

PRIVATE PATIENT UNITS: WALES

The Principality has potential for growth

This month, **Philip Housden** reviews private patient activity for the NHS in Wales

IN WALES, the NHS is organised into eight health boards which manage all healthcare services, not only hospitals, and there is one hospital services trust: Velindre Cancer Centre.

The published annual accounts of these nine organisations have been used in this article.

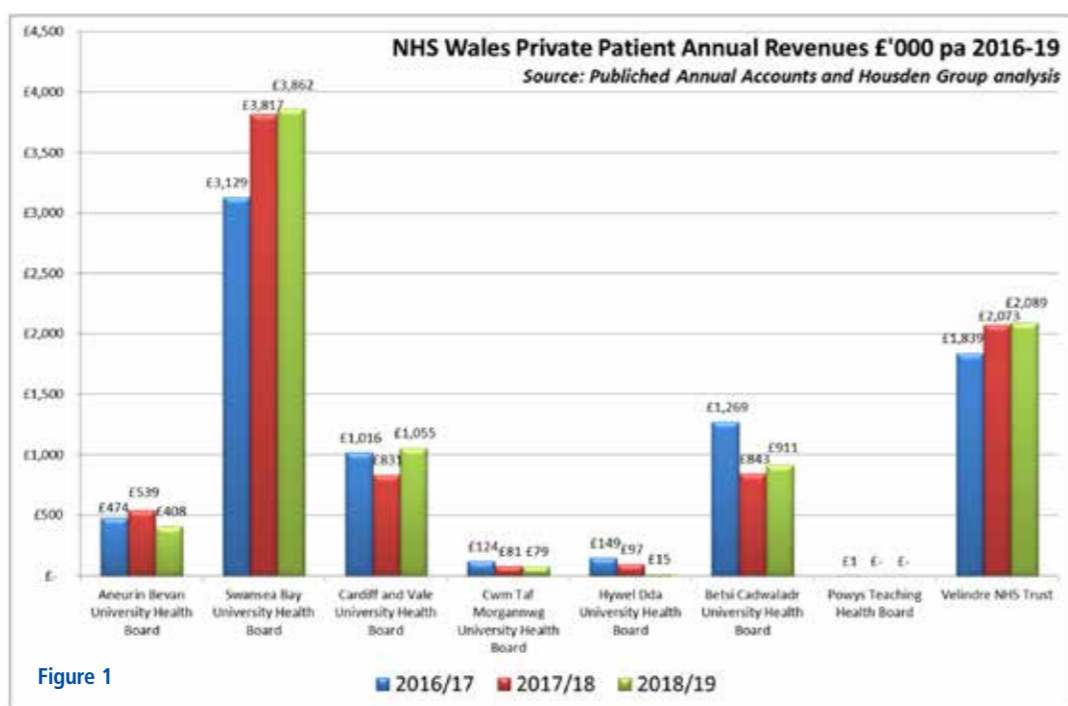
In Wales, total private patient revenues are £8.4m, up 5% from £8.0m over the past two years. This represents a steady 0.17% of the total revenues and is on a par with the lowest-performing regions in England, and well below the combined national average outside of London in 2018-19 of 0.46%.

However, this under-represents the true level, as a like-for-like comparison is difficult because the equivalent of NHS trust revenues are not separately reported by health boards.

Leading the way is Swansea Bay University Health Board, responsible for the Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend areas, with a population of nearly 400,000.

Morrison Hospital, Swansea, with around 720 beds, is the regional acute tertiary hospital for south-west Wales, providing specialist services including the Welsh Centre for Burns and Plastic Surgery, supporting not only south and mid-Wales, but the south-west of England and one of two cardiac surgery services in Wales.

The trust provides a range of private patient services including management of the Bridgend Clinic, a nine-bed PPU opened in 1997, located mid-way between



Cardiff and Swansea. The health board reported private patient revenues of £3.8m in 2018-19, 1.2% up on the previous year and representing 0.43% of total revenues.

