



Eich llais chi mewn
iechyd a gofal

Your voice in health
and social care

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023-2024

Accessible formats

This document is also available in Welsh.

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Prof. Medwin Hughes
Chair

Message from the Chair

Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report for 2023/2024.

The past year has been a period of significant transformation and growth for Llais as we established ourselves as the new independent body dedicated to reflecting the views and representing the interests of the people of Wales in their health and social care services.

The Board and I are immensely proud of the progress we have made as a new organisation. We are grateful for the unwavering commitment of our staff, volunteers, and partners.

Since our inception on April 1, 2023, we have focused on laying a strong foundation. Our initial efforts were directed towards listening – to the public, our stakeholders, and our own team. This foundational period allowed us to understand the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

Despite the complexities of setting up new systems and integrating new staff and volunteers, we have made significant strides in building a robust framework that supports our mission.

Throughout the year, we have engaged in numerous initiatives to amplify the voices of the Welsh people. From attending local and national events to launching a comprehensive multimedia marketing campaign, our efforts have been aimed at raising awareness about our independent role in improving health and social care services.

We have successfully established strong partnerships with NHS bodies, local authorities, and third-sector organisations, which have been instrumental in supporting our efforts.

We are dedicated to making Llais a well-run, trusted, and ambitious organisation. Our vision for the next 3 to 5 years will set ambitious goals to help make sure that health and social care services in Wales work best for everyone. We will continue to learn, adapt, and grow, always prioritising the needs and voices of the communities we serve.

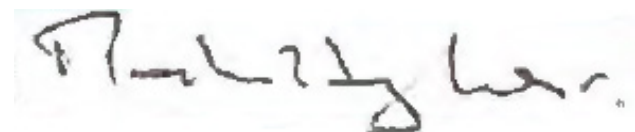
Looking ahead, our strategic plan for 2024–2027 will guide our efforts to drive a national conversation about the future of health and social care in Wales.

This conversation will be inclusive and honest, addressing the challenges we face and building consensus around sustainable solutions.

As we move forward, I invite all of us who may need or use services, community representatives and groups and everyone involved in health and social care to join us in this transformative journey. Together, we can build a health and social care system that is not only fit for today but also equipped for tomorrow, truly belonging to the people of Wales.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and well-being of Wales. Let us move forward with resolve and optimism, ready to make a difference in the lives of everyone living in Wales.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the people and communities across Wales for taking the time to share their views with us so their voices help shape health and social care services. My thanks also to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners for their unwavering commitment and support. Your contributions are vital to our success, and I look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to improve health and social care services in Wales.



Performance overview

This section provides an overview of our performance throughout the year in relation to our engagement activities, representations made to health and social care providers, including about changes in the way health and social care services are provided, service changes and our complaints advocacy service.

We knew that our plans for our first year were ambitious, and that we might not get everything done. We are really pleased to tell you that, thanks to the hard work and commitment of our staff and volunteers, the goals we set for Llais in [Our first 100 days report](#) and [Our Plan & Priorities: October 2023 – March 2024](#) have largely been achieved.

We are Llais (it means “voice” in Welsh)

We are a Welsh Government sponsored public body. This means we get our funding from the Welsh Government, but we are operationally independent, so we get to choose what we work on, how we work, and who we work with.

We were set up in April 2023 and we have about 102 staff, operating in every corner of Wales.



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The way we work

We're aiming to set the standard, listen carefully, and team up with others to make sure we get the job done well. Our values, what's important to us, helps us to do this. Our values are:



People-driven

We put the needs and experiences of people at the centre of decision-making.

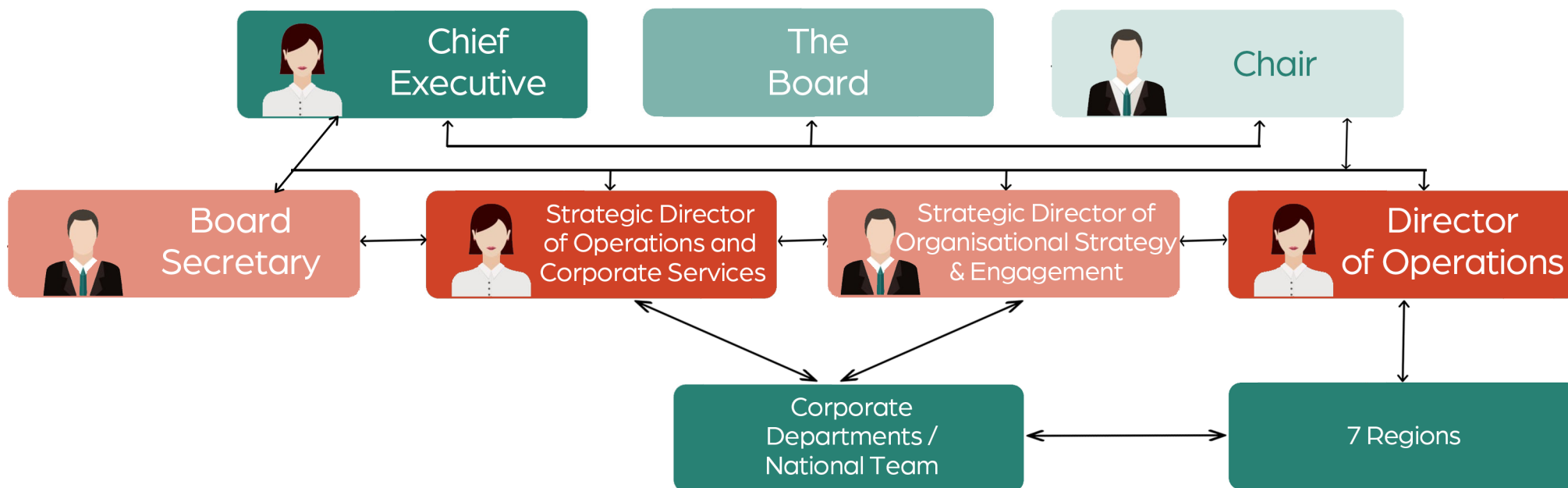
Working together

We are inclusive and accessible.
We work as one team with shared goals, both within our organisation and externally.

Integrity

We are independent, honest, accountable and transparent about our work.

We organise ourselves into 7 regions across Wales, and our organisational structure can be seen below:



Our corporate services teams and strategy, communication and insights teams support our regional teams to deliver our work.

Our Board sets our strategic direction. It makes sure we are on track to do what we said we would do – in ways that best meet people’s needs.

Tîm Arwain is our senior leadership team. All Directors are part of this leadership team and they support our Accounting Officer, who is our Chief Executive, to run Llais in a way that meets our obligations in the legislation and guidance set out for public bodies.

Our first year has been about listening, learning and working with others to understand what you want and need from your health and social care services. We set out our plans for our first year in our [**100-day plan**](#) and Our Plans and Priorities (Oct 2023 –March 2024). The outcomes we were aiming for were:

01. Listen and represent your views and experiences to decision makers to make a difference.

02. Build awareness and understanding of who we are, what we do and how we make a difference.

03. Make it easy to connect with you and our partners, by being accessible and inclusive.

04. Speak up to help keep people safe when things aren't right.

05. Build a strong voice in social care.

06. Develop our people, attract new people and support their involvement in our work.

07. Be a well-run, trusted and ambitious organisation.

We had a lot to do to make sure we got the basics right to help us support you, form new partnerships, and to be an independently run organisation.

Our Vision

We believe in a healthier Wales. A health and social care system where people get the services they need in a way that works best for them and is ready for whatever the future holds.

Our Mission

We make it our mission to listen carefully, locally, regionally and nationally, and to increase the impact of people's voices in shaping services.

We work together with the people of Wales to give you a stronger voice, and represent your interests, when it comes to health and social care. **We do this by:**

Engagement

We engage and listen to people about their experiences of health and social care. We try and meet communities in the places that work best for them.

Representations

We represent the views we hear to decision makers in health and social care. By law, they must let us know what they plan to do with the views and experiences that we share.

Communication and promotion

We will make sure people know about our services so more people can have their say. The health bodies and the local authorities have a legal duty to promote our services, too.

Complaints Advocacy

We help and support people when things go wrong, and they want to make a complaint through the formal complaints process of the NHS or their local authority. We also provide advice where we can to those who haven't started this process.

These are our core activities, and we base our key performance indicators on these four areas as well as how we are doing in meeting our strategic priorities and objectives.



Alyson Thomas,
Chief Executive

Statement from the Chief Executive on our performance

This first year has been all about growth and change as we set up Llais to be the independent voice for the people of Wales in health and social care.

Starting on April 1, 2023, we faced the big task of building a new standalone organisation at a really challenging time for everyone. Our first job was to listen carefully – to you the people and communities of Wales, our partners, and our teams. This listening phase helped us understand what people really need and want from health and social care services, and from us.

We focused on getting everything set up. We put new systems in place, brought in a fantastic team of new staff and volunteers, and found new ways of working. This work was crucial to setting a strong foundation for making a real impact on health and social care services in Wales.

We've made great progress in lots of important areas:

Engagement

We tried new ways of engaging with people. Working locally to understand your needs, building regional understanding and using this to help shape national policies.

Representations

We have used our new legal powers of representation responsibly so that decision makers listen and act upon what we have heard. This has led to some small and some big changes.

Complaints advocacy

We've worked hard to develop our service and make sure your experiences and needs are front and centre in health and social care. Our efforts have led to positive changes in individuals lives and have tackled important issues affecting our communities.

Raising awareness and understanding of our services

We have spread the word about what we do with lots of different communities so that when people want to speak to us, they know where to go.

Building relationships

We formed strong partnerships with NHS bodies, local authorities, third-sector organisations and community groups. These partnerships have been vital in making sure we hear and act on what you need in your communities.

Developing our values and standards of behaviour

We used what we had heard from members of the public, our partners and our people to develop our organisational values, and to start work on developing a new behaviour framework.

We haven't performed as well as we would have liked in a couple of areas and will focus on getting better in these areas next year. We know for example that there is more work to be done in social care. The economic situation means our Local Authorities are working to do more when things cost more and this will have an impact on services. We need more people to talk to us about their social care services and we need to be better connected to the 'system'. We also need to be better at making sure people know who we are and what services we provide so we will get better at spreading this message.

We still have a way to go in setting up our organisation. We will continue to update our policies, procedures and governance arrangements, such as our Board Assurance and committee arrangements, so they support us to do things in the best way possible.

I want to thank our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners. It's because of you that Llais has started to become a trusted organisation.

We will also continue to work on our organisational culture, our people's development and our recruitment and induction processes, all with the intention of making Llais a great place to work. Setting up Llais has been a learning experience. We've faced and overcome many challenges, from building new systems to understanding the complex world of health and social care. These challenges have taught us valuable lessons and helped us shape how we work. We are committed to continually learning and adapting to better serve the people of Wales.

While this report is about looking back at what we've achieved, it's also about looking forward. We will build on the strong foundation we've created, and our annual plan for 2024/2025 sets out the steps we need to take to achieve the aims we have set out in our new 3 year strategic plan, A National Conversation. Our plans for the next 3 years will be to:

- 1. Drive a national conversation about the future of health and social care services.**
- 2. Push for services that meet everyone's needs.**
- 3. Work together better.**
- 4. Help people and services to use technology in ways that work for them.**
- 5. Grow and improve as an organisation.**

Thank you for your support and commitment to the health and well-being of Wales. Together, we will keep working hard to make a positive difference in the lives of everyone in our country.

