

Responses to questions from members of the public

Two key questions were raised in advance of this meeting from a member of the public.

Question

Since PBS submitted our response to the Hywel Dda Consultation on the Clinical Services Plan to Llais on the 15th July this year, how and when, would you have made Hywel Dda University Health Board aware of our concerns?

Response:

At Llais, we're here to help make sure people's voices are heard in decisions about health and social care. One of the most important ways we do that is by helping to make sure public consultations – particularly about service changes - are fair, open, and meaningful.

Llais was copied into the email that Protect Bronglais Services sent to the Health Board. Since this time, Llais in West Wales has continued its involvement in the consultation exercise run by Hywel Dda University Health Board, to make sure that the matters raised by Protect Bronglais Services, as well as those raised by anyone responding to the consultation proposals, are listened to, thought about and used to shape the outcome.

Throughout the consultation period, representatives from Llais attended all the health board arranged consultation events to hear directly from people and communities, and kept in touch with wider community discussions and activities relating to the consultation.

Since the consultation period ended, representatives from Llais have attended a number of online sessions run by the health board with key stakeholders (including representatives from Protect Bronglais Services) to consider the alternative options provided by the public.

Llais has attended 2 health board extraordinary Quality, Safety and Experience meetings, and attended 9 'alternative options' appraisal meetings to review options relating to each of the 9 service changes proposed.

Llais will be in attendance at an alternative option appraisal meeting today, which will focus on shortlisting/scoring options.

Alongside attendance at the range of meetings and discussions arranged by the health board to consider the consultation feedback, the Llais Regional Director in West Wales meets regularly with the CEO of the Health Board. This provides an opportunity to discuss what Llais is hearing, raise issues and talk about the health board's plans and activities, including those relating to the consultation exercise.

Llais may also at any time raise emerging matters or issues with the health board in person or through written representations. Llais will continue to be involved throughout the consultation process to make sure that the things that matter to people are responded to and reflected in the health board's decision making.

Question

If the population disagrees with a health board's plans, especially those drawn up far from the communities affected, who do people have recourse to, particularly when Welsh Government Ministers repeatedly tell us that Health Boards and other health authorities are autonomous, even though they are commissioned by Welsh Government? What work, if any, are you undertaking to look at this?

Response:

All NHS bodies in Wales are responsible for working with their communities to design, develop and vary the way they deliver services. The way in which they must do this when making proposals to change services has

been set out by the Welsh Government in its guidance **How to make changes to health services: guidance for NHS organisations.**

That guidance is itself based on wider public law, and incorporates what is known as 'the Gunning principles'. These principles which have been established through the UK courts provide that:

1. Consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are still at a formative stage.
2. The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response.
3. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
4. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is made.

In Llais, it's our role to help make sure that health boards know what the population think about their plans, and respond appropriately to any concerns raised. If people affected by decisions made by a health board disagree with those decisions, they can raise them directly with the health board, as well as with us at Llais and others with a role in representing their interests.

It's our role to reflect what we are hearing and to get answers. If people do not think a health board has properly thought about and responded to the concerns raised by its population in its approach or decision making, then we can raise this with NHS bodies directly, as well as regionally and nationally.

In relation to stroke services, it is our expectation that although health boards are responsible for taking decisions relating to the provision of health services for their population, it will not act autonomously in doing so, instead playing its full part in the Strategic Cardiovascular Network and Regional Boards established to ensure services, including stroke services,

are designed in a way that drive improvement equitably for people living in all parts of Wales.

If Llais does not consider health board decision making reflects these requirements, we will raise our concerns directly with the health boards, with the regional board, all Wales Network and if necessary the Cabinet Secretary.