

## Draft Minutes: 23-07 (24 January 2024)

### Members:

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

### Attendees:

Ben Eaton	Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement
Sue Evans	Deputy Regional Director, Neath Port Talbot & Swansea
Ceri Sullivan	Interim Head of Governance and Board Secretary
Eleri Soanes	Administrative Support Officer
Sharon Walters	Business Manager

## Welcome and introductions, declarations of interest and apologies Matters arising

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Angela Mutlow.
- 1.3 The declaration of interest register was discussed. The Chair informed the Board that the declaration of interest register included with the papers has since been updated to reflect the discussions at the October Board meeting. The register has also been amended to reflect that Jason Smith no longer has an interest in Cymorth Cymru but is now Head of Development, Trusts and Foundations at Better Story.
- 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 Chair advised the Board that this was the last meeting that Ceri Sullivan would be attending before returning to her role within Welsh Government. Everyone thanked Ceri for her outstanding work and support given to the Board and wished her well for the future.
- 1.6 The minutes of the board meeting held on 25 October 2023 and the extraordinary board meeting held on 22 November 2023 were agreed as an accurate account of what was discussed.
- 1.7 The actions and decisions log was agreed.
- 1.8 The Chief Executive provided an update on the following outstanding actions:
  - A23-05-08: The North Wales Regional Director had provided an up to date briefing on vascular services in North Wales. The Regional Director had advised that since the Coroner in North Wales had written to the Minister for Health and Social Services about his concerns regarding vascular services and the potential for a public inquiry, arrangements had been taken forward by Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board to involve and support the patients and families affected by poor vascular care in North Wales. Llais was fully involved in this work, and the Regional Director had advised that the patients and families who had responded to Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board's contact as part of this process were content with the constructive approach being taken. The Board asked about the relationship between Llais and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. The Chief Executive reported that the Regional Director was content that the relationship had developed into a constructive and positive one. Given the ongoing activity in this area and continued active involvement of Llais North Wales, the Regional Director had advised that no further action was needed by the Board at this time.
  - A23-06-02: The Chief Executive confirmed that discussions are continuing with Welsh Government on the possible use of public sector spaces for Llais. A recent visit to the Welsh Government's building in Cardiff has identified a potential space that could be available for use by the national team as well as the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan region.

Further investigation is needed to understand suitability and costs. Discussions are on-going about the Carmarthen office lease, and the future closure by the local authority of the offices occupied by Llais staff in Brecon.

## Report from the Chair

- 2.1 The Chair noted the challenges of establishing the infrastructure of a new organisation and how Llais is securing additional capacity across Wales to facilitate the delivery of its priorities.
- 2.2 The Chair talked about the 'Is Wales Fairer' report and its significance for Llais. The report reflects on most comprehensive review of equality and human rights in Wales since the last report was published in 2018. The report highlights the 9 protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3 The Chair highlighted some of the issues within the report that are of great concern for Llais. This included the number of children in Wales living in poverty, the increase in waiting times for NHS care and the strain on mental health services. The report demonstrates significant pressures in the health system that Llais will need to consider carefully as it moves forward.
- 2.4 The Board noted that Llais should look at ways in which it could work collaboratively with partners to engage further with the aim of developing solutions to these issues.

**A24-01-01:** Board members agreed that Llais should work collaboratively with its partners to respond to the issues raised in the report around health and social care services.

## Chief Executive's report

- 3.1 The Chief Executive introduced her report covering key activities she had undertaken since the last Board meeting.
- 3.2 She had met with a number of key partners to talk about the role of Llais and how we can work together to strengthen the voice of people in health and social care. This included:

- Meeting with the Patient Safety Commissioner for England. Discussions had focussed on developing arrangements to share information and work collaboratively to strengthen the voices of people around patient safety matters affecting people living in the UK.
- Presenting to the boards of Healthcare Education & Improvement Wales, Social Care Wales, Powys Teaching Health Board, and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust on our activities to date and arrangements to work in partnership moving forward.
- Attending a series of Healthcare summits focused on NHS bodies in Wales. The summits are hosted by Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and are held twice a year. They provide an opportunity for a wide range of statutory bodies to share what they have been doing and what this has told them about the NHS in Wales.