J A Thomas

Performance analysis

We have made a good start in building awareness and understanding of who we are, what we do and how we make a difference. Our first 100 days listening to people, communities and partner bodies informed our priorities for the rest of the year.

We set ourselves an ambitious amount to do in our first year. We were happy with our performance, we did a lot of things as planned, but we also needed to roll some things over into our 2024/2025 annual plan.

Overall, we believe our performance was good in most areas. We have identified that we are under recording our representations and this is an area we want to get better at next year.

In our first year, 26,726 people have engaged with Llais.





Our **518 engagement activities** and **71 on-site health and social care premises visits** have successfully led to us building relationships and gaining valuable insights into people's experiences of health and social care in Wales.

We have shared what we've heard in the **159 representations** made to decision makers, including health boards and local authorities, and we will keep a close eye on how this makes a difference for people as services respond.



Through **Llais representation at 234 formal meetings/networks** we have helped make sure that people's voices were considered by a broad range of organisations across the country. This is the area of representations we need to be better at recording.

We have been involved in **143 service changes and 17 national consultations**, feeding in what the communities of Wales are saying to help shape their services.



We have helped people to raise **1,510 formal complaints**, helping to put things right for them and, in some cases, influencing changes to services in the future.

Risks to our performance have been closely monitored through new arrangements.

We have identified several key risk themes and have sought to reduce those risks in the following ways:

Setting up a new organisation

means doing things in new and different ways. This takes time and resources to support our people to be equipped with the right tools and to understand, adapt and be confident to start using those new ways of doing things.

This poses several performance risks such as an initial drop in productivity due to learning, resistance to change, significant resource allocation for training and support and impact on our people in adopting new ways of working.

We have mitigated this through a change programme that is balanced and proportionate. Regular communication and engagement of our people in the changes, and new opportunities for learning and development are also important elements of our approach.

With our remit now covering social care as well as health

we have also needed to build new relationships and learn new areas of work. We took a careful and considered approach, avoiding potential delays and inefficiencies which could have been caused by stretching our resources and diverting some focus from existing responsibilities.

This is especially important for our complaints advocacy service that has needed to build a collective understanding of where and when we can support people to raise concerns and the types of involvement we can have.

Failure to mitigate risks in the complaints advocacy service could have led to inconsistencies in support, miscommunication, uneven service quality, and slower response times, all of which could have undermined effectiveness and credibility during the transition.

To avoid this, we introduced a new role of Head of Advocacy Profession to lead and co-ordinate the continued development of our complaints advocacy service and bring together our teams across Wales to share ideas and experiences.

Potential demand for Llais service and support

via our complaints advocacy service. As we made efforts to promote our services across health and social care in a more impactful and sustainable way there was a risk that the demand for complaints advocacy support would increase beyond our capacity.

This was mitigated by working in a cross regional way, balancing all-Wales demand and capacity.

Securing volunteers to increase our capacity to engage

We have 151 volunteers signed up and are actively seeking to recruit more. If not enough volunteers were recruited and retained, or if the ones recruited weren't adequately trained or engaged, we might have struggled to meet our engagement goals.

This was a particular risk in our first year as previous Community Health Council members transferred to become Llais volunteers and may not have felt able to continue due to new ways of working, new remit, or personal reasons.

This was mitigated through a series of actions including supporting existing volunteers in understanding our new ways of working, including them in the future direction of Llais, and efforts to recruit new volunteers.



People and skills

Potential impacts on our ability to engage with communities due to inconsistencies, misalignments and knowledge gaps around engagement.

Towards the end of the year, in late February 2024 we recruited a Head of Insights and Engagement whose focus has been on developing an Insights and Engagement framework and accompanying engagement toolkit to support our teams to engage with communities in ways that work for them.

A learning and development programme is currently being created to provide our teams with the necessary skills to ensure that our engagement activities are appropriate, effective, outcome-focused and culturally sensitive.

The risk that people and communities do not understand our role and how we can support them may result in complaints and reputational damage as we may be seen to be unhelpful or refusing to act on people's behalf, even though to do so would be acting outside our remit.

These risks were mitigated by lots of communication of our role and remit, and the impact we are having for people. We did this by producing information in a range of ways and languages, and supporting our stakeholders to promote our services themselves.

There is a lot to cover across health and social care. People have highlighted lots of good things and lots of areas that need to be improved. We have had to manage expectations and communicate the types of work we can get involved with. We have looked to prioritise our work based on where we can have the most impact.

As this is our first year of operation, we have been developing and adapting processes for tracking and communicating our impact because we know this is important to people.

With oversight from the Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement, the insights and engagement team have been refining the ways we capture and use what we are hearing and tracking the difference we are making to the health and social care system.

Overview of our performance against our strategic priorities and objectives 2023/2024

The following is a summary of how we did against our objectives for October 2023 to March 2024:




RAG stands for Red, Amber, Green. It is a traffic light system we use to show how well things went. Green is everything went well according to plan, Amber means things were okay but could have gone better, Red means there was a problem.

Achieved means we did what we set out to do during the year. It doesn't mean that there isn't further work to do. Partially achieved means that we didn't make as much progress during the year as we set out to do.

Priority 01	Objective	RAG	Status
Listen and represent your views and experiences to decision makers to make a difference.	Continue to represent your voices through our involvement with local, regional and national meetings, boards, committees and projects.	Green	Achieved.
	Listen to your views on an ongoing and open basis at a local, regional and national basis by delivering a rolling programme of open engagement to find out what matters most about your health and social care.	Green	Achieved.
	Respond on your behalf to new and emerging issues that we hear about.	Green	Achieved.
	Create a new communications, insights and engagement team.	Amber	Partially achieved. All but 2 of the team were recruited by April 2024. 2 posts were going through the job evaluation process and were due to be advertised in 2024/2025.

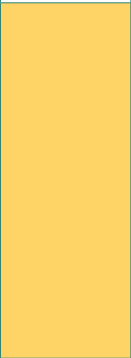



Priority 02	Objective	RAG	Status
<p>Build awareness and understanding of who we are, what we do and how we make a difference.</p>	<p>Design and run communications campaigns, locally, regionally and nationally to reach different groups on relevant issues and to promote our work more generally.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Agree standards for our communication, engagement and digital media that reflect our people-centred approach and let people know how they have helped make a difference.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>	<p>Partially achieved. National principles for engagement were adopted, communication and digital media standards were rolled over into 2024/2025 workplan.</p>
	<p>Develop new ways of engagement, communication and information sharing with our people and the people we work with.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Create our communication and engagement strategy so everyone is clear where we want to get to and how we want to work.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>	<p>Partially achieved. Engagement on the strategy took place throughout the year but completion of the strategy ran over into 2024/2025.</p>
	<p>Develop a network of engagement, communications and insights and learn and improve what we do by sharing good practice.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>






Priority 03	Objective	RAG	Status
<p>Make it easy to connect with you and our partners, by being accessible and inclusive.</p>	<p>Create new approaches, tools and ways of engaging and communicating to learn as much as we can about how services work for you.</p>		<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Develop our strategic equality plan in a way that makes equity, diversity and inclusion run through everything we do.</p>		<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Get ready to work with a common set of standards so that people in all parts of Wales can work for and with us easily and consistently in the Welsh language.</p>		<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Improve our people's knowledge, understanding and confidence working with underrepresented communities.</p>		<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Make sure equity, diversity and inclusion is everyone's business. Provide support in each region and bring people together to share ideas and learning so that we think about, identify and act wherever we find barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion in all that we do.</p>		<p>Achieved.</p>

Priority 03	Objective	RAG	Status
<p>Make it easy to connect with you and our partners, by being accessible and inclusive.</p>	<p>Take steps to understand and increase the diversity of our people so we better reflect our diverse communities across Wales.</p>		<p>Partially achieved. System access to data has prevented a clear picture so this work will be completed in 2024/2025.</p>
	<p>Get better information and use it to understand the diversity and representation within local communities as a starting point for building and increasing our on-going connections with underrepresented groups – so we can help to make sure everyone’s voice is heard by decision makers.</p>		
	<p>Build an understanding of what we need to do more of, or differently, so that we build trust as an organisation that is anti-racist and where disabled people, LGBTQIA+, and people with different communication needs feel welcomed, comfortable and valued through their involvement in our work.</p>		

Priority 04	Objective	RAG	Status
<p>Speak up to help keep people safe when things aren't right.</p>	<p>Use what we hear through our activities to understand how the new Duties of Candour and Quality are working to improve the care and experience of those needing health care.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Develop how we use data and information to work together and with our partners in Wales and across the UK to identify, share and act on concerns about the safety of individuals and services.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Develop the links between our complaints advocacy service, our other activities, our plans and reports and wider developments like the Duties of Candour and Quality.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Agree new ways of working and partnership arrangements between our Complaints Advocacy Service and the Public Services Ombudsman Wales.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>	<p>Partially achieved. New arrangements were developed. Final agreement completed in 2024/2025.</p>
	<p>Review and develop our complaints advocacy service and support our people to develop their practice.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>

Priority 05	Objective	RAG	Status
<p>Build a strong voice in social care in Wales.</p>	<p>Improve our knowledge and understanding about social care in Wales.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Build good relationships in social care: with service providers, service users, charities and other people and organisations who support people in social care such as carers and families.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
	<p>Create a series of engagement events designed to hear what matters most to you about your social services.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>	<p>Partially achieved. More focused engagement needed in 2024/2025 as we mostly hear feedback about health.</p>
	<p>Promote our services, particularly our complaints advocacy service, with Local Authorities and service providers and support them to fulfil their duty to promote our services.</p>	<p>Yellow</p>	<p>Partially achieved. More work is planned in 2024/2025 to support this objective such as including providing a wider range of resources to support the promotion of our services.</p>

Priority 06	Objective	RAG	Status
<p>Develop our people, attract new people and support their involvement in our work.</p>	<p>Create ways that help attract a more diverse range of people to work with us, learning and development that is right for the role they do for us, and we are clear about how they should go about their work.</p>		<p>Partially achieved. More work is planned in 2024/2025 to support this objective such as our learning and development strategy, our Workforce Strategy, our Strategic Equality Plan and our Welsh Language Plan.</p>
	<p>Develop our communications and ways of working with our people so they feel more connected, more informed, and they know what difference their contributions make to achieving our strategic aims.</p>		
<p>Priority 07 Be a well-run, trusted and ambitious organisation.</p>	<p>Developing our people’s knowledge, skills and understanding in good governance, managing public money and records management.</p>		
	<p>Reviewing our governance arrangements against the highest standards and working on a plan to do things better where we need to.</p>		

Priority 07	Objective	RAG	Status
Be a well-run, trusted and ambitious organisation.	Looking at how we are carrying out our tasks and making changes to make it better for everyone where we need to.		Achieved.
	We will agree what values we believe in and use this to work on our: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational culture • behaviours framework • skills and capability framework • revised performance assessment approach • our national learning and development plan. 		Partially achieved. Engagement had begun on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviours framework • skills and capability framework • revised performance assessment approach • our national learning and development plan. The items will be completed in 2024/2025.
	Co-produce our strategic vision for the next 3 to 5 years.		Achieved.
	Develop more ways for our people to play an active role in the future of the organisation.		Achieved.
	We'll provide better opportunities for development and learning, more chances to suggest and be a part of new ways of working, and bring people together with similar interests to share ideas and experiences across Wales.		Complete and ongoing.

