

LLAIS POWYS REGION REPORT ON WHAT WE'VE HEARD IN POWYS



**Community Focused Engagement in Builth Wells &
Llanwrtyd Wells Locality
November 2023**

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This report is also available in Welsh.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us.

You can download it from our website or ask for a copy by contacting our office.

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ABOUT LLAIS



We believe in a healthier Wales where people get the health and social care services they need in a way that works best for them.

We are here to understand your views and experiences of health and social care, and to make sure your feedback is used by decision-makers to shape your services.

We seek out both good and bad stories so we understand what works well and how services may need to get better. And we look to particularly talk to those whose voices are not often heard.

We also talk to people about their views and experiences by holding events in your local communities or visiting you wherever you're receiving your health or social care service.

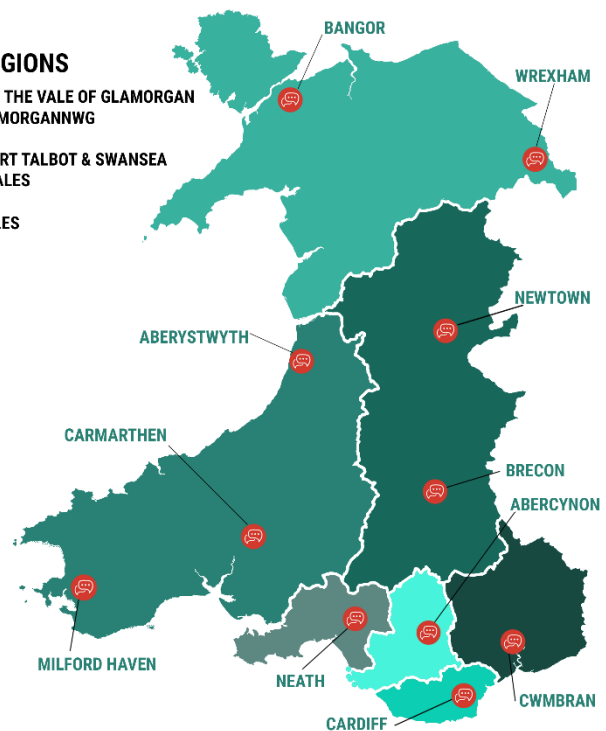
We also work with community and interested groups and in line with national initiatives to gather people's views.

And when things go wrong we support you to make complaints.

There are 7 Llais Regions in Wales. Each one represents the "patient and public" voice in different parts of Wales.

LLAIS REGIONS

- CARDIFF & THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN
- CWM TAF MORGANNWG
- GWENT
- NEATH PORT TALBOT & SWANSEA
- NORTH WALES
- POWYS
- WEST WALES



WHAT WE DID

This is the third locality in which we have undertaken focused engagement for a period of a month. The aim of this engagement was to capture people's lived experience of accessing and receiving health and/or social care services, irrespective of whether the services are provided within the locality or outside the local area. We want to find out about services provided within Wales or in England.

We wanted to find ways to engage with people of all ages and with different interests and to listen to their views about health and social care services.

We initially carried out research to find out what activities would be happening in the locality. We made contact with the Community Connector for the area to check what groups or activities they were aware of.

We also researched what organisations operate in the area who we could target to help raise awareness of Llais and to provide them with literature, including a link to a general survey asking people for their views on any health or social care services.

We made excellent links with organisations who agreed to help raise the profile of Llais and help to gather feedback from the people who use their services. We are very grateful to these organisations for their help and support:

- Age Cymru added our surveys and leaflets into goody bags they were handing out at Wyeside Theatre and they took additional surveys for distribution to people they help.
- Builth Wells Home Support Team were willing to take our generic surveys to each household on their books (approximately 90 people) and assist with completing them if required.
- Builth Wells Community Support said they could include surveys in prescription, food bank and shop deliveries that they undertake.
- We were invited to join the Police Community Support Officer 'Cuppa with a Copper' sessions.
- Someone from Bumps to Buggies offered to take surveys to distribute to their group.

We were able to arrange visits under the Welsh Government Code of Practice on Access to Premises and Engagement with Individuals. This allowed us to talk to people about the services they were receiving at the setting we visited and also about other services they received. These visits included the GP surgeries, pharmacies and Glan Irfon Health & Care Centre.

We carried out face-to-face engagement in the following locations or with the following groups:

Visit to Builth Wells Medical Practice
Visit to Llanwrtyd Wells Surgery
Visit to Llanwrtyd Wells Pharmacy
Age Cymru Drop-in Event, Builth Wells
Co-Op, Builth Wells
'Cuppa with a Copper', Builth Wells Library
MIND, Builth Wells
Advocacy Session in Builth Wells Library
Builth Wells Livestock Market
Meeting with Wellbeing Ambassadors at Builth Wells High School
Builth Wells Community Support Lunch Club
Visit to Glan Irfon, Builth Wells
Engagement outside Boots, Builth Wells

We had two surveys available for people to complete – one was a general survey for people to provide comments about any aspect of health or social care and the other was a survey about accessing GP services. These surveys were available online and in paper copy.

WHAT WE HEARD

What We Heard from Conversations with People

GP Services

Some people spoke about positive experiences of accessing GP services from Builth Wells Medical Practice. We heard from people who felt that they were able to get appointments when needed and that staff were friendly and helpful. People appreciated the fact that they could make appointments by visiting the surgery in-person and not just by telephoning. Some people commented that they did not always see the same doctor but they were not concerned about this.

The most common concern raised by people about the medical practice was the fact that it is difficult to get through on the telephone, with some people stating that it was quicker to walk to the surgery than to wait on the phone. Several people commented that their calls were often cut off whilst they were waiting to speak to someone. Some people said it was stressful trying to call.