Regional Directors were in attendance for the sessions focused on their particular region. Summit discussions provided an opportunity to bring information together to identify common themes and emerging issues to take up with the Welsh Government.

- Spending a day with Carers Wales to hear about their campaigns and activities in Wales, as well as the work it does to support employers to develop a supportive workplace for people with caring responsibilities.

3.3 The Chief Executive had also been part of the expert panel at the 2023 Carers Wales Conference which focussed on the needs and issues facing carers in Wales. Further discussions with the Chair of the Wales Carers Alliance had focused on the best ways to get involved with the Alliance and work together to inform and influence progress and activity on key developments.

3.4 The Chief Executive advised the Board that there had continued to be a significant programme of recruitment related activity since the previous meeting. A number of roles are at the appointment stage. This included the roles of Governance Manager, Complaints Advocate and the PA for the National Team. Several roles were being advertised, including the Director of Governance and Finance and the Director of Operations.

- 3.5 The Chief Executive informed the Board of the forthcoming retirement of 2 senior leaders. Stephen Allen, Regional Director of the Cardiff & Vale region would be retiring at the end of March. The role was being advertised with a closing date of 11 March 2024.
- 3.6 Alan Williams, Director of Finance would also be retiring later in the year. The Board wished to note their formal thanks to Stephen and Alan for their significant contribution to the work of the former community health councils and to Llais. They wished him both well for the future.
- 3.7 The Board reflected on current recruitment activity and the extent to which this will address on-going capacity issues. The Chief Executive noted the positive impact of recruiting permanently to key roles while recognising the capacity and time that will be needed to support staff in new roles and the need to reflect this in the plans and priorities for Llais.
- 3.8 Members noted the importance of continuing to focus on attracting a diverse range of candidates for roles within Llais. It was agreed that further information should be reported to the Board on this matter.
- 3.9 The Chair asked the Chief Executive to summarise the 3 key operational risks for Llais related to our workforce. The Chief Executive responded that these related to staff capacity, the design and delivery of a comprehensive learning programme and supporting the wider development of our people.

**A24-01-02:** The National Team to provide further information on the diversity of applicants applying for roles within Llais.

## 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 November 2023. At that meeting members had endorsed the submission of the Annual Report & Accounts 2022/23 to the Llais Board and agreed the Audit Wales audit plan 2022/23.

- 4.3 The committee had considered the Corporate Risk Register and requested an outline of the risk management process.
- 4.4 Since the last meeting, 2 independent members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had been appointed. These members have specific skills in finance and audit and cyber security and digital. It was hoped that both new members would be available to attend the next committee meeting in March 2024.
- 4.5 The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee would meet over 2 days in March 2024. This would enable a formal meeting followed by a committee effectiveness session the following day.

## Finance Report

- 5.1 The finance report was presented to the Board.
- 5.2 The Board noted that all budgetary delegation letters have been issued and signed by all budget holders, confirming the budget figures as well as detailing responsibilities and accountabilities for the efficient and effective use of resources.
- 5.2 The finance report at month 9 (December 2023) reports an underspend of £572k while the forecast for year end is for an underspend of £75k. This is based on Llais absorbing, in 2023/24, additional costs in the following areas:
  - 2023/24 Pay Awards £259k
  - Capgemini CRM Contract £250k
  - Projects & Agency
  - Additional post in the national team.
- 5.3 The Head of Finance is meeting with budget holders on a monthly basis to review and update the financial forecast. There is potential for the underspend to increase further. The Chief Executive advised the Board that work is underway to identify where Llais can use the underspend to increase capacity and support the delivery of our priorities.