Engagement activities



During our first year we tested, learned, and developed different ways of doing things to find out what works best. We have listened to your views on an ongoing and open basis at a local, regional and national level by delivering a rolling programme of open engagement to find out what matters most about your health and social care.

We have undertaken **518 community engagement activities** across all regions in the past year, including hosting events and workshops, attending partner events, networks and forums, profile raising activities, information sharing and general promotion of Llais.



186 relating to health



36 relating to social care

269 relating to health and social care

We have had a presence at several national and regional events, including the Royal Welsh Show, Pride Cymru, National Eisteddfod and the Big Welsh Bite, giving us the opportunity to engage with up to 380,000 visitors.

Engagement impact #1

LGBTQIA+ Open door event

We co-hosted an open-door event with Swansea Bay University Health Board to launch their LGBTQIA+ strategy plan, sharing information on the strategy, information on Llais and getting to know the LGBTQIA+ community in the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea region.

The event gave those who came a chance to ask questions about the work both Llais and the Health Board are doing and we made some great new connections with representative organisations for future engagement.



Engagement impact #2

Vascular Services

Our team in North Wales have worked with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to provide independent advice and support to the families affected by the identified failings of vascular services in North Wales.

At the launch event of the Vascular Harm Report, we took a facilitative approach to ensure that all voices were heard, offering advice and assistance for those who needed it in relation to the NHS Redress process. We advised on the next steps, offered the support of our complaints advocacy service and signposted to other relevant services.

The work of our North Wales team has been cited by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board as key drivers for improvements in vascular services in the region.



Llais Local

We piloted a new Llais Local approach to engagement in Powys. This involves spending concentrated periods of time in a range of local towns and neighbourhoods to hear what's important to the people who live there.

We worked with local clubs, charities, and health and social care services to make it easy for people to share their experiences.

One of the outcomes of the Llais Local pilot was that we saw a notable increase in referrals to our complaints advocacy service in those areas through the awareness-raising activities.

The pilot has been so successful we are replicating the approach across Wales going forward.



On-site health and social care engagement (visits)

Our staff and volunteers have been out and about visiting you wherever you're receiving your health or social care service to listen to your experiences.

This year we have made **71 on-site visits**;

56 to healthcare premises, **5** to social care premises and **10** to premises that cover both health and social care.



Representations

Across Wales we have attended 234 activities.

181 relating to Health,
22 relating to Social Care and
31 relating to both Health
and Social Care.

Throughout the year we have listened and represented your views and experiences to decision makers to make a difference.

The overall purpose of these representations is to support the process of co-development of health and social care services by amplifying and reinforcing your voice to decision makers.

We have kept track of 159 representations to NHS bodies and local authorities, and those acting on their behalf or working jointly e.g. regional partnership boards regarding the provision of health or social care services.

Half of the representations were made by email, with letters being the second most frequent method of communication. Less than a quarter of representations were made in formal meetings. 143 were relating to health and 16 were relating to social care.

Most of our representations were made to health boards (81%) with only 6% made to local authorities and the remainder made to a mix of private practices and health-related organisations.

We know we need to do more to make sure we keep a full record of the representations we make to health and social care bodies so we can keep track and let people know the difference it makes.

representations

159

143

health
related

social care
related

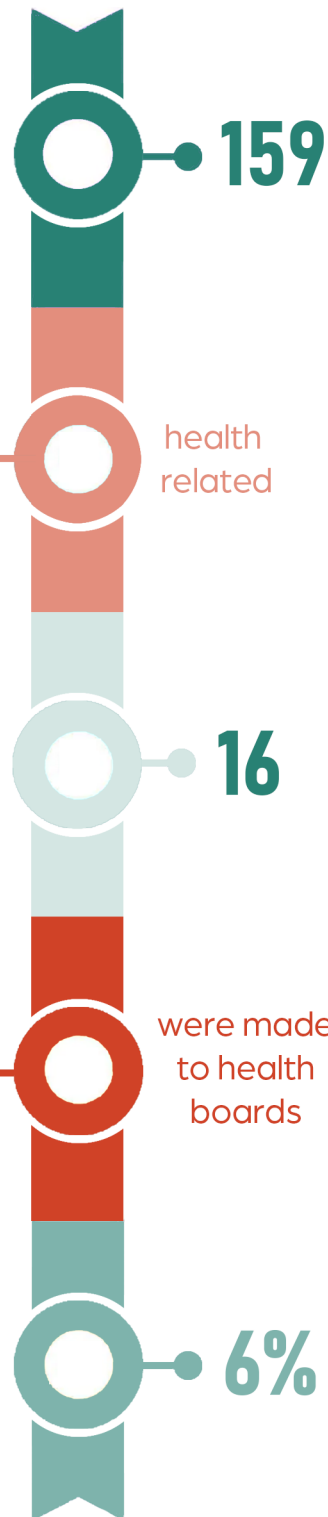
16

81%

were made
to health
boards

were made
to local
authorities

6%



Representation Impact

#1

BSL interpretation service

We were contacted by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation service with concerns that a hospital was not booking interpretation services for patients on weekends. The hospital had advised the BSL interpretation service that “no therapies take place over the weekend” so they did not provide cover.

The BSL interpretation service was concerned not only for the person they were supporting, but for other patients who may need to access BSL services at weekends.

We got in touch with the local health board about the person who needed support at their weekend appointment and the concerns around the hospital not providing BSL interpretation services more broadly at weekends.

As a result, the person was given the BSL interpretation they needed. All nursing staff were reminded that they must act on the requests of any person who has raised language needs as part of their requirements to access and attend appointments and receive the healthcare they need.



Representation Impact #2

Digital exclusion

We made a representation to a health board about their surveys for people registered in 2 GP surgeries. We asked the health board to provide paper copies of the surveys so that people who aren't on-line could get involved.

The health board changed their approach so that people registered with the GP surgeries could get the information in paper form as well as digitally. It also offered support to anyone who needed further help to get involved and share their views.





Representation Impact #3

Outpatient appointments

We were told about a person who had difficulties attending outpatient appointments. Their appointments had been redirected from their closest hospital to a different hospital further away. The 2 hospitals were run by different local health boards.

We made a representation to the health board who talked things through with their neighbouring health board so that the patient could continue to receive their appointments closer to home.

We are continuing to work with the health board to make sure this kind of problem isn't more widespread.

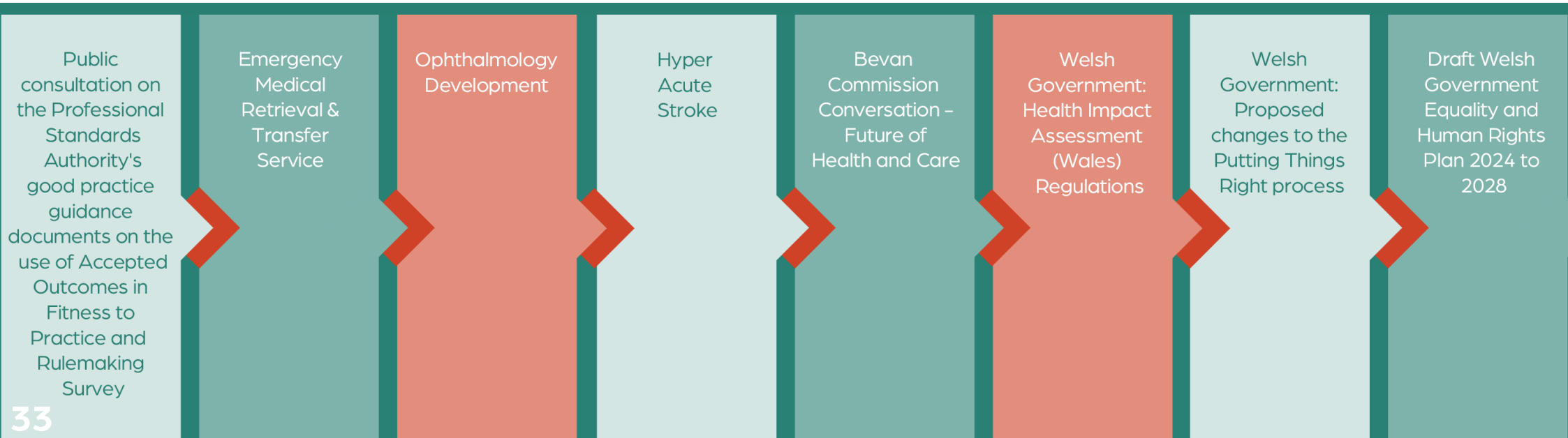
Consultations and service change

Open consultations include Llais' involvement when health and social care bodies want to make changes in the way services are provided. This may be called a service reorganisation, reconfiguration, redesign, variation, improvement, or expansion.

When changes to services are proposed, the NHS and local authorities must involve people when they plan, develop, and design services from the start so that they can understand peoples' existing and future needs. Our role is to help make sure they gather the views of people who may be affected and then think about and respond to what they say.

We also share what we hear with policy makers and others when they want to get feedback or views on the things they are thinking about or proposing to do about health and social care services in Wales. This may be by responding to public consultations or providing evidence to inquiries that cover aspects of health and social care services.

Across Wales we were involved in **143 open consultations** this year. We also made **17 responses to national consultations**, or calls for evidence. These included:



Service Change Impact #1

Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS)

Review

We know how much the changes to the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) mean to many of us, especially those in rural areas of Wales. We have heard how deeply people care about the emergency services they and their loved ones can get when they need it and that for a lot of people making sure that any changes to the ways the service is provided does not mess with the quality or speed of help in their area is important to them.

That's why we've been meeting with those responsible for organising the service, sharing public feedback and encouraging them to not only engage with the public, but to listen and respond to what people say. Whenever we've seen room for improvement, we've spoken up, pushing for changes to be made.

Our involvement in the plans for this service are continuing into 2024/2025.

You can also [**watch this video**](#) about the impact of our involvement in a proposed service change in West Wales.



How we have used what we heard

Our work is driven by what we hear about what matters most to people living in Wales about their health and social care services, and what is expected of us. We do this by working with and listening to individuals and community representatives and groups.

We used what we heard to develop:

- our vision, mission and purpose
- our values, behaviours and ways of working
- our organisational strategy, which sets out our longer term aims – [A National Conversation: Llais Strategic Plan 2024–2027](#)

Things we still need to work on...

We still have work to do to improve our knowledge and understanding about social care in Wales, and to build good relationships with service providers, service users, charities and other people and organisations who support people in social care such as carers and families.

We are in the final stages of agreeing standards for our communication, engagement and digital media that reflect our people-centred approach and let people know how they have helped make a difference.

Our complaints advocacy service

In the past year our complaints advocacy teams have provided free, independent and confidential advocacy services to people across Wales to help them raise concerns or make a complaint about the health or social services they or someone they care for has received.