Telephoning for an appointment is particularly difficult for people who have hearing loss. One person, who explained that they were hard of hearing, said it is sometimes easier for them to walk to the surgery to make an appointment but they have mobility issues which makes walking difficult and they do not drive.

People raised issues about communication, including difficulty speaking directly to a doctor and promised calls not returned.

We heard from people who do not like being asked to explain to the receptionist about their health concerns.

A number of people made comments about not having face-to-face appointments with a GP. One person said a home visit to a patient with cancer who was unwell was refused and they had to send a photo and discuss issues over the telephone.

Some people felt that the waiting time for non-urgent appointments was too long.

Dentistry

There were some positive experiences with local dental services. Some people had successfully registered with an NHS dentist in Builth Wells after a long wait. Another person received timely assistance when an emergency dental appointment was provided in Builth Wells through the 111 service.

However, most people who discussed dentistry explained how difficult it was to register with an NHS dentist in the area. Some people had been on a waiting list to be registered with a local dentist, with one person stating that they had been on the list for five years but still not registered. At one of the group sessions we attended, 83% of attendees reported that they were either registered with a dentist elsewhere or they were not registered at all because they could not register with the dental practice in Builth Wells.

Some people were registered with the dentist in Hay on Wye but that was now a private practice. The high cost of private dental care was mentioned, with one person explaining that a tooth extraction cost them £600. People commented that the dental practice in Brecon was taking on private patients and they felt that this was causing delays for NHS patients.

Two people who had used 111 to access urgent dental care explained that they had difficulty getting to the dentist where the appointment was booked because of distance to travel.

Having dental appointments cancelled last minute was an issue raised by some people. In one instance, the number of cancelled appointments had led to the patient transferring to an NHS dentist out of area.

Pharmacy Services

We received positive comments about Llanwrtyd Wells Pharmacy, with comments such as “service is excellent”, “very convenient”, “The

pharmacy in Llanwrtyd Wells is fantastic. I go to them before trying a doctor”.

Waiting Times for Planned Care

People told us about long waiting times to see a specialist. Examples given were:

60 month expected wait to see a dermatology specialist;

Minimum two year wait for hip replacement surgery;

Nearly three year wait for kidney surgery (still waiting);

One year wait for cataract surgery (still waiting and unable to see).

Some people were resorting to paying for private healthcare, incurring significant cost.

One person explained that, at the start of Covid, their diabetic eye screening appointment was cancelled and it had still not been re-arranged.

Care in Hospital

We heard from a person in their 90s who attended Hereford Hospital as an emergency with a heart problem. They were discharged at 2am after receiving treatment. They had to book in to a hotel for the rest of the night and travel there via taxi.

We heard about a patient’s poor experience in hospital which the family believed was related to staff shortages. The patient asked for help to get in to bed from the chair and it took an hour before someone was able to assist – the patient fell asleep in the chair.

People commented on the long wait in A&E.

One person suggested that walk-in centres are the way forward as a way to treat people who do not need to attend A&E. They had experience of centres in the Midlands.

Distance to Services

A number of people commented on the distance to a district general hospital, with many people speaking about travelling to Hereford Hospital or Prince Charles Hospital.

Transport Options

We received some very positive comments about the community transport scheme available in Builth Wells.

One person spoke about the limited public transport options. There is one bus per week which travels direct from Builth Wells to Hereford. The bus leaves Builth at 9.30am, arriving in Hereford at 11.20am and then returns from Hereford at 1.40pm – this leaves only a small window to access appointments. On other days, there is a bus from Llandrindod Wells to Kington, with a change in Kington to go on to Hereford. If the buses are running late, this leads to missed appointments.

The roads to Hereford are prone to flooding in high rainfall, which leads to diversions and much longer travel times.

Ambulance Services

People expressed their worries about ambulance waiting times, with people providing examples of a 2½ hour wait following an accident, and an anticipated wait of 8 hours which led to a family member driving a patient who had a seizure to hospital.

We heard an individual's positive experience following a fall, where the ambulance arrived in a reasonable time and they were treated in the ambulance and did not need to be transported to hospital.

Social Services

We were told about a patient who was stuck in hospital for two months whilst they waited for a care package. The person was eventually transferred to a care home.

One person spoke about inappropriate comments made by someone when they were suffering with depression and contacted Social Services to seek help.

Services Provided by Third Sector Organisations

We heard from people who thought that the services and groups run by the local MIND are vital for the community and they felt that they must keep running.

Issues Raised by Builth Wells Community Support and Builth & Llanwrtyd Wells Home Support Teams

Builth Wells Community Support runs schemes to help people live healthy independent lives within their community. They provide a community car scheme, shopping and prescription delivery service, a befriending service and have a satellite branch of Llandrindod Foodbank.

The Home Support Team provides support and help to individuals so that they can continue to live in their own home.

The Community Support Team raised some questions and comments about the appointments system for the Autumn Covid vaccination programme. They were receiving requests from some people who needed transport to Bronllys and others who needed transport to Glan Irfon for their vaccination, often on the same dates. The Community Support Team had asked at the start of the programme whether patients would be able to access vaccination locally, instead of having to travel to Bronllys, but they were told that would not be possible, but they started to receive transport requests from people needing to attend Glan Irfon. They also said it was unhelpful that they were having difficulties rearranging appointments unless the patient was present.

During November, the Health Board was able to organise an additional outreach clinic at the Pavillion in Llandrindod Wells. This led to Builth Wells Community Support receiving an unexpected surge in demand for transport and they would have appreciated advance notification of this from the Health Board to allow them to prepare for this.

We made contact with the Health Board to request an update on the Covid vaccination programme and we made them aware of the above concerns.

The Home Support Team raised an issue with us about the need to weigh used incontinence pads if a patient needed a larger size of pad.

