

Reference: IR898

Date issued: 6 November 2023

Swansea Bay UHB Maternity Services

I am writing in response to your request for information dated 12 October 2023, which was for:

Any records / documentation / internal correspondence / external correspondence held by Audit Wales relating to maternity services in Swansea Bay University Health Board within the last two years.

I attach an extract of the Audit Risk Assessment 2022-23 in reference to the maternity service, which falls within the scope of your request. We also hold further material that falls within the scope of your request, but I am withholding that information for the following reasons:

The information, if disclosed, would be likely to prejudice the Auditor General for Wales' functions in relation to audit. The disclosure of such information would discourage co-operation with auditors. Such co-operation is necessary for maintaining efficient and effective audit processes. The information therefore falls within the exemption provided by Section 33 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (audit functions). There is public interest in wider public knowledge of the workings of public sector auditors. However, the public interest in maintaining effective public audit by avoiding loss of co-operation that would arise on disclosure is greater than the public interest that lies in disclosure. I have therefore decided that the balance of the public interest is such that the exemption provided by Section 33 should be maintained.

The information is personal information. Under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I am unable to provide a greater level of detail as the disclosure of information from which the individuals concerned may be identified would be unfair and a breach of the data protection principles.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Information Officer

Audit Risk Assessment: 2022-23 Audit Year

Health Body: Swansea Bay University Health Board

Completion date: February 2023

Completed by: [REDACTED]

Reviewed by: [REDACTED] 17th April 2023

The Code of Audit Practice (CoAP) requires auditors to develop an annual programme of work, based on an assessment of risks of the body not making proper arrangements for securing effective use of resources. Auditor General Guidance XC18 (November 2019): 'Proper Arrangements in the Use of Resources' sets out requirements in further detail.

The two main aspects required within the audit work programme are:

an assessment of proper arrangements for the use of resources (which is discharged through structured assessment); and
the development of a risk-based programme of work that focusses on the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of services.

Auditors should use the Audit Risk Assessment (ARA) tool set out in this document to record audit risks relating to value for money (VFM). The ARA tool is made up of two parts - a form for recording audit intelligence (**Appendix 1**), and a form for recording a summary of major and significant audit risks which will form the basis for consideration of local audit review and inform regional risk assessments (**Appendix 2**).

Auditors should spend up to 3 days completing the risk assessment for a Health Board, and up to 2 days completing the risk assessment for a Trust or Special Health Authority.

As a starting point, auditors should use the cumulative intelligence from ongoing audit body engagement and the most recent structured assessment as an evidence base. This will then need to be supplemented with addition intelligence obtained through:

Holding audit planning discussions with select key representatives as part of ongoing stakeholder engagement (e.g. Chief Executive Officer, Board Secretary, Director of Finance, Audit Committee Chair) to seek their view on the significant risks the organisation is facing [NB – These discussions should be undertaken by Audit Leads].

Considering the findings from our 2022 structured assessment work (3.5 hours).

Reviewing the audit body's Board Assurance Framework and Corporate Risk Register (2 hours).

Reviewing [key aspects of performance information](#) and health body performance report (3.5 hours).

Considering past audit work, and any requirement to undertake a follow-up review (1.5 hour).






Any intelligence from ongoing engagement with other stakeholders inc. Welsh Government, Healthcare Summit, HIW, Ombudsman (3.5 hours).

The amount of time allocated to each activity is indicative.

1) For each arrangement / area of activity listed in **Appendix 1**, auditors should:

Record a summary of key intelligence gathered via the activities set out above. If there is no audit intelligence for a particular arrangement / area of activity, then colour code this blue.

Assign a priority rating for each arrangement / area of activity in line with the following descriptors:

	No significant risks or concerns relating to VFM.
	There are some concern, but the organisation is aware of these, is taking action to address the issue and is providing assurance on progress.
	There are some major issues, and the actions of the audit body are proving ineffective.
	There are significant issues relating to economy, efficiency, and / or effectiveness. Audit work in this area is timely and would create value by promoting savings, improvement, and transferable lessons.
	No or limited audit intelligence.

2) Complete the audit risk assessment in **Appendix 2** for major (orange) and significant (red) audit risks. Also include arrangements / areas of activity coded as blue as it may be useful for us to consider undertaking work in those areas

Appendix 2 – Audit Risk Assessment

Audit Risk	Why is this an audit risk?	Proposed action for Audit Wales	Value and impact of proposed action
<p>Maternity Services</p>	<p>There are significant staffing issues within maternity services which at the time of writing was resulting in the closure of the Tiron Birthing centre as there is insufficient staff. Recent Board updates have highlighted the Critical midwifery staffing levels “There continues to be challenges in achieving the required baseline staffing levels in the obstetric unit and community”. A review of the Health Boards QS papers contains very little detail on what work the HB is doing to assure quality and outcomes within maternity services.</p>	<p>A review of maternity services to assess plans for addressing the staffing levels, but also to provide assurance on the quality monitoring and measurements. Also a critical review of any improvement and action plans.</p>	<p>Maternity services are by their nature high risk. Previous issues at CTM Health Board have highlighted the implications if things go wrong., and there have been high level reviews across in England. If there are issues, there is a reputational risk for Audit Wales if we have not undertaken work in this area to obtain assurance or highlight concerns.</p>