



Eich llais chi mewn | Your voice in health
iechyd a gofal | and social care

OUR IMPACT REPORT 2023/2024



Prof. Medwin Hughes
Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The Board and I are immensely proud of the progress we have made as a new organisation. We are grateful for the unwavering commitment of our staff, volunteers, and partners.

Since our inception on April 1, 2023, we have focused on laying a strong foundation. Our initial efforts were directed towards listening – to the public, our stakeholders, and our own team. This foundational period allowed us to understand the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

Despite the complexities of setting up new systems and integrating new staff and volunteers, we have made significant strides in building a robust framework that supports our mission.

Throughout the year, we have engaged in numerous initiatives to amplify the voices of the Welsh people. From attending local and national events to launching a comprehensive multimedia marketing campaign, our efforts have been aimed at raising awareness about our independent role in improving health and social care services.

We have successfully established strong partnerships with NHS bodies, local authorities, and third-sector organisations, which have been instrumental in supporting our efforts.

We are dedicated to making Llais a well-run, trusted, and ambitious organisation. Our vision for the next 3 to 5 years will set ambitious goals to help make sure that health and social care services in Wales work best for everyone. We will continue to learn, adapt, and grow, always prioritising the needs and voices of the communities we serve.

Looking ahead, our [strategic plan for 2024-2027](#) will guide our efforts to drive a national conversation about the future of health and social care in Wales.

This conversation will be inclusive and honest, addressing the challenges we face and building consensus around sustainable solutions.

As we move forward, I invite all of us who may need or use services, community representatives and groups and everyone involved in health and social care to join us in this transformative journey. Together, we can build a health and social care system that is not only fit for today but also equipped for tomorrow, truly belonging to the people of Wales.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and well-being of Wales. Let us move forward with resolve and optimism, ready to make a difference in the lives of everyone living in Wales.



I extend my deepest gratitude to the people and communities across Wales for taking the time to share their views with us so their voices help shape health and social care services. My thanks also to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners for their unwavering commitment and support. Your contributions are vital to our success, and I look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to improve health and social care services in Wales.



Our first year has been about listening, learning and working with others to understand what you want and need from your health and social care services. We set out our plans for our first year in our 100-day plan and Our Plans and Priorities (Oct 2023 –March 2024). The outcomes we were aiming for were:

Listen and represent your views and experiences to decision makers to make a difference.

Build awareness and understanding of who we are, what we do and how we make a difference.

Be a well-run, trusted and ambitious

Build a strong voice in social care.

Speak up to help keep people safe when things aren't right.

Make it easy to connect with you and our partners, by being accessible and inclusive.

Develop our people, attract new people and support their involvement in our work.

We had a lot to do to make sure we got the basics right to help us support you, form new partnerships, and to be an independently run organisation.

Our Vision

We believe in a healthier Wales. A health and social care system where people get the services they need in a way that works best for them and is ready for whatever the future holds.

Our Mission

We make it our mission to listen carefully, locally, regionally and nationally, and to increase the impact of people's voices in shaping services.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



We work together with the people of Wales to give you a stronger voice, and represent your interests, when it comes to health and social care.

We do this by:

ENGAGEMENT

We engage and listen to people about their experiences of health and social care. We try and meet communities in the places that work best for them.

REPRESENTATIONS

We represent the views we hear to decision makers in health and social care. By law, they must let us know what they plan to do with the views and experiences that we share.

COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY

We help and support people when things go wrong, and they want to make a complaint through the formal complaints process of the NHS or their local authority. We also provide advice where we can to those who haven't started this process.

COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION

We will make sure people know about our services so more people can have their say. The health bodies and the local authorities have a legal duty to promote our services, too.

These are our core activities, and we base our key performance indicators on these four areas as well as how we are doing in meeting our strategic priorities and objectives.



OUR ENGAGEMENT IMPACT



OUR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Our regional teams work in several ways to hear your voice. You may meet us at one of our events, raising awareness of who we are and what we do.

You may see us visiting the places where you receive your health and care, or out and about in your community. **Our aim is to hear what matters to you.** We:

Drive a National Conversation: Through Llais Local, we learn about what you need and the issues you face, helping shape the future of health and social care in Wales.