We also received some comments about the length of the waiting time between the assessment and starting to receive continence products. One person told us that they were informed the wait would be three months and so they sourced products themselves at a substantial cost.

We contacted the Health Board to ask how the Continence Service works and whether weighing used incontinence pads was a usual request. The Health Board's Continence Service Manager provided an explanation of the assessment process and the need to ensure that the correct size and absorbency of pad is provided for patients.

Discussions with Young People

We met with a group of 10 Wellbeing Ambassadors at Ysgol Calon Cymru, Builth Wells Campus. These are pupils in the school who represent their peers and meet to discuss ways to improve wellbeing for pupils attending the school.

- Pupils spoke about the emotional wellbeing/mental health support available in the school. The school has male mental health ambassadors, to try to encourage more boys to talk about their mental health. They have 'Are You OK' boxes around school. There are teachers trained in mental health first aid and pupils know who they are and where they can go to talk to them. They have had people from MIND go in to school. There are specific quiet areas/rooms in school that pupils can go to if they feel that they need some time out. The pupils in the group felt that this was all good. However, some said that they did not think there was enough money going to the priority of emotional and physical health of students.
- The Wellbeing Ambassador meetings had been put on hold for a little while but there was an intention to start them up again.
- Pupils did not think that the school has a School Nurse. When asked if they were aware of the text helpline called ChatHealth, they had

seen posters. However, they mentioned that posters had been removed because the imagery on them was considered to be inappropriate. They also commented that the posters were of little use to them in school because they were not allowed to use their mobile phones whilst in school – so they could not make use of the QR code or text number. They thought it would be better if the posters were in other places outside of school, such as GP surgery, around town or in places/clubs that young people attend.

Because we have had recent contact with the School Nursing Team about promoting ChatHealth, we have let them know the comments made by the pupils about the posters and where they might be best placed. We were advised by the Team that they also hand out business cards to pupils with contact details and a QR code on them which allows young people to scan the code outside of school hours.

- The pupils spoke about how use of technology was put into place during COVID but, as time has gone on, things have changed and they are no longer able to use it.
- The pupils said that they don't feel old enough or confident to make contact with doctors themselves. They would not know how to go about making appointments.
- Some of the pupils spoke about the waiting time for orthodontics being too long. One young person had been waiting for 2 years and they spoke about the impact this had on their confidence.
- Pupils commented on the difficulty in registering for a dentist and the waiting times for dentist appointments. One person explained that their parent had a dental emergency and ended up having to pay a lot of money to go private.
- Regarding hospital appointments, some pupils said that they got frustrated about the waiting time in the clinic/hospital for their appointments. One person explained that they had been in to hospital for day surgery and had to wait more than six hours before they went down for their surgery. Another person explained that they had recently been for a hospital appointment which was booked for 10.20 but it was after 12 o'clock before they went in for the appointment.
- They spoke about ambulance waiting times. They provided examples of long waits following a rugby injury and following a motor cycle

accident. Another example given was of a family being advised that it would be best if they could take the patient to hospital themselves or face a long wait for an ambulance – this caused a lot of stress and worry for the family during the journey. The young people spoke about the impact that these experiences had on the patients and the people with them; sometimes this had a long-lasting effect on someone's emotional wellbeing.

The young people said that the ambulance waiting times were particularly worrying because everything is so far away.

- They also spoke about long waiting times in A&E.
- **Because of worries about ambulance waiting times, a number of the pupils in the group said that they would like to see First Aid courses in school. Some pupils had received first aid training in groups/activities they attend outside of school and they thought it was important for all young people to receive training.**
- We spoke about the intention for Llais/Junior Start Well Board to carry out a mental health survey with young people. **The pupils present said that they would prefer this to be done as an anonymous survey rather than through small focus groups – they would feel more comfortable putting their views through an online survey rather than having to speak about things in front of other people. They suggested that this could be done through school – they do sometimes complete surveys whilst in school. They said it might be possible to arrange this through the Head Teacher.**

Visit to Glan Irfon Health & Care Centre

Glan Irfon has a 12-bed health and care unit which provides short stay reablement. We were able to visit the reablement unit and engage with the six people who were staying in the unit.

We received the following comments from people on the unit:

- A patient spoke about their experience at Shrewsbury Hospital. They had been moved from bed-to-bed, around hospital wards, seemingly because there was confusion about which specialist was needed. There was very little communication between each department and each specialist seemed to care only about their own 'silo'. They did not communicate information to each other or with the patient. The patient felt that their questions had been ignored by specialists. It had

been difficult to sleep due to bright lights always being on and the wards were noisy. The patient reported it as a stressful time.

Since arriving at Glan Irfon, the patient was receiving some physiotherapy but felt that this was not provided regularly enough.



- A patient spoke about their experience of being in and out of hospital for a number of years. They had been in hospital since July. The patient was frustrated that the care package and home adaptations required were taking a long time to be organised. The patient felt that the lack of communication and updates was demoralizing.
- Another patient was desperate to get home and stated that there had been no explanation as to why there was a delay in organising a care package. The patient described their room as a 'prison cell' and said the stay at Glan Irfon was like a 'place for the forgotten'. The staff were described as kind and friendly. However, the patient did not have a social worker and therefore experienced a sense of 'being cast aside', not being able to access the professional advice and transfer of care information they might have been able to obtain in a hospital setting.
- People in the community also commented on Glan Irfon with some people expressing disappointment that the community hospital beds were closed several years ago. We heard concerns about under-utilisation of the beds in the unit now; some people felt that they could

be better used for people who needed to be discharged from district general hospitals.

What We Heard from the Surveys

We had two surveys available for people to complete, either online or via paper copy. We had a general survey where people could tell us about any health or social care service they received, and a survey about GP services.

