

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Issue Date: 5 May 2023

STATUS: INFORMATION/ACTION

CATEGORY: PLANNING

**Title: GUIDANCE FOR ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION
ON CHANGES TO HEALTH SERVICES 2023**

Date of Review May 2024

For Action by:

Chief Executives and Chief Operating
Officers of Health Boards and Trusts

Action required by: ongoing

Sender: Professor Chris Jones

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Enclosure(s): Letter with hyperlinked guidance

To all Chief Executives Health Boards and Trusts in Wales
Cc: Directors of Planning

Dear Chief Executives

GUIDANCE FOR ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO HEALTH SERVICES 2023

1. The NHS has evolved continually since its inception on 5 July 1948. The way in which people are cared for today would have been unimaginable when Aneurin Bevan established the health service. Thanks to advances in technology, medicines and clinical practice, the NHS is caring for, and treating, people that may have otherwise died many years ago. Changing and evolving to meet the latest clinical guidelines, feedback from patients and staff and the growing expectations of the public is a constant for the NHS. It is therefore essential that service change is done well, and it is important that people using those services have a say in the way they receive them.
2. The purpose of this Welsh Health Circular is to share revised and updated guidance for engagement and consultation on changes to health services which aims to give NHS organisations guidance and prompts on issues to consider as they approach changes to services.
3. The original guidance was more than 10 years old and has been updated following the establishment of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care, Wales, operationally known as Llais. Llais is the organisation that replaced the network of Community Health Councils from 1 April 2023.
4. This new guidance has been developed following engagement with a range of stakeholders including the former Board of Community Health Councils, representatives of Llais and the NHS. That engagement highlighted that much of the previous guidance remained appropriate and has therefore been replicated in the latest guidance.
5. While this service change guidance is an NHS-facing document about NHS-delivered and commissioned patient-facing services, the principles outlined should be helpful in guiding any change.
6. In developing proposals, NHS bodies in Wales must consider the Duty of Quality, taking time to evidence how the proposal may impact on the improvement in health services and build towards better health outcomes for people.
7. While this Circular is directed to Chief Executives, Chief Operating Officers and Directors of Planning, it is important to note that all staff have a key role in generating ideas and supporting the development and delivery of NHS service change.
8. The document is available on the Welsh Government website: [Guidance on changes to health services | GOV.WALES](#)

9. The guidance should be applied from the date of issue. It is expected that the guidance will be reviewed after being in place for a year.

Yours sincerely,

PROFESSOR CHRIS JONES