- 6.1 The Board was provided with a summary report which provides an update on progress against each of the risks within the Corporate Risk Register.
- 6.2 The Board was informed that since the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's scrutiny of the corporate risk register in November, further updates have been made. In October 2023 the Board had agreed the corporate risks on the basis that an additional risk would be included on cyber security. This had now been actioned.
- 6.3 The Board noted that:
- The risk around volunteers has changed in focus
  - Discussions were continuing with Welsh Government and NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership about the legal status of the Service Level Agreement and the indemnification of the risks associated with this.
- 6.4 The Board noted that further discussions will take place at Tîm Arwain and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee over the coming months. Any recommendations to change our approach will be brought back to the Board for approval.
- 6.5 The Board noted the summary report and agreed the additional cyber security risk and change in focus of volunteers risk within the Corporate Risk Register.

**D24-01-01:** The Board agreed the additional cyber security risk and change in focus of volunteers risk within the Corporate Risk Register.

## Health and social care services in Neath Port Talbot and Swansea

- 7.1 The Regional Director for the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region provided an overview of health and social care services in Neath Port Talbot and Swansea and the regional activity that had recently taken place.
- 7.2 The Board heard that:

- Health and Social Care services in the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region are provided by Swansea Bay University Health Board, Neath Port Talbot Local Authority, Swansea Local Authority and Western Bay Regional Partnership Board.
- There are two urban areas within the region, and it has a culturally diverse population.
- Neath Port Talbot and Swansea are deemed as falling in the most deprived 10% of areas in Wales.
- Life expectancy is 20-25% less than the Welsh average.
- The area is served by main hospital sites at Morrison and Singleton, as well as key services like a Minor Injuries Unit at Neath Port Talbot hospital.
- Morriston hospital is one of the busiest emergency departments in Wales. It hosts specialist services for trauma and orthopaedics, renal medicine, neurology, oral and maxillofacial surgery and regional cleft lip and palate service for children and adults
- A community hospital and community services provide clinical services outside of the main hospital sites. There are 51 GP practices, 72 dental practices (including orthodontists), 32 optometry practices and 92 community pharmacies.
- Neath Port Talbot and Swansea has an ageing population of 390,000.

7.3 The Llais team covering the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region had focused on a range of activities:

- Promoting the work of Llais nationally and locally to let people know what Llais.
- Establishing new relationships and strengthening old ones
- continuing to listen to what people want to tell us about health and social care services.
- Meeting with lots of community based representatives and groups, including elected representatives and local councils for voluntary services.
- Presenting to a range of meetings and groups, including, for example, the Regional Partnership Board, non-executive Members of Swansea Bay Health Board, People's Forum and third sector groups.
- Meeting with Directors responsible for leading service changes, and creating a task and finish group to look at ways of working around service changes.



- Carrying out a programme of visits to hear from people while they were accessing services. This included visits to GP surgeries in 3 ward areas, as well as visits to speak with patients in Murrison hospital and Neath Port Talbot hospitals.
  - Working with community groups and families and carers living with dementia. A report on this programme of work was due to be published soon.
  - Celebrating diversity, including Black History Month. Llais had collaborated with the Swansea Africa Centre on this work, which had focused on black and ethnic minority people's experience of accessing health and social care.
  - Making a range of representations to services on health and social care related matters.
  - Delivering a programme of community based engagement activities. This had been resource intensive, with a significant impact on the small staff team.
- 7.2 The Regional Director informed the Board that the region is developing a plan to engage and support people to be involved with the independent review of maternity services in Neath Port Talbot and Swansea.
- 7.3 The Chair thanked the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region for their hard work and looked forward to seeing the recommended actions from the dementia work.