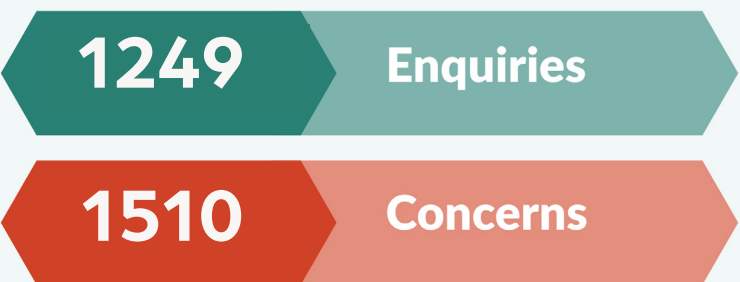
We have also signposted people to other organisations if we think that someone else can also help answer questions about health and/or social services.

People often wanted guidance on administrative processes, such as how to make formal complaints, access medical records, or navigate health and care systems. Providing information and guidance like this was a key part of the support we offered through our enquiries service.

Some people we supported experienced difficulties with communication, such as getting through to the right department or making appointments. We advised them on the next steps to take, like contacting specific departments or using online resources. In many cases we were able to help people without the need for them to go through a formal complaint process, by providing information or by picking up the concern directly with the people involved, e.g. contacting a GP, making an appointment, or resolving administrative issues.

In total our complaints advocacy service has been contacted by **2,759** people. We have supported **1,249** people with their enquiries and helped people to take forward **1,510** concerns or complaints.

This was the first year our complaints advocates have supported people with social services complaints.



Around 15% of the complaints we supported related to social services. Whilst we know that the level of social services complaints is much lower than in health, we think more needs to be done to promote the ways in which people can make a complaint and to promote our services. We will work with local authorities and regulators to improve this next year.

Complaints advocacy

Region	Enquiry	Support Provided	Total
Cardiff & Vale	276	105	381
Cwm Taf Morgannwg	233	108	341
Gwent	97	322	419
Neath Port Talbot & Swansea	86	248	334
North Wales	332	293	625
Powys	52	100	152
West Wales	173	334	507
Total	1249	1510	2759

Most of the complaints we supported were about GPs, dental services and waiting for treatment. We have also supported people with complaints about mental health services and services supporting or assessing learning disabilities.

Some of the most common things people wanted support to raise concerns about were long delays in getting seen, poor communication or not feeling the care people received was good enough.

You can find out more about our complaints advocacy service in this guide: [Llais Advocacy Guide](#) or by [watching this video](#).

Advocacy Case Study

An incident occurred in local authority protected accommodation involving a young person who was taken to hospital following an overdose of medication.

The parents of the young person initially complained to the care establishment about the supervision and management of their child in that care environment. They weren't satisfied with the response they received.

They contacted our service for further advice and support.

We provided support to raise the continued concerns to the local authority responsible for placing the young person with that care provider.

We supported the parents through the Independent Stage 2 Investigation under the social services complaints process. Most of the concerns the parents were unhappy about were upheld by the independent investigation.

Our service supported the parents to meet with the local authority and the care provider to talk about the way forward. As a result, an action plan has been put in place for the future care of the young person, and this is being monitored to make sure it is working well.



Communication and promotion of our services

As a new organisation in our first year we needed to create a new communication, insights and engagement team. Most of our newly recruited team joined us towards the end of the financial year in 2024.

During our first year we have focused on promoting public awareness of our functions and objectives so people know who we are, what we do and how to reach us. Our efforts were focused on achieving these goals through a series of targeted promotional activities. These included advertising campaigns along key transport routes such as motorways and railway routes, and a multi-media campaign aimed at increasing brand awareness.

Special focus was placed on reaching underrepresented groups to promote Llais' volunteer opportunities, in line with the communication needs identified in Our Plans and Priorities October 2023–March 2024.

We also produced a range of bilingual promotional videos, posters, infographics, animations, information booklets, radio adverts, newspaper articles (online and print) and social media toolkits to help people and organisations understand and engage with our service.

These have been shared locally and regionally with other health and social care organisations and nationally through our website and YouTube Channel.



Developing our website

In our first year, our focus has been on improving awareness and understanding of what we do and ensuring that our website serves as an effective communication tool to support this.

Our new website (www.llaiswales.org) is central to our strategy, providing essential information and a primary means for people to engage with us. Recognising its importance, we have prioritised the development of its design, content, and accessibility to ensure it meets the needs of our diverse audience. We did this in a range of ways including 2 accessibility audits and improvement plans.

Since 14 February 2024, we have been analysing website traffic to gain insights into how people use the site. With around 3,900 visitors between 14 February and 31 March 2024, this data has provided an important way for us to understand how people use the website so we can improve our online presence. Our goal is to keep improving the website, making it more engaging and easier to use.

The website also plays a key role in interacting with people, as shown by the 299 inquiries made through the site during this short period (14 February to 31 March 2024). Moving forward, we will continue to develop our website and monitor its use, so it remains a valuable resource for the public and a strong tool for engagement.

Using social media to reach and engage with communities

Starting from zero followers, we have focused efforts on increasing our social media presence as it plays such an important role in making more people aware of Llais and helping them understand what we do.



Social media is a powerful tool for us because it lets us reach a wide audience, engage directly with people and communities, and quickly share important information.

We now have 2,265 followers on our social media platforms, with an average engagement rate (the percentage of people who interact with our content) of 5.35%. This is a good engagement rate for a public body.

In our first year, our reach (how many people see our posts) and engagement (how many people can see our posts) achieved 1,978,294 users, increasing the chances of more people becoming aware of Llais.

LinkedIn has the highest engagement rate, making it a good platform for connecting with professionals and organisations. By engaging with stakeholders on LinkedIn, we've been able to spread our message further through their networks, making it an important channel for promoting our services.

Facebook is our most effective platform in terms of reach and followers, partly because our 7 regional offices each have their own Facebook pages. This allows them to share local updates and events that matter most to people in their area. This local focus keeps us connected with communities across Wales and makes sure our messages are relevant to each region.

Instagram is especially good for us in reaching younger audiences with visual content. It has the second-highest reach and engagement levels, and we plan to build on this to create more dynamic content on Instagram in the coming year to boost interaction and visibility and complement our children and young people's programme.

As we continue to grow our social media presence in line with our communication strategy, our focus will be on using these platforms to connect with communities, share valuable information, and encourage people to take part in our work. This approach will help make sure we stay visible, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our communities.



**We have
an average
engagement
rate across all
platforms of
5.35%.**



Media Activity

There were 26 pieces of media coverage

8 Online

Broadcast 4

14 In print

Media activity

In April 2023, we launched Llais with a targeted awareness campaign, managed by an external agency. This campaign resulted in 26 media mentions across online, broadcast, and print channels, helping us introduce Llais to a broad audience.

Since then, we've taken an active role in media discussions about important health and social care issues, like the challenges facing Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and proposals to change the way the Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service operates. We've also provided commentary on the junior doctor strikes for BBC Radio Wales and BBC Radio Cymru, establishing Llais as a trusted voice in these areas.

From April 2023 to March 2024, Llais was mentioned in 192 news stories, with a potential reach of over 1 billion (the number of times a story could have been viewed by someone). This coverage included 113 online articles, 78 in print, and one magazine feature.

Being proactive in public relations has been key to increasing awareness of Llais and what we do. By consistently providing timely and relevant information, and making sure our messaging is clear and coordinated, we're steadily building our presence and influence in the public conversation.

192 items of news coverage that mentioned Llais with a potential post reach of 1,095,526,905

Our commitment to the Welsh language

We are dedicated to promoting and supporting the Welsh language in everything we do. As we prepared to meet the requirements set out in our Welsh Language Standards from April 2024, (as set out in our [compliance notice](#)), we've made sure that our communications are fully bilingual and accessible to Welsh speakers across Wales. Over the past year, we've worked hard to integrate the Welsh language into our communication efforts. This means that all our website content is available in both Welsh and English, with equal care given to both languages in all our promotional materials.

To further support our commitment to the Welsh language, we created and started to implement a Welsh Language Standards Action Plan. This plan outlines how we will meet the requirements of our compliance notice and shows our commitment to encouraging and supporting an environment where our people can feel comfortable and confident to use Welsh internally and when working in our communities and with our partners.

We've done some specific things like:

- Providing all external communications, both digital and printed, in both Welsh and English and providing more information internally in both Welsh and English.
- Holding bilingual public board meetings, and publishing all our Board papers in Welsh and English.
- Actively promoting the use of Welsh in our services and internal communications.
- Recruiting more Welsh speaking staff.
- Sharing good practices across our team to emphasise a "Welsh first" approach in developing our communications.

Our preparations for the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards are part of a larger commitment to the Welsh language and its use in health and social care services and we will be looking to develop more projects that explore this next year.



Digital initiatives and improvements

To better serve people and communities across Wales, we developed a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in collaboration with a third-party developer. This system brings all our functions together, making it easier for us to manage data, track our impact, and identify trends in health and social care.

By doing so, we can work more efficiently and effectively, especially in areas like complaints advocacy. We can make quicker and better connections across the different areas of our activity, so that we can be more effectively addressing broader systemic issues and influence national policies.

Our move to SharePoint has been another important step forward. This digital tool has helped us to streamline how we manage documents and work effectively together across our teams. By standardising the way we work and share information, we can make sure that no matter where people engage with us, they receive a consistent and high-quality service.

This not only makes our work easier and better governed, but also directly benefits the people we serve by improving our responsiveness and efficiency.

Additionally, SharePoint will be our internal intranet, which will improve our communication within our teams across all areas of Wales. We have been working on making it a tool that provides a central hub where all our people can access important updates, resources, and tools, helping us to have more connected and informed teams across all regions.

This helps us to make sure that everyone at Llais is aligned and able to work together effectively, no matter where they are located. We will be launching the intranet in 2024.

Sustainability

We've designed our organisation to be easily accessible to people. This helps us reach more people in their communities, making our services more convenient and reducing our environmental impact.

We are committed to reducing the environmental, financial, and social impacts of our work. To support this, we're aligning with broader public sector efforts, like the NHS Shared Services Partnership Sustainable Procurement policies.

Even though we're not required to join the Welsh Government Net Zero Scheme, we've decided to participate starting in 2024/2025. We plan to start reporting our progress on Net Zero by September 2025.

This year, we've updated or reinforced the principles set out in several key policies, such as our travel and subsistence and agile working policies. These encourage using the most economical and sustainable travel options and finding ways to do business that have less impact on the environment.

By focusing on sustainability in our daily operations and joining these larger initiatives, we're helping to create a more sustainable future while ensuring our services remain accessible and effective for everyone in Wales.



Our future plans and strategic priorities

Strategic goals for 2024/2025

We will build on the foundations and learning from our first year, while continuing to focus on key strategic goals designed to enhance the health and social care landscape across Wales at a local, regional and national level. Our overarching priorities and objectives include:

- 1. Driving a national conversation about the future of health and social care services:** We will involve people from all over Wales in discussions about the future of health and social care. By making sure policymakers and service providers listen to public feedback, we can help shape a system that better serves everyone.
- 2. Push for services that meet everyone's needs:** We are committed to ensuring that health and social care services are not only effective but also inclusive and accessible. We will focus on making sure these services are designed with the needs of all groups in mind.
- 3. Working together better:** We will work to build stronger partnerships across different sectors, making sure health and social care services try to work together more smoothly and effectively to improve how services are delivered.
- 4. Help people and services to use technology in ways that work for them:** We want to help people and services talk to each other so everyone feels okay about new tools and technologies, everyone can use them if they want to, and no one feels left behind.
- 5. Growing and improving as an organisation:** This includes adopting new IT systems, improving our communication strategies, and fostering a workplace that values continuous learning and development.

