

Draft Minutes: 23-06 (25 October 2023)

Members:

Medwin Hughes	Chair
Grace Quantock	Deputy Chair
Bamidele Adenipekun	Non-Executive
Barbara Harrington	Non-Executive
Jack Evershed	Non-Executive
Karen Lewis	Non-Executive
Rajan Madhok	Non-Executive
Alyson Thomas	Chief Executive (CE)
Mwoyo Makuto	Associate Member

Attendees:

Angela Mutlow	Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services
Ben Eaton	Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement
Ceri Sullivan	Interim Head of Governance and Board Secretary
Donna Coleman	West Wales Regional Director
Eleri Soanes	Administrative Support Officer
Sam Dentten	West Wales Deputy Regional Director
Sharon Walters	Business Manager

Welcome and introductions, declarations of interest and apologies Matters arising

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. He congratulated Mwoyo Makuto on her appointment as the first Associate Member of the Llais Board.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Jason Smith.
- 1.3 The declaration of interest register was discussed. The Chair informed the Board that he had retired from his role as Vice Chancellor of University of Wales and University of Wales Trinity Saint David as well as from various related roles. The register of interest would be updated to reflect these changes.

- 1.4 All other declarations of interest were agreed as being accurate and up to date. There were no conflicts of interest raised in relation to the items for discussion.
- 1.5 The Chief Executive informed the Board that Llais would shortly review its policy on declarations of interest and the supporting declarations of interest form. Any proposed changes would be shared with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for scrutiny and assurance.
- 1.6 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate account of what was discussed.
- 1.7 The actions and decisions log was agreed. Board members were content with the following actions being closed: A23-03-08, A23-03-12, A23-05-01, and A23-05-04.
- 1.8 The Chief Executive provided an update on the following outstanding actions:
 - A22-01-12: Discussion were underway to set up a session with the Welsh Language Commissioners office to learn about their experiences with cyber security.
 - A23-02-07: The Board previously agreed that Llais would aim to limit the use of acronyms so that the information we provide was clear and accessible. A glossary would be created but the glossary would be limited to acronyms that are widely recognised.
 - A23-05-07: The advert to appoint 2 Independent Members to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee was live. Board members were encouraged to share the information with their networks.
 - A23-05-08: The North Wales Regional Director had developed an outline briefing on vascular services. This would be further updated to reflect recent discussions and meetings between Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the patients and families of those affected by the vascular care provided. A final version of the briefing would be shared in due course.
- 1.9 The Board asked for an update on the development of the digital infrastructure. Members were informed that all offices were now on the Llais networks with the exception of the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea office. All staff were using Llais laptops and the development of the end user service would soon come to a close.

1.10 The design and testing for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was still underway. Feedback from the testing stage was positive and the programme is on target to deliver the system by the middle of February 2024.

1.11 The Board was informed that Llais had met with other organisations with similar remits to learn about the approach they took to develop key performance indicators. Llais's existing data system didn't provide a facility that would assist in identifying suitable key performance indicators across all its functions.

Report from the Chair

2.1 The Chair noted that in carrying out its functions, Llais would need to bear in mind that health and social care service providers were preparing for difficult times ahead due to budget constraints and with the winter months approaching.

2.2 Later in the meeting the Board would discuss and agree Llais's national and regional strategic priorities for the next 6 months. The Chair stressed the importance of this item and the work which would follow.

2.3 Work continued with Yr Urdd, Merched y Wawr, Mudiad Meithrin and Mudiad Ffermwyr Ifanc Cymru. This was an opportunity to involve people of different ages and backgrounds in shaping health and social services for the better. This activity was integral to Llais commitment to improving outcomes for the people of Wales and being proactive in communities.

2.4 The Chair reminded the Board of their important role in establishing a positive culture for Llais and in ensuring that the body was representative of all people in Wales.

Chief Executive's report

3.1 As per the Board's request, a paper had been produced covering the Chief Executives update. The Chief Executive explained that the paper sets out some of the activities that she had undertaken since the last Board meeting.