## Planning and progress 2023/24

- 8.1 The Board received a paper on planning and progress reporting arrangements, linked to the latest annual plan and its objectives. The report presented a proposal to introduce new arrangements to support our planning, management and reporting of organisational performance in delivering agreed plans.
- 8.2 Board members considered the new framework, referred to as Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) would provide a clear, detailed view of the structured programme of actions and activities needed to deliver agreed objectives and priorities. It will also provide the Board with information on performance through a range of key performance indicators.

8.2 The Board noted the planning and progress paper and looked forward to seeing outcomes going forward.

## Strategic planning outline 2024-2027

9.1 The Board received a paper outlining the approach taken to the development of a strategic plan. The strategic plan would cover a 3-year period, and would be designed to guide Llais through its formative years, laying a strong foundation for sustainable growth and impactful service delivery.

9.2 It would:

- Set out our vision, mission, values, and behaviours
- Align and map across to our duties and responsibilities, including working within the framework of the Future Generations and Well-being Act, A Healthier Wales, the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement)(Wales) Act, and other contextual laws, obligations, and relevant strategies.
- Link to supporting strategies and plans, including, for example our Strategic Equality Plan and strategies related to our volunteers, digital infrastructure and use and communications and engagement.

9.3 The plan will present 5 principal goals:

- Advocate and influence services to be people-centred, accessible, sensitive, and responsive to individual, community and national needs.
- Pressure on services and the affect this has on people and communities, services, and workforce.
- Alignment, integration, and partnerships. Finding our way through the challenges.
- Digital, Data, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the impact on people's health and social care.
- Evolve as an organisation to become a mature, well-run, trusted and ambitious organisation.

9.4 The Board noted the current position and agreed that further opportunities to discuss the development of the strategy should be provided.

**A24-01-03:** The Board agreed that further opportunities for members to discuss the development of the strategy should be provided.

## Outline funding allocation 2024/25

- 10.1 The Board was presented with a draft funding allocation for 2024/25. It was noted that while the 2024/25 remit letter and funding letter have not yet been issued, Welsh Government has published a draft budget for 2024/25. Members also noted that the 2023/24 funding letter had been issued to Llais in May 2023.
- 10.2 In 2023/24 Welsh Government had assumed slippage on appointment dates for new posts during the year, reducing the budget allocation for the year by 25% to reflect this. Funding to meet the additional costs associated with the annual pay award and inflation had not been built into the funding allocation, as Llais was able to meet these additional costs through slippage. In 2024/25 Llais will need to have sufficient funding to meet the annual pay award and inflation. Further dialogue was needed with Welsh Government to get a clear understanding of the approach to dealing with this.
- 10.3 Board members were informed that officers would be meeting with Welsh Government officials soon. One of the priorities for discussion at that meeting would be to establish when Llais can expect to receive its funding letter for 2024/25.
- 10.4 The Chief Executive noted the environment in which these discussions were being held, in particular the scale of the financial challenges affecting the public sector in Wales, and the actions being taken to support a shift of funding to support health and social care delivery.
- 10.5 The Board noted the draft funding allocation for 2024/25 and ongoing discussions with Welsh Government officials to finalise the funding allocation.

## Values and behavioural framework

- 11.1 The Board received an update on progress with the development of Llais values and behavioural framework. Following the success of the staff conference last year, a follow-up event was planned for staff, as

well as a separate volunteer conference. Due to unforeseen circumstances, both events had been delayed.

11.2 Work was underway to developing a comprehensive values and behavioural framework. This was involving our people, partners and stakeholders in a variety of activities, including:

- The development of arrangements to link our desired behaviours within a new skills framework for staff
- A review programme for all Llais policies and procedures to ensure they enable and support our values and expected behaviours

11.2 To support the further development of a consistent and common organisation culture, Llais has also commissioned organisational development professionals to work with staff in their teams to understand team dynamics and actions needed to build effective teams and support new ways of working.

11.3 The Board noted the approach being taken to develop and describe desired behaviours in support of our values, the current position on the development of a values and behavioural framework. Members asked to be kept updated on progress.

