

Item: 12

Title: Risk update report

Gweithredu/Action required	For comment and assurance
Amseru/Timing	Routine reporting
Argymhelliad/Recommendation	The Board is asked to receive this risk update report for assurance and information. The report is a narrative report as requested by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and supported by the Board. It continues to build on previous narrative reports made to the Board and Committee over recent months. It also reflects the organisational position as we continue to implement the new Risk Management Strategy agreed by the Board in March 2025. This includes the continuing work on finalising a new series of reporting dashboards.
Risg/Risk	Failing to capture and manage our organisational risks could lead to short and longer-term consequences for Llais.
Cyllid/Finance	There are no direct financial implications for this report other than those risks that directly cover financial matters or have investment elements associated with them.
Amcan cynllun blynyddol/Annual plan objective Amcan cynllyn strategol/Strategic plan objective	Our risk processes provide assurance to the Board, committees, Executive Team and Tîm Arwain that all strategic and operational risks have been identified and are being effectively managed. The organisation continues to hold and maintain a corporate risk register and a series of regional and function-based risk registers. The work on risk management forms part of our governance and assurance arrangements in line with the Board Assurance Framework and delivery of the Annual Plan for 2025/2026.

	The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has a key role on behalf of the Board in scrutinising the organisational approach to risk and advising on the continuing development of the organisation's approach to risk management. The committee last reviewed the update relating to risk at its meeting on the 10 September 2025.
Ecwiti, Amrywiaeth a Chynhwysiant / Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	There are no direct equity, diversity and inclusion matters relating to this report, but there could be features in each risk.
Cyfathrebu/Communications	Please tick one of the following boxes if this activity will have an impact on: Internal: our people ☒ External: our customers/partners/stakeholders ☒ External: our organisation's reputation ☒
Cymeradwyaeth/Approval/Clearance	This paper has been cleared by Alyson Thomas, Chief Executive.
Trafodaethau neu penderfyniadau blaenorol/Previous discussions or decisions	The report provides an overview of ongoing development work in response to the approved risk management strategy, annual plan, board assurance framework and the dashboard development activity. It also outlines the ongoing risk assessment work undertaken through the Executive Team to identify the key risks of non-delivery of the approved Annual Plan.
Awdur Cyflwyno/Author/presenting	Richard Bevan, Corporate Director of Governance/Board Secretary
Dyddiad/Date	10 November 2025

Cefndir/Background and Manylion/ Detail

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on behalf of the Board has been engaged in development work on risk management over the last year. The committee has provided comments and suggestions on how risk activities, risk registers and risk dashboards could be further developed, improved and reported, suggesting a narrative form of reporting to help with better engagement in the details of the risks. This report continues to respond to those suggestions and builds on a narrative risk report style that has been used for recent Board and committee meetings.

