

Llais Cymru – Public Board Meeting

Wednesday 25 September 2024

Venue: The Metropole Hotel, Temple Street, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 5DY

Zoom Meeting

Meeting to start at 09:00am – 12:00

Members:

Medwin Hughes
Alyson Thomas
Bamidele Adenipekun
Barbara Harrington
Grace Quantock
Jack Evershed
Jason Smith
Karen Lewis
Rajan Madhok

Chair
Chief Executive
Non-Executive
Non-Executive
Deputy Chair
Non-Executive
Non-Executive
Non-Executive
Non-Executive

Attendees:

Alun Lloyd
Angela Mutlow
Ben Eaton

Financial Support Officer
Director of Operations
Strategic Director of Organisational
Strategy and Engagement
Strategic Director of Operations and
Corporate Services

Joanne Bolton

Other Attendees:

Kirsty Contreras-Stacey
Eleri Soanes

Governance Officer (minute taker)
Administrative Support Officer

Welcome, introductions, declarations of interest and apologies

- 1.0 The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to all joining the meeting.
- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mwoyo Makuto (Associate Member) and Richard Bevan (Interim Board Secretary)
- 1.2 No declarations or conflicts of interest were raised regarding the items on the agenda.

Minutes

- 2.0 The minutes of the Public Board meeting held on 24 July 2024 were agreed and accepted as an accurate record.

Actions

- 3.0 The Interim Board Secretary provided an update on the following outstanding actions:

A24-07-01 - Report from Chair Partnership Working: 'Chief Executive to submit a response to the Welsh Government consultation on Partnership working to confirm Llais's intention to engage with partners to highlight significant issues in health and social care and seek integrated approaches.' **Progress** The current report requires updating to reflect the latest position and circulated to Board members.

A24-07-02 - Standing Orders: It was agreed that the standing orders would be posted to the Llais website and awareness raising with staff would be undertaken to develop understanding and compliance. **Action completed**

A24-07-03 - Board Schedule of Matters Reserved: It was agreed that the schedule of matters reserved would be posted to the Llais website. **Action completed**

A24-04-02 - The Chief Executive, as part of the communications arrangements for Llais, would publish a monthly statement for the public to highlight the work of Llais and its key achievements and

impacts. **Progress** - The first public statement is due to be published in October 2024. Reports will then be issued routinely each month.

- 3.1 **Agreed** - The actions and decisions log were agreed, and progress noted.

Report from the Chair

- 4.0 The Chair confirmed that it has been a very busy period for Llais over the summer. The Chair and Chief Executive had met with the then Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care. Since then Wales has welcomed a new First Minister and a new Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.
- 4.1 The Chair highlighted that healthcare in Wales shows a very complex picture with issues in Emergency care and long waiting lists. The Chief Executive reported that the emergency department struggles and challenges is informing the development of new performance measures for NHS emergency care. Llais is involved in these developments.
- 4.2 The Chair recognised the gratitude of the public to NHS staff for their professionalism in difficult circumstances.
- 4.3 Llais needs to make our statements and voice clear that improving health outcomes calls for integrated policy engagement across all key areas. Important to this is the role of the Regional Partnership Boards, especially regarding outcomes for children and young people and mental health and wellbeing support and services.
- 4.4 Llais needed to play a key role in representing the views of citizens in these meetings and ensure that Regional Partnership Boards actively engage with Llais.

Chief Executive's report

- 5.0 The Chief Executive introduced a report covering key activities undertaken since the last Board meeting. She highlighted a range of matters, including:

- the importance of maintaining regular contact with organisations that carry out similar functions to Llais so that we can work together to strengthen our collective voice to drive change where needed in UK wide policy development.
- the benefits of holding introductory meetings with all new joiners to Llais. Our new starters have described how important it is to them to join an organisation whose role is to help make a difference for the Welsh public in their health and social care services. She has also visited some of our Llais regions to meet with staff.
- regular discussions were continuing with the Nursing and Midwifery Council around its response to the significant concerns about its culture and ways of working. Any members of the public who may have concerns as a result of the issues identified were able to access independent support through a 24 hour helpline. The Professional Standards Authority will also be overseeing progress in the Council's response.

5.1 Board members noted the contents of the Chief Executive's report.

Report from Board Committees:

- Audit and Risk Assurance committee

- Workforce, Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

6.0 The Committee chair provided an update on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The last formal meeting was held on 18 September 2024. It was attended by all members of the committee and representatives of internal audit, external audit, senior colleagues on the Executive Team in Llais, and our counter fraud professional adviser.

6.1 Discussions at the meeting included consideration of the further work that had been carried out on the Board Assurance Framework. The committee had welcomed the progress made.

6.2 Plans were underway to organise a corporate risk workshop, to take place in the new year.

- 6.3 The draft annual report and accounts has been sent to the Welsh Government and Audit Wales.
- 6.4 The committee chair was delighted to present at the recent Royal College of Nursing awards on behalf of Llais. It had been a very humbling experience to hear the remarkable achievements of nursing staff working so hard to make a difference .

