



Eich llais mewn iechyd | Your voice in health
a gofal cymdeithasol | and social care

THE FEEDBACK YOU TOLD US Pembroke Dock (April 2025)

INTRODUCTION

In April 2025 Llais West Wales visited Pembroke Dock for 2 weeks to talk to people about their experiences of health and social care services in the area. Our visiting team, Catherine, Elin and Leanda met with a variety of groups ranging from Men's Shed to Slimming World to Warm Rooms, in Pennar Hall and Pater Hall. They spoke to 15 community groups, about 160 people, and heard lots of really interesting experiences about health and social care in South Pembrokeshire.



What we heard



The practice uses Electronic Prescribing Service (EPS) to send prescriptions directly to pharmacies. Delays can happen if medications are out of stock. The practice and pharmacies are working to improve communication. Please request repeat prescriptions at least a week in advance to avoid running out.

Praise for care homes and chemists, caring staff, frees prescription delivery

Health visitors and social services supportive of foster parents

Health visitors always turn up when they say they will and have "all been fantastic"

Supportive breast-feeding health visitor

Withybush General Hospital - Ward 7 "top class" and "day and night staff absolutely fabulous"

Withybush General Hospital - excellent care, good care and treatment for sciatica issues

Glangwili General Hospital - Maternity Ward "brilliant" and "could not fault Carmarthenshire"

6 monthly diabetes check-ups are positive experiences



Lack of services in the area (patients travelling out of county for hospital treatment)

Short notice cancellations of transport services let patients down

Long ambulance waiting times (19 hours)

Waiting list for hip replacements (5 years)

Healthcare services haven't returned to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels

Severe lack of mental health care in the town

More social care services needed in the town

Care and communication issues at Bro Cerwyn hospital

Communication between Health Board and patients

Lack of empathy from reception staff at surgeries

Stock levels at the chemist situated at Argyle Medical Group

Representations to the Local Authority

What representations are

As the Citizen Voice Body, we use our formal power to raise the public's concerns with the Local Authority, who are required to consider these issues and respond, including any action they will take.

People moving into adult services



We heard that you were concerned about the lack of support for people moving into adult services. We know that when parents and carers of older children see that the ones they care for are getting towards adulthood, they often worry about how this will be handled.

The response from the local authority

The Local Authority is aware that this can be a time of worry and are keen to do what they can to make this a smoother process. They want to be proactive about this; and they sometimes need to involve the NHS also, because often people using social care services as they approach adulthood have health needs that have to be addressed as well.

The Local Authority has set up working groups that bring together key people from both health and social care. The Local Authority is working with other organisations to help with this process; staff have been involved in learning events to try to develop a model for the 0-25 service, and they are looking at recommendations for how to improve things.



What representations are

As the Citizen Voice Body, we use our formal power to raise the public's concerns with the Local Health Board, who are required to consider these issues and respond, including any action they will take.



Dental provision

Across Wales we know that people are struggling to find an NHS dentist. We told the Health Board that they needed to help people when they experienced dental problems.

The response from the Health Board

The **Dental Access Portal** is a way for people to access an NHS dentist in Wales when they need routine dental treatment. If you are not registered with an NHS dentist and haven't received routine dental care in the last four years, you can apply for a place on the Dental Access Portal. You will then be contacted when a place becomes available. This can be accessed online or by calling 0300 303 8322 (option 4) between 8.45am and 4.00pm.



Eating disorders

We spoke to people managing their weight to improve their health. People shared positive experiences of local slimming and exercise groups. We also heard concerns about more complex eating disorders and are seeking information from the Health Board about available services for people needing more intensive support.

Representations to the Health Board

Contenance issues in Pembrokeshire



People raised concerns about patients waiting for help and support with toileting in hospital after ringing the bell. It is important for people to be supported to use the toilet rather than relying on pads while in bed. We've raised this with the Health Board; we will monitor this issue during our care home visits also.

Problems with your ears



People were worried about hearing problems and managing earwax. We know ear syringing has been replaced by better methods, so we've asked the Health Board to provide clearer information on how to manage earwax effectively.