Risk management strategy implementation update

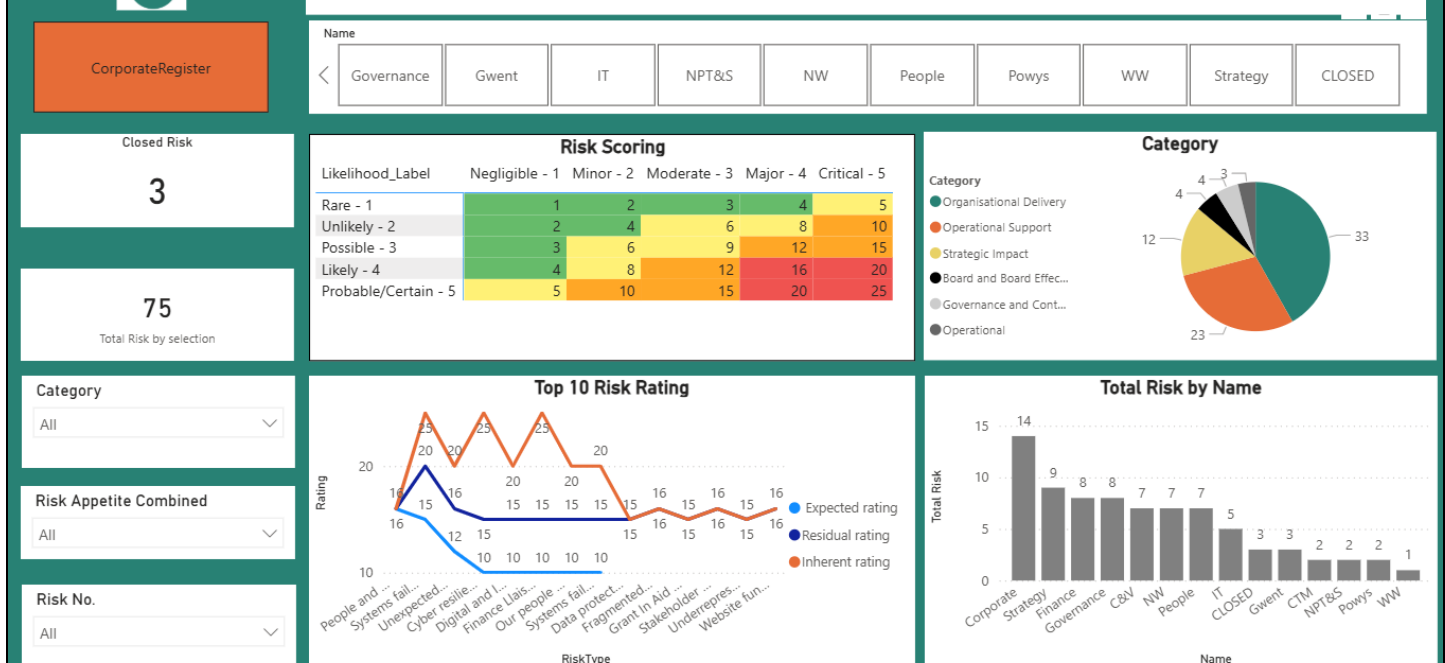
Significant progress continues to be made since the Governance and Risk Manager joined Llais, on development activities, especially regarding assessment of key risks, sources of assurance, timelines/deadlines for actions, expected outcomes, the finalisation of a corporate risk dashboard and regional and function risk dashboards. Comprehensive review discussions continue to be held with our regions and all national functions to review, rebuild and maintain their individual registers.

Work has been undertaken and completed to integrate the corporate risk dashboard and regional and function risk dashboards into one reporting format which is shown in the examples below. These will be increasingly interactive and will be date and time stamped to be clear about when the information was last updated.

Corporate Risk Dashboard



Risk Dashboard



This following narrative report provides overview information about what has changed in the last reporting period (improved and worsened), if there are new risks, what new mitigations/ actions have been put in place and what are the plans for the coming quarter to further act on risks and mitigate their potential impact on the organisation, its services and functions.

The report also explains what the position will look like if mitigations are successful and what additional resources or support might be required so that risks can be brought to an acceptable level in line with the organisation's stated risk appetite.

The key risks identified are assessed against the Annual Plan and other key projects and are outlined below. The risk status of each area has been identified where possible and appropriate to give a clearer indication of the current profile of risks.

During the last reporting period further updating work has been undertaken on the corporate risk register. This was in part to re-assign the leadership of some key risks following the departure of the former Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services at the beginning of October 2025, the assessment of the remedial work required in some areas and the updating of risks to reflect this and several new areas of risk identified through assessment by the Executive Team.

The new risks identified and framed in the last reporting period have included:

- **Communication consistency** – The risk of failure to consistently follow up, communicate outcomes, and share insights across Llais may lead to erosion of trust, reduced confidence from government and partners, missed safety issues, and lost opportunities to influence service improvement.
- **Learning and development** - the scale and complexity of learning and development required across Llais may exceed current capacity, leading to the risk of delays in implementation, inconsistent understanding of roles and systems, and reduced confidence in delivery.

These 2 risks have previously been dimensions of other more compound risks, but it has been considered important to draw them out as separate risks to better manage them through the risk management processes.

Two further areas of risk that have been recently assessed by the Executive Team and added to the risk profile for the organisation. These are:

- **Welsh Government budget:** There is currently uncertainty surrounding the passing of the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2026/2027 financial year. Ongoing negotiations are taking place. There is the risk that if the Senedd fails to agree on a budget then automatic funding cuts would apply, which would have significant consequences for Welsh public services.
- **Senedd elections 2026:** The Executive Team has considered the potential impact on engaging with and supporting a larger Senedd following next May's elections, with 96 members. There are also risks surrounding the new constituencies that straddle current regional boundaries, as currently operated by Llais. Therefore, this presents the potential risk of needing to establish different ways of working for our regions.

Also, given the new electoral system and the potential of re-balancing membership across Wales there is the potential for revised and reframed priorities for public services in Wales in line with the thinking of any new government. The Executive Team alongside the Board has been considering our manifesto calls as an organisation to seek to highlight the key themes that the people of Wales are telling us about what they want from their health and social care in Wales.