The online links to the surveys were included on flyers which were circulated at all engagement sessions and copies were sent to organisations to share publicly.

We are very grateful to the Builth Wells Home Support Team and Builth & Llanwrtyd Wells Community Support for circulating paper copies of the surveys to their clients. This led to us receiving a good number of completed surveys.

General Survey – Tell us about health and social care services you've received

We received **93** responses to this survey from people with an LD postcode.

The services people commented on were:

Service	Number of Comments
Builth & Llanwrtyd Wells Home Support Service	46
GP Services	20
Carers	13
District Nursing Service	5
Dentist	4
Builth Wells Community Transport	3
NHS	2
Non-Emergency Patient Transport	2
Social Care	2
Waiting for Planned Care	2
Ambulance Service	1
Cancer Care	1
C-Mat Physiotherapy	1
Dementia Care	1
Dignity of Care in Hospital	1
Glan Irfon Health & Care Centre	1

A summary of what we heard within the survey responses is below:

Builth & Llanwrtyd Wells Home Support

People provided positive feedback about the Home Support service, expressing gratitude for the practical and emotional assistance and support.

Clients appreciate the regular visits or telephone calls from the Home Support Team. The service helps people to maintain their independence and it is credited with contributing to their overall wellbeing. People expressed appreciation for the help with medication management, including collecting and delivering prescriptions and medication, and also with daily tasks such as reading letters, managing appointments and performing household duties.

The service is described as flexible and is commended for its quick response and willingness to assist with various requests. The staff show compassion and understanding towards their clients.

People said they recommend the service to friends and family and they emphasized the positive experiences they had.

The service is reported to go above and beyond expectations.

Comments made about how things could be improved related to the desire for more staff within the Home Support Team and also a wish that the support workers could provide more of the 'care' type services.

GP Services

Feedback about GP services was mixed, with some patients satisfied with the service received, while others expressed concerns about accessibility, professionalism and the quality of medical assessments.

There were multiple comments about staff being friendly, helpful and providing a good service.

Some patients expressed difficulty in securing appointments, with a preference for face-to-face appointments rather than telephone appointments. Some people felt that diagnosis was incorrect or delayed

because they were unable to obtain a face-to-face appointment with a doctor.


The need for more doctors was mentioned.

Some people commented on changes to the system in recent years and some patients expressed frustration that home visits were refused.

Carers

People gave positive feedback about paid carers and were grateful for the practical and emotional support which contributes to their well-being.

People commented on staff shortages and the difficulty in setting up care packages, especially in the rural areas. This led to people trying to care for their loved ones without support and without respite. One person had a package of care agreed four months ago but, despite contacting Powys County Council on a regular basis, it has not been possible to arrange the care yet.



More carers are needed! There needs to be a better support network and information available to help loved ones cope. Anybody could find themselves in this situation and having gone through the experience it felt as though there was nowhere to turn.

Some individuals said that they wished carers were given more time for the visits and they expressed a desire for more social interaction during care visits.

One person commented that their carers were usually late and this led to fear of falling and toileting accidents.

District Nursing Service

The feedback about district nurses was mainly positive. Nurses are described as friendly, well-trained and helpful, providing gentle and polite assistance with dressing changes.

However, there was one suggestion for improvement, with a request for better collaboration between the district nurses and GP surgery. The specific issue highlighted was regarding a request for patches and cream, where the patient felt that they themselves should not have to request supplies or pick them up from the surgery for the district nurse to use.

Dental Care

The feedback about dentists was around difficulties accessing NHS dental services and the waiting time for an appointment. Some people commented that NHS dentists had gone private recently which impacted on the availability of NHS appointments.

Poor communication over appointment notification was mentioned and an example was a patient not receiving notification that an appointment had been cancelled.

Builth Wells Community Transport

People also complimented the community transport service, stating that it is a wonderful service with helpful people. The service helps people to maintain their independence.

NHS in General

The general feedback on the NHS included concerns about remote diagnosis, long waiting times for doctor appointments, delays in accessing specialists, nursing staff exhibiting a perceived 'don't care' attitude, and the necessity of resorting to private healthcare for timely treatment.

There were frustrations about the absence of a district general hospital in Powys, leading to potentially life-threatening delays when waiting for an ambulance and the perceived unfairness in the distribution of healthcare services. There was also comment about the perceived wasteful spending on correspondence in Welsh, with the suggestion that resources could be better allocated.

Non-Emergency Patient Transport

One person commented that it was very hard to book hospital transport.

Social Care

There were some comments about the need for more help to be available and offered to older people, with examples of help with physical tasks around the home and help at meal times.

Waiting for Planned Care

There were a number of comments from people who were waiting for planned care. Examples given related to gall bladder surgery, spinal, renal and cataracts. In one case, a patient had their surgery cancelled three times, one of which was after they had been prepped for the surgery.

Ambulance Service

We received positive comments about ambulance crews who have helped a patient after several falls – the patient commented that the staff have ‘done a brilliant job’ and ‘staff are well trained and very helpful’.

Cancer Care

We were told that only limited care was available to a patient who was diagnosed with cancer, because there was only one Cancer Nurse in Powys.

Clinical Musculo-Skeletal Assessment & Treatment Service

Positive comments were made about the service provided by C-MATS.

Glan Irfon Health & Care Centre

The service and staff at Glan Irfon was praised.



Parkinson's Nurse

A patient outlined their positive experience of being monitored by the Parkinson's Nurse, stating that they received regular visits and checks and the care provided is excellent.

Patient Survey about GP Services

We received **71** completed surveys.