Upcoming projects and initiatives

Here's a preview of some of our important projects and initiatives that are planned under each strategic priority:

1. Drive a national conversation about the future of health and social care services:

- Llais local expansion: We will bring Llais Local to more towns across Wales, engaging with local communities to hear their views on health and social care.
- Collaboration with the Bevan Commission: Partnering with the Bevan Commission to explore innovative solutions to the challenges facing health and social care services.
- Review of the Duties of Candour and Quality: Assessing the implementation of these new standards in Wales and providing feedback to NHS Wales.

2. Push for services that meet everyone's needs:

- Community-focused research: Conducting detailed studies on the top health and social care concerns identified in different regions, such as access to doctors and dentists, or support for carers.
- Strategic Equality Plan implementation: Advancing our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion by embedding these principles into all areas of our work.
- Expansion of our complaints advocacy service: Streamlining our complaints advocacy service to better support individuals across Wales.

3. Working together better:

- Launch of a Rural Programme: Addressing the unique health and social care challenges in rural areas through targeted initiatives.
- Hosting a complaints summit: Bringing together key stakeholders to discuss and learn from public complaints, driving improvements in service delivery.
- Increasing stakeholder engagement: Strengthening our partnerships with organisations like Social Care Wales and Health Education Improvement Wales.

4. Help people and services to use technology in ways that work for them:

- Representation on the NHS Wales App development: Ensuring that user needs are central to the design and functionality of the new NHS Wales App.
- Promoting Digital Inclusion: Advocating for developments that help everyone, regardless of their digital literacy, to use health and social care technologies confidently.
- Collaboration on Digital Strategies: Working with partners like Digital Health and Care Wales to shape digital strategies that benefit all users.

5. Grow and improve as an organisation:

- Further developing the use of our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System: Working on how we have introduced and used our new IT systems to improve our efficiency and impact.
- Development of a Volunteer Strategy: Creating more opportunities for volunteering within Llais, enhancing our community outreach and impact.
- Refinement of Communication and PR Strategies: Launching new campaigns to better communicate our work and engage with the public.



Finance review

Our 2023/2024 financial plan was based on both the ongoing and the additional responsibilities and resources we needed in our first year of operation. This included Welsh Government additional investment, including significantly increasing the funded staff establishment over transfer baseline.

Regular finance reporting to our Board highlighted any important in-year financial issues. These included delays in hiring new staff, using unspent money to temporarily cover 2023/2024 Agenda For Change staff pay rises, and funding one-off projects.

Our outturn financial performance for 2023/2024 equated to a revenue underspend of £156k.

	Revenue	Notional 6.3% Pension Contribution	Total Revenue
	£m	£m	£m
Revenue Resource Allocation	7.131	0.195	7.326
Revenue Expenditure	6.974	0.195	7.170
Surplus/ (Deficit)	0.156	-	0.156

J A Thomas

Alyson Thomas
18 December 2024

03. Corporate governance report

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

As required by the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, I, as Accounting Officer, have prepared, for each financial year, an annual report and statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Directions issued by HM Treasury and Welsh Ministers. These documents are fair, balanced and understandable.

The accounts are prepared so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs as at the year-end and of the net expenditure, financial position, cash flows and changes in taxpayers' equity for the financial year then ended. The annual report is fair, balanced and understandable.

In preparing the accounts, I am required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular:

01. Observe the Accounts Directions, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis.

02. Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis.

03. State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts.

04. Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

05. Confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

I have been appointed by the Director General, Health and Social Services Group, Welsh Government, as Accounting Officer of Llais with effect from 1 April 2023.

The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records, and for Llais' assets as set out in the memorandum - 'Managing Public Money' - published by HM Treasury, and 'Managing Welsh Public Money', published by the Welsh Government.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all steps that I should to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that Audit Wales' auditors are aware of this information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

J A Thomas

**Alyson Thomas,
Chief Executive,
Accounting Officer, Llais
18 December 2024**



Directors' report History and statutory background:

The Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care, Wales, known by its operating name **Llais** is a national, independent body set up by the Welsh Government to give the people of Wales a stronger voice in their health and social care services. Llais became fully operational on the 1 April 2023 and replaced former Community Health Councils across Wales, which ended when Llais was established under the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

The Chief Executive and Accounting Officer for the financial year 2023/2024 was Alyson Thomas.

Chair of Llais

The Chair of Llais for the financial year 2023/2024 was Professor Medwin Hughes CBE DL.

Members serving during 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 are outlined in the Board membership and attendance table on page 59.



Our Board and Committees

Our Chair and 9 Board members are responsible for providing us with leadership and direction. Our Board comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair, 6 other non-executive members and the Chief Executive. All these positions can vote on Board decisions. Our Board has 1 associate non-executive member, who can not vote.

Our Board works closely with the Chief Executive and our senior leadership team, known as Tîm Arwain, to set our strategic direction through the approval of a 3 year strategic plan and annual plan, allocates our resources, and monitors our performance. Our work is scrutinised, guided, and approved by the Board and its committees.

Declarations of interest of Board members:

Members' interests:

Details of company directorships and other significant interests held by members of the Board or close relatives which may conflict with their responsibilities are maintained and updated on a regular basis. The document, which can be accessed in the link below, shows details of directorships of other organisations or other interests that have been declared by the members of the Board of Llais in line with our Standards of Business Conduct and Declarations of Interest Policy.

[Declarations of Interest 2023/2024](#)

Committees of the Board

The Board has established 2 committees, which are the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee.

These committees provide detailed scrutiny, insight, information, and advice to the Board. The committees comprise non-executive members of the Board and are supported and advised by officers and other internal and external advisers.

The Board has also appointed to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee two additional independent members to provide further input from the perspectives of particularly finance, cyber and information technology (IT).

Llais Board – roles and responsibilities include:

- 01** Makes decisions on those matters reserved for the Board and agrees the overall governance arrangements for the organisation.
- 02** Demonstrates high standards of organisational governance – agreeing Standing Orders and other required governance documentation and committee terms of reference.
- 03** Provides leadership and direction by setting our strategic direction, agreeing a three-year strategic plan and associated annual plans.
- 04** Scrutinises resources and performance – through finance and performance reports.
- 05** Considers information regarding the role of Llais in representing the interests of the citizens of Wales in health and social care and receives reports on our activities locally, regionally and nationally in discharging these responsibilities.
- 06** Considers human resources (HR), governance, policy, and employee engagement information.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee roles and responsibilities include:

Advises the Board on:

01

the effectiveness and adequacy of the financial position and performance, risk management, internal control and governance.

02

the appropriateness, adequacy and integrity of the Annual Report and Accounts.

03

the adequacy of management and organisational responses to issues that have been identified by internal audit, Audit Wales and the Counter Fraud Service relating to the corporate governance requirements for the Board and the organisation.

Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee roles and responsibilities include:

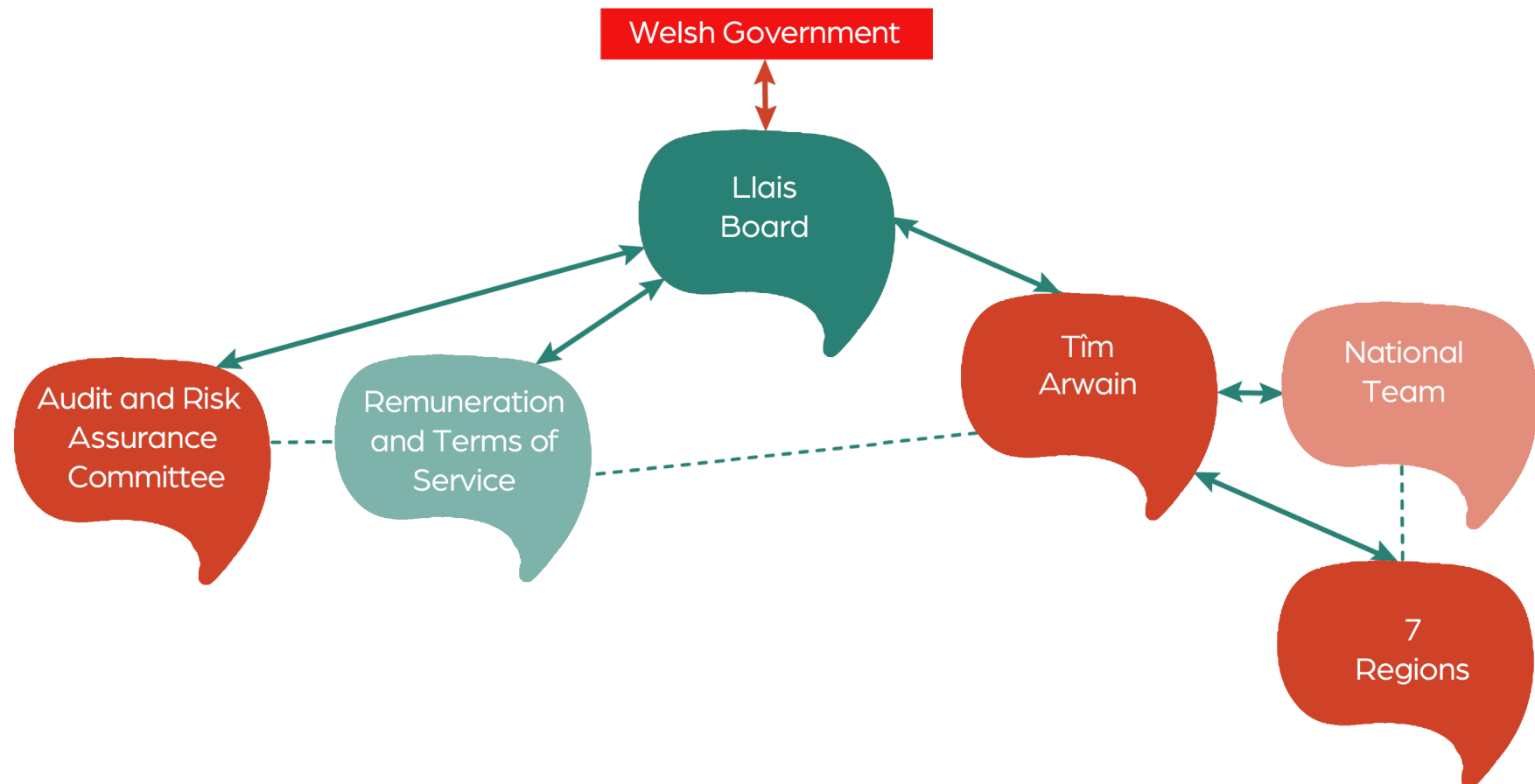
Advises the Board on matters relating to the setting and review of the pay of the Chief Executive and, consideration and endorsement of any required recommendation for staff annual payments/uplifts in line with Agenda for Change, Llais policies and any additional national agreements.