Annual Plan 2025/2026 risk assessment (which forms the basis of the corporate risk register for 2025/2026)

1. Cross-cutting themes – narrative view

Several risks have been identified as stretching across every objective in the Annual Plan; they are seen as the “golden threads” that the Board and its committees need to be sighted on throughout the year. These are also being further considered as Llais moves into the next planning round as we think about our priorities for the Annual Plan for 2026/2027, which will be the final year of our 3-year strategy agreed in 2024.

The Board will be actively engaged in discussing and planning the next annual plan at its Board development session in December 2025, with a view to approving the plan early in 2026.

Risk area - capacity and capability

Our workforce is leaner than it was 12 months ago, following the Voluntary Early Release Scheme. Work is continuing to re-design and recruit to new roles to better meet the strategic and operational commitments of Llais. In the short term there are some capacity gaps. However, increasingly these are being filled. As mentioned above further assessments have also been undertaken around our learning and development requirements to ensure that Llais can be best placed to continue to fulfil its commitments during our current annual plan and be best placed to align our capacity and capabilities to make sure we are able to successfully implement the 2026/2027 annual plan, when agreed next year.

In the last period new posts have been designed, and others re-developed and are currently being recruited to, with some new starters having joined Llais in recent months. These roles are at regional and corporate function levels. The next quarter will be important in mitigating the capacity risk in the organisation through completion of several current programmes of recruitment.

Until colleagues take up new posts within Llais and all new starters arrive, the existing teams are working at maximum capacity. Our immediate response has been to ring-fence staff time for priority tasks and back-fill with short term agency contracts when essential, as well as slowing or pausing lower-impact activity, where possible and/ or appropriate.

A further area of impact has been the departure of the Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services at the beginning of October 2025. Work has been led by the Chief Executive to undertake a reallocation of lead roles, which were discussed with and supported by the Board at its September meeting. Since that time assessment work has been undertaken to identify priorities and undertake remedial actions.

For the intervening period Executive Team colleagues have taken on additional roles to lead key areas in association with the existing teams in the organisation. New corporate structures were also discussed and approved by the Board at its September meeting and the reorganisation of the executive/corporate structure is currently underway.

Several risks on the corporate risk register relate to this theme – they range between current risk levels of 12 and 15 (yellow and amber risk areas), all with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These have included the finalisation of a people strategy (which was supported by the Workforce, Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee at its October meeting) and the current programme of role re-design and realignment being led by the Chief Executive and Executive Team, maximising the opportunities presented by the voluntary early release scheme and other senior staff movements.

Risk area - Sustained pressure on health and social care

Service pressures across Wales often due to waiting times, workforce availability, financial constraints and year-round “winter” pressures means that services have potentially less space and time to engage with Llais or act on our proposals. The overarching risk is that we might stop being heard and that partners might struggle to implement what they have agreed, which could erode public confidence.

Ongoing mitigation in this area is two-fold. We are focusing our representations on realistic first steps (for example, better discharge information rather than wholesale pathway redesign) and using our rights, expectations and responsibilities programme to frame actions and activities that remain achievable, even in a pressured system.

Significant progress has been made in this area as the health and social care we want programme has been running during recent months. Nonetheless, there could be further risk as we enter the winter period, and demand further increases on health and social care services, especially as current assessments are that the influenza season this year has started earlier and the types of flu being identified suggests that the impact might be more severe.

This too could equally have an impact on the staffing capacity in Llais and our ability to be able to actively engage with services. Already, as of November 2025, several health boards have implemented restrictions and precautions primarily focusing on visitor guidelines and mask-wearing due to concerns about influenza.

Llais is also continuing to build positive working relationships with partner organisations either directly or embedding these in partnership mechanisms, supported through the development of agreements and memoranda of understanding, where appropriate.

These also help to mitigate the risk of health and social care organisations not being aware or hearing about the work of Llais. Further review of memoranda of understanding and partnership arrangements will be taken forward in the coming months, for example with Digital Health and Care Wales and also Llais's lead role in establishing the National Maternity and Neonatal Voice Partnership Cymru (MNVPC) Forum.

A number of risks on the corporate risk register relate to this theme – they range between current risk levels of 12 and 16 (yellow and amber risk areas), all with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include the regularised liaison with partners, especially health and social care organisations. Active monitoring of demand. Work on regional reassessments of service planning discussions with health and social care organisations. Active involvement in partnership meetings at regional and national levels. Framing of the rights, expectations and responsibilities programme.