Health and social care services in Powys

- 7.0 A presentation was made by the Powys Regional Director about health and social care services in the region.
- 7.1 The presentation focused on:
- the different needs of the Powys population in terms of health and social care
 - the unique opportunities for Powys health and social care services to work in partnership to deliver integrated services
 - the unique challenges in providing health and social care services in the region because of the rurality of the region, and its reliance on a wide range of other healthcare providers in Wales and across the border in England
 - how Llais had been working locally in partnership with health and social care services and the 3rd sector to hear and respond to the needs of local communities.
- 7.2 Following the presentation the chair thanked all involved in the ongoing work in Powys.
- 7.2 Board members requested a copy of the presentation.

A24-09-01 – Presentation to be circulated to board members.

Llais Annual Plan progress report and presentation

- 8.0 The Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement updated the Board on the development of our organisational approach to planning, monitoring and reporting progress against our strategic and annual plans.

- 8.1 Board members noted that a software package had been introduced for this purpose and was being rolled out across the organisation. Alongside this, the communications team was now distributing and publishing monthly 'Impact' reports letting people know what Llais has been doing and the difference it has been making locally, regionally and nationally.
- 8.2 The Strategic Director summarised Llais activity for the period July to August, focusing on:
- engagement activities, noting that 3,738 people had engaged with Llais through 172 activities
 - representations made to drive improvements in health and social care services, including those relating to service change proposals and responses to national consultations
 - research activity underway and recently completed on all Wales topics including access to GP services, using Welsh in health and social care (in partnership with Mwy na Geiriau), and access to dentistry, as well as regional topics
 - the delivery of our complaints advocacy service, supporting 2,080 people to take forward their concerns.
- 8.3 Board members also received an overview of communications activity, and planned next steps in communicating impact.
- 8.4 The Board noted the actions being taken forward and planned to deliver on the Annual Plan priority 2: push for services that meet people's needs.
- 8.5 The Chair thanked the Strategic Director for his comprehensive report.

People's experience of getting to see a dentist in Wales

- 9.0 The Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement provided an overview of the Llais all-Wales project on people's experience of getting to see a dentist in Wales:
- Llais commissioned Access, an independent research organisation to carry out a qualitative study aimed at understanding people's experiences. The approach included a survey, focus groups and interviews.

- We have used the findings from this research alongside what our teams have heard from open listening, regional engagement activities and national engagement events including the National Eisteddfod, Royal Welsh Show and Pride.

9.1 The findings from both Llais activities and commissioned research was consistent, highlighting:

- Lack of access to dental care, with more than 1 in 3 people not registered or on a waiting list
- Inequity in access to dental care, with children and young people, disabled people, older people and people on low incomes facing most challenges
- Affordability of dental care, with almost three-quarters of people in the survey agreeing that dental care is generally not affordable
- Concerns around quality of care, particularly the difference between NHS and private care
- A lack of preventative care, with hygienist appointments being difficult to access or not affordable for many.

9.2 As well as the themes heard across both the research and Llais engagement, we have heard 2 further themes relating to access for pregnant women, and inconsistent approaches to community dentistry for refugees and asylum seekers.

9.3 Board members noted the actions planned to release the report and discuss with the NHS the further actions needed to address the issues raised.

Llais draft behaviour framework

10.0 The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services presented the draft behaviour framework. She described the importance of the framework in:

- defining expectations for our people, and for those we work with
- shaping our organisational culture
- being a clear foundation for all our people functions
- driving the review of our framework of policies, procedures and processes so that our expectations are central to everything we do.

10.1 The Board recognised the importance of this framework as a key driver of cultural change, and welcomed its introduction.

Approved – to be published to the Llais website.

Llais office arrangements

11.0 The Director of Operations provided an update on Llais office arrangements.

- **West Wales, Carmarthen office** – the team is waiting for further information from the Welsh Government about financial arrangements. Staff are being kept up to date
- **Neath Port Talbot and Swansea office** – staff are currently working in the NHS health and care centre in the Neath area. There is a need to identify options for the future
- **Powys, Brecon office** – The Powys teams Brecon office move is taking some time as suitable alternative office premises are limited. A few potentially suitable sites have been identified and need to be fully evaluated to see if they are suitable. The officers are due to close early 2025.
- **Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan and national team** – staff consultations are now closed. We are waiting further information on financial arrangements from the Welsh Government.

11.1 It was noted that office moves will be closely monitored and officers will keep board members updated.

Draft financial plan 2024/2025 & finance update report

12.0 The Senior Finance Advisor presented an update on the financial position at the end of Month 5 and advised the Board on progress with the financial plan 2024/25.

12.1 As at the end of month 5, there is an underspend of £194K. This was largely due to staff vacancies and timing of non-pay expenditure. Any staff underspends resulting from vacancies in the first 5 months, have been reallocated to a contingency expenditure category. The contingency value is at £94,556 at the end of August. The current cumulative underspend is not expected to roll to the

year end. A final underspend of £1K is currently forecast for year end.

