

Draft Minutes: 23-04 (28 April 2023)

Members:

Medwin Hughes	Chair
Grace Quantock	Deputy Chair
Bamidele Adenipekun	Non-Executive
Jack Evershed	Non-Executive
Jason Smith	Non-Executive
Karen Lewis	Non-Executive
Rajan Madhok	Non-Executive
Alyson Thomas	Chief Executive (CE)

Attendees:

Angela Mutlow	Llais Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services
Ceri Sullivan	Llais Interim Head of Governance and Board Secretary - Welsh Government (WG)
Ben Brown	WG Llais Implementation Programme
Professor Chris Jones	WG Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Meeting opening

Welcome and introductions, declarations of interest and apologies Matters arising

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everybody to the first Llais Board meeting in public. He noted that this was a key milestone for our new body.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Barbara Harrington.
- 1.3 The declaration of interest register was agreed as being accurate and up to date. There were no conflicts of interest raised in relation to the items for discussion.
- 1.4 Professor Chris Jones, Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) of the Welsh Government (WG) Llais Implementation Programme was in attendance. He noted the significance of the organisation's role in representing the voices of the people of Wales in relation to health and social care services.

- 1.5 He thanked the Board for their work and contributions in supporting the establishment of Llais and noted that the Minister for Health and Social Services sends her best wishes to the new organisation.

Reports

Report from the Chair

- 2.1 The Chair provided an update on recent activity.
- 2.2 The Chair noted that he had recently been working with the Chief Executive and Welsh Government on matters related to the establishment of Llais and its infrastructure.
- 2.3 The Chair advised the Board that he had formally written to all Senedd Members to inform them that Llais was now established and operational, welcoming discussions about the work of the new body and its plans.
- 2.4 The Chair and Chief Executive had undertaken a range of media interviews as part of the organisation's launch earlier that month. This had proved useful and beneficial in raising awareness of the new body.
- 2.5 Looking forward, the key focus for the Chair would be to continue developing key co-operative relationships with our national partners and stakeholders.

Chief Executive's report

- 3.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on recent activity.
- 3.2 All staff from the Community Health Councils (CHCs), with the exception of one individual who retired, had moved across to Llais successfully. 112 former members of CHC have moved across to be volunteers and new volunteers had joined since the 1 April 2023.
- 3.3 All Llais staff were able to operate from 1 April 2023, using their Llais email addresses. However, due to the temporary information, communication and technology (ICT) arrangements in place, the ICT

systems were inhibiting the ability of staff to operate as successfully as they'd like to.

3.4 The Llais website was live, and actions were in place to develop the website further. Social media channels were up and running and being used to raise awareness about Llais's establishment and its functions.

3.5 More recruitment campaigns for new roles within Llais had taken place since the Board last met. A number of appointments and offers had been made to candidates. These included:

- 8 whole time equivalent (WTE) complaints advocate roles
- Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement
- Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services (fixed term)
- Head of People, Wellbeing & Organisational Development
- Head of Digital Infrastructure

3.6 The Chief Executive noted that engagement with key stakeholders and partners continues. Llais have met with the Bevan Commission and others to facilitate how they can work together in partnership. A meeting took place with the Welsh NHS Confederation to discuss collaboration arrangements and to agree that the Llais Chair and Chief Executive will join a meeting of the Chairs and Chief Executives of the NHS.

3.7 The Chief Executive also met with Age Cymru to discuss care home engagement and partnership working. Age Cymru provide learning opportunities for volunteers working in care homes, Llais is going to work with Age Cymru to produce eLearning material and on the ground learning for new volunteers.

3.8 The Chief Executive met with the Chair of Aneurin Bevan Health Board and the Chair Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to discuss ways of working. She also met with the Chief Executives from a number of health bodies and further meetings are planned, including meetings with Directors of Social Services.

3.9 The first Llais Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting took place the previous week, the focus of which was on ways of working, decision-making arrangements and delegations. There was also a discussion about a service change matter that had been transferred from the CHCs.