Risk area - Public and partner awareness

Llais is still new to many people. If stakeholders do not understand our distinct role, duplication and blurred accountability could potentially result.

A 4-message communications plan is in place (“independent voice”, “evidence-led”, “we make change happen”, “we are local and national”). The planned performance dashboards will give us further visible, authoritative data, and all public-facing products will be issued in accessible formats, including Welsh-language first. They are currently being finalised with just some information governance aspects being clarified and they will be shared as soon as possible.

This is particularly relevant to our role when proposals are made to change services. We have been undertaking work to produce updated information for staff, partners and the public about our role, guidance for staff and the development of an outline protocol for handling service changes for discussion and agreement with NHS bodies and local

authorities. This has recently been discussed with NHS Directors of Planning and the Association of Directors of Social Services where there was agreement on the principles, but further work needed on the details in the context of local government decision making. A way forward to finalise arrangements has been agreed with the NHS and local government

We are also undertaking further public relations work to help with people's awareness, knowledge and understanding of our functions, roles and responsibilities and we have added additional capacity to our communications and engagement functions. The risk of failing to consistently follow up, communicate outcomes, and share insights across Llais may lead to erosion of trust, reduced confidence from government and partners, missed safety issues, and lost opportunities to influence service improvement. This additional assessment resulted in the additional risk been framed for the corporate risk register, as outlined earlier.

The production of our second full annual report and accounts also presents opportunities to highlight the work and impact of Llais, albeit that it covers 2024/2025 and not our most recent activities. The annual report and accounts was approved at the additional Board meeting on the 5 November and has subsequently been certified by the Auditor General for Wales and laid at the Senedd, as required.

An overview document will also be produced to highlight some of the key messages from our corporate documentation, and this will be shared with our partners and the people of Wales and communication and awareness raising activity will take place on the publication of these important public disclosure documents.

Our presence and activities at national events during the summer such as the Urdd, National Eisteddfod, Royal Welsh Show and Pride events, have also helped to raise awareness of the roles of Llais, the work that we do and profile the impact we are having. The work that the Executive Team alongside the Board has been considering on our manifesto calls for the Senedd election in 2026 will also be a further opportunity to highlight the key themes that the people of Wales are telling us about their experiences of health and social care in Wales.

A number of risks on the corporate risk register relate to this theme – they range between current risk levels of 9 and 12 (yellow risk areas), all with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. Ongoing actions in this area include our programmes of communication and engagement and the development of new protocols with partners to clarify our role and reinforce our independence. There is continuous activity in this area to seek to keep these risks under review and as explained a new risk has been since the last Board meeting.

Risk area - data quality and insight

Our success depends on good data. Inconsistencies in the use of our Customer Relationship Management system, combined with staff turnover, risks impacting on the design and delivery of our dashboards and key performance indicators created to give assurance. A data-quality dashboard is being developed to highlight gaps for each regional lead, monthly “data huddles” will take place to cleanse historic entries, and any issues that threaten decision-making on key matters will be escalated directly to the Executive Team.

Our focus on risks related to the development of our digital systems has increased as the pace of our development work has increased, so that identified risks in its design, functionality and roll out are mitigated.

Taken together, these cross-cutting risks are currently being actively managed but must remain on the organisation’s radar and will be key features of risk reporting. Capacity within Llais is the largest internal factor, and system pressures the largest external variable to seek to manage in the coming year.

A few risks on the corporate risk register have dimensions that relate to this theme – they range between current risk levels of 12 and 16 (yellow and amber risk areas), all with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include corporate development work on the OKR, CRM, dashboards and the information governance programme work that has been undertaken in recent months. A comprehensive digital and data strategy is being finalised.

Risk area - system complexity and accountability gaps

The landscape we operate in, particularly health and social care integration, is increasingly complex. Multiple organisations may be responsible for a single person's experience, and boundaries between NHS bodies, local authorities, the voluntary sector and regulators are not always clear to the public.

This creates a risk that our findings or recommendations are passed between bodies without resolution. It also challenges our ability to demonstrate impact. To mitigate this, we're working through Regional Partnership Boards and using thematic escalation routes to Welsh Government when local action is slower to progress.

We're also further developing our relationship with NHS Wales Performance and Improvement and the new senior team in the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee. Our forthcoming representation standards will also clarify expectations around follow-up and response and contribute to mitigating this risk area.