- 3.2 The Chief Executive provided a brief overview of the paper, informing the Board that work had been predominantly focused on engagement and building relationships with key stakeholders and individuals.
- 3.3 A meetings had been held with the NHS Chief Executive about the financial challenges facing the NHS in Wales. This included consideration of the need to understand the impact on proposals to change the way services are provided and the involvement of people and communities in these discussions.
- 3.4 Meetings were held with a number of representative bodies, including STAMMA, a UK wide organisation supporting people who stammer. Discussions focused on raising awareness of the issues faced by people who stammer when accessing NHS care, particularly at GP surgeries. Opportunities to increase Llais staff and volunteer awareness were also identified.
- 3.5 The Chief Executive continued to meet with key policy officials across Welsh Government. The purpose of these meetings was to make connections individually, to help make sure Llais had early involvement in policy developments that may impact peoples experience of health and social care services.
- 3.6 Llais held its first Wales wide all staff conference event. The session took place in person and was well received by staff. This was a useful opportunity to welcome new staff and hear from experienced staff on how they felt things were going. The focus of the conference was on the identification of our organisational culture, values and behaviours.
- 3.7 Staff were keen to continue these conversations. We have made a commitment to hold another conference in March 2024. Board members agreed the importance of their involvement in any future events.
- 3.8 Staff learning and development sessions were underway. A number of sessions had already been delivered, the focus of these had been on governance and cultural awareness.
- 3.9 A meeting had been held with the Equality and Human Rights Commission office in Wales. Discussions had focused on the development of our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion, as well

as our public sector equality duties, including a set of equality objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan.

- 3.10 The Chief Executive had also recently sent written evidence and provided oral evidence to the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee as part of its short inquiry on Data Justice: the use of personal data in the Welsh NHS.
- 3.11 Work on agreeing Service Level Agreements with our service providers was progressing. NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership hadn't previously provided a service to a non-NHS body that sits within Wales and so both organisations were trying to navigate this unique arrangement. The Service Level Agreements with Digital Health and Care Wales was in the process of being finalised and would be signed off shortly.
- 3.12 The Chief Executive stressed the importance of ensuring that other organisations responsible for advocating for and representing the public are clear that Llais is there to work with them not replace them.

Report from Board Committees: - Audit and Risk Assurance

- 4.1 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair provided an update on recent activity.
- 4.2 The Committee last met in August 2023 to consider and scrutinise the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 ahead of the document being shared with Audit Wales. The Committee was due to meet again in October 2023 to scrutinise the final draft but there had been some delays which were out of our control.
- 4.3 The Committee was expected to meet again to scrutinise the final draft in November 2023.
- 4.4 An internal audit service provider has been appointed through a formal procurement exercise. The Committee was involved in the development of the tender specification and agreed the appointment of the highest scoring supplier which was NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair noted that she

attended an introductory meeting with the internal auditors and felt positive about the discussion and next steps.

- 4.5 The Board previously took a decision to appoint 2 Independent Members to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. This was in response to the committee's identified skills gaps. The Committee Chair informed the Board that these roles were now being advertised through the Llais website and social media platforms.
- 4.6 The Committee Chair asked for the Board's support to promote the roles through their personal social media platforms and networks.
- 4.7 The Committee Chair provided an overview of the Committees upcoming work, this included:
- development and implementation of the Committee's effectiveness review process
 - a review of the Committee Terms of Reference
 - Agreeing the Audit Wales detailed audit plan
 - Agreeing the internal audit plan
 - Considering the results of the IT Health Check
 - Reviewing regular reports
 - Review of the Financial Control Procedures, Procurement Policy and Counter Fraud Policy.

A23-06-01: Board members were asked to promote the Independent Member roles through their personal social media platforms and networks.

Health and social care services in West Wales

- 5.1 The Regional Director for the West Wales region provided an overview of health and social care services in West Wales and regional activity that had recently taken place.

Overview of health and social care in West Wales:

- West Wales has a population of 389,000, living across 3 counties but the population density is far lower than average.
- 47,000 of these individuals are carers, 3,500 of which are young carers between the age of 5-17 years old.

- 32% are single person households – This impacts health and social care as these individuals sometimes need additional support particularly as they grow older or if they become unwell.
- People often move to West Wales for retirement. Whilst life expectancy is 78 for males and 82 for females, this doesn't necessarily mean a good quality of life.
- The challenges older people face in the West Wales region include: access to transport; ability to travel by car due to the quality of the roads; individuals are often left isolated and without support if they are widowed or their partners need additional support or care.
- Within the 3 counties, some people are deprived because of unemployment, education, health and disability and housing.
- A lot of the challenges individuals face are a result of rurality.
- The region has over 400 GP's working in the areas but many of those individuals work part time which reduces the number of appointments available.
- Each of the local authorities have different approaches to the way they deliver services.

West Wales regional activity:

- One of the local hospitals had been affected by the Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) issue, resulting in the closure of some parts of the hospital. Some patients had moved to an alternative local hospital. Llais had visited some of the patients affected by the situation to listen to their experiences.
- Engagement with the public continued. The regional staff were engaging with individuals working in partnership organisations as well as engaging with the public at events and in health and social care settings. This included, for example, at the Pembrokeshire show; Borth carnival; South Pembrokeshire Hospital; A Carmarthenshire carers event; and local care homes.
- The region had made representations on a range of health and care related matters, including a hospital landsite consultation; paediatric services consultation; GP de-registrations; protracted complaints process; branch and surgery closures; and ophthalmology care.
- The team had visited a number of social care settings, where they have received a warm welcome.
- The region's complaints advocacy service had a case load of 108, with 14 people waiting for their cases to be allocated to an advocate.

