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John Griffiths AM
Chair, Equality,
Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales

(via email: linda.heard@assembly.wales)

22 December 2017

Dear John

During my appearance before the Committee on 13 December 2017, I agreed to provide further information about Private Patient Units in Wales.

What is a Private Patient Unit?

An NHS private patient unit is a separate ward, series of rooms or side ward that is allocated for the accommodation of private patients. A patient or private medical insurance company will pay for these services, just as at a wholly private hospital, and patients are seen privately by their consultant, even if he or she also works for the NHS at the hospital.

Where are the Private Patient Units in Wales?

There are currently two private patient units in Wales:

[Bridgend Clinic](#) at the Princess of Wales hospital

A dedicated private healthcare unit located within the Princess of Wales Hospital grounds and operated by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU), which has inpatient beds and outpatient facilities.

[Glan Usk Suite](#) at Neville Hall hospital in Abergavenny

A private patient facility situated on the second floor of Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny, part of the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, that offers private overnight only in patient stays following theatre. All private inpatient procedures that need longer than an overnight stay are transferred to the NHS specialty ward as a private patient.

Additionally, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board provide private patient services at the University Hospital of Wales and University Hospital, Llandough. They do not, however, have a separate dedicated private patient unit.

Staff employed at at Bridgend Clinic and Glan Usk Suite are NHS staff and the income generated is reinvested into the NHS.

Are Private Patient Units registered?

The Care Standards Act 2000 and the Independent Health Care (Wales) Regulations 2011 expressly exclude NHS hospitals from registration. Therefore, private patient units are not required to register with HIW under current legislation.

Complaints

If HIW were to receive a concern relating to care at a private patient unit we would direct the complainant to the Health Board complaint processes in the first instance and we have previously done so. It is HIW's understanding that if a complainant is not happy with the Health Board's response to their complaint, they would have access to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales under the proposed new legislation.

Role of HIW in respect of Private Patient Units

HIW would direct any correspondence relating to private patient units to the Chief Executive of the health board, as responsibility for the service rests with them.

HIW would inspect a private patient unit in the same way as it inspects any ward in an NHS hospital, assessing it against the same Health and Care Standards.

HIW is also interested in the clinical governance of private patient units and follows this through its Relationship Manager roles.

The financial governance of private patient units is not within HIW's remit. However, this could be something of interest to the Auditor General for Wales.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kate Chamberlain
Chief Executive