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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Freedom of Information Request	FOI 22-336	8 th August 2022
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I have been contacted by a number of my constituents who are supporters of the Group B Strep Support's campaign.

As you will be aware, group B Streptococcus (GBS) is the leading cause of life-threatening infection in newborn babies in the UK. The National Childbirth Trust estimates that around one in every 2,000 babies born in the UK is diagnosed with GBS infection. While in most cases it can be successfully treated with antibiotics, sadly some babies develop life-threatening complications such as pneumonia, septicaemia or meningitis.

In May 2019, the National Institute for Health Research announced a landmark trial – GBS3 – which will test the effectiveness of two types of screening in hospitals in England and Wales. However, I understand that the timing of the trial has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. From the information my constituents have been given, they understand that so far less than half of the 80 hospitals that are required for the trial to be successful have signed up to take part.

My constituents would therefore like to know if any of the hospitals in the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area are taking part in the trial, and, if not, what steps will the Board be taking to encourage some of the hospitals to participate.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is not running the trial. The Health Board looked at the GBS3 trial in 2019, the Sponsor planned to open in 2020 but the trial was paused due to COVID-19.

The Health Board were unable to confirm capacity and capability as the trial requires ECM (enriched culture medium) testing for GBS swabs, and the Health Board does not have the facility to carry out this type of testing.

The sponsor has recently contacted the Health Board regarding participation and we are reviewing the protocol. However, our position is unlikely to change as on first read of the protocol ECM testing is still required.