- 3.10 Llais regions have already been actively involved in a range of public consultations and engagement events.
- 3.11 Regional Directors have held introductory conversations with Directors of social services and are making arrangements to meet with social care leaders. They have also had a range of meetings with complaints teams in Local Authorities to ensure the arrangements in place for Llais to support individuals who wish to make a complaint works as smoothly as possible. Discussions are also taking place around the arrangements with Regional Partnership Boards to ensure Regional Directors can be in attendance of their Board meetings at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.12 The Chief Executive informed the Board that Llais Regional Directors were settling into their new roles despite the significant difference in the governance structure to the former CHCs. The SMT have been working really hard to ensure Llais staff feel supported and have what they need to carry out their roles. SMT are also working through a comprehensive development agenda in parallel to being active in front facing services, this has been challenging.
- 3.13 The Non-executives offered their support to the Regional Directors in relation to their roles as regional ambassadors. The Chief Executive informed the non-executives that a document had been drafted outlining how these relationships could work in practice provide clarity to both the Non-Executives and the Regional Directors. This would be sent to the Board the following week.
- 3.14 The Board was informed that the complaints advocacy service had received referrals for social care.
- 3.15 The corporate lead for Llais volunteers had been working with WG on further developing the volunteer arrangements, including the volunteer development programme, these would be developed in partnership with the volunteers. In the meantime, the Regional Directors were working hard to keep volunteers engaged and informed. Security checks would be needed for some of the volunteer roles, this would be discussed at SMT over the coming weeks.

A23-04-01: Circulate the role description and arrangements for the non-executives' ambassadorial roles.

Report from Implementation Programme Manager

- 4.1 An update on progress was provided by Ben Brown on behalf of the Implementation Programme Manager.
- 4.2 It was noted that there were many successes in the report but there were still some matters to be worked through.
- 4.3 The Board was informed that the Service Change guidance went up to the Minister earlier that week and so WG were expecting a decision on that fairly soon.
- 4.4 The programme close down report template had been sent out to the workstream leads for population. Those reports would cover things that had been successfully delivered, outstanding products for delivery, who those products would be handed over to and any risks or outstanding actions.
- 4.5 The Board was assured that the end user service would be completed by the end of May. Testing was underway but there were some networking issues that were out of the organisations control. The CRM system would be in place by the end of 2023. Llais have had a commitment from WG to fund and oversee the delivery of the digital infrastructure in a way that meets the WGs digital standards.
- 4.6 The Board was informed that Llais is rolling out a piece of software called Engagement HQ. This will enable the organisation to engage with people across Wales in a variety of different and creative ways. The ability for that to work successfully is linked to the end user system but we are hoping that will be set up imminently.
- 4.7 The Board raised a question about cyber vulnerabilities. Assurance was provided that cyber vulnerabilities had been considered and were being managed. It was noted that Llais were reliant on Digital Health Care Wales (DHCW) as part of its digital infrastructure and so additional assurance is provided through those services. The Chief Executive noted that there would be an awareness raising programme for staff on cyber security.
- 4.8 The Board was assured that Centerprise is on hand to support staff in addition to the newly appointed Head of IT and infrastructure.

- 4.9 It was noted that the Ministerial responsibility would soon be moved from the Minister for Health and Social Services to the Minister for Social Justice to protect the organisations independence.

Ratify decisions taken during establishment

- 5.1 A paper was presented listing the Boards decisions to date, those taken in and outside of committee. It was noted that the list of decision didn't include those taken at the last meeting or since the Board last met as they were in the process of being agreed as part of the minutes of the last meeting.
- 5.2 The Board formally ratified the decisions taken during the establishment phase.

D23-04-01: The Board formally ratified the decisions taken during the establishment phase.

Standing Orders

- 6.1 The Board last agreed a version of the Llais Standing Orders at its November meeting, these Standing orders included provisions specific to the establishment of the organisation. At this meeting the Chief Executive and Board Secretariat took an action to remove any interim arrangements, update the language used so that it was more every day and carry out an integrated impact assessment (IIA).
- 6.2 The Board was presented with the Standing Orders and assured that the integrated impact assessment (IIA) didn't highlight any negative impact. The Chief Executive noted that there would be opportunities to further develop the Standing Orders in a way that makes the Board and Llais more accessible to the public. A discussion would be held with the Board to consider ways that the Board can share information about its operations in a way that is transparent and accessible. Some examples of how this could be done were provided.
- 6.3 Board agreed the standing orders.