- 12.1 The executive team have carried out a detailed review of the financial position, incorporating all regional and central expenditure lines within a 12-month forecast, incorporating the recent 5.5% pay award.
- 12.2 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee received a report at its September 2024 meeting. At that stage, it appeared that additional funding from the Welsh Government to cover the pay award would not be confirmed.
- 12.3 However, since then, Welsh Government has notified arm's length bodies that *“Welsh Government is providing additional funding in 2024-2025 to bridge the gap between pay bill assumptions that bodies have planned for (3.7%), and the higher public sector pay commitments agreed by Welsh Government”*.
- 12.4 Discussions continue with the Welsh Government about the level of additional funding Llais can expect given that the NHS pay award was higher than other public sector awards.
- 12.5 Llais is due to meet with the Welsh Government on 3 October 2024 to discuss the longer-term financial position. At this stage, and until further information is received on the additional funding, officers are unable to present a final budget plan.
- 12.6 Llais is currently operating in a very challenging funding environment. Moving forward, action is needed to make sure Llais receives confirmation of funding arrangements much earlier in the financial year, so that a clear budget plan can be presented to the Board. The Board recognised the challenges to good financial management operating in an uncertain financial environment.
- 12.7 The Chair acknowledged the governance challenges presented by the current position, and asked that arrangements be made to discuss the issues relating to Agenda for Change pay arrangements further with the Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the Welsh Government officers and report back to the Board.

12.8 The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services confirmed that the executive team will continue to monitor the situation over the next few weeks.

12.9 The Chief Executive confirmed that work was continuing to further develop our financial planning and control arrangements, focusing on budget holder responsibilities and budget delegation arrangements.

A24-09-02 - Finance update/Pay Award: Meeting required with the Deputy Medical Officer at Welsh Government regarding the uplift for staff pay award and agenda for change. A meeting to be arranged with the Board via teams once clarity has been obtained.

Workforce report/dashboard

13.0 The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services presented the workforce report. She noted this was the first time the Board had received information in dashboard format. The use of this format would hopefully help easily highlight areas that require additional focus or consideration.

13.1 As well as key graphs and tables covering aspects relating to things like employee health and wellbeing and workforce sustainability, the report also provides explanations on what the charts and graphs tell us, including actions/mitigations to respond to identified areas of concern.

13.2 Board members were invited to provide feedback on the design and content.

13.3 Board members advised that the dashboard would be even more helpful if it routinely provided the following information:

- Performance appraisal activity
- Leavers.

13.4 The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services advised the Board that the new People and Organisational Development manager would join Llais in October 2024. They will use the data in this regular report to inform future initiatives.

13.5 The new People and Organisational Development Manager, who will be joining Llais in October, will be able to use this data to help inform future initiatives.

13.6 The Board noted the design and content of the report.

A24-09-03 – Dashboard: It was agreed that the dashboard would be adapted to reflect appraisal input and detailed report on leavers.

Corporate risk report

14.0 The Chief Executive advised that work is continuing to review and refine our approach to risk management. It is expected that this will lead to a substantial revision of the Risk Management Strategy and approach. A proposed revised Risk Management Strategy has been submitted to the Audit and Risk Assurance committee for discussion.

14.1 The Audit and Risk Assurance committee will continue to advise on these developments. A revised risk management strategy will be submitted to the board for approval in due course.

14.2 Alongside this, further work has been taken forward to design a new Board Assurance Framework. The outline approach links to the organisational performance management and reporting system. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has discussed the approach and continues to inform developments.

14.3 The Board noted these developments.

14.4 The Board received an update on the current organisational risk profile, noting the addition of a new risk relating to the review of Maternity Services in Swansea Bay University Health Board.

14.5 Board members also noted that in the longer term, an enhanced risk dashboard would be produced using the organisational performance management system (OKR).

A24-09-04 - Corporate Risk Dashboard: Enhanced Dashboard to be produced through the OKR system.

Any other business

15.0 No further business was identified for discussion.

Forward look and Board workplan

16.0 It was confirmed that the forward look and board workplan is to be reviewed by the Executive Team. The Board will receive an updated version of the forward look at the October 2024 development and briefing session.

16.1 The Board will also be provided with an updated Strategic Equality Plan, along with a report on progress.

A24-09-05 - The forward look and board workplan to be reviewed by the Executive Team and the board is to receive an updated version of the forward look at the October development and briefing session.

A24-09-06 - Forward Look/Workplan: Board to receive the updated version of the Strategic Equality Plan and progress report for the remainder of 2024 at the board briefing and development session on 23 October 2024.

Questions from the public

17.0 The Chair noted that no questions had been received from members of the public.

Papers for information only

18.0 The Board received the following papers for information:

- Public sector commitment to net zero statement
- Digital accessibility statement
- Confirmed Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes, 19 June 2024.

The meeting closed 11.55am