Name of GP Practice

Builth Wells Medical Practice (inc Llanwrtyd Wells)	55
Llandrindod Wells Medical Practice	4
Rhayader Surgery	4
Dyfi Valley Health	2
Wylcwm Street Surgery	2
Brecon Medical Group	1
Glan Irfon Builth Wells	1

Haygarth Medical Centres	1
Vale of Neath	1

Ease of making routine appointments

There was a mixed response, with 39 people responding that they found it very easy or easy, 18 stating that it was OK and 14 people responding that they found it difficult or very difficult when making routine appointments.

The majority of people (64) made their appointments over the telephone, and others made appointments in-person.

Two-thirds of the respondents were able to obtain an appointment within a week of their request, with 12 of them waiting less than 48 hours, 17 people waited 1-2 weeks, 6 people waited 2-3 weeks and only one person had to wait more than 3 weeks.

Ease of accessing urgent appointments

There was also a mixed response about making urgent appointments, with 29 people stating that it was easy or very easy, 25 people stating that it was OK and 13 people stating that it was difficult or very difficult. 4 people had not needed to make an urgent appointment.

Using My Health Online

No respondents had used My Health Online. 20 people had heard of it but didn't use it and 51 people did not think that their surgery had it available.

It is noted that My Health Online was schedule to be retired at the end of December 2023 and it is now suggested that patients download and register for the NHS Wales App.

Ease of requesting a repeat prescription

The majority of people had no difficulty requesting their repeat prescriptions. Only 2 patients reported that they found it difficult.

Privacy at the Reception Desk

Only 35% of respondents felt that they had enough privacy at the reception desk area and the rest of respondents felt that it could be better.

Travelling to the Surgery

The majority of respondents travelled to the GP surgery by car, with 14 of them stating that they used the community transport or taxi. 14 people stated that they were able to walk to the surgery.

Surgery Opening Times

Only 3 respondents were not happy with the surgery opening times. Most people (57) reported that they were happy or very happy and 11 people thought the opening times were OK.

Helpfulness of Staff

Most people were satisfied with the helpfulness of staff, with 12 being very happy, 34 being happy and 19 thought it was OK. 6 people were not happy with the staff.

Communication

Only 1 person reported that they were not able to communicate in their preferred language. This person commented that there were no Welsh speaking receptionists.

62 people felt that the communication they received from their GP surgery was adequate.

Comments about communication were as follows:

I only moved to area three years ago from England. I've had no information on routine health screening for over-70s.
No problem with GP services in general. Just problems getting through in the morning for an emergency appointment. Can wait 25 minutes plus on the phone, so sometimes I have to walk around to the surgery.
Rude staff. Very untrained.

Ten minutes time is not enough for some complaints and you can only talk about one illness at a time. If you have two illness you have to make a second appointment. More doctors are required. The old system worked fifteen years ago and it worked much better too!

Too long winded. Having to explain why I need a consultation. Doctor never reads any letters I send, no response.

Waiting for results etc.

Waiting times are unacceptable. Can't get to see my GP on times. Difficult to get through on phone in morning.

We gave people the opportunity to make any further comments about the service and we received the following information:

Always had a fab service when coming with my baby.

Don't go there usually but seems it works well.

Excellent surgery. Particularly when it comes to dealing with my son who is twenty months. Good communications from clinicians. My only criticism is the amount of time it takes to get through to somebody on the phone.

Friendly staff. Clean area.

Good service. No problems or misunderstandings.

Happy with our surgery after so many people have got problems with the Builth Wells one [Llanwrtyd Surgery].

I think it's working fine.

Never had any problems. Responds quick, prescriptions ready. Very quick when ask for urgent appointment.

Not any problems.

Our Doctors, Nurses and staff do their best. Thank you!

Respectful Staff. Good communication with clients.

They will call if they need to speak to me.

Very helpful staff. Understanding Doctors.

Have had bad experience with own surgery, especially receptionists. Young lady who thinks its better to decide something instead of book me to see a doctor.

I am a healthy over-70s and rarely need to use any GP. But I'm unsure if they can adequately deal with routine healthcare or preventative healthcare. I feel I can only contact if I had an Emergency or something serious.

I have had problems getting an appointment with a doctor (rather than practice nurse etc) and with being referred on when necessary.

It is not easy to see a doctor straight away. Over phone to say 'try these tablets', then phone us back again when we inform them that they don't work.

It is often difficult to get through to reception. When I do it is 'there are no vacancies for two weeks'. When phoning again it is often another seven to ten days before I can get to see my Doctor. Sometimes we are offered another Doctor but I, like others, prefer our Doctor.

Just need trained staff and understanding doctors.

Miss the walk-in service which we had for years.

No Paediatrician in Builth Area. Why?

There never seems to be any patients waiting in the surgery so why aren't surgeries not going back to the days when patients could go in to see the doctor?

Receptionists are not qualified to ask medical conditions and give their opinion.

Doctors used to do home visits. These are now very few and far between. Why?

Not everyone has access to online services to be able to use those, but the assumption is often made.

No respect.

Providing better healthcare for the elderly, i.e. annual check-ups. Very poor people skills - no bedside manner, compassion or understanding of ageing needs.

Struggle to get house visit by doctors.

The process of ringing a doctor, getting an appointment to receive a phone call from a doctor, which is usually a week away, and then, having to wait another week to actually see the doctor is protracted. Need to go back to pre-pandemic. Ringing a doctor and making an appointment without the waiting for call-back (often the waiting is all morning till 13:00), just to speak to a doctor and then having to make another appointment.

The surgery appears to be improving lately, but has a long way to go. Particularly with reception setup and receptionists. It has been absolutely terrible in the past. Room for improvement!

Very difficult to get through to the reception. Results can be given over the phone in a 30 minute window - not realistic when working 2 - 2.30pm.

Walk in service.

Wish GP would have pharmacy inside to reduce travel time and paying for parking.

