

# LLAIS POWYS ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Hay-on-Wye and Talgarth  
Locality – November 2024

## Introduction

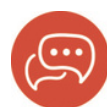
During November 2024, Llais undertook focused community engagement in the Hay-on-Wye and Talgarth locality, the eighth area in Powys to be included in our locality-based programme. This initiative is part of our 13-locality approach aligned with Powys Regional Partnership Board structures. The aim was to capture lived experiences of health and social care from people in both rural towns and surrounding areas, including services accessed across the border in England.

Over a two-week period, we engaged with residents through pop-up events, group visits, and one-to-one discussions, informed by local insights and promotional efforts including a Royal Mail leaflet drop to approximately 4,500 households. In total, engagement took place at GP surgeries, community groups, hospital wards, and youth settings, supported by a general survey available online and in print.

## What We Heard

### General Themes

- Strong praise for frontline staff, especially nurses, pharmacy staff, and ambulance teams.
- Widespread issues with access: long waits for GP and specialist appointments, lack of continuity, and limited local services.
- Rurality-related barriers: poor transport, long travel times, and service fragmentation.
- Inadequate mental health and neurodiversity support.
- Communication breakdowns and limited preventative care.
- Social care perceived as hard to navigate, with limited support for carers.
- Youth feedback stressed insufficient mental health services and social opportunities.
- Desire for improved signposting and digital access to services.



## **GP Services**

- Significant dissatisfaction with Haygarth Medical Practice: delays, inconsistent GP access, triage frustration.
- Mixed reception staff experiences, with reports of intimidating behaviour.
- Poor support for people with Autism/ADHD or immunocompromised conditions.
- Prescription issues at the Hay dispensary.
- Unwelcoming surgery environments.
- Some positives: better access for children, friendly staff, smooth registration for newcomers.

## **Community Pharmacy**

- Praised for helpful staff and efficient prescription handling.

## **Dental Services**

- Major difficulties accessing NHS dentists.
- High private costs and unclear access to mobile dental unit.

## **Bronllys Community Hospital**

- Concerns about reduced inpatient care and end-of-life services.
- Positive feedback on care, staff, and food on Llewellyn Ward.
- Mixed experiences on Felindre Ward: generally improved, but patients seek more doctor time and updated facilities.

## **Secondary Care and Transport**

- High praise for hospitals like Hereford and Queen Elizabeth Birmingham.
- Major concerns over travel distances, especially for elderly or low-income residents.
- Cross-border system incompatibility creating delays and errors.



## Mental Health Needs

- Communication challenges, especially during crises.
- Lack of timely or tailored support.
- Frustration with being dismissed due to pre-existing diagnoses.

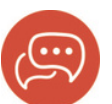
## Unpaid Carers

- Support from groups like Ceredu appreciated.
- Struggles with assessments, benefits, and lack of respite.

## Key Insights

This engagement reflects several Llais strategic priorities:

- **Drive a national conversation:** Community concerns about systemic issues, such as cross-border healthcare incompatibility, contribute to the broader dialogue on healthcare transformation.
- **Push for services that meet everyone's needs:** Repeated issues with GP, mental health, and dental access show that current services are not sufficiently people-centred.
- **Work together better:** Fragmentation between health and social care, and Welsh and English systems, highlights the need for better integration.
- **Help people and services use technology:** Calls for improved digital services show appetite for more accessible service design.
- **Grow and improve as an organisation:** Feedback underlines the importance of listening to diverse voices, including young people and those with complex needs.



## Health Board and Council Responses

Powys Teaching Health Board acknowledged the concerns raised and provided the following updates:

- **Haygarth Medical Practice** has started a review of its triage and appointment systems, with planned improvements to better support continuity of care and communication with neurodivergent patients.
- **Prescriptions:** The Board is working with the Hay dispensary to address reported delays and improve communication with patients.
- **Bronllys Hospital:** The move to a "ready-to-go-home" model aims to support step-down care while retaining flexibility for palliative needs. End-of-life care will still be provided where clinically appropriate.
- **Mobile Dental Unit:** The Health Board is improving public information about the mobile service and ensuring that 111 and other providers are kept up to date.

Powys County Council responded by highlighting steps to improve:

- **Transport and Accessibility:** A transport review is underway to explore demand-responsive options for rural residents.
- **Support for Carers:** Investment in better Carers' Assessment processes and improved coordination with third-sector partners like Ceredu.



## Next Steps

Based on what we heard and in light of responses received:

- Llais will continue monitoring improvements at Haygarth Medical Practice, with a follow-up engagement in 2025.
- We will share feedback from this report with health and care providers to support patient forum development and service redesign.
- We will advocate for improved clarity and access to dental services, including better promotion of the mobile unit.
- We will work with Powys County Council and the Regional Partnership Board to input into their transport review and unpaid carers strategy.

## Conclusion

This engagement in Hay-on-Wye and Talgarth highlighted both dedicated care from staff and systemic challenges that affect people's health and wellbeing. By feeding back directly to providers and working with partners, Llais aims to ensure that voices from this locality drive meaningful improvements.

We encourage continued participation in future engagement opportunities and welcome feedback year-round through our website or regional team.