The response from the Health Board

The Ear Micro-Suction Clinic accepts self-referrals and has short waiting times. You can find details on the Health Board website at "Ear wax micro suction community clinic - Hywel Dda University Health Board", telephone 0300 303 8322, or scan the QR code to access the booking form. Use of these clinics is increasing year-on-year across the Health Board.



People told us they were struggling with waiting times for audiology and hearing aids since the pandemic. We're waiting to hear more from the Health Board about this.

Responses from Argyle

We've heard feedback about difficulties accessing GP services in Pembroke Dock and raised these concerns directly with Argyle Medical Group practice managers. Below are your questions and the practice's responses.

Getting through on the phone



Phone lines open at 8am: Calls made before 8am won't go through.

Between 8–9am: The phone system can queue up to 50 calls. If you're the 51st caller, you'll hear a message saying the queue is full and your call will end. This doesn't mean appointments are gone, just that the queue can't hold any more calls at that moment.

Between 9am–5.30pm: Up to 45 people can queue, and the system will offer to call you back so you don't need to wait on hold.

Important: "Queue full" is not the same as "no appointments available". If the queue is full, try calling back in a few minutes.

Why there is no open surgery like before



Open surgery is no longer available due to patient numbers and safety concerns. Appointments are now managed to prioritise urgent needs and prevent overcrowding.

Appointments for multiple health issues



Double appointments are limited but available when clinically needed. Mention this when calling so reception can check availability.

Follow-ups after hospital discharge



Tell reception this is a follow-up appointment when booking. Staff are being reminded to allocate these to the right appointment type.

Booking ahead for non-urgent issues



Limited pre-bookable appointments are available, but demand is high. Same-day appointments are prioritised for urgent care. The practice is reviewing ways to offer more advance booking slots.

Children's appointments



Children who are unwell are always prioritised for same-day appointments.

Short notice for same-day slots



The practice understands attending at short notice is difficult for parents, carers, people without transport, and those with additional support needs. Do explain your circumstances when booking so staff can consider timing wherever possible.

Online booking



There are concerns about fairness and clinical safety, but the practice is reviewing this and will update.

Responses from Argyle Medical Group

Women's health specialists



The practice is exploring staff training and external referral options to improve women's health support.

Blood tests & long waits



After losing two phlebotomists, a new one is now in post. The surgery handles high volumes, including hospital-requested tests. Routine appointments are usually available within a week, and urgent tests are always fitted in. Multiple tests (blood pressure, ECG, bloods) can be booked together to save repeat visits, though this takes longer to arrange. Electronic test requests have now been introduced to make the process smoother.

A final word from the practice

The practice recognises these issues take time to resolve but is actively working to improve communication and patient experience. A summary infographic will be shared in community spaces including the library, local groups, and the surgery.

Reception triage and confidentiality



Reception staff don't diagnose - they ask questions to book you with the right clinician. Staff are being reminded to handle sensitive details discreetly. You can ask to speak privately if needed. . Main phone lines are answered upstairs. Staff make patient calls in the back office, not at the front desk.

Reception environment



We have updated all the seating in the waiting room, decorated and updated the noticeboards focusing on patient information and health promotion. Main phone lines are answered upstairs. Staff make patient calls in the back office, not at the front desk. We're working to ensure all patients feel respected. . In addition, we have added a Health Pod which will allow a patient to have their BP checked without needing an appointment. It also measures height and weight, calculates BMI and asks relevant health promotion questions which automatically feed back into the patient's medical record.

Keeping doctors at Argyle



Patients have noticed frequent GP turnover and are unsure who is currently working at the practice. Some newly qualified GPs decided to leave after facing negative online comments on Facebook, where they were named or described in detail. This contributed significantly to their departure. Since this time, the practice has successfully recruited two additional GPs. The practice has also shared how negative feedback posted on social media has had a significant and deeply felt impact on staff wellbeing.



Eich llais mewn iechyd | Your voice in health
a gofal cymdeithasol | and social care

Thank you

We thank everyone who took the time to share their views and experiences with us. We would also like to thank all staff and volunteers at all the groups we attended who made us feel very welcome.



LLAIS WEST WALES

Covering health and social care services for people living in:

- Carmarthenshire
- Ceredigion
- Pembrokeshire



westwalesenquiries@llaiscymru.org



01646 697 610



@LlaisWestWales