Several risks on the corporate risk register relate to this theme – they range between current risk levels of 12 and 16 (yellow and amber risk areas), all with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include the regularised liaison with partners, especially health and social care organisations. Regional attendance at Regional Partnership Boards and engagement with key networks such as the NHS Directors of Planning Group.

Risk area - safeguarding and emotional impact of our work

As we engage more directly with people on sensitive issues, for instance, maternity loss, mental health crises, transition of care, and neurodivergent accessibility to name a few, we are more likely to hear distressing or serious disclosures. That creates 2 risks: first, that we are not equipped to act safely or consistently when safeguarding concerns arise; and second, that our staff and volunteers absorb the impact without adequate support.

In response, we are embedding reflective practice into team routines, revisiting our supervision model for frontline roles and continuing to ensure that staff members have

access to the support they might need. Staff learning has been undertaken on safeguarding across the organisation.

A further learning programme on dementia and neurodiversity training was undertaken in July and August 2025 which sought to reduce the risk through enhanced understanding and awareness amongst staff when using our systems, processes and policies. The safeguarding policy and procedure has recently been fully reviewed and updated. It has been subject to staff consultation and had also been considered by the Workforce, Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee. The revised policy has been submitted for Board consideration and approval at the November meeting of the Board.

A number of risks on the corporate risk register have dimensions that relate to this theme – the current risk level for this area is 15 (amber risk level), with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include additional training and awareness raising especially around safeguarding and on social care. Further work is being undertaken on well-being and responding to the organisational wellbeing survey undertaken last year. These areas will continue to be monitored in more detail via the Workforce, Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee.

Risk area - language and inclusion obligations

Our Executive Team is clear that meeting our duties under the Welsh Language Standards is more than compliance; it's about credibility, reach, and equity. However, not all our teams currently have Welsh-speaking staff, and simultaneous translation and bilingual communications create real delivery pressures when timelines are tight.

A strengthened focus on advertising Llais roles as 'Welsh Essential' has recently been successful in appointing a candidate with Welsh language skills at a leadership level in one of our regions that has never had a Welsh language speaker within the staff team.

We are taking a "Welsh first" design approach to new campaigns and dashboards, and our internal Welsh Language Working Group is helping us build confidence and consistency. This applies equally to other inclusive formats, including Easy Read and BSL interpretation, where there is still room for us to grow.

The Executive Team has organised further training for identified staff members to train in BSL and this programme of development was reported to the Workforce, Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee at the end of October 2025. An annual Welsh language report was approved by the Board's at its September 2025 meeting. This showed increased compliance by Llais against the Welsh language standards during the last year and indicated further areas for continued development.

A risk on the corporate risk register covers the dimensions that relate to this theme – the current risk score is 12 (yellow risk area) - with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risk, especially with regard to further enhancing our work regarding our commitment and responsibilities to the Welsh Language and also development activities in other areas such as BSL.

Risk area - reputational exposure as a 'connector' organisation

Llais occupies a unique space: we are not a regulator, nor a campaigning body, but we are expected to speak credibly on behalf of the people and communities of Wales.

That puts us at reputational risk from both directions. If we're seen as too aligned with the system, our independence is questioned. If we're seen as too critical, we may lose access to opportunities and partnerships where change happens. This balance must be actively held and managed.

Our mitigations include careful framing in reports, separating individual voice from Llais collective voice, and being solutions-focused on all external approaches. Our work on framing manifesto calls in advance of the May 2026 Senedd elections will also provide a further opportunity to highlight our independence and our role and responsibilities to represent the voices of the people of Wales regarding their experiences of health and social care and their suggestions about what would make a difference for them in their communities and the services that they receive.

Further awareness raising is being undertake amongst our staff and volunteers to ensure all representing Llais are aware of our role and status and reinforce this through their activities and approaches on behalf of the organisation.

Several risks on the corporate risk register relate to this theme – they range between current risk levels of 9 and 12 (yellow risk areas), all with actions in place to seek to mitigate the risks. However, it is recognised that the risk in this area could be assessed as having increased due to recent media stories. Ongoing actions in this area include our programmes of communication and engagement and the development of new protocols with partners to clarify our role and reinforce our independence.

Risk area - sustainability of strategic partnerships

Our model of working depends on collaboration with health boards, local authorities, third sector organisations, and national bodies like the Bevan Commission, Care Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, and the various Commissioners.

