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Eich llais mewn iechyd | Your voice in health
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17 February 2026

Dr Neil Wooding
Chair
Hywel Dda University Health Board

Letter sent by email only: neil.wooding@wales.nhs.uk

Dear Dr Wooding

Hywel Dda University Health Board Clinical Services Plan (CSP)

I write ahead of your extraordinary public board meeting later this week to reflect recent concerns from some people in our communities about the timing of the Board's decision making, and to confirm our expectations about how the Board should approach any decisions on the Clinical Services Plan.

Recently, some members of the public have shared concerns that it would not be appropriate to make major decisions about the future of health services in the Hywel Dda area at this time. They feel that the Board should be mindful of the potential for changes in NHS policy that may follow the upcoming Senedd elections.

Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: **Alyson Thomas**
Cyfarwyddwr Rhanbarthol (Llais Gorllewin Cymru)/ Regional Director (Llais West Wales):
Donna Coleman

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Os byddwch yn ysgrifennu atom yn Gymraeg, byddwn yn ateb yn Gymraeg. Ni fydd hyn yn arwain at oedi wrth ymateb i'ch gohebiaeth.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English. If you write to us in Welsh, we will answer in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding to your correspondence.

We ask the Board to provide a clear explanation of how it has thought about these concerns, including how it has taken into account the possibility of future policy changes.

As well as responding fully to the issues people raised during the public consultation, and the impact of the changes identified through its assessments, Llais also wants to see any decisions about the Clinical Services Plan take full account of the following key points.

- The Board has published a significant amount of information about the challenges facing services, the proposals, and the feedback from engagement and consultation. We welcome this transparent approach which enables the Board to consider all the evidence in public and make its own decisions.

The 9 service areas being considered are closely linked. This already makes decision making complex. Asking the Board to decide without a single preferred set of options from the Executive Team gives flexibility, but unless handled well also creates a potential risk of poor decisions. It may also make it harder for affected communities to understand the direction of travel from the papers alone.

We understand that day 1 of the public board meeting will involve presentations to support the Board's discussions. It is important that these presentations summarise the evidence already available publicly, and do not introduce any new information at this late stage.

- No decision should be made on any service change unless that change has been part of public engagement and consultation in its entirety. So, for example, if the Board believes an alternative option identified during

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consultation is the best way forward, that option should first be subject to public engagement or consultation before any final decision is taken.

- Any decision must take full account not only of the impact on local communities within Hywel Dda, but also on people living outside the region who rely on its services.
- Decisions must show how proposed changes fit with wider developments affecting relevant clinical areas, e.g., national pathways being developed across Wales.
- Enough time and attention must be given to consider the impact of each proposal on people and communities, including those where people's voices may have been quieter.
- Any decisions on individual service changes must take into account the wider consequences for other services and the overall capacity of the health board, its staff and people using services to adapt to changes.
- Efforts to address pressure or fragility in one service must not unintentionally put the future of Hywel Dda's hospitals at risk.
- Whatever decisions the Board makes, there must be a clear commitment to ongoing engagement and involvement of affected communities throughout any implementation.

Finally, I look forward to receiving a response to the representations made in my letter of 22 December 2025.

Yours sincerely



Donna Coleman

Regional Director (Llais West Wales)

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