Influence change: We share what we hear with health bodies, local authorities, and Welsh Government policymakers to help make services better.

We listen to local people about what they think are the three most important health and social care issues that needs fixing in their area. From the insights we gather from Llais local, visiting and from our ongoing national survey we will complete three regional projects. We will do targeted work to find out much more about these priorities in your area.

We will also look out for important topics coming out of this work through the year to help us plan our visits to health and social care services.



Engagement impact #1

LGBTQIA+ Open door event

We co-hosted an open-door event with Swansea Bay University Health Board to launch their LGBTQIA+ strategy plan, sharing information on the strategy, information on Llais and getting to know the LGBTQIA+ community in the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region.

The event gave those who came a chance to ask questions about the work both Llais and the Health Board are doing and we made some great new connections with representative organisations for future engagement.



Engagement impact #2

Vascular Services

Our team in North Wales have worked with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to provide independent advice and support to the families affected by the identified failings of vascular services in North Wales.

At the recent launch event of the Vascular Harm Report, we took a facilitative approach to ensure that all voices were heard, offering advice and assistance for those who needed it in relation to the NHS Redress process. We advised on the next steps, offered the support of our complaints advocacy service and signposted to other relevant services.

The work of our North Wales team has been cited by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board as key drivers for improvements in vascular services in the region.



Llais Local

We piloted a new Llais Local approach to engagement in Powys. This involves spending concentrated periods of time in a range of local towns and neighbourhoods to hear what's important to the people who live there.

We worked with local clubs, charities, and health and social care services to make it easy for people to share their experiences.

One of the outcomes of the Llais Local pilot was that we saw a notable increase in referrals to our complaints advocacy service in those areas through the awareness-raising activities.

The pilot has been so successful we are replicating the approach across Wales going forward.



OUR REPRESENTATION IMPACT



REPRESENTATIONS

As the Citizen Voice Body, we gather your opinions, analyse them, and share them with key decision-makers in Wales. Our goal is to ensure your voice shapes the services you receive. We follow a formal process for representing your views.

Under Section 15(1) of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, we can raise issues with NHS bodies and local authorities in Wales. These issues could come from consultations by these bodies or through our own engagement with the public.

The representations process allows you to have a voice in shaping the delivery of health and social care services in a way that works for you. It means services are designed with you in mind.

A service provider must tell us what they are going to do with the representations that we make. If they can't act on the representation, they must give us a valid reason.

We're also working on improving how we communicate the impact of these representations back to you. Throughout the year we have listened and represented your views and experiences to decision makers to make a difference.



Across Wales we have attended 234 activities;

181 relating to Health, 22 relating to Social Care and 31 relating to both Health and Social Care.

Representation Impact #1

BSL interpretation service

We were contacted by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation service with concerns that a hospital was not booking interpretation services for patients on weekends. The hospital had advised the BSL interpretation service that "no therapies take place over the weekend" so they did not provide cover.

The BSL interpretation service was concerned not only for the person they were supporting, but for other patients who may need to access BSL services at weekends.

We got in touch with the local health board about the person who needed support at their weekend appointment and the concerns around the hospital not providing BSL interpretation services more broadly at weekends.

As a result, the person was given the BSL interpretation they needed. All nursing staff were reminded that they must act on the requests of any person who has raised language needs as part of their requirements to access and attend appointments and receive the healthcare they need.



Representation Impact #2

Digital exclusion

We made a representation to a health board about their surveys for people registered in 2 GP surgeries. We asked the health board to provide paper copies of the surveys so that people who aren't on-line could get involved.

The health board changed their approach so that people registered with the GP surgeries could get the information in paper form as well as digitally. It also offered support to anyone who needed further help to get involved and share their views.



Representation Impact #3

Outpatient appointments

We were told about a person who had difficulties attending outpatient appointments. Their appointments had been redirected from their closest hospital to a different hospital further away. The 2 hospitals were run by different local health boards.

We made a representation to the health board who talked things through with their neighbouring health board so that the patient could continue to receive their appointments closer to home.

We are continuing to work with the health board to make sure this kind of problem isn't more widespread.