D23-04-02: The Board agreed the revised Standing Orders.

Remit Letter and Framework Document

- 7.1 The Board had previously received the Remit Letter and Framework Document. The Board was asked to formally note that they had received the documents and note their contents.
- 7.2 The Chief Executive requested that sessions be set up with Welsh Government policy leads to discuss some of the requirements such as the Anti Racist Action Plan so that the Board can develop their strategic response to those responsibilities.
- 7.3 The Chief Executive noted the importance of protecting Llais's independence in relation to health and social care in an unfettered way and assured the Board that there were some key areas of wording within the document that seek to protect that independence. The Chief Executive went on to say that the Framework Document would need to be reviewed at the end of the first 12 months of operations.

D23-04-03: The Board formally noted acceptance of the Remit Letter and Framework Document.

A23-04-02: Set up development sessions with policy leads in the Welsh Government to talk about the requirements set out in the Remit Letter.

Finance Report

- 8.1 A paper was presented outlining the process to date and the timescales for finalising and approving the 23/24 financial plan. It was noted that formal confirmation of the final budget was still awaited but discussions had concluded.
- 8.2 The first detailed financial plan would be presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its first meeting.
- 8.3 The financial plan was being developed by the Head of Finance, in discussion with senior colleagues. The approach was taking into account the requirements for Llais set out in the Welsh Government's remit letter, as well as the following aspects:

- The interim nature of the Board's plans, pending the outcome of initial engagement on the organisation's longer term strategic objectives and priorities in the year ahead
- the known financial commitments that were transferred from CHCs. The following aspects were drawn to the Board's attention as potentially impacting on the financial plan
- the pay awards for 2023/24. Discussions were underway with Welsh Government on the arrangements for receiving additional funding to accommodate this
- The outstanding staff pay awards for 2022/23. Llais had received confirmation that Powys Teaching Health Board will deal with these arrangements as it covers the period that staff were its employees
- cost of living increases. These pressures were being considered by the Head of Finance and factored into budget estimates.

8.4 Llais expected to receive its annual funding confirmation letter from the Welsh Government shortly. The overall maximum allocation was expected to reflect an increase from that set out in the Remit Letter. This followed recent discussions with Welsh Government colleagues about the budget estimate assumptions drawn from earlier funding to the Community Health Councils.

D23-04-04: The Board formally noted the progress set out in the finance report and agreed that the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee would review the first financial plan before submitting to the Board for formal approval.

A23-04-03: Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee to review the first financial plan before submitting to the Board for formal approval.

100-day plan

9.1 The Chief Executive noted that the document 'Our first 100 days' had been published on the Llais website earlier in April. Discussions were being held with the Senior Management Team about the best way to manage reporting on the delivery of the commitments in the document.

- 9.2 The Chief Executive provided a summary of progress on the delivery of the key commitments in the document. At this early stage in Llais's development, performance data and reporting arrangements were limited. The digital development programme would incorporate the design and introduction of a comprehensive organisational performance management framework.
- 9.3 The Board noted that it would receive regular updates on progress, and a full report will be produced at the end of our first 100 days.

Payment approval limits

- 10.1 The Board discussed the current payment approval limits set out in the agreed Standing Financial Instructions. The current payment approval limits required any payment over £25k to be approved by the Board. Practically, this was limiting the efficiency of the payment process and risked delay in making timely payments.
- 10.2 The Board was asked to change the arrangements to remove the payment limit set for the Chief Executive at £25k. The Board would still be required to approve the commitment of any expenditure above £25k.
- 10.3 Llais staff had considered payment approval limits for other organisations of a comparable size to Llais and the proposal was in line with those arrangements. The Board was also assured that payments could be monitored by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee through regular reporting arrangements.
- 10.4 The Board agreed to remove the payment approval limit for the Chief Executive.