Who We Heard From

Our surveys include equality and diversity monitoring questions so that we can get an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of different groups of people in the community.

The following table is a snapshot of the people in Powys who shared their views and experiences. People do not always tell us everything about themselves when they come to share their experiences and views with us.

167 people completed our surveys

We received **0** responses in Welsh

167 people completed some or all of the equality and diversity questions

74% were women and **25%** were men, **1%** preferred not to say

1% identified as a trans person; **22%** identified as heterosexual; **1%** asexual; **5%** bisexual; **1%** Gay; **67%** preferred not to say and **4%** gave no answer

The average age of people sharing their views with us was **76**. The youngest was **25** and the eldest was **101**

95% were White (Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish, British), **3%** were White Irish, **1%** White Other and **1%** Asian

62% of people stated Christianity as their religion; **8%** Other religion or belief; **17%** No Religion; **3%** Buddhism; **10%** preferred not to say

16% of people said they had a disability or long-term health condition

25% of people were carers

2% of people were pregnant

Regarding financial status, **20%** have just enough for basic necessities and little else; **24%** have more than enough for basic necessities and a small amount of disposable income; **3%** don't have enough for basic necessities and sometimes run out of money; **50%** have more than enough for necessities, and a large amount of disposable income; **1%** don't know/prefer not to say and **2%** gave no answer

WHAT WE'VE DONE WITH WHAT WE HEARD

As we are learning from each period of engagement that we undertake, we are also working with and developing our partnerships with Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council.

We were pleased to be able to pilot a new way in which to report back to these organisations on the main themes of what we heard from people in the Builth Wells and Llanwrtyd Wells area. We held a joint workshop session which involved staff and volunteers from Llais and representatives from the Health Board and the County Council. We shared our draft report with them ahead of the session and, during the meeting, we were able to highlight some of the main themes, discuss areas of work which are already underway, and identify some actions which will be taken.

The main themes we considered in the workshop were as follows:

- We discussed the value and power that individual patient stories can give in helping service providers to understand what matters to people.
In Powys, we are keen to develop the patient story model and we committed to work together to take this forward.
- Difficulties in accessing NHS dentists was a matter which was raised with us at many of our engagement sessions in the area. It is acknowledged that there are challenges across the UK in being able to access planned dental care.

There is access to urgent dental care in Powys but it is recognised that, often, this means patients need to travel to get to the appointment and this can be difficult for some people. The Health Board is continually reviewing the availability of urgent dental care.

Powys Teaching Health Board has a dental helpline which provides patients with access to their dental waiting list. Anyone who lives in Powys, or is registered with a GP in Powys, and who needs help finding a dentist can call the Powys Dental Helpline on 01686 252808.

There are plans to develop an all-Wales waiting list to help

understand the scale of demand and prioritise those who have been waiting longest.

The Health Board is planning to set up a mobile dental clinic which can be prioritised to the areas of greatest need. Recruitment of staff to operate this service will commence soon.

There is also a need to raise awareness of the changes in guidance on routine dental checks. NICE guidance recommends that oral health reviews should be based on need and, for many adults, the recommendation is for these checks to be every two years.

- We spoke about the feedback we received about Glan Irfon. The Health Board and County Council work closely with the provider, Shaw Healthcare, and will share the feedback with them. A physiotherapist with a lead responsibility for Glan Irfon has recently been appointed and this will help to support the rehabilitation of people on the reablement unit. The County Council identified that it would be helpful to establish a specific worker who could liaise with Glan Irfon and support residents with information and advice.
- The examples we shared about services received outside of Powys will be shared with the service providers. They will also help to support the Health Board's plans to provide care closer to home where it is clinically safe and sustainable to do so.

The Health Board continues to work with district general hospitals to seek to reduce the waiting times for planned care.

- The feedback from children and young people was also discussed. The School Nursing Team has been promoting the ChatHealth text helpline by providing business cards at vaccination appointments within schools. They are also exploring other ways to raise awareness of the service such as through Facebook and Instagram channels, and through Youth Clubs and Young Farmers Clubs.

In response to the young people's suggestion that they would like to see First Aid courses run in schools, the Director of Education committed to liaising with Headteachers and will share details of organisations who are able to deliver First Aid sessions, such as St

John Ambulance Cymru. It was confirmed that First Aid sessions have taken place in some schools in Powys.

We found this way of partnership working to be very valuable. Powys Llais will continue to work closely with Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council to develop ways to ensure that the feedback provided by the residents of Powys really does help to shape health and social care services for the future.

SUMMARY

During this period of engagement, we have heard feedback about a wide range of different services.

In the main, people are appreciative of services they receive, in many instances giving praise about staff and the care provided, particularly about services received locally. But we also heard concerns about difficulties in accessing services for various reasons, in particular about telephone contact with the GP Practice, difficulty accessing NHS dental care, shortage of paid carers and waiting times for planned care.

It is important that the planners and providers of services are able and willing to hear about people's experiences. We are working hard to build on the relationships we have with the Health Board and County Council in Powys so that they are able to understand what is working well and what needs to improve.

APPENDIX A

Response from Powys Teaching Health Board

29 January 2024

LLAIS ENGAGEMENT REPORTS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the reports of your recent engagement activities:

- Report on What We've Heard in Powys: Community Focused Engagement in Builth Wells & Llanwrtyd Wells Locality (November 2023)

We are committed to ensuring that the voice of patients, service users, carers, the public and wider stakeholders is at the heart of our planning, priorities and service improvement.

This commitment reflects important statutory duties for NHS bodies including through the new Duty of Quality as part of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

As part of this Duty of Quality we must take into account the new Health and Care Quality Standards (right) which provide a framework to assess quality and guide improvement. Importantly, "Person Centred" is one of the key domains of quality alongside Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient and Equitable.