Governance statement

This statement sets out our control structure and provides an account of corporate governance and risk management, alongside a description of the strategic risks. This governance statement sets out the ways in which we are governed and managed and how the Accounting Officer is accountable for how the organisation discharges its responsibilities.

Our accountability, governance and assurance framework and structure

We have a governance framework which guides and supports how we work. This is illustrated in the diagram below:



Governance framework and processes

2023/2024 has been our first full operational year. It is recognised that we are still an organisation in development. However, we have ensured that we have the fundamental governance structure, documentation, and processes in place. Nevertheless, as an organisation we want to continuously improve and strengthen our governance arrangements.

As a result, in February 2024 our Board undertook a detailed Board and governance effectiveness review and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee undertook a committee review in March 2024. The Chair and Chief Executive also engaged external advice to undertake an independent review of the governance arrangements established in the first year. This review confirmed that all the fundamentals are in place, but that further refinement and embedding was required.

As a result of these reviews our Board agreed to a governance review and development programme, which is currently underway to further strengthen governance and assurance arrangements during 2024. This includes a full review of Standing Orders, Standing Financial Instructions, the development of a Board Assurance Framework and a review of Llais's risk management approach. A review is also underway of the committee framework and the terms of reference for each committee. This will include the expanding of the scope of the Remuneration and Terms of Service committee to take on wider responsibilities for workforce and general performance matters.

In addition to our public board meetings that took place in 2023/2024, the Board has also undertaken a programme of development and briefing sessions. These have covered engagement with partner bodies, discussions with staff of the organisations on key strategic and business developments, preparedness for required organisational developments and requirements from Welsh Government, new legislation, and national consultations.



Members' attendance at Board and Committees

Our Board members are public appointments and are appointed in accordance with national requirements. They have also been appointed to reflect Welsh society – people from all walks of life – to help them understand people's needs and make better decisions.

In addition to our publicly appointed members, we have several people who are co-opted onto our Board and our Committees:

We have an associate non-executive member of the Board, in line with legislative requirements who is a staff member from one of our recognised trades unions.

We have also appointed, in line with our Standing Orders, 2 independent members to our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for their additional expertise and experience in financial, cyber and IT matters.



Board and Committee membership and attendance 2023/2024

Name	Committee Membership	Attendance at Board Meetings	Attendance at Committee(s)	Terms of Appointment
Medwin Hughes, Chair	None. However, can attend all meetings	5 out of 5	Not applicable	1 April 2022 to 31 March 2026
Alyson Thomas, Chief Executive	None. However, is invited to attend committees	5 out of 5	Attendance, as required	Not applicable
Grace Quantock (Deputy Chair)	Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee (Chair)	5 out of 5	1 of 1	6 June 2022 to 5 June 2025
Bami Adenipekun (Non Executive Member)	Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee	5 out of 5	1 of 1	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026
Jack Evershed (Non Executive Member)	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	5 out of 5	4 of 4	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024
Barbara Harrington (Non Executive Member)	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	3 out of 5	4 of 4	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024
Karen Lewis (Non Executive Member)	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	5 out of 5	4 of 4	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026
Dr Rajan Madhok (Non Executive Member)	Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee	4 out of 5	1 of 1	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026
Jason Smith (Non Executive Member)	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	4 out of 5	4 of 4	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024
Mwoyo Makuto (Associate Member of the Board)	None	3 out of 3	Not applicable	1 November 2023 to 1 November 2026

Independent members for Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Name	Committee Membership	Attendance at Board Meetings	Attendance at Committee(s)	Terms of Appointment
John Baker (Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee)	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Not applicable	1 of 1 (one committee meeting since appointment)	1 February 2024 to 31 January 2026
Anthony Pritchard (Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee)	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Not applicable	1 of 1 (one committee meeting since appointment)	1 February 2024 to 31 January 2026

System of internal control, risk management framework and processes

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risks; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurances of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

Capacity to handle risk

As Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, I have overall responsibility for risk management and report to the Board on the effectiveness of risk management across Llais. My advice to the Board has been informed by officers and feedback received from the Board's committees, in particular the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Tîm Arwain meetings present an opportunity for the senior leadership team to consider, evaluate and address risk, and actively engage with and report to the Board and its committees on our risk profile.

Our Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services is the lead for risk and is responsible for establishing the policy framework and systems and processes that are needed for the management of risks within the organisation. Depending on the nature of risk, other senior officers take ownership for management and mitigation, especially at a regional level. **The Board has agreed a risk management policy and has also agreed a risk appetite statement, which is provided below:**

Finance /VfM	RA 1	We have an averse risk appetite to any financial loss or impact. Value for money is a key objective.
	RA 2	We have an eager risk appetite to invest where there is benefit to the establishment of Llais systems, functions and services.
Governance	RA3	We have an averse risk appetite for decisions that may compromise compliance with statutory, regulatory or policy requirements particularly during our establishment phase.
	RA 4	We have an eager risk appetite to our internal governance controls. We want our internal controls to reflect our culture. We want our people to feel empowered to make decisions and not feel like they are restricted by red tape.
Operational and policy delivery	RA 5	We have an eager risk appetite to innovation. We are a new ambitious organisation wanting to make real change for the people of Wales.
Reputational	RA 6	We have a cautious risk appetite for decisions that could adversely affect how our partners and the public see us. Our priority is to build trust and establish positive relationships.
Our people	RA 7	We have an eager risk appetite for decisions that could have a negative impact on the welfare of our people. Our priority is to build trust with our staff and volunteers.
	RA 8	We have an eager risk appetite to help our people develop and to do things differently and for the better. We want to provide our people with opportunities to share ideas and suggest new ways of working.
Information and data	RA 9	We have an averse risk appetite when it comes to the safety of the information and data we hold about our people and the public and the damage that could be caused by the disclosure of that information.
	RA10	We have an eager risk appetite when it comes to sharing information that will improve joint working with our strategic partners, but only where the aim is to improve services for the people of Wales.

The risk management framework

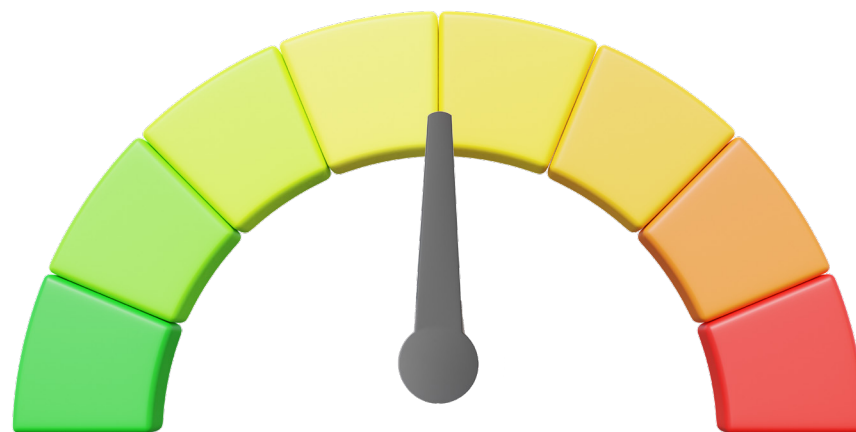
We have continued to implement and refine our approach to risk management during 2023/2024. A complete review of the risk approach is underway during 2024, and it is intended that this will result in a substantial revision of our Risk Management Strategy and approach. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will remain responsible for monitoring effectiveness of the implementation of the risk approach to ensure we reach our full potential.

In monitoring the ongoing implementation, any risks to the non-delivery or gaps in the achievement of our goals and objectives will be identified and acted upon with remedial actions agreed and implemented to mitigate and ensure the plan continues to progress. This will be further developed in the coming year through the finalisation and adoption of a Board Assurance Framework.

At each Llais Board meeting, the Board receives a strategic risk report, which provides a high-level account of all risks included on the corporate risk register. This report is published in the public domain, ensuring transparency and openness around the strategic risks that Llais has identified as potential impacts to achievement of the Board's strategic priorities.

Members of the public and any other stakeholders can comment or raise queries about these risk reports, in-line with Llais's Board Standing Orders.

In addition to this, the strategic directors hold assurance meetings with their respective regions and teams to discuss management of ongoing risks that are held at regional and team levels. Reports are discussed at Tîm Arwain to ensure a balanced and consistent approach and cross referral of risks and agreed joint working, as required.



Risk profile

As at end of March 2024, there were 15 strategic risks described within the Corporate Risk Register which represents the most significant risks to the organisation which could potentially impact on the delivery of the Board's strategic priorities.

The risks are classified as:

Very High 0

High 0

Moderate 13

Low 2

The key risk themes of the risks on the corporate risk register are:

- **Understanding of Llais's role and remit**
- **Organisational change and cultural change**
- **Securing volunteers**
- **People and skills**
- **Demand for Llais services and support**
- **Public and stakeholder expectations of Llais**
- **Partnerships and service agreements**
- **IT implementation, systems failure, and cyber security**
- **Financial position**