New cancer centre

Velindre NHS Trust is a specialist cancer treatment centre, located on the outskirts of Cardiff City Centre and providing cancer services to over 1.5m people across south-east Wales and beyond.

In late 2017, the trust gained planning permission to build a new state-of-the-art Cancer Centre in Whitchurch, Cardiff, to be open by 2022-23.

The trust is also developing plans for a radiotherapy satellite centre to be located at Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny, Gwent, and has longer-term plans to open outreach units across south-east Wales. The trust's private patient revenues are £2.1m, up 1% on 2017-18.

In Cardiff, NHS private patient services are delivered from both University Hospital of Wales and the University Hospital Llan-dough. The trust does not have a dedicated PPU, but revenues across all departments grew 12.5% and £224k in 2018-19 to reach £1.05m, 0.12% of total income.

In Gwent, the population of

600,000 has acute hospital services provided from the Royal Gwent in Newport and also Nevill Hall Hospital, Abergavenny, where the other NHS-run PPU is located: the three-bed Glan Usk Unit, opened in 1995.

Limited services

This presently offers a limited mid-week inpatient and day case. All private inpatient procedures that need longer than an overnight stay are transferred to NHS speciality wards. Revenues from private patients in 2018-19 were £408k, down 24% from £539k the previous year.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is the largest health organisation in Wales and provides acute hospital services for a population of around 676,000 people across the six counties of north Wales – Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham – as well as some parts of mid-Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire.

Total private patient revenues across the three main hospital sites in Bangor, Bodelwyddan and Wrexham were £911k, up 11% in 2018-19.

Developing region

Earnings elsewhere in the three other remaining health boards amounted to only £84,000 in 2018-19.

South Wales in particular is a developing region for private patients and the independent sector has recently invested in significant new facilities, such as the

“ There is potential for NHS growth in the sector, if there is the political appetite to support such growth ”

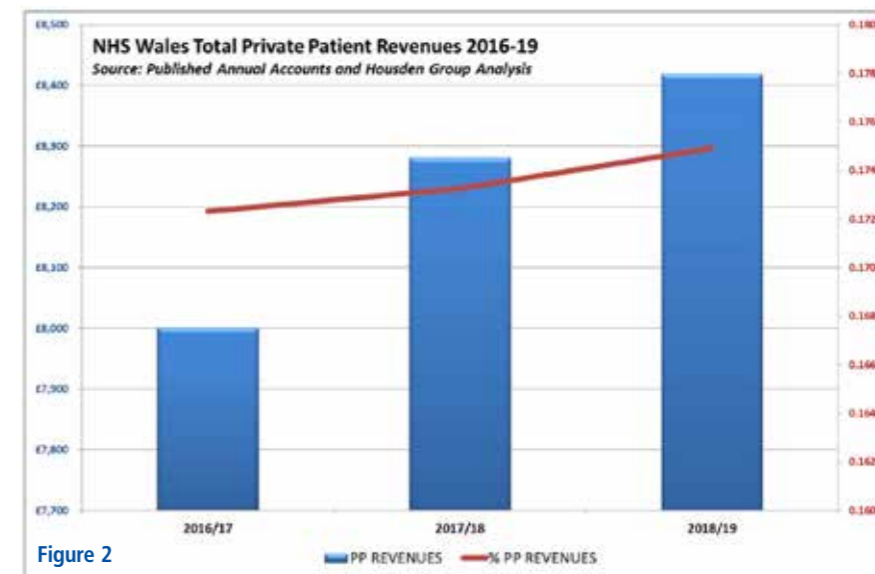


Figure 2

Rutherford Cancer Centre in Newport and the rebuilding of Sancta Maria Hospital in Swansea, due to open in late 2020 at a cost of £16m.

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political appetite to support such growth.

Next month: Scotland

Philip Housden (right) is a director of Housden Group



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