deliver the healthcare that the public in North Wales expects.

The new Chair of the health board and board members face the challenge of rebuilding public confidence as a key part of emerging from Special Measures. North Wales Community Health Council will continue to work with them to achieve this by reflecting the views and experiences of patients.’

John Stewart, a member of the Tawel Fan families group who continues to receive support from the NWCHC said ‘This report is highly critical of the health Board and a lot of what the NWCHC has said has been referenced within the report and accepted.’

‘The Tawel Fan families who took part in the PAC review are pleased that they had the opportunity to have sight of the report before it was released publicly. Mr Stewart went on to say ‘the families involved in the maternity failings in South Wales spring to mind this morning – I hope that the lessons learnt within the report (including the lesson of sharing a report with those affected prior to its public release) will spare families the anger and emotional duress that many of us experienced on the day that the HASCAS report was released last year. We just hope that Welsh Government and the Health Board act upon and implement the recommendations made.’

Geoff Ryall- Harvey went on to say ‘At a time of uncertainty for the future of Community Health Councils in Wales, the comments of the Tawel Fan families regarding the South Wales maternity review are both timely and extremely important. The Community Health Councils movement in Wales cannot allow these experiences to be repeated.’

### **Note for editors**

1 North Wales Community Health Council (CHC) is an independent statutory organisation which represents the interests of patients and the public in the National Health Service in North Wales. It came into being on 1 April 2010 as part of the reorganization of health services in Wales and covers the counties of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Ynys Môn. The six counties have a combined population of around 675,500.

2 The Community Health Council has six local committees, one covering each of the six counties. Each local committee comprises members drawn from three sources: councillors nominated by the relevant local authority, people nominated by the local voluntary sector organizations and local people appointed by Welsh Assembly Government.

### **More information**

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