These partnerships are generally strong, but some are informal or driven through personal connections. For instance, work is being undertaken with Social Care Wales to explore opportunities for collaborative working, the development of a Board-to-Board session, which will take place at the end of February 2026 and further work is being completed on compacts and memoranda of understanding with other agencies in Wales.

Different information sharing requirements have recently introduced some practical challenges in taking forward our partnership commitments with the Bevan Commission. Arrangements have been put in place to explore solutions through discussions with information governance leads.

Staff turnover in partner organisations (particularly at senior levels) risks the loss of key working relationships and institutional memory. This can slow progress or force reintroduction of our purpose. Mitigation includes formalising relationships through shared protocols, memoranda of understanding, staying visible in strategic groups, and ensuring new stakeholders are quickly briefed on our role and impact. This is taken forward both on an all-Wales level and at a regional level with partners and through important partnerships.

A few risks on the corporate risk register relate to this theme with scores between current risk levels of 12 and 16 (yellow and amber risk areas). Actions are in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include the regularised liaison with partners, especially health and social care organisations, routine attendance at Regional Partnership Boards and engagement with key networks such as the NHS Directors of Planning Group.

Risk area - policy instability and shifting priorities

As policy agendas evolve and shift, there's a risk that priorities we've built our plans around (e.g., complaints reform, digital inclusion, patient voice charters) are changed or reshaped mid-year. This will affect both the impact and the relevance of our outputs. To mitigate the potential for this change, we maintain flexibility in our project scopes, ensure clear alignment with multiple Programme for Government aims where appropriate, and build our annual plan in ways that can be flexible to respond to policy transitions and changes.

We are also aware that the Senedd election in the spring of 2026 and that we will be entering a pre-election period. It is recognised that the pre-election period can impact on the scope and pace of policy development and that this could impact on the risk profile and associated assessments. There is also the scope for a framing of policy approaches in Wales post the election and Llais must be ready to be able to engage in these changes and work with the people of Wales regarding what this might mean for their health and social care services and continue to provide opportunities for the people of Wales to share and highlight their experiences.

A number of risks on the corporate risk register cover this theme with scores between current risk levels of 12 and 16 (yellow and amber risk areas). Actions are in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include active engagement with our Welsh Government Partnership Team and awareness of the legislative programme.

Work is undertaken on policy horizon scanning and active engagement in assessing new policy proposals and undertaking assessments to provide feedback from Llais based on the feedback and experiences of the people of Wales generated through our work as an organisation.

Risk area - volunteer and lived experience engagement risk

The credibility of Llais depends not just on what we know, but how we know it, and from whom. Volunteers and people with lived experience bring vital insight, requiring support, feedback, and meaningful influence to stay engaged.

There's a reputational and ethical risk in consulting without acting, or in creating relationships where people feel their contributions are undervalued or tokenistic.

Our response is to build feedback loops into every engagement, strengthen our volunteer learning offer, and embed co-production where possible, rather than using consultation as an afterthought. We will be focusing on our ability to do this well.

The health and social care we want programme will be a significant contributor in this area of our work and further discussions and updates were provided to the Board at its September 2025 meeting and further reports will be provided as the programme comes to an end and the key outputs are framed.

There is a dedicated risk on the corporate risk register to cover this theme with a current score of 12 (yellow risk area). Actions are in place to seek to mitigate this risk. This includes the work that has been undertaken on the implementation of the volunteer strategy, the new volunteer induction programme, active engagement of volunteers in the work of Llais, especially through regional engagement and ensuring volunteers have access to comprehensive learning for their work with Llais on health and social care.

Risk area - digital and cyber risk

As Llais expands our use of technology, the cyber risk increases. A breach, even of non-personal data, could damage trust. We handle significant volumes of sensitive narrative material from members of the public. We are mitigating this risk through adherence to legislative requirements, national guidance, development and delivery of mandatory training, completing Cyber Essentials and ISAME level 2 certification, and tightening access controls for dashboard and engagement tools.

Llais commissioned an externally led IT, cyber/security assessment. The outputs of this advisory assessment were reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at a special session in early August 2025. Additional strategic expertise and support for our digital arrangements have been secured for the organisation as part of the new interim arrangements.

A range of remedial and development work is underway to secure the required levels of certification, ensure our digital systems are robust with clear systems checks and balances and to develop a clear strategy that aligns our digital and IT developments with our wider organisational strategies and plans.