**OUR IMPACT THROUGH
CONSULTATIONS & SERVICE CHANGE**

CONSULTATIONS AND SERVICE CHANGE

Open consultations include Llais' involvement when health and social care bodies want to make changes in the way services are provided. This may be called a service reorganisation, reconfiguration, redesign, variation, improvement, or expansion.

When changes to services are proposed, the NHS and local authorities must involve people when they plan, develop, and design services from the start so that they can understand peoples' existing and future needs. Our role is to help make sure they gather the views of people who may be affected and then think about and respond to what they say.

We also share what we hear with policy makers and others when they want to get feedback or views on the things they are thinking about or proposing to do about health and social care services in Wales. This may be by responding to public consultations or providing evidence to inquiries that cover aspects of health and social care services.

Across Wales we were involved in **143 open consultations** this year. We also made **17 responses to national consultations**, or calls for evidence.



Service Change Impact #1

Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS)

Review

We know how much the changes to the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) mean to many of us, especially those in rural areas of Wales. We have heard how deeply people care about the emergency services they and their loved ones can get when they need it and that for a lot of people making sure that any changes to the ways the service is provided does not mess with the quality or speed of help in their area is important to them.

That's why we've been meeting with those responsible for organising the service, sharing public feedback and encouraging them to not only engage with the public, but to listen and respond to what people say. Whenever we've seen room for improvement, we've spoken up, pushing for changes to be made.

Our involvement in the plans for this service are continuing into 2024–2025.

You can also [**watch this video**](#) about the impact of our involvement in a proposed service change in West Wales.



Service Change Impact #2

Laugharne Surgery

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) informed us that the Coach and Horses had applied to close its branch surgery at Laugharne. Work began immediately with HDUHB to understand the emerging position and how public engagement should be designed and structured.

We worked together to agree a public engagement plan that included a number of ways to reach people for their views, to ensure the process was accessible to all.

Following the engagement period, we considered what we had heard from the local communities affected and made a representation to the Health Board that the branch surgery should remain open.

In our response we referenced the Health Board's own strategy "A Healthier Mid and West Wales" which aspires to provide health services that keep people well, prevent ill-health or the worsening of ill health. It also says that it is working in communities to provide more joined-up support and care "as close to home as possible".



Service Change Impact #3

Pushing for the best possible cancer care in Cardiff and The Vale

Cardiff and the Vale published a well-received 'Living with Cancer' report in April. The report highlighted the positive feedback we received from people regarding their care, and Velindre Cancer Centre has issued a letter of thanks, along with an Improvement Plan to address some of the outcomes of the report.

The actions set out in the Improvement Plan covered areas of real importance to people receiving care, from:

- Passing on the positive feedback we received from people regarding their care.
- Re-opening the cafe.
- Improving communications with people receiving care.
- Helping people have blood tests closer to home rather than only at the treatment centre.
- Ensuring people didn't get lost in the gap between the hospital and the GP surgery.

Many of the recommendations detailed in the report have been completed already. This is a great example of the value and impact of how our work in Llais leads to improvements to how services are designed and delivered.



Service Change Impact #4

Review into Maternity Services at Singleton Hospital

Llais has been listening to women, birthing people and families that received care from Swansea Bay Health Board's maternity services. What people told us was shared with the Independent Review of Maternity Services, and we asked them to show us how these views shaped their work.

Whilst this work is continuing, here are examples of what we have achieved:

- An Advisory Group including people with lived experience, representatives from Maternity Voices Partnership, Llais and other third sector groups will be formed to advise the Panel on the approach to their work.
- Bereavement, mental health and wellbeing support services are being made available for those who might need them.
- Information about the review has been made more visible on the Health Board website and a separate website has been launched for the review itself: [Swansea Bay Independent Maternity and Neonatal Review – Niche](#)
- We are working closely with families and the Health Board to move the review process forward so services can improve for people.

3,200 babies are born each year in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area. We know there may be a lot of you with stories to share.



Service Change Impact #5

Dementia – A joined up approach to services

We made a representation to Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Local Authorities as well as Swansea Bay Health Board and the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to: work together to create or further develop jointly funded services that provide advice and support for people living with dementia and their families.

We heard that the West Glamorgan RPB is putting together a dementia strategy in line with the All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway Standards. As part of this work, they will be looking at which services currently support those living with dementia in the area to better direct people and work out any gaps in services.