D23-04-05: The Board agreed to remove the payment approval limits for the Chief Executive and the changes required to the relevant documents.

Llais committee arrangements

11.1 The Board was reminded that the Chair, in consultation with the Board members had previously discussed the committee membership for the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee.

11.2 Following these discussions, the Board considered the proposed membership as:

Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee:

Karen Lewis (Committee Chair)

Barbara Harrington

Jack Evershed

Jason Smith

Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee:

Grace Quantock (Committee Chair)

Bami Adenipekun

Medwin Hughes

Rajan Madhok

11.3 The Board agreed the proposed committee membership.

D23-04-06: The Board formally agreed the Committee membership.

Board Associate member

12.1 The Board was presented with a paper outlining the process and timeline for the appointment of an Associate Member, consistent with the membership provisions set out in the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

12.2 The Chief Executive noted the importance of this appointment to ensure staff interests were effectively represented through trade union nominated representation at Board level.

D23-04-07: The Board agreed the outline process and timeline for the appointment of the Associate Member and for the process to be started in discussion with the trade unions.

Annual report and accounts timetable for 2023/24 accounts

- 13.1 The Board was presented with Annual Report and Accounts timetable for the 2023/2024 accounts, for information. It was noted that the arrangements for the production of the annual report and accounts for 2022/23 would be discussed and agreed jointly with the Welsh Government.
- 13.2 This was because it would cover the ‘establishment phase’ of the organisation, before it was operational. Its preparation and sign off would reflect the financial, governance and decision-making arrangements in place during that period. As a result, this first annual report would be very different from that of future reports.
- 13.3 The Board noted that its Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee would need an appropriate amount of time to review the draft report.
- 13.4 The Board discussed the timetable for meetings of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee. The Committee Chair proposed that its first meeting should take place later than the originally planned date in May 2023 to allow sufficient time for the committee arrangements to be put in place.

A23-04-04: The Board agreed that the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee meeting should be scheduled for a later date.

Update on Welsh Ministers guidance on access, representations, and NHS service change

- 14.1 The Board received an update on the development of the following Welsh Ministers Guidance:
- Code of Practice on Access to Premises
 - Statutory Guidance on Representations
 - Guidance on Service Change in the National Health Service.
- 14.2 The Board noted that the guidance on representations had recently been published. The Chief Executive noted that this guidance would be helpful in establishing effective working relationships between Llais, local authorities and the NHS in Wales.

- 14.3 The guidance on service change in the NHS was being revised in response to the issues raised through the public consultation process.
- 14.4 The Board noted that a delay in finalising this guidance could lead to a lack of clarity for NHS bodies on handling service changes, particularly with regard to their relationship with Llais (as previously issued guidance referred specifically to responsibilities relating to Community Health Councils).
- 14.5 The Chief Executive suggested that it would be helpful if the Welsh Government could make clear to NHS bodies its expectation that in advance of the issue of the guidance, they should continue to consult Llais as they did with CHCs.
- 14.4 The Code of Practice on access to premises was being revised in response to the issues raised through the public consultation process. Once completed, Welsh Ministers would formally consult Llais on the contents of the draft code. The Board noted that arrangements for developing a response to the consultation would be developed over the coming weeks.

Promoting our activities and being accessible to people in Wales

- 15.1 The Board received, for information the final version of the document 'Promoting our activities and being accessible to people in Wales'. This statement of policy had previously been considered and approved by the Board
- 15.2 This document had been produced in response to the requirement set out in the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 to publish a statement of policy on these matters.

Meeting closing

AOB

- 16.1 No other business was raised.

Forward look

17.1 The Board noted that its forward look would be developed further in preparation for discussion at the Board's informal meeting in May 2023.

Questions from the public

18.1 A concern was raised that Llais would become a Cardiff centric organisation. The Chair provided assurance to the individual of the arrangements in place to make sure that Llais operated on an all-Wales basis, carrying out activities locally, regionally and nationally.

18.2 An individual had been having difficulty contacting the Gwent office. Assurance was provided that this matter would be looked into as soon as possible.