Dear Paul

The FoI figures from the Health Board show, on the basis of population ratio Carms:Pembs of 1.54, bed excesses of about 81, 65 and 42 in March 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively.

I worked out that an excess of about 40 is a generous estimate of 'reasonable' to account for urology, vascular and a few ENT or eye beds, that are the Carmarthenshire-specific specialties. There is a 28 bed urology ward in Glangwili but in Prince Philip these cases share a ward with other general surgery cases.

So there was a ward or two's worth of extra beds in Carmarthenshire in the last couple of years that appears to have been eliminated by March 2012.

However the CHC counts during the winter showed excesses of over 100 between November and February, during which % occupancy at Withybush was over 95% on each count, while that in Carmarthenshire was on average about 84%.

Then Withybush got nearly 50 beds back - our count in April was 280 compared with 233 in February (the gap between was because of the norovirus outbreak). That's still 21 less than the HB estimate for March - I think that may be because they included 'assessment' beds which we didn't as we thought patients were not supposed to stay in those more than 24 hours (though quite often they do).

So all that would be consistent with the idea 1) that historically we had fewer beds per head of population 2) that we were for some reason even more squeezed during the winter months in comparison with the hospitals in Carmarthenshire, and 3) (if the HB figures are to be believed) they finally got the message and equalized out.

However I am asking the CHC if we can do some more counts in both counties to see if there are any discrepancies with what the HB are telling us. I'll let you know the results if / when we get these done.

Kind regards

Peter.