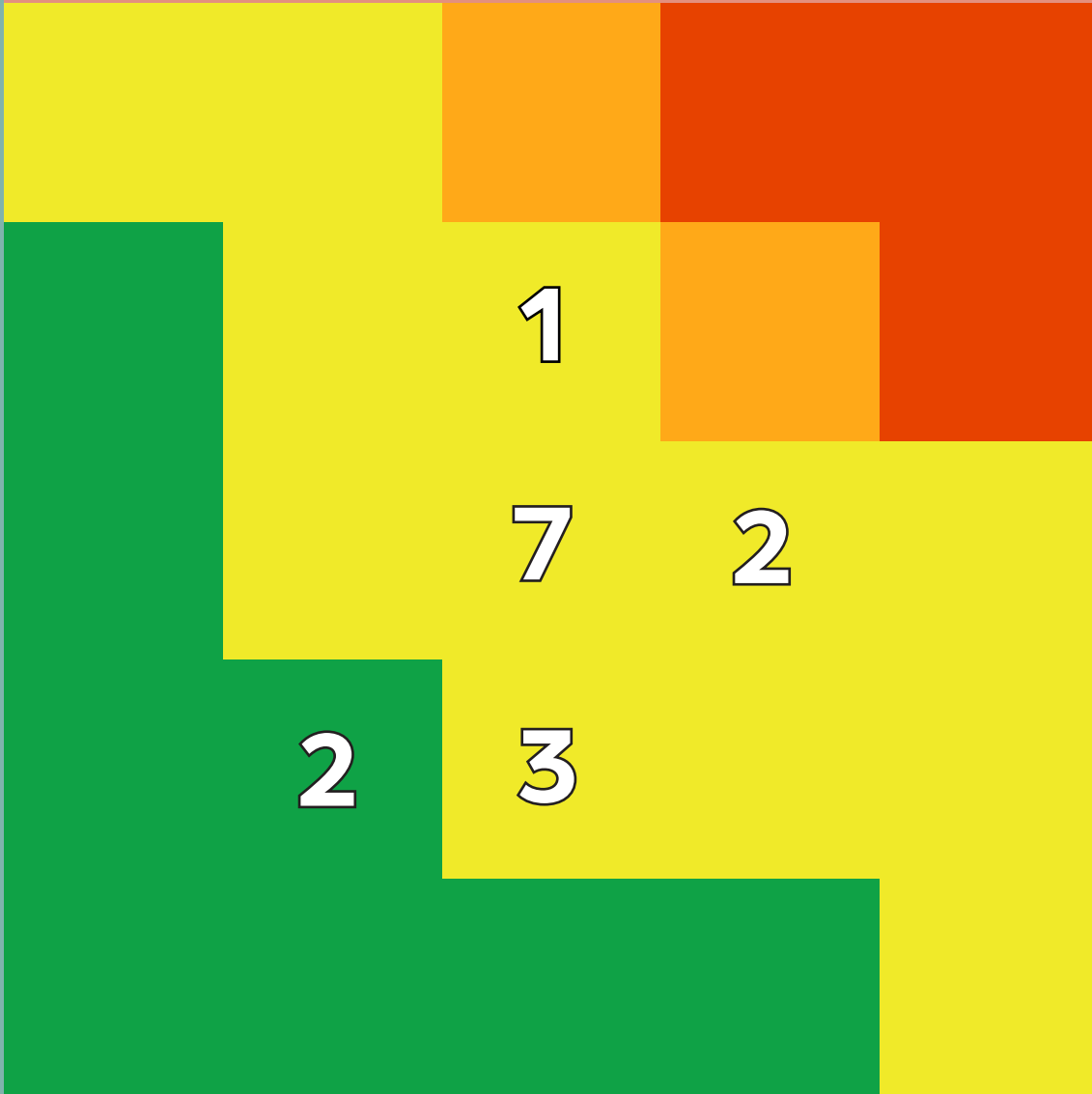


Likelihood

Very Low – 1 Low – 2 Medium – 3 High – 4 Very High – 5

Impact

Very Low – 1 Low – 2 Medium – 3 High – 4 Very High – 5



A heat map showing the spread of risks on the corporate risk register as of the 31 March 2024.

A copy of the latest Strategic Risk Report which was presented at the end of March 2024 is available here – [Corporate Risk Report](#)

The risks contained within this have been subject to risk owner scrutiny, and challenge through management review.

Internal, external audit and counter fraud

Our Internal Audit function is provided by the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership.

We have developed our internal audit plan using a risk-based approach. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Tîm Arwain advised and agreed on the plan.

Our internal auditors submit regular reports about the adequacy and effectiveness of our systems (financial, corporate and workforce regulation) of internal control, together with recommendations for improvement to management and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The overall assessment of our internal auditors and the Head of Internal Audit opinion is provided below.

We also liaise closely with Audit Wales and actively engage in their programme of work each year. Audit Wales representatives attend our Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and Board, as required. We receive an Audit of Financial Statements Report and Management letter, which reports on issues that are picked up during the audit of our financial statements.

We have a Counter Fraud Policy and a counter fraud service, which is provided by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership. Regular updates and an annual report are provided to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Counter fraud training has also been provided to our staff, which is outlined further in the Remuneration Report.

Head of Internal Audit opinion 2023/2024

The purpose of the annual Head of Internal Audit opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer and the Board which underpin the Board's own assessment of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The approved Internal Audit plan is focused on risk and therefore the Board will need to integrate these results with other sources of assurance when making a rounded assessment of control.



The scope of the Head of Internal Audit Opinion is confined to those areas examined in the risk-based audit plan which has been agreed with senior management and approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Head of Internal Audit assessment should be interpreted in this context when reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control and be seen as an internal driver for continuous improvement.

The overall opinion for 2023/2024 is that:

Reasonable Assurance



The Board can take Reasonable Assurance that arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal control, within those areas under review, are suitably designed and applied effectively. Some matters require management attention in control design or compliance with low to moderate impact on residual risk exposure until resolved.

Overall, the Head of Internal Audit Opinion has provided the following assurances to the Board that arrangements to secure governance, risk management and internal control are suitably designed and applied effectively in the areas in the table below.

Where the audits have identified high priority matters arising, management is aware of the specific issues identified and have agreed action plans to improve control in these areas.

A summary of the audits undertaken in the year and the results are summarised below

Substantial Assurance	Reasonable Assurance
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and risk management • Performance management and financial systems • Digital arrangements • Workforce arrangements
Limited Assurance	
N/A	
Unsatisfactory	Advisory/Non-opinion
N/A	N/A

In reaching this opinion, the Head of Internal Audit has identified that the reviews undertaken during the year concluded positively with robust control arrangements in a number of areas. **A summary of the findings is shown below:**

Governance and risk management arrangements

The objective of this review was to consider the developing governance and risk management arrangements within the organisation while being mindful that Llais is a new organisation, and its governance and risk arrangements will continue to develop as it begins to establish itself. Internal Audit made three medium priority recommendations and issued a **reasonable assurance** opinion.

Performance management and financial systems

Internal Audit looked at financial planning and reporting arrangements, the standing orders and standing financial instructions and matters relating to performance measuring and reporting. We made three medium priority recommendations. Overall, Internal Audit issued a **reasonable assurance** opinion.

Digital arrangements

The purpose of the review was to establish the processes and mechanisms in place for the management of digital within the organisation. Internal Audit have issued **reasonable assurance** on this area. There is an appropriate governance structure for digital, which ensures reporting to a formal Committee. There are policies and procedures in place that cover some of the significant digital and information governance requirements and gaps will be addressed in 2024/2025. Provision of IT services is via a contract, with a formal monitoring process, and Internal Audit noted good resilience and cyber security practices. In addition to three medium priority recommendations, Internal Audit raised two high priority recommendations relating to information governance and the need to review and update the information asset register.

Workforce arrangements

Internal Audit looked at the developing workforce arrangements. The work included workforce reporting, document retention, training and development, and planning. Internal Audit identified one high priority recommendation in relation to workforce strategy development. Overall, a **reasonable assurance** opinion was issued.

Management response to the internal audits

The management of Llais has put in place an audit recommendations tracker. This tracker logs all the recommendations provided by both internal and external auditors. It identifies the agreed actions, lead officers, timelines within which responses should be made and the outputs/outcomes of completing the actions. This tracker is reported to the Tîm Arwain (senior leadership) meeting to monitor progress against the actions and identify any required remedial actions. The tracker is also reported to each meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for assurance purposes.

Information governance

The protection of personal data is important to Llais. Our staff are required to undertake mandatory data protection training to ensure we remain compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). During the year we worked with our third-party supplier to resolve some issues that were experienced with accessing the learning and development platform. As a result we will run data protection awareness sessions in the first quarter of 2024/2025.

We can confirm that there have been 3 personal data related incidents during the year. Our Corporate Services team has monitored and is reviewing our information governance arrangements across the organisation to ensure they are strengthened moving forward.

We received 7 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. One request was delayed due to IT issues, but all other requests were responded to within the prescribed timescales.

We did not receive any Subject Access Requests during the year.

In recognition of the vital importance of managing security risks relating to data management, our Digital Infrastructure Manager will start working towards gaining Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation in 2024/2025.

Whistleblowing

All staff and board members are encouraged to raise issues of concern about wrongdoing that comes to their attention while at work or undertaking activities on behalf of Llais. We regard internal identification of wrongdoing as an important contribution to managing corporate risk and ensuring good governance. Llais has in place an internal whistleblowing policy and procedures which reflect the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and sets out how to raise such matters. In 2023/2024 there were no concerns raised under the policy.

J A Thomas

Alyson Thomas
18 December 2024

Remuneration report

Pay policy statement

This is the pay policy statement for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This pay policy statement provides the framework for decision making on pay and decision making on senior pay.

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (subject to audit)

Name		Salary		Pension Benefits		Total	
		2023/2024 £'000	2022/2023 £'000	2023/2024 £'000	2022/2023 £'000	2023/2024 £'000	2022/2023 £'000
Medwin Hughes	Chair	5-10	0	0	0	5-10	0
Alyson Thomas	Chief Executive	115-120	25-30	0-5	0	115-120	25-30
Grace Quantock	Vice Chair	10-15	10-15	0	0	10-15	10-15
Bami Adenipekun	Non Executive Member	5-10	5-10	0	0	5-10	5-10
Barabra Harrington	Non Executive Member	5-10	5-10	0	0	5-10	5-10
Jack Evershed	Non Executive Member	5-10	5-10	0	0	5-10	5-10
Jason Smith	Non Executive Member	5-10	5-10	0	0	5-10	5-10
Karen Lewis	Non Executive Member	10-15	5-10	0	0	10-15	5-10
Dr Rajan Madhok	Non Executive Member	5-10	5-10	0	0	5-10	5-10
Angela Mutlow	Strategic Director	75-80	0	80-85	0	160-165	0
Ben Eaton	Strategic Director	60-65	0	15-20	0	75-85	0

Ben Eaton commenced in post on the 26 June 2023, the banding for the full year equivalent salary for 2023/2024 was £80-85k. Angela Mutlow commenced in post on the 1 May 2023, the banding for the full year equivalent salary for 2023/2024 was £80-£85k.

For part of 2023/2024 the Chair declined remuneration as he was employed as Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales and University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The full year equivalent salary for 2023/2024 was £15-£20k. No Benefits in Kind or bonuses were paid in 2023/2024.

The Chief Executive and most staff are members of the NHS pension scheme.

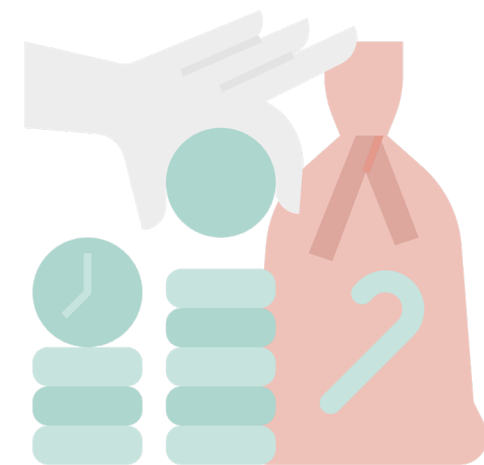
Llais signed up to the NHS pension scheme and staff transferring on 1 April 2023, from the former Board and Community Health Councils in Wales, who were members of the scheme continue to be members of the scheme.

The Chief Executive and directly employed staff are eligible for membership of the NHS Pension Scheme. The scheme is an unfunded, defined benefit scheme that covers NHS and other employers, General Practices and other bodies, allowed under the direction of the Secretary of State, in England and Wales. The scheme is not designed to be run in a way that would enable NHS and other bodies to identify their share of the underlying scheme assets and liabilities. Therefore, the scheme is accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme: the cost to the body of participating in the scheme is taken as equal to the contributions payable to the scheme for the accounting period. The latest NHS Pension Scheme valuation results indicated that an increase in benefit required a 6.3% increase (14.38% to 20.68%) which was implemented from 1 April 2019.

As an organisation within the full funding scope, the joint (in NHS England and NHS Wales) transitional arrangement operated from 2019/2020 where employers in the Scheme would continue to pay 14.38% employer contributions under their normal monthly payment process, and in Wales the additional 6.3% would be funded by Welsh Government directly to the Pension Scheme administrator, the NHS Business Services Authority (BSA, the NHS Pensions Agency).

While Llais budgets and accounts for their staff employer contributions of 14.38% in the financial plan and finance reports, the notional cost of the additional 6.3% is directly funded by Welsh Government.