**A24-01-04:** An update will be provided to the Board on the development of a values and behaviours framework.

## Skills framework & learning and development programme

12.1 The Board received an update on progress with the development of a skills framework and supporting learning and development strategy and programme for Llais staff.

12.2 To drive the development of a learning and development strategy and programme that supports our emerging strategy and plans, we have engaged the services of a temporary skills and learning and development programme lead, until March 2024.

12.3 Work on the development of a skills framework is underway. In November 2023 approval was given by the Board to run a formal tender exercise to address identified skills and knowledge gaps

caused by the extended remit of Llais and the large-scale recruitment of new staff.

- 12.2 A learning programme is being developed for staff and will also be rolled out to volunteers. The programme will focus on building awareness and understanding of the social care sector in Wales, and our confidence and competence to work in different ways.
- 12.3 So that we can deliver this training in 2023-2024, we have completed the procurement process for the volunteer learning programme. This was facilitated by NHS Shared Services Partnership and was awarded to Practice Solutions Ltd. The volunteer training programme will start in January and be completed by March 2024.
- 12.4 The second phase of training will be for Llais staff and will be subject to a separate tender process which is currently underway. This training is expected to begin after April 2024.

## Volunteer update

- 13.1 The Corporate Lead for volunteering provided the Board with an update on the development of our volunteer framework.
- 13.2 From April 2023 the Regional Director of Powys took on the corporate leadership responsibility for volunteers. Regional Operations Managers oversee the day-to-day management and communication with regional volunteers.
- 13.3 In December 2023 Llais had 132 volunteers across Wales, a reduction from 145 in October 2023. Although detailed reasons for individuals leaving are not yet available, it is likely that some volunteers who were previously Community Health Council members have left due to other commitments, or because their involvement had come to a natural end point having completed the original expected tenure set for the community health councils, or because the new requirements of the role are not what they were looking for, given the changes from the previous 'member' model.
- 13.4 A working group of Regional Operations Managers have worked together to put the core processes and documentation in place that enable us to onboard, train, communicate and support our volunteers.

Progress has been slower than anticipated, but the following are now in place or underway:

- A range of flexible role descriptions
  - A clear, defined recruitment process
  - A policy and process for Disclosure and Barring Service checks
  - A process for identity cards
  - Interim induction programme
  - Administrative forms eg. Expenses, next of kin, role(s), time commitment
  - An all-Wales database
  - Regional communication/ workshops/ development days
  - A draft strategy has been prepared in readiness to align with the organisational strategy from 2024 onwards.
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- Key policies have been reviewed including safeguarding, expenses, behavioural standards
  - Volunteers are able to participate across all the identified roles where they indicated a preference
  - A volunteer handbook has been designed.

13.5 The Board discussed the problems encountered by the former community health councils when recruiting new members. Although Board members acknowledged the new process is much less formalised, they were concerned to ensure the arrangements were not 'process heavy' in a way that could discourage people from getting involved. The Board was keen to ensure there are no unnecessary barriers and to recognise that people want to volunteer in different ways.

13.7 It was suggested that people could get involved in the work of Llais in other ways, perhaps as an associate or friend. The Regional Director confirmed that this was something being considered.

13.8 The Chair sought the views from a Llais volunteer from the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region who was in attendance. A number of suggestions were made. These included regular newsletters, more volunteers in rural communities, lead volunteers to push forward the work of Llais, the provision of more technical and IT support and a Llais presence in schools to talk to young people about becoming a volunteer.

13.9 The Board noted the current position but was also keen to ensure that there is continued engagement with new volunteers and support for former community health council members moving forward.