They shared their commitment to jointly providing the right advice at the right time for people living with dementia and their carers. They told us a Dementia Support Service had been set up via the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership with the help of five key organisations across Swansea and Neath and Port Talbot. The service supports people living with dementia along with their family, friends, and carers through providing information and advice around getting help at home, housing adaptations and repairs, respite, support and guidance. We were told that this work would continue to be developed further.

As well as sitting on the RPB, we now also sit on their Dementia and Learning Disability Programme Board bringing the voice of people to the table whilst services are being planned and developed. Thank you to all those who spoke to us about their experiences of living with dementia.





**OUR
COMPLAINTS
ADVOCACY
IMPACT**

Our complaints advocacy service

Our complaints advocacy teams provide free, independent and confidential advocacy services to people across Wales to help them raise concerns or make a complaint about the health or social care services they or someone they care for has received.

We also signpost people to other organisations if we think that someone else can also help answer questions about health and/or social care services.

People often wanted guidance on administrative processes, such as how to make formal complaints, access medical records, or navigate health and care systems. Providing information and guidance like this is a key part of the support we offered through our enquiries service.

Some people we support experienced difficulties with communication, such as getting through to the right department or making appointments. We advise them on the next steps to take, like contacting specific departments or using online resources. In many cases we are able to help people without the need for them to go through a formal complaint process, by providing information or by picking up the concern directly with the people involved, eg., (contacting a GP, making an appointment, or resolving administrative issues).



Advocacy impact #1

An incident occurred in local authority protected accommodation involving a young person who was taken to hospital following an overdose of medication.

The parents of the young person initially complained to the care establishment about the supervision and management of their child in that care environment. They weren't satisfied with the response they received.

They contacted our service for further advice and support.

We provided support to raise the continued concerns to the local authority responsible for placing the young person with that care provider.

We supported the parents through the Independent Stage 2 Investigation under the social services complaints process. Most of the concerns the parents were unhappy about were upheld by the independent investigation.

Our service supported the parents to meet with the local authority and the care provider to talk about the way forward. As a result, an action plan has been put in place for the future care of the young person, and this is being monitored to make sure it is working well.



Advocacy impact #2

Following a trip to A+E, a client was diagnosed with heart failure and fluid on the lungs and referred to her GP for further investigation.

The GP did blood tests which indicated heart failure and stated they would refer the client to a cardiologist.

As their symptoms worsened, they decided to pay for a private consultation, as they had not received any notification that they were on a waiting list.

A year after originally seeing the GP it was discovered that there had been an error and no referral had been made.

In addition to supporting the client to raise the complaint with the GP Surgery, our advocacy service also liaised with the Health Board regarding their Cardiac referral, which helped in progressing matters.



Advocacy impact #3

The client's father had passed away after being cared for in ITU with Covid19. They were struggling to come to terms with the sudden loss of their father and needed answers to help in their understanding of what happened and why certain decisions and actions were taken. They contacted the HB initially to raise concerns but were struggling to know how to pursue a complaint.

Our advocate submitted additional concerns and liaised with the health board on her behalf and then assisted in the referral of her complaint to the Ombudsman, part of which was upheld.

The client was thankful for advocacy support throughout the complaints process and that a number of her questions and concerns had been addressed.



Advocacy impact #4

Our advocacy service had been supporting a client who had been suffering with distressing symptoms, which had progressed significantly over time.

They had collapsed at home multiple times and been taken to A&E via ambulance but never received an official diagnosis or any treatment for their symptoms. The client contacted Llais and a complaint was made on their behalf. The client was unhappy with the response from the University Health Board as they were not offered any treatment, so a meeting was requested. Unfortunately, after several months passing, no date was offered, so a referral was made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales who recommended that the University Health Board offer a meeting with the Consultant.

Our advocate supported the client at the meeting where they felt that they were listened to for the first time. They were then taken straight from the meeting to a consultation with a consultant where they were examined, and investigations were arranged.



Advocacy impact #5

Our complaints advocates supported Ms X's complaint about the care of her father, Mr A.

After running into the GP surgery with severe chest pains, sweating and yellow in colour, Mr A was told to attend A&E and show the slip given to him by the GP.