The report from Llais provides a breadth of feedback that encompasses a wide range of different departments and directorates within the health board, as well as services commissioned by the health board from local primary care contractors (e.g. GPs, dentists) and from other providers of health and care services (e.g.



pathways to acute and specialist services provided by neighbouring hospitals in both England and Wales).

We were therefore grateful for the opportunity to test out a new partnership approach with Llais Powys and with Powys County Council through our joint workshop session on 19 January 2024. This was a valuable and co-productive opportunity to work with Llais volunteers and staff to focus on the principal themes, to discuss areas where work is under way, and to identify further actions that we can take in partnership.

During the workshop we focused on experience and action in relation to the following key themes:

- Citizen and Patient Stories
- Dentistry
- Children and Young People
- Glan Irfon
- Commissioned Pathways for Urgent & Emergency Care and Planned Care

Citizen and Patient Stories

We discussed the power of citizen and patient stories and personas to provide detailed and personal feedback to help us with the continuous improvement of our services. We heard that as part of the national development of Llais, work is under way in the Swansea Bay area to develop a patient story model for adoption across the country. We look forward to working with you as this approach develops.

This will complement our wider approach to patient experience which includes our CIVICA patient experience platform which helps us to gather feedback about services both within and outside the county. This latter system helps us to understand how patients feel about their experience in district general hospitals, and we are grateful for your support to promote awareness of this so that we can take action on those issues most important to Powys residents.

Key Action: Work together on the continued development of our approach to citizen and patient stories

Dentistry

In your feedback you highlighted the issues raised about access to dentistry.

There are challenges in access to planned dental care across the UK at present, including here in Powys. Dentists have increasingly moved into private practice which has made it difficult to procure or recruit sufficient NHS dental capacity to meet demand.

Here in Powys we have been leading the way with our dental helpline which provides patients with access to our dental waiting list. There are now plans to develop an all-Wales waiting list to help us understand the scale of demand and prioritise those people who have been waiting longest.

We will soon be commencing recruitment to a further salaried dental role in Powys with the aim of staffing a mobile clinic which can be prioritised to areas of greatest need. The recruitment market does remain challenging, but we will ensure that Llais Powys is kept updated on progress with this role and service.

The health board has been working hard to improve access to urgent dental care, and at most times we have the capacity in place to meet the demand. We do however recognise that the rural nature of Powys presents some challenges for us and for patients, as the quickest available appointment may require the patient to travel. This can be difficult for people who do not have access to their own travel and/or who are reliant on public transport. We are keeping the availability of urgent dental care under ongoing review.

Key Action: Continue to update Llais Powys on the further development of our salaried dental service, and on development of the all-Wales waiting list.

We also spoke about the importance of raising awareness of the changes in routine checks. Many people recall when a six-monthly check up was recommended, but NICE guidance in 2004 recommends that oral health review intervals should be based on need, and for many adults are only recommended every two years. We were grateful to hear that Llais plans to help with awareness raising through your activities across Wales.

Children and Young People

We are very grateful for the insights you gathered from children and young people, and the discussion on access to school nursing and ChatHealth was very helpful. The team has already begun to promote the service in new ways, including by providing business cards at vaccination appointments. They have established new Facebook and Instagram channels, and whilst they recognise the benefits of Snapchat and TikTok these are not currently enabled on PTHB systems following an assessment of cyber-security risks.

We will also look into the issues raised about the appropriateness of publicity materials.

Key Action: Continue to promote the ChatHealth service.

Glan Irfon

Your visit to Glan Irfon provided useful feedback from residents about their experience both there and in acute hospitals.

Glan Irfon is registered for the provision of intermediate and residential care, with nursing input provided via in-reach by district nurses and other teams based on the clinical needs of residents. We have recently strengthened the clinical input with the appointment of a physiotherapist with lead responsibility for Glan Irfon, supporting residents with their rehabilitation.

Together with Powys County Council we continue to seek to ensure that Glan Irfon is used as effectively as possible for those residents who meet their admission criteria, and the feedback from your locality engagement will help us with this vital work. This includes sharing the feedback with Shaw, as the providers of Glan Irfon, to help make sure a quality experience for residents.

KEY ACTION: PCC and PTHB to continue to work together on the effective utilisation of Glan Irfon

Commissioned Pathways for Urgent and Emergency Care / Planned Care

We do fully recognise that the pressures being experienced across the emergency and urgent care system are adversely affecting patient experience. Waits for planned care procedures remain long, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID pandemic.

Your locality engagement included examples that we can share with our district general hospital partners outside Powys, as well as to support as in our plans for services in Powys. For example, the further development of our minor injury services remains a key priority so that we can provide even more services closer to home. For residents in the Builth Wells and Llanwrtyd Wells areas, the main MIU facilities will include Llandrindod Wells Hospital and Breconshire War Memorial Hospital.

We do also recognise that the rural nature of Powys does mean that there are constraints on the services that we are able to provide within the county, and for many acute and specialist services our communities are dependent on district general hospital (DGH) services outside the county. Notwithstanding this, we retain our ambitions to provide care closer to home where it is clinically safe and sustainable to provide these services in a rural community setting. We also continue to work with DGH providers to seek to reduce waiting times for planned care.

KEY ACTION: During 2024 we are planning an ongoing conversation with the people of Powys about the future of health and care.

Thank you for this report, and thank you to the officers and volunteers of Llais for the work you do to listen to and share the views and experiences of the people of Powys.

APPENDIX B

Response from Powys County Council

01 February 2024

Thank you for your most recent engagement report from the Builth & Llanwrtyd locality.

