

Llais Cymru - Board Meeting

Wednesday 23 April 2025

**Venue: Rhydyar Business Park, Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1DL**

Zoom Meeting

Members:

Medwin Hughes
Grace Quantock
Alyson Thomas
Bamidele Adenipekun
Jack Evershed
Karen Lewis
Rajan Madhok
Mwoyo Makuto

Chair
Deputy Chair
Chief Executive
Non-Executive
Non-Executive
Non-Executive
Non-Executive
Associate member

Attendees:

Richard Bevan
Kirsty Contreras-Stacey
Ben Eaton

Charysse Harper

Angela Mutlow
Daniel Price
Claire Taylor

Interim Board Secretary
Governance Officer
Strategic Director of Organisational
Strategy and Engagement
Head of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and
Wellbeing
Director of Operations
Regional Director, Cwm Taf Morgannwg
Deputy Regional Director, Cwm Taf
Morgannwg

Apologies:

Jason Smith
Joanne Bolton

Non-Executive
Strategic Director of Operations and
Corporate Services

Welcome, introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including all those joining the meeting online.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Jason Smith, Non-Executive and Joanne Bolton, Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services.

Declarations of Interest

- 2.0 No declarations of interest were made in relation to the items on the agenda.

Valuing people's stories: examples of how an individual's experience can help change for the better – Accessing GP services

- 3.0 The Regional Director of West Wales provided a presentation with stories of people's experiences of health and social care services that had been provided during their visit to a homelessness kitchen in July 2024.
- 3.1 One story in particular was of a man who struggled with his speech and as a result had barriers in being heard. The gentleman was sat on his own with his dog, who he later described as his closest friend. Llais staff sat with the gentleman for about 30 minutes.
- 3.2 The gentleman had 2 main problems in life, the first was that people could not understand him which meant that no one ever heard what he had to say, and the second was that he did not always have the means of overcoming his communication problems due to lack of money. He explained that he found it really difficult to make GP appointments.
- 3.3 He explained that he often faced long waits in a queue, and didn't always have money to make long calls on his mobile. When he eventually got through, he would try to explain what he wanted, often to be told that he could not be understood. He had previously been told to call back when he was less agitated, sober or awake, or he should get someone else to call on his behalf.

3.4 Calls were also ended whilst holding on to get through for over 20 minutes. His social worker did not start work until later in the morning and so he was not able to arrange an appointment via the 8am call-in method, and by the time he was able to arrange an appointment there would be no appointments available.

3.5 Due to his living situation, the gentleman did not always receive appointment letters. This meant that he missed appointments. When appointments were missed, he was criticised for wasting resources. Also, some appointments were routine and only took 5 minutes, which involved a lot of travel, inconvenience and unnecessary expense.

Outcome

3.6 Following this experience and others that had been highlighted to the region about clients with speech issues, a representation was made to the Health Board.

3.7 STAMMA (a charity focusing on people with speech and communication issues) provided training and made resources available to all Llais staff.

3.8 The health board acknowledged a gap in its learning resources, and set up a task and finish group to develop its learning arrangements further.

3.9 The Regional Director reflected that Llais might not have changed the gentleman's immediate experiences of health and social care, but he considered that he hadn't been ignored and dismissed. He was pleased that he had been included and his issues taken seriously. This was fed back following the gentleman's further engagement with a community connector.

3.10 The Chair expressed his gratitude to all staff involved and the difference that had been made for this gentleman and also the meaningful impact and learning for health and social care as a result.

3.11 A number of board members echoed their gratitude and suggested that the impact made in this area would be a good example to share across Wales with other health boards and services.

- 3.12 The Chief Executive agreed with the positive impact of this story and asked that the Regional Director of West Wales share the experience of this gentleman across Llais, and for it to be raised with Health Education and Improvement Wales with regard to training for NHS Wales staff to better support individuals with problems with speech.

Action: DC to share this story across Llais to encourage other regions to bring it to the attention of their health and social care partners and Health Education and Improvement Wales.

Spotlight on our activities: Accessing GP services

- 4.0 The Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement continued a presentation on accessing GP services and confirmed that lack of GP appointments were causing anxiety for many people in Wales. 21 onsite visits to GP surgeries had taken place and overall, Llais had engaged with 40,000 people in person, via email and across several social media platforms.
- 4.1 Concerns about GP services featured heavily in the feedback we received. Almost half of the concerns raised with the Llais complaints advocacy team related to general practice in the past year.
- 4.2 There were varied issues raised such as 8am appointment 'scrambles' and difficulty navigating systems. Other issues raised were around safety and quality where practices close or change hands without community understanding. There was also a desire for continuity of care, person-centred treatment, and services that reflect people's needs and not organisational convenience.
- 4.3 Recurring themes were lack of access to appointments, barriers to access for people in vulnerable situations, digital exclusion, travelling for care, cultural and language gaps. Once appointments are arranged, the care provided is highly valued.
- 4.4 The Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement confirmed that Llais had shared what we had heard about GP services through our complaint's advocacy service with the Cabinet Secretary's office. In March 2025 Llais also submitted evidence

based on what we had heard to the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee Inquiry into the future of general practice.