We currently have assurance and development work being undertaken in the organisation on information governance to ensure we have the right framework, policies, systems and processes to best support our activities and related risks and the Corporate Director of Governance/Board Secretary has recently successfully completed Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) certified training. Certified training has also been secured for our Interim Data Protection Officer.

Also, a range of learning and awareness raising is taking place across Llais as part of this programme of work to ensure all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, and ways of responding should a data breach occur. This awareness raising builds on the online e-learning that all members of staff are required to complete.

A number of risks on the corporate risk register cover this theme with scores between current risk levels of 15 and 20 (red risk areas). Actions are in place to seek to mitigate the risks. These include obtaining of Cyber Essentials and IASME Level 2 accreditation to build on the achievement of the awarding of the initial awarding of Cyber Essentials. External specialist advice has been undertaken and has been reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee via an additional special assurance session and a plan following this assessment will be implemented in the organisation. Strategic expertise and support have also been secured for the organisation during the last month, and a range of consolidation and development work is underway.

2. Risk highlights by strategic priority in the Annual Plan 2025/2026

Please find below for information the initial assessment undertaken by the executive team against the strategic risks within our annual plan for 2025/2026. These assessments provide the context for the continuing work being undertaken by the executive team and teams across Llais to implement our annual plan.

Priority 1: Drive a national conversation about the future of health and social care

This priority brings together our most visible, national-facing work, anchored by the *Rights | Expectations | Responsibilities* (R | E | R) campaign. This multi-phase programme includes public engagement, stakeholder roundtables, and the potential publication of a shared framework for what people can expect from health and social care services in Wales.

It is joined by projects such as our review of Integrated Care Hubs, a national "Voices for Change" event, and joint work with the Bevan Commission – Walking in your shoes.

Risks in this area include:

- **Message confusion**, with public-facing campaigns by Llais running in parallel with Welsh Government's "My Voice, My Choice", leading to potential overlap and dilution of impact.
- **Engagement fatigue**, especially among people and groups who have already contributed to multiple national consultations in recent years.
- **Political timing**, as any significant outputs requiring Ministerial response or influence will need to be developed before the pre-election period begins in early 2026.
- **Data saturation**, where we collect powerful insights, but risk losing clarity in what we're asking decision-makers to do with it.

We're mitigating these risks by closely coordinating with national partners, simplifying our campaign messaging, using multiple accessible formats (including low-tech

options like phone and Easy Read surveys), and focusing on practical, people-led recommendations that stay relevant regardless of political change, which are being aligned in our manifesto calls development work.

Priority 2: Push for services that meet people's needs

This is the 'engine room' of our statutory work covering complaints advocacy, representations, and local engagement that drives systemic feedback. It includes our ongoing thematic reviews, a new Regional Health and Social Care Summits programme, and the scaling of *Maternity and Neonatal Voices Cymru* into a stronger national platform.

Risks in this area include:

- **Delivery pace constraints** due to limited analytical capacity, especially as thematic reviews become more detailed and there is an increased requirement for analysis of data.
- **Inconsistent partner engagement**, particularly from social care bodies, where existing relationships are newer and less embedded.
- **Safeguarding and confidentiality**, especially when dealing with highly sensitive narratives such as maternity loss or serious care failures.
- **Summit fatigue**, with some Health Boards or Regional Partnership Boards potentially reluctant to commit to another layer of meetings.
- **Over-reliance on individuals**, we aren't a big organisation, the potential absence of individuals is strongly felt and impacts on the work programme.

We're responding by securing additional capacity where needed, partnering with trusted third-sector organisations, and co-designing our summits to ensure they feel relevant and useful to partners. We're also phasing our delivery, prioritising timely, actionable, and politically salient topics. We are also undertaking a range of additional training and awareness raising across the organisation, especially regarding safeguarding and social care awareness training.

Priority 3: Work together better

This area focuses on how we build sustained partnerships with communities and strengthen the voices of those less heard. Key projects include our *Children and Young People's Programme*, *Community Mapping*, and our *Volunteer Programme*.

Risks in this area include:

- **Safeguarding complexities** in youth engagement and not having the right skills and experience.
- **Volunteer recruitment**, lack of people volunteering means we may not have a volunteer group that reflects our local populations.
- **Uneven engagement**, with urban, well-networked groups more likely to access support than isolated or marginalised communities.
- **Time pressure** - limits opportunities for collaboration.
- **Inadvertent tokenism**, if co-production efforts are not sustained beyond the initial engagement phase, we risk appearing to be making only symbolic efforts to do things.

