

Llais Gorllewin Cymru
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Eich llais mewn iechyd | Your voice in health
a gofal cymdeithasol | and social care

Llais West Wales
Suite 5, Floor 1
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Old Station Road
Carmarthen SA31 1LP

Attention of: Jill Patterson Director of Primary Care,
Community and Long Term Care

4th December 2023

Dear Jill

Llais response to Tumble and Cross Hands engagement

Background

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) informed us that the Tumble and Cross Hands GMS contract had formally been returned on the 29th of September 2023, the practice giving statutory notice as per regulations of 6 months. The list size of the practice is 7600 people. The Practice currently provides General Medical Services to its registered patients from two premises: a main site in Tumble and a branch site in Cross Hands.

Work began immediately with HDUHB to understand the emerging position and how public engagement should be designed and structured.

A Vacant Practice Panel was held by the HDUHB on the 17th of October 2023. A further Vacant Practice Panel will be held to reflect the

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Cyfarwyddwr Rhanbarthol (Llais Gorllewin Cymru)/Regional Director (Llais West Wales): **Donna Coleman**

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engagement process and a final decision will be taken by the HDUHB in an Extraordinary Public Board meeting in December where Board members will make a final decision.

The Role of Llais in Service Change when changes are proposed.

The NHS and local authorities must involve people when they plan, develop, and design services from the start so that they can understand peoples' existing and future needs.

The role of Llais is to help make sure they ask you for your views and then think about, and respond to what you say.

For full details of Llais role in Service change please see

<https://www.llaiswales.org/our-role-service-change>

Our role in planning the public engagement process.

- Through discussions with the Health Board, we worked together to agree a public engagement plan.
- The engagement period ran from 30th October 2023 until 26th November 2023, with late online responses still captured until 1st December 2023
- The engagement process used standard media, social media, poster, and paper/virtual survey approaches. The Health Board's dedicated Communications Hub was used to field telephone calls.
- Llais had the survey on their website, social media approaches were also used to promote the survey and engagement events.
- People completed the survey on Llais website this was shared anonymously with the Health Board.
- At the time of writing over 600 people have responded although it is recognised that a few people may have completed the survey more than

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once and thus the number of survey responses won't necessarily reflect the exact number of people who responded.

- An engagement event was held in Tumble on the 8th of November 2023 with approximately 92 people attending. A further engagement event was held on the 21st of November 2023 Cross Hands with approximately 160 people attending.

What people said during the engagement.

A few broad themes came through at these events.

- People were concerned that on the 1st of April 2024 that they would not have a GP.
- People were concerned regarding their medication.
- People were also concerned about dispersal of the patient list due to having difficulties getting an appointment.
- The practices that would take on extra patients could "topple over" and they would be in the same position as they find themselves now.
- People were also concerned about travel stating that the bus routes and timetables were not good in that area.
- People also questioned the opening of the new proposed facility and had negative thoughts on the timescale. With that said people were positive and welcomed a new facility.
- People did state that they would prefer that the surgery would be taken over by another provider and if that was not the case they would prefer a managed HB practice, with the understanding that they might not see the same doctor but would see a doctor in the same premises as they frequent now.

What we thought of the engagement process

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The Health Board worked with Llais in the early stages and communicated effectively, this included weekly engagement “catch-up” meetings. Llais attended the initial Vacant Practice Panel meeting and will also be present for the final meeting and the Health Board’s extraordinary Public Board meeting.

The Health Board was committed to the process, being open and transparent with the public and explaining the process and the 4 options. The events were well attended by the Primary Care team and Llais staff and volunteers.

The Health Board and Llais captured comments made on social media. Llais shared with the HB anonymously, the responses and themes that had come to them via the internet or in writing.

Our conclusion

It is important to highlight the respective roles of the Health Board and Llais within this process. The Health Board holds a contract with GP practices, if it receives a contract resignation it has a duty to ensure the affected people remain with a GP. It must also give due consideration to the community it serves. The Health Board must listen and consider the views of the public in any service change, this includes primary care.

As stated the role of Llais is to help make sure the Health Board ask you for your views and then think about and respond to what you say.

For full details of the role of Llais in Service change please see:

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Llais is not able to take an expert stance on the complex and challenging logistics of a GP provision or generate solutions for an area. Our focus is on ensuring that our conclusions are based upon the impact of the service change proposal to people that are affected, ensuring these impacts are understood and incorporated into the decision making.

Having considered information available, and public feedback during the engagement period Llais makes the following points:

The potential closure of Tumble and Crosshands practice was unsettling for the community. Most people we spoke to understand the difficulties in GP recruitment and also saw the realities in the options. With this said, the majority preferred another provider take over the practice. Most people stated that if another provider could not take the contract over their next preferred option is for the practice to become a Health Board managed practice. Llais would agree with the above.

The community also stated that the Cross Hands and Tumble area was growing with new houses being developed and that the community needed primary care services within its community. Travel and bus timetables were also a worry.

People did not want to be reassigned to another practice due to travel. They also felt with the extra patients that these practices would be assigned they could also get into difficulties delivering primary care services for the population that they serve.

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They also felt that some would experience difficulty accessing appointments with the doctors of those practices.

Other comments made by the public

People were enthusiastic regarding the new proposed hub that would be based in Cross Hands and took the opportunity of speaking to the Health Board's planning colleagues.

People did raise concerns in accessing the GP services at present, stating it was difficult getting through on the telephones and when they did manage to get through, sometimes all the appointments were already gone. It was also difficult to book an appointment in advance.

Yours sincerely



Helen Williams
Deputy Regional Director

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