Thank you for continuing to provide the Feedback Reports to the Social Services Feedback team alongside myself so they can progress relevant aspects through the Quality Assurance processes for both Adults and Childrens Services. This considers learning and outcomes, and promotes best practice from complaints, compliments and feedback; actions are noted and monitored and themes are recorded in the Annual Complaints Report. The Llais Feedback Report and Powys' response to the same will be considered at Social Services Briefings to Portfolio Holders and provided to Health and Care Scrutiny.

As previously requested, Llais may wish to share Powys County Council's Social Services Feedback leaflet at engagement events, or signpost people to our feedback webpage at

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/11274/SocialServicesCompliments-Comments-and-Complaints-Process>

A more limited response has been provided where the Feedback was anonymous and / or limited. If an individual requests a detailed response on their personal circumstances, please encourage them to make contact via the contact information provided above. In some instances, it was not clear which council service the Feedback related to; and in some cases it may have related to other organisations' service delivery such as Powys Teaching Health Board's Mental Health Services for example.

Comment	Response	Action
<p>A patient was unable to leave hospital for two months, due to the delay in setting up a care package. They were eventually transferred to a Care Home.</p>	<p>The shortage of carers to provide care to those in the community is a national issue, which can contribute to discharge delays. Powys County Council continues to work with partner agencies and providers to manage and address the continuing challenge around shortage of carers. Initiatives such as the Health and Social Care Academy and a more streamlined council recruitment process for carers is now in place. This is already showing benefits and providing some relief, but we recognise there is still work to be done to address the shortage in packages of care due to shortage of carers.</p>	
<p>A patient had experienced many hospital stays and had been in hospital since July. They were frustrated that the care package and home adaptations required were taking a long time to be organised. They found the lack of communication and update was demoralizing.</p>	<p>Further to the comment above, noting this is in relation to a specific named care setting.</p> <p>Adult Services identified that establishing a specific worker liaising with this setting would be helpful. A Reviewing Officer has been identified to support residents with information and advice, work is on-going to make this sustainable.</p>	

<p>A patient did not receive any explanation about why their care package was delayed. They described their room like a ‘prison cell’ and that Glan Irfon was like a ‘place for the forgotten’ although the staff were kind and friendly.</p> <p>The patient did not have a social worker and described feeling ‘cast aside’, unable to access professional advice and information about the transfer of care which they might have been able to get in a hospital setting.</p>	<p>Please see both responses above. We are sorry to hear anyone’s experience that is not positive, and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about this specific individual and the circumstances they found themselves in.</p>	
<p>People commented on staff shortages and the difficulty in setting up care packages, especially in the rural areas. One example was a package being agreed 4 months ago but was not arranged despite contacting the Council on a regular basis. This led to people trying to care for their loved ones without support and respite.</p>	<p>Please see the previous responses. We are very sorry for any delay in setting up a package of care and continue to work on addressing the challenges that prevent packages of care being delivered in a timely manner.</p>	

<p>One person spoke about inappropriate comments made by someone when they were suffering with depression and contacted Social Services to seek help.</p>	<p>We would very much like the opportunity to understand their experience and the situation within which the comment arose to promote a change of practice that may be necessary.</p>	
<p>A number of pupils said they would like to see First Aid courses in schools, because of worries about ambulance waiting times. Some pupils had received first aid training in groups/activities they attend outside of school, and they thought it was important for all young people to receive the training.</p>	<p>The Director of Education has agreed to share this concern with Headteachers, and signpost to organisations that deliver First Aid Awareness sessions and could deliver life-saving skills to pupils in school.</p>	<p>Director of Education to liaise with Headteachers and share details of organisations who could deliver First Aid sessions such as St John Ambulance Cymru.</p>
<p>We spoke to young people about the intention for Llais/Junior Start Well Board to carry out a mental health survey with young people.</p> <p>The pupils said that they would feel more comfortable and prefer this to be done as an anonymous and online survey rather than through small face-to-face</p>	<p>This point will be shared with the Children’s Commissioning Team who facilitate the Junior Start Well Board.</p>	

<p>focus groups. The pupils suggested this could be done through school, as other surveys are done that way, and might be possible to arrange through the Headteacher.</p>		
<p>Some individuals said that they would like Carers to have more time for visits and for there to be more social interaction during them.</p>	<p>Powys County Council has committed to care calls of no less than 30 minutes. Feedback shows that, on occasion, this can be longer than the individual needs and is generally sufficient to ensure the care needs are met. This is balanced with ensuring minimal risk to not overwhelming staff or reducing capacity to deliver care.</p>	<p>We will continue to monitor views from Care Providers and from representatives on service user forums.</p>
<p>One person commented that their carers were usually late and this led to fear of falling and toileting accidents.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, there are times where carers may be unavoidably delayed, for example if another service user is unwell and requires unplanned additional care, or there are traffic works taking place. Care Providers are always happy to receive feedback from service users, especially if the matter is persistent.</p>	
<p>There were some comments about the need for more help to be available and offered to older people, for example help with physical tasks around the home and help at mealtimes.</p>	<p>Please encourage residents to contact ASSIST if they feel they may benefit from additional support to help meet their needs.</p> <p>A call handler will have a '<i>what matters</i>' conversation with the individual to understand their care and support needs better to refer</p>	

them on to the Service for assessment or signpost them to another service that can meet their needs.

ASSIST 0345 602 7050

Assist@powys.gov.uk

I hope the information and comments provided above are helpful, informative and constructive. Please confirm if this approach to responding to your Feedback still meets with your requirements.

THANKS

We thank everyone who took the time to share their views and experiences with us about their health and care services and to share their ideas.

We hope the feedback people have taken time to share influences healthcare services to recognise and value what they do well – and take action where they need to as quickly as they can, to make things better.

FEEDBACK

We'd love to hear what you think about this publication, and any suggestions about how we could have improved it, so we can use this to make our future work better.

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