We're addressing these risks by strengthening safeguarding protocols, proactively offering more flexible volunteer roles (e.g. micro-volunteering), allocating more proactive support for rural or underrepresented groups, and investing in genuine co-production from the outset, particularly for groups, such as children and young people.

Priority 4: Help people and services use technology in ways that work for them

This area reflects the increasing role of digital transformation in both our work and the systems we influence. It includes the development of public and internal dashboards, our participation in the Digital Inclusion Alliance, and upcoming artificial intelligence (AI) work with a new policy for Llais being framed for consideration.

Risks in this area include:

- **Digital exclusion**, with some individuals and communities still facing significant barriers to participating in online engagement or accessing digital services.
- **Data protection**, potential threats to confidentiality, integrity and availability of data and unauthorised release, exposure and/or destruction of data.
- **Over-promising**, especially around the use of AI, where expectations may run ahead of what is practical or safe.
- **Tool overloaded**, with staff facing too many reporting systems and not enough support to use them confidently.

Our mitigation strategy includes always pairing digital tools with non-digital alternatives (e.g. postal feedback, phone lines), embedding role-based access controls for sensitive data, providing everyday language guidance for any AI-facing activity and policy framework, and sequencing dashboard rollouts with clear, bite-sized training.

Priority 5: Grow and improve as an organisation

This priority underpins the whole plan. It includes the continued development of our internal performance dashboard programme, the development and implementation of a Location Strategy, the delivery of our culture and capability plans (“One-Llais”), enhancing openness and transparency of our governance and the integration of equity, diversity and Welsh language principles into our daily work.

Risks in this area include:

- **Timeline slippage**, competing demands, staff absences, lack of time for staff to engage with developments.

- **Organisational fatigue**, as staff adapt to new systems, new team members, and wider changes.
- **Gaps**, particularly where recruitment or learning and development capacity has not yet caught up with our needs and ambitions.
- **Balancing development and delivery**, we have a large development need across skills, process, system, and policies, but also an expectation to continue delivering impact. We also need to ensure that good governance arrangements are seen as an enabler to help our people do the right things in the right ways.

We are responding through pragmatic sequencing of internal change, targeted backfill where gaps are acute, investing in our onboarding process for new starters, and transparency with the Board about areas where we need additional investment or time.

For all areas of risk, it is also clear that these risks are being assessed in dynamic internal and particularly external environments, where new factors and decisions made by others will impact the level of risks for Llais.

Conclusion

It is recognised that the identified actions and mitigations by Llais might only maintain risks at initial levels and not reduce them as anticipated due to internal factors, especially staffing and an ever-changing external environment, especially as we lead into the Senedd elections of 2026. It is therefore important that risk management remains an active process for the organisation, each of the risk owners and are key features at operational and management meetings.

The risk dashboards and narrative reports continue to be important in highlighting progress with identified risks and framing new risks that might have been identified. They will also provide an overview of the risk profile of the organisation and where changes have occurred and whether identified actions have had the expected effects.

Risk continues to be an important feature of the Board and its committees' governance and assurance arrangements. The Executive Team is coordinating the organisational work on risk management and as reported above, built a new network of risk registers, seeking to embed active risk management in the day-to-day functions of Llais and will develop enhanced reporting to the Board and its committees. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will continue to engage on and scrutinise the risk framework for

Llais. Increasingly too the Workforce, Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee will monitor risks relating to its remit.

The Governance and Risk Manager alongside the Corporate Director of Governance/Secretary have important roles in facilitating and coordinating these arrangements and good progress has been made in recent months as new arrangements are further developed and embedded.

The organisational risk workshop has been postponed at the suggestion of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and is now going to be planned for early in the new year. This will engage with board members, colleagues across the organisation and with partners to discuss risk management, to test new arrangements, adjust where needed and implement further developments, such as the opportunities presented by the strength-based models proposed within the new strategy.

The intention is to also align this workshop with a meeting of Tîm Arwain to ensure the engagement of leaders in our regions as well as representatives from national functions. The date will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Argymhellion/ Recommendations

The Board is asked to note this narrative risk report providing the assessment of key risks for the organisation and those against the non-delivery of the agreed Annual Plan. Also to note the planned further developments to the risk management approach in line with the implementing of the new risk management strategy, Board Assurance Framework and reporting against the OKR and the new network of dashboard reports and the progress that has been made in recent months.