



NEWS RELEASE

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TAWEL FAN - HASCAS REPORT STATEMENT BY NORTH WALES COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

The independent health watchdog for North Wales – the North Wales Community Health Council (NWCHC), has today provided its statement following the recent release of the report into issues relating to the quality of care at the Tawel Fan Ward in the Ablett Unit at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.

Representatives of the NWCHC, joined members of the Tawel Fan Families Group at the release of the report prepared by HASCAS (the Health and Social Care Advisory Service).

Geoff Ryall-Harvey, Chief Officer of the NWCHC, said: ‘We are continuing to provide support to the Families Group and to others who have been affected by the issues at Tawel Fan. The HASCAS report highlights major structural failures on the part of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). We are disappointed that so little of the detail within the report demonstrates that there has been true and wide engagement with patients and the public across the whole of the region. In light of these failures, the report makes 15 recommendations identifying areas where immediate and substantial improvement is required. Many of these recommendations concern not only mental health settings, but departments and wards across the health service, wherever older adults and those suffering from dementia or other mental health issues are treated. ‘

‘We are concerned that the report demonstrates so little empathy with the families of patients who were treated in Tawel Fan and are disappointed by the insensitive manner in which its findings were released to the families. Most of the families we have spoken to over recent months

and years still have not received clear answers to their question and concerns. We would therefore hope that the families will receive assurances from HASCAS and the BCUHB that release of their promised individual reports will not be delayed any further.'

Mark Thornton, NWCHC Chair said: 'Mental Health is a priority theme for us this year. We now look forward to receiving Donna Ockenden's second report on the care provided in Tawel Fan ward. We await sight of the Health Board's Action Plan to address the serious issues that have been highlighted. We shall closely scrutinise the quality of the Action Plan and the progress made towards achieving the targets identified.'

Referring to the HASCAS report, Mr Thornton went on to say: 'We were concerned to find that some parts of this report appear to cancel out a concern expressed by one family, by citing praise for good care offered by another family. Such different experiences should not be used to hide the fact that HASCAS has identified several serious failings on the part of the region's Health Board. These include a lack of out-of-hours medical care; lack of night cover on wards and a lack of appropriate equipment in our hospitals.'

'Furthermore, one of the most challenging aspects of this report for the Health Board to address will be the fact that the report recommends a more joined up review to look at the needs of older people and those with dementia across North Wales. It is also recommended that such a review should include all care and treatment settings and all clinical policies.'

Members of the NWCHC will be considering the HASCAS report in order to prepare for detailed discussions in our six forthcoming Local Committee meetings. Mr Ryall-Harvey stressed: 'I would urge people from all across the region to share their experiences of health services with the NWCHC. It is vital that people's voices are heard in relation to such an important report that affects us all.'

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

For more information or an interview with Mr Geoff Ryall-Harvey or Mr Mark Thornton, please contact: North Wales CHC, tel: 01248 679284 or Email: geoff.ryall-harvey@waleschc.org.uk