## IT systems update

- 14.1 The Board received an update on the development of key digital infrastructure projects. The Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) project is in the final stages of its Phase 1 development. A programme of training for all staff has been developed. The training will be delivered to co-incide with the week of the go-live date.
- 14.2 An IT health check on the new CRM development is currently underway and further progress will be reported to the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.
- 14.3 The end user work programme is nearing completion with two areas of work still outstanding. Discussions are underway with Centerprise to develop a support contract and with Welsh Government to look at an alternative supplier to support the network arrangement for the Neath Port Talbot & Swansea region.
- 14.4 The Board noted that training has been delivered to most staff on the SharePoint system. This has been well received by staff and will be completed by the end of January 2024.

## Review of policies and procedures

- 15.1 The Board received an update on the development of arrangements to review our governance framework, including our policy and procedures. Prior to Llais becoming operational, the Board adopted a wide range of policies and procedures, the majority of which had been in use by the former Board and Community Health Councils. There are over 150 policies, procedures, standards and guidance documents.
- 15.2 It was agreed these policies and procedures should be reviewed after one year of operation to determine if they were fit for purpose.

- 15.3 During the first months of operation, Llais identified some gaps and areas for development in its governance framework, reflecting the different needs of a Welsh Government Sponsored Body.
- 15.4 It is proposed that a procurement exercise be undertaken to select a supplier to review our existing governance framework. This would incorporate a review of our governance arrangements, including our high level governance documents as well as a gap analysis of current policies and procedures. A review of policies and procedures would be undertaken with suggested changes and additions made where needed to rationalise and simplify documents.
- 15.5 This would be carried out over 2 phases. Phase 1 would focus on our high level governance framework, would be carried out straight away. Phase 2 would include a more detailed review of our policies and procedures. This would be taken forward once a number of roles that are key to shaping our policies and procedures are in post. In order to carry this out in 2 phases, 2 separate procurement exercises would be needed.
- 15.4 The Board noted the importance of working with an external supplier that demonstrated a strong understanding of the nature and scale of Llais, and of having a governance framework that was clear and simple to work within. Board members identified a clear opportunity to simplify the number of policies and procedures going forward, and the need to reflect the requirements of Llais as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body.
- 15.5 The Board noted the rationale for a review of the governance framework and agreed the need for external support to carry out this work.
- 15.6 The Board agreed the proposed approach.

**A24-01-05:** The Board agreed that a 2 stage procurement exercise be carried out to select a supplier to undertake a review of our governance arrangements. Phase 1 to review our high level governance arrangements and phase 2 to carry out a review of Llais policies and procedures.

## Board effectiveness review process



16.1 Proposals on an approach to conduct a Board effectiveness review, in line with Standing Orders were presented to the Board by the Head of Governance and Board Secretary.

16.2 The Board discussed the proposed approach, including the areas of focus that should be included in the Board effectiveness questionnaire. Members identified a need for further work to be undertaken on the statements for inclusion in the Board effectiveness questionnaire to reflect the context of a Board in its first full year of operation.

**A24-01-06:** Further work to be undertaken on the statements for inclusion in the Board effectiveness questionnaire.

**D24-01-04:** The Board agreed the proposed approach to the board effectiveness review process.

### Bevan Commission: a conversation with the public

17.1 The Chair summarised the key findings of the recent report published by the Bevan Commission called A Conversation with the Public – challenges and opportunities for change. Llais had been involved in this work, encouraging involvement in a public engagement exercise and supporting a programme of regional engagement events.

17.2 Following the publication of its report, the Bevan Commission approached Llais to discuss how we might work together in taking forward next steps.

17.2 The Llais Chair and Chief Executive recently met with the Director of the Bevan Commission, Dr Helen Howson, and agreed that a further meeting with the Bevan Commission's Chair should take place in February 2024. This would provide an opportunity for Llais to further consider the report and discuss the potential to work together to focus on further public engagement about the future of health and social care services, in line with our role and remit.

17.3 The Board agreed that Rajan Madhok would consider the report in more detail and report back to the Board.

**A24-01-07:** Rajan Madhok to consider the Bevan Commission report in more detail and report back to the Board.

## 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.

16.2 The meeting closed.

Draft