The amount of pension benefits for the year which contributes to the single total figure is calculated in a similar way to the method used to derive pension values for tax



purposes and is based on information received from actuaries. The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

This is not an amount which has been paid to an individual by Llais during the year; it is a calculation which uses information from the pension benefit table. These figures can be influenced by many factors e.g. changes in a person's salary, whether or not they choose to make additional contributions to the pension scheme from their pay and other valuation factors affecting the pension scheme as a whole.

Pension Entitlements of Directors & Senior Managers	Total accrued pension at 31 March 2024 £'000	Real increase in pension at 31 March 2024 £'000	Total accrued lump sum at 31 March 2024 £'000	Real increase / (decrease) in lump sum at 31 March 2024 £'000	CETV at 31 March 2024 £'000	CETV at 31 March 2023 £'000	Real increase/ (decrease) in CETV at 31 March 2024 £'000
Executive Directors							
Alyson Thomas (Chief Executive)	15-20	0-2.5	0	0	281	264	17
Senior Managers							
Ben Eaton (Strategic Director)	0-5	0-2.5	0	0	14	0	14
Angela Mutlow (Strategic Director)	15-20	2.5-5	40-45	7.5-10	351	265	86

The table above is subject to audit. The Chief Executive is an ordinary member of the NHS pension scheme.

The Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme.



It is a payment made by a pension scheme, or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme, or arrangement when a member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the pension benefits they have accrued in their former scheme.

The pension figures shown related to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures and other pension details include the value of any pension in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

The real increase in the value of the CETV reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It takes account of the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee, including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement, and uses common market valuation factors from the start and end of the period.

Staff report

During 2023/2024, Llais reported a 19.78% turnover of staff. This figure reflects a year where some staff left via a Voluntary Early Release Scheme, we saw a higher-than-normal number of retirements and, unfortunately, a death in service.

We are committed to recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce to deliver our services. To do this, we offer fair pay to new starters, which respects existing employees' salary levels and adheres to equal pay legislation.

All staff below the Chief Executive level are employed on NHS Agenda for Change terms and conditions. This decision was taken by the Board as the majority of our staff were

transferred into the new organisation via a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) style process.

All new appointees will automatically be placed at the bottom salary point and annual leave entitlement for the role to which they have been appointed. No appointing manager can agree any variation to this, without making an evidenced application where previous reckonable service and transferable skills can be considered, in line with our policy and procedure for determining starting salaries.

All our posts have been subject to Job Evaluation. All roles below the Chief Executive have been banded through the NHS Job Matching, Job Evaluation process to ensure fairness, consistency and equality for all members of staff. The Chief Executive salary was determined via the Job Evaluation for Senior Posts (JESP) scheme.

Changes to existing roles are only accepted when there's a significant and permanent increase in job responsibilities due to progress, innovation, or new technology. Simple changes to tasks or adding more work at the same level does not qualify. These are defined in detail in the evaluating new jobs and re-evaluation of changed jobs policy.

Although all roles are subject to annual appraisals, pay step meetings (to increase a pay increment) no longer occur annually and occur every 2,3 or 5 years depending on pay band.

Annual pay awards for staff on Agenda for Change are determined by Welsh Ministers and actioned in line with Welsh Government pay circulars.

The Chief Executive role does not automatically receive any pay step (increment) but is subject to the pay award as per arrangements for Very Senior Managers (VSM) in NHS organisations, including final decision by the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee.



Fair pay disclosure (subject to audit)

In 2023/2024 all staff including the highest paid director received a pay award of 5%.

Pay Ratios	2023/2024
Highest earner's total remuneration	£115k – £120k
25th percentile pay ratio	4.8:1
Median pay ratio	3.4:1
75th percentile pay ratio	2.8:1

Range of staff remuneration

Highest paid employee	£115k – £120k
Lowest paid employee	£20k-£25k

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the median, 25th percentile (lower end) and 75th percentile (higher end) remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid director in Llais in the financial year 2023/2024 was £115,000 to £120,000. (2022/2023: £110,000 – £115,000)

The remuneration used for the 25th percentile pay ratio, median and 75th percentile pay ratio were £28,010, £35,922 and £43,257 respectively. As we only became operational on the 1 April 2023, there are no corresponding figures for 2022/2023.

Total remuneration is the salary cost only and does not include employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer of pensions.

Remuneration ranged from £20,000 to £120,000 in 2023/2024.

Staff numbers (subject to audit)

As at 31 March 2024, Llais has 102 employees. 13 Male and 89 Female.

In addition to the 102 employees, through other employers and agencies, an additional 8 full and part time staff worked in Llais.

Percentage of males and females in pay bands (not subject to audit)

	Male	Female
Band 3	1	3
Band 4	1	25
Band 5	0	12
Band 6	4	32
Band 7	1	10
Band 8a	1	0
Band 8b	4	5
Band 8c	0	0
Band 8d	1	1
VSM	0	1

Females make up the largest percentage of the workforce of Llais; 87% are female and 13% are male.

Males working within Llais are mostly at a more senior level (Band 6 and above).

Due to an issue with the electronic staff record reporting system, we are unable to report on more detailed equality data on our people. We have taken action to make sure that we have this information for next year's report.

Recruitment

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, Llais advertised 47 positions both internally and externally.

A total of 28 positions were filled, all of which were female.

Gender pay gap (not subject to audit)

This is our first gender pay gap statement since we were established in April 2023.

As a public sector body in Wales, we are required to produce our gender pay statement each year. The report provides data about gender and pay that helps us to identify any differences or gaps that need to be addressed.

This gender pay statement includes all employees. Our aim is to use the findings in this report to shape and improve our organisation for our people in line with our Strategic Plan 2024–2027 and our Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028. We have reported our findings based on employee information as of 31 March 2024. For consistency, we will make sure the same date is used each year.

In this statement, gender has been reported in a binary way, that only recognises males and females. This follows UK government guidance on gender pay reporting. We know that there are many people who do not identify in a way that fits into a binary category and having to report in this way does not take them into account.

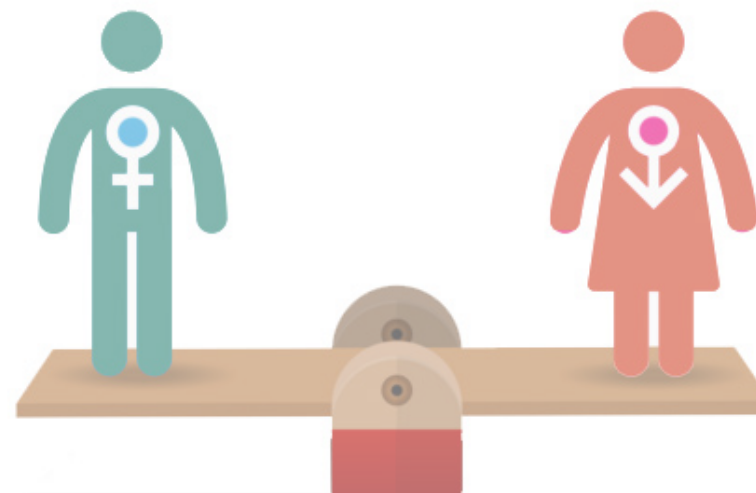
In this report, we have used the terms 'gender', 'men' and 'women', 'males' and 'females'. We understand that for some people this will be referring only to their biological sex, for some people this may be referring to their gender identity and for some people both.



LLAIS
Lleoliannau a Llywodraethau
Lleoliannau a Llywodraethau
Lleoliannau a Llywodraethau

Median and mean hourly rates and pay gaps (not subject to audit)

Gender	Median Hourly Rate (£ per hour)	Mean Hourly Rate (£ per hour)
Male	26.05	25.83
Female	18.42	19.77
Difference	7.63	6.06
Pay Gap %	29.28%	23.46%



Sickness absence policy

As part of the TUPE style transfer, we have adopted the NHS All Wales Managing Attendance at Work Policy. Reporting of absence is via an Electronic Staff Record system operated on our behalf by NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership.

This year, Llais monitored staff sickness absence against a level set at 3.30%. This is in line with the levels set for our predecessor organisation. This report will consider our performance against this target, and how we might improve absence levels moving forward.

Since April 2023, absence levels have consistently exceeded the 3.30% level. Over the last 12 months, we have seen an average absence rate of 4.13%, reaching a peak of 8.16% in December 2023. A number of long-term absences contributed to these levels, with 10 cases of long term sickness absence occurring between the period September 2023 – January 2024 alone.

Our commitment to our people, diversity, and language

Our people policies are designed to align with current employment law and best practices, with a strong focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. We go beyond the requirements of the Equalities Act, working hard to make sure that our people deliver inclusive services.

We are committed to creating an environment that values diversity and respects the rights of all staff, volunteers, and those we engage with, in line with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our people also play a key role in promoting language choice and sensitivity within health and social care services. We want to maximise the impact we can have in supporting the delivery of the Welsh Government's "More than Just Words" framework. As a bilingual organisation, we foster an environment that supports and develops our staff's bilingual skills, aiming to embrace a bilingual ethos throughout our work.

More detail on our diversity and inclusion initiatives can be found later on in the report.

Listening to our people

Since we started in April 2023, we've run regular staff update meetings, usually led by our Chief Executive or Strategic Director. All staff are invited to join these virtual sessions, where we share updates on current initiatives, activities, and developments at Llais. These meetings also provide an open forum for staff to ask questions, share ideas, offer feedback, or voice any concerns.

We believe in involving staff in shaping our organisation. This has included gathering input through staff conferences, feedback sessions, and involving staff in the design, development, and review of our vision, mission, values, behaviours framework, our organisational strategies, policies, procedures and ways of working.



Staff have a voice at our Board through an associate member, ensuring their perspectives are considered in decision-making, as well as involving regional teams in each Board meeting to hear more about their work and involve them in Board level activity.

We work closely with our Trade Union colleagues, valuing their insights and feedback on issues that matter to our workforce.

This collaborative approach helps us create a positive and inclusive work environment where everyone's voice is heard and respected.

People assistance programme

We offer our people access to the following range of services:

- Access to fully qualified counsellors and support specialists 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This offers an opportunity to discuss emotional, personal or work-related issues.
- Face to face and virtual counselling sessions.
- In the moment support – which offers real-time counselling support at the very moment someone needs to talk.
- Self help workbooks available in easy read format and as an audio book on a wide range of subjects ranging from bereavement, anxiety and stress. These allow an insight into the topic, advice and support.
- Podcasts and blogs on over 60 topics relating to health and wellbeing.
- Debt advice offering advice on solutions and support available either in person or virtually and specifically with household utility bills.
- Domestic Abuse support for anyone in an abusive relationship or for anyone who may be concerned about someone they believe to be in one.

In addition to the well-being provisions listed above, we offer our people 'Lifestyle Savings' – this offers the opportunity to save money on everyday essentials to money off cinema tickets, family days out, retail discounts and savings on leisure activities and eating out.

Flexibility

We support staff to work a hybrid pattern of home and office locations and the opportunity to work flexibly subject to the needs of our services. We also support and encourage our people to utilise Wellbeing at Work Breaks.

22% of our workforce worked non standard hours (less than 37.5 hours a week or