

Item: 8

Title: Chief Executive's report

Introduction

This report sets out some of the activities of the Chief Executive since the last full public Board meeting on 25 September 2024. More detailed information about our key activities and developments since the last board meeting is included in other Board papers.

Developing relationships and working with partners

I have met with lots of key partners to talk about our role, developing our plans and delivering our activities, our ways of working, key issues in health and social care and how we can work together to strengthen the voice of people in health and social care services. This included:

- Regular meetings with the Llais partnership team in the Welsh Government to talk about Llais's activities and performance, development activities, budget allocation and management for 2024-2025 and budget planning arrangements for 2025-2026. This included providing detailed information about the real impact of financial uncertainty on the development and delivery of our services.
- Regular meetings with Interim Deputy Chief Medical Officer to talk about healthcare developments and what we are hearing from people across Wales.

We talked about a range of matters including the Welsh Government response to the consultation on the Putting Things Right process¹, the impact of concerns in England about physician associates on these roles in Wales, rural healthcare, and the impact of the reformed death certification process in Wales.

We also talked about the potential impact and learning for the NHS from a wide range of ongoing public inquiries, e.g., Hillsborough, Grenfell, Manchester bombing, infected blood inquiry, etc. Other developments that may impact on the NHS in Wales include the Department of Health and Social Care in England's proposals to regulate NHS managers in England²

- Regular planning or information sharing meetings with health and social care representative or regulatory bodies. This included:

¹ [Consultation on proposed changes to the Putting Things Right process \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

² [Leading the NHS: proposals to regulate NHS managers - GOV.UK](#)

- Care Inspectorate Wales. We've shared information about social care services in Wales. We've talked about a range of matters including:
 - the emerging impact of the draft Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill³ in local authority child home provision
 - engagement surrounding care home closures
 - arrangements for signposting people to our Complaints Advocacy Service
 - the introduction of ratings for care home and domiciliary support services⁴ from April 2025.

Our conversations led to my agreement to join Care Inspectorate Wales's National Advisory Board, to work in partnership with Care Inspectorate Wales and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales on our approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion and to identify further opportunities to work jointly on planned reviews.

- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales. As well as our regular meetings to share information about NHS services, and identify areas for potential joint working, I've also attended the biannual healthcare summit meetings⁵.

These meetings result in feedback to the Director General, Health and Social Services and NHS Chief Executive about individual NHS bodies and common themes across NHS Wales. This feedback informs the Escalation and Intervention process for NHS bodies, where appropriate.

- Professional Standards Authority. We talked about the planned consultation on professional standards, the barriers and enablers to making a complaint to a health or social care professional regulator, and the introduction of regulation for physician associate and anaesthesia associate professions.

I also agreed to a request by the Professional Standards Authority for Llais to be part of its Nursing and Midwifery Council Independent Oversight Group⁶, to provide a vital patient and service user perspective to the oversight of the Council's response to serious concerns about its culture and governance.

- Welsh NHS Confederation. As well as our regular meeting with the Director, where we focused on the impact on people of the pressures on health and social care services, shifting the focus to health prevention and promotion, and joint working between health and social care services.

I also attended the Confederation's annual reception and dinner, focused on an 'Ambition for a healthier nation'.

³ [Health and Social Care \(Wales\) Bill](#)

⁴ [Ratings for care home and domiciliary support services | Care Inspectorate Wales](#)

⁵ [Healthcare Summit | Healthcare Inspectorate Wales](#)

⁶ [Nursing and Midwifery Council Independent Oversight Group Updates | PSA](#)

- Association of Directors of Social Services. We talked about a range of matters including the scale of the financial challenges affecting local authorities and the impact on services, and working with people and communities to deliver changes.

We also talked about Llais' role in driving change through sharing positive examples of services that work for people, the challenges in children's services, supporting people to access advice and information early enough, continuing health care, the focus on public health, the developments and use of Artificial Intelligence in social care services and the launch of a national social care conference network.

- General Medical Council (GMC). At a regular meeting with colleagues in the Wales office, we talked about responding to the recently published Workforce Race Equality Standard national report for NHS Wales ⁷, the increase in medical school places, and the voice of people in healthcare education programmes.

I also attended the Autumn Patient Group Roundtable. This event focused on developing the next GMC Corporate Strategy, bringing physician associates and anaesthesia associates into regulation, and the role, remit and approach of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service⁸ in protecting the public.

- Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). We talked about the experience of introducing nursing associates in England, public awareness and understanding of what to expect from associate roles, and the actions being taken to address the challenges facing the council, including improvements to fitness to practice arrangements.
- Meetings with the NHS Wales Chairs Peer Group and all Wales Directors of Planning. We talked about Llais's activities, the challenges facing NHS services and the arrangements in place to handle proposals to change NHS services.
- Regular updates with the Bevan Commission. We talked about our joint work programme and activities, particularly on the launch and progress with our joint work on 'Silly Rules'.
- Discussions with a range of third sector and other bodies to share information and identify/take forward opportunities to work together:
 - Tenovus cancer care. We talked about progress in developing partnership arrangements to support people to raise concerns about their care, as well as the impact of financial challenges facing 3rd sector organisations supporting different groups of people

⁷ [National report 2024 - NHS Wales](#)

⁸ [Home - MPTS](#)

- Age Cymru. We talked about our activities and what we were hearing from older people, in particular people waiting too long for planned care and treatment.
- Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales (FTWW). We talked about the launch of the Women's Health Plan and the potential to work together to hear from women through a series of focus groups.
- Met with the Welsh Local Government Association's spokesperson on health and social care in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region to talk about developments and challenges in social care provision, the work of Llais and its role in social care services.
- An introductory meeting with Rhian Bowen-Davies, the new Older People's Commissioner for Wales. This was a valuable opportunity to talk about how we can work effectively together to strengthen our collective voice in the interests of older people in their health and social care services in Wales.
- A regular meeting of the Welsh Public Leaders Forum. The meeting heard directly from the Welsh Government's First Minister about her key priorities focused around delivery, accountability and productivity. We also heard more from the Welsh Treasury about the Welsh economy, and joined workshops focused on our leadership responsibilities in creating an Anti-Racist Wales.

Health and social care service developments and delivery

I have met with a range of people, including health and social care policy makers, development bodies and groups to hear about developments, and share what we are hearing about people's experiences of health and care services to influence what needs to happen to make things better.

I have:

- continued to work with colleagues from the National Office for Care and Support⁹ and others to drive forward the Strategic Advisory Group's objectives relating to citizen engagement with the National Office.
- met again with people affected by poor maternity care provided by Swansea Bay University Health Board to hear more about the impact on their lives and how they feel about the independent review.
- talked with Powys Teaching Health Board about its significant financial challenges and proposals to slow down the pace of planned care for people on NHS England waiting lists to meet financial targets for 2024/25.

⁹ [National Office for Care and Support | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/national-office-for-care-and-support)

- talked with a range of Welsh Government policy officials about topics affecting the Welsh public. This included officials:
 - from the Women and Children’s Health team about the Women’s Health Plan¹⁰, and progress with the planned introduction of official baby loss certificates
 - involved in a review of ambulance targets in Wales, and what’s most important for people
 - responsible for promoting public engagement and involvement in primary care services, to talk about the role of patient participation groups
 - involved in taking forward actions set out in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan¹¹.
- engaged with officials at the Welsh Affairs Committee about the submission of evidence to the committee about people’s views and experiences of cross-border healthcare.

I also received further information as an interested party about the Judicial Review proceedings aimed at challenging the decision of the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee to approve recommendations for relocation of Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Services. The hearing date has been set for 22 and 23 January 2025.

Developing ourselves to deliver

I have spent lots of time working with our organisation’s leaders and staff and with external partners to continue to build our capacity, capability, and ways of working. This included:

- Meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner’s office to talk about our experience of working within the framework of the Welsh Language Standards since our compliance notice came into force on 1 April 2024.

We talked about the importance of creating an environment that gives people confidence to “give Welsh a go”, as well as our roles in driving improvement in the provision of Welsh language services in health and social care.

- Attending some workshops and seminars, including:
 - Considering the effects – a seminar by the Welsh Language Commissioner’s office on its policy making standards
 - Kings Fund – Listening to people and communities, the change we need
- Commissioning our leadership team ‘Tîm Arwain’ to talk about, decide on, make proposals, and oversee progress around the things we do and how we do them. As well as our routine activities and focus, we have also talked about a range of matters including:

¹⁰ [Women’s health plan for Wales launched to close the gender health gap | GOV.WALES](#)

¹¹ [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: 2024 update \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

- A workshop focused on the development of a new service change framework for health and social care
- Setting priorities for the review of our Workforce related policies
- Developing our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Agreeing our media handling protocol
- Responding to our Wellbeing survey
- Reviewing our behaviour framework
- Our dentistry position statement
- Our volunteer strategy action plan
- Our complaints advocacy development programme
- Our governance and accountability framework development
- Our digital infrastructure developments
- Our approach to the Welsh language
- Reviewing our approach to representing Llais at external boards, committee, etc.
- Our learning and development priorities.

I have also continued to meet with staff individually and collectively to hear from them about working in Llais.

Planning and reporting arrangements

Following the December 2024 meeting, we submitted our final Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/2024 to the Welsh Government and to the Auditor General for Wales so that it could be laid at the Senedd, in line with our legislative requirements.

Work continues to develop our Annual Plan priorities for 2024/25 for discussion by the Board and sign off at our public board meeting in March 2025.

Upcoming events and activity

Some of the upcoming activities and events I will be involved in during the coming weeks include:

- Exploring partnership opportunities with Digital Health and Care Wales – Meeting with the Chair and Chief Executive
- Challenges facing the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust – meeting with the Chief Executive
- Care Inspectorate Wales National Advisory Board
- Public Bodies Chief Executive’s meeting