- 5.2 The Regional Director informed the Board that the region was operating with 1 vacancy which they were hoping to fill soon. Many of their staff were former CHC staff with the exception of a few new starters. Recruitment had been challenging. The team were hopeful that recruitment would be easier once Llais becomes more established.
- 5.3 The region was keen to become more digitally focused to help reach those in rural areas. However, in order to do this particular groups would need support accessing digital services.
- 5.4 The West Wales Regional Ambassador provided his thoughts and views on health and social care services in West Wales. He stressed the challenges that the public face as a result of rurality and the impact this has on travelling times, emergency services, and retaining skills in the area.
- 5.5 He thanked the West Wales region for their hard work and the positive impact they were making on the ground.

Our plan: October 2023 - March 2024

- 6.1 A proposed plan for the remainder of the financial year was shared with the Board for consideration and agreement. Further work needed to be done to the design of the document before publication but the key content was captured and included.
- 6.2 The priorities had been developed based on engagement and feedback received from members of the public, community representatives and groups and partners. The document addresses those areas that were identified as being the most important to members of the public.
- 6.3 Tîm Arwain had involvement in shaping the national and regional priorities for Llais. The Board was informed that the impact of the plan would be continuously monitored. Regular updates would be provided to the Board.
- 6.4 The Board agreed the plan but noted that some minor presentational changes would be made before the document was published.

D23-06-01: The Board agreed Our plan: October 2023 - March 2024.

Our activity

7.1 A full report on our activity was provided as a paper. A summary of the report was presented at the meeting which included:

- We continued to promote awareness of our services with different people, communities and organisations across Wales and the UK.
- Our social media presence was growing slowly, and the team was promoting Llais through printed and digital information which was distributed at events, in our communities and to stakeholders and key partners.
- More partnerships were being created with a number of key partners and organisations across Wales.
- Feedback from the public on 'our first 100 days' was being used to make our services more accessible.
- We were continuing to listen and act on what we have heard about health and social care services to make sure that decision makers in the NHS and Local Authorities meaningfully consider our insights.
- A presence at national events, including the Royal Welsh Show, Pride and the National Eisteddfod.
- We continued to pick up and take forward concerns and issues in our communities.
- Further development of how we deliver our complaints advocacy service, our engagement and our representations functions.
- Our complaints advocates have been supporting each other on new complaints about social care as well as working with the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales to improve our ways of working in partnership.
- We have worked with our staff, volunteers and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action to design and put in place a wide range of volunteering options, although more work was needed.
- Internal work has also taken place to develop our systems and services.

7.2 Some early examples of the impact of this activity was provided. This included:

- 814 complaints have been taken forward.
- 660 enquires have been responded to which may have prevented formal complaints being raised.

- The Welsh Health Specialised Services were looking again at their proposals to change fertility services.
 - The Welsh Ambulance Services Trust have worked closer with health boards to support the transfer of patients from ambulances to emergency departments.
 - the Emergency Ambulance Services Commissioner had further developed the approach to engaging with people and communities about the way the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer service works in Wales.
- 7.3 The Board was informed that work would be carried out to measure what activity works and what doesn't.
- 7.4 The report would be developed into a public facing document that would be published on the Llais website.

Finance Report

- 8.1 The finance report was presented to the Board.
- 8.2 The report addressed some savings that had been made across the organisation. These savings were predominantly a result of delays with recruiting to the roles within our organisational structure.
- 8.3 Monthly meetings had been taking place with the Partnership Team in Welsh Government to discuss budget and forecasting. Llais had been open and transparent in these discussions to ensure Welsh Government colleagues fully understood the organisations financial situation.
- 8.4 The Board was informed that the Welsh Government was in the process of preparing the draft budgets for the next financial year. Whilst Llais didn't need to determine its final bid at this stage, it was helpful to provide Welsh Government with a rough outline of the budget requirements so that it could be built into their planning assumptions.
- 8.5 The Board didn't raise any concerns about the content of the finance report. The Board agreed the importance of good financial planning and control over spend that was designed to deliver on our functions and priorities. It agreed that any identified underspend that could not

reasonably be used in 2023/24 to deliver on our functions and priorities would be notified to the Welsh Government for re-allocation.

D23-06-02: The Board agreed that any identified underspend in 2023/24 would be notified to the Welsh Government.