Leaving the surgery in his minibus with his elderly mother, he planned to go to A&E after finishing his work. Mr A suffered a massive heart attack at the wheel, crashing into a wall.

He sadly died at the scene.

Following a review by the Deputy Medical Director – Primary Care & Community, the Health Board issued their findings:

- The GP's practice was outside of what is recommended by NICE Guidance CG 95.
- Advice re 999 ambulance when a patient presents with an acute emergency needs to be reiterated to all GP practices.
- The advice to patients around driving when systemically unwell will be reiterated to all GP practices and
- The need to document a complete set of observations

At Llais, we hope these recommendations will improve care and support for seriously unwell people.



Advocacy impact #6

The parent of Ms X approached our Llais Neath Port Talbot and Swansea team for complaints advocacy after Ms X's dental practice cancelled six separate appointments for treatment.

Ms X was in significant pain and struggling to cope. She urgently needed painful teeth removed but the appointments kept on being cancelled.

She hadn't received an acknowledgment to an earlier written complaint. Ms X was due to go away for a few days but was planning to cancel due to the pain she was in.

Our complaints advocate contacted the Practice Manager to query why the complaint had not been taken forward and to discuss the cancelled appointments. They identified an issue with communication and the process in the practice for re-appointing.

The client rang shortly afterwards to say that she had an appointment that afternoon. After having three teeth removed, Ms X attended her trip away as planned.

The client also received an apology from the practice and is thrilled with the outcome.



Advocacy impact #7

Waiting Times for Orthopaedic Surgery

West Wales Region spoke with an 84-year-old man who had been waiting for orthopaedic surgery since early 2019. During that time his ability to get about deteriorated, with even one step leaving him in a lot of pain. He described his quality of life as non-existent. The pain was so bad that he hadn't had a good night's sleep in over four years.

His question to Llais was **"have I been condemned to live the last years of my life in agony, with no chance of surgery – am I going to die waiting for surgery?"**

He had suffered from cancer during this time and was treated swiftly and successfully. However, as the cancer treatment lasted longer than 21 days the guidelines suggested he be removed from any waiting list and start again when doctors agreed he was fit. This would have meant him spending years longer awaiting orthopaedic surgery.

We wrote to the Health Board asking them to put him back on the list, in the place he should have been. The Health Board agreed, and the patient has now been offered imminent surgery.

He is overjoyed and looks forward to enjoying the future pain free.



VOLUNTEER IMPACT



LLAIS 

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Volunteer impact #1

West Wales hospital wayfaring

Following feedback, the West Wales team wanted to know what it was like to get to each of the 4 main hospitals in the region (including parking) and then use the signs and directions provided for different departments, wards and units that patients need to get to.

With the help of our volunteers, we designed some basic scenarios which aimed to check what kind of information was available and whether it was straight forward to find.

We were also very fortunate to have the help and support of Pembrokeshire People First, (PPF) an independent charity run by and for adults with learning disabilities and/autism.

This project gave us an interesting insight into people's experiences as they plan and arrive at hospital. We shared our final report with the Health Board with suggestions for improvements including parking, signage and maps.



Volunteer impact #2

North Wales Hanmer Surgery

In North Wales our regional team has played a key role in progressing the proposals for upgrading the medical facilities of Hanmer Surgery which serves almost 2000 patients.

At our request, the Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) met with the Hanmer GP and his staff. Llais facilitated this meeting with support from one of our volunteers whose experience as a GP principal was invaluable in helping to navigate some of the “red tape” and has saved the development a significant amount of time as a result.



Volunteer impact #3

Gwent winter patient experience

In Gwent 22 of our volunteers took part in a six-week engagement project to support one of the region's focussed priorities of 'getting care quickly when you need it'.

Our volunteers engaged with 172 people who took the time to share their experiences of accessing care and treatment at Minor Injury Units or Emergency Departments in Gwent.

Following the engagement period, we were able to share what our volunteers heard with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and make representations for improvements in service.

Without our volunteers we would not have been able to have a presence across the multiple hospital sites in the region and would have missed valuable insights from those attending the different sites.





**THANK YOU FOR READING
OUR VERY FIRST IMPACT
REPORT**

[OUR FULL ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS IS AVAILABLE HERE](#)