- 4.5 In 2024 Llais took part in two roundtable discussions with the Older People's Commissioner and partners including the Royal College of GPs, Age Cymru, Welsh Government, ADSS and GP practitioners.
- 4.6 Llais continues to work with policy makers and healthcare professionals to inform and influence the development of GP services nationally through policy groups such as the Primary Care Programme Board, review activity like that planned for Welsh GP access standards, and regionally through primary care clusters.
- 4.7 The Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement confirmed that Llais would use what we've heard to finalise a Llais position statement regarding access to GP services. Further representations would be made, as needed to the Welsh Government and NHS organisations, and monitor their responses. It was confirmed that Llais would continue to provide communications via press notices and newsletters.
- 4.8 The Chief Executive expressed her gratitude to all involved in the work of Llais across Wales in relation to access to GP services, which was a key area of concern for the people of Wales and an important element of national and regional programmes of work.

Health and social care services in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

- 5.0 The Deputy Regional Director of Cwm Taf Morgannwg provided a presentation on health and social care matters in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. The matters presented were around supporting people with learning disabilities to stay healthy, GP access issues, Neurodevelopmental diagnosis and children and young people's mental health, day services and care homes.
- 5.1 It was confirmed that Llais had engaged with over 2,500 people in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. 1,048 people shared their experiences of health and social care services. Llais had supported 217 clients with advocacy services and Llais had made 30 representations to the health board and local authorities in the region.

- 5.2 From the feedback received, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board had confirmed that there had been instances of missed cancer diagnosis and stroke services pressures. There had been significant impact as a result of the Princess of Wales Hospital roof repairs and repatriation issues with a number of reports having been issued in relation to the position. It was also reported that issues had been identified with the health board's responsiveness to complaints within the 30 days standard for responses and this had been highlighted to the health board.
- 5.3 Llais had engaged with People First Groups and hosted interactive workshops. Group members confirmed that they had experienced unhelpful behaviours accessing health and social care services in the region. Group members confirmed their preferences on ways in which they would like to be communicated with in future. Llais has been supporting them in raising awareness of these matters.
- 5.4 Through a number of partnership working groups (Llais had been working with the Behaviour Support Hub) Llais ran a survey and a series of face to face and online engagements to hear parent and children's experiences of accessing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Neurodevelopmental diagnosis. 462 parents shared their experiences and those of their children on long waiting lists.
- 5.5 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board had increased its attendance recently at the Regional Partnership Board, although this was often deputies rather than the named members themselves attending. As a result, the shape of the meetings had been very much weighted more towards local authority representatives and other partners rather than health.
- 5.6 The Deputy Regional Director of Cwm Taf Morgannwg confirmed their region's focus for 2025/26. This included a wide-ranging programme of activities including:
- Llais locals in Hirwaun/Porth/Sarn/Penydarren
 - fora focusing on mental health/women's health/youth/CTM service change
 - social care events (learning disabilities, dementia & carers)
 - Health and social care summit
 - Increasing outreach activity

- Acute Clinical Services Plan public engagement and consultation
- volunteer training events, and
- continuing to build relationships with local authorities, third sector partners and local members of the Senedd.

5.6 The Chair expressed his gratitude to the Deputy Regional Director Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Team for their support and valued the work the team continued to deliver. This was echoed by other Board members.

5.7 The Chair raised a number of concerns regarding putting things right and the reasoning why Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board had not been responding effectively within the required timeframes. Also, concern was expressed with regard to representation at the Regional Partnership Board and. It was agreed that Llais would write reflecting the concerns discussed at the board meeting to Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

Action: Letter to be written to Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to highlight the concerns discussed at the Board. Chief Executive to determine the most appropriate approach.

Minutes of the last meeting: Wednesday 22 January 2025 and 26 March 2025

6.0 The Board approved minutes from the January and March 2025 meetings. Both sets of minutes were confirmed as accurate records.

Action log and discuss any matters arising from the minutes

7.0 The Interim Board Secretary provided an update on the action log, this was discussed and approved by the Board. All closed actions carried out were agreed to be transferred to the closed action tab.

Close meeting and date of the next meeting

8.0 The meeting concluded with the Chair thanking all involved in preparing the papers, presentations and contributing to the Board meeting.

The meeting closed 11:50am