Organisational Structure

- 9.1 An update was provided on recruitment. This included information on roles that had been recruited to and those that were in progress.
- 9.2 The Board was informed that NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership was going through an internal review which would likely impact the level of resources available to support Llais recruitment. The Head of People, Wellbeing and OD was working with colleagues within Shared Services to understand the full extent of this impact.
- 9.3 A proposal was made to create a role within the organisational structure which was for a Director of Operations. The Board acknowledged the breadth of the Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services portfolio and supported the creation of this new role which would provide much needed support on the delivery of operations.
- 9.4 The Board agreed for the Director of Operations role to be added to the structure.

D23-06-03: The Board agreed the Director of Operations role would be added to the structure.

Corporate risk register

- 10.1 The draft Corporate Risk Register was presented to the Board for approval. It was noted that this was a working document, and would be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 10.2 An earlier draft of the risk register had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, with the exception of one new risk related to the agreement of Service Level Agreements with key partners. The Committee recommended that the Board approve the risk register.

- 10.3 The Board asked that the mitigating actions under the ‘systems failure’ risk be strengthened to fully capture what is needed to protect the organisation from cyber-attacks. The Board was informed that a meeting would take place with Digital Health & Care Wales to discuss cyber resilience and support, this discussion would help inform those mitigating actions and the development of cyber resilience.
- 10.4 It was noted that the newly appointed internal auditors would be key to shaping the approach to risk management and to providing assurance on its suitability and robustness.
- 10.5 The Board agreed the Corporate Risk register.

D23-06-04: The Board agreed the corporate risk register.

Welsh Language Standards compliance notice

- 11.1 The Board was informed that Llais had received its final Welsh Language Standards compliance notice following consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner on the proposed standards.
- 11.2 Llais would need to be compliant by the 1 April 2024. Work would be done to assess current compliance across all regions. The Chief Executive noted that we had been voluntarily complying with the standards previously imposed on Community Health Councils and so we weren’t starting from a position of no compliance.
- 11.3 Work would also be done to further develop our induction for new starters to ensure individuals fully understood Llais’s commitment to the Welsh language and the requirements of the standards.
- 11.4 The Board noted the statutory requirements and the timeline for compliance.

Our locations

- 12.1 A report was provided on existing locations and their current lease agreements.
- 12.2 To allow time for us to develop our location strategy, some existing office leases would need to be extended. NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership have been providing professional estates support for

discussions with relevant landlords. The existing lease arrangements would continue for the following offices:

- Cardiff & Vale office
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg office
- North Wales, Bangor office
- Powys, Newtown Office
- National office
- Powys, Brecon office
- West Wales, Milford Haven Office

12.3 In addition, negotiations to agree new leases for 3 offices needed to take place. These were for the Gwent, Carmarthen and North Wales, Wrexham offices.

12.4 It was noted that there was no action required on the Neath Port Talbot & Swansea, Cimla office as the leases were still in contract.

12.5 There was also no action required for the existing Aberystwyth office as new arrangements were being developed following staff changes in the West Wales team. An option to use the hot desking area in a Welsh Government building was being explored.

12.6 The Board noted the continuation of the existing lease arrangements and agreed that negotiations should move forward on the 3 remaining buildings – the Gwent, Carmarthen and North Wales, Wrexham offices.

12.7 Members were informed that work had been done to determine whether any of the Llais offices had been affected by the Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) issue that had affected many public buildings built between the 1950s and 1990s. It was confirmed that none of the Llais offices were affected by this issues.

12.8 The Board was advised that the draft Location Strategy would be considered by the Board at its April 2024 public board meeting.

12.9 The Chair requested an update on lease breaks following the remaining negotiations.

D23-06-05: The Board noted the continuation of the existing lease arrangements and agreed that negotiations should move forward on the 3

remaining buildings – the Gwent, Carmarthen and North Wales, Wrexham offices.

A23-06-02: Provide update on lease breaks following the remaining negotiations.

Standing Financial Instructions

- 13.1 Some proposed changes were made to the Standing Financial Instructions to ensure good governance and operational efficiency. Details of these changes were provided.
- 13.2 The Chief Executive as Accounting Officer provided assurance that the new arrangements were necessary and reflected good governance practice.
- 13.3 The Board agreed the revised Standing Financial Instructions.
- 13.4 It was noted that changes would now need to be made to the Oracle system to reflect the new arrangements outlined in the revised Standing Financial Instructions.

D23-06-06: The Board agreed the revised Standing Financial Instructions.

Any other business

- 14.1 No other business was raised

Forward look

- 15.1 The forward look was noted and acknowledged as a working document that would be updated to reflect organisational priorities.

Questions from the public

- 16.1 The Chair noted that no questions had been received from members of the public in advance of the meeting.
- 16.2 There were no members of the public physically present and so the Chair asked that those joining remotely email any questions they had to the Llais enquiries mailbox: enquiries@llaiscymru.org.

16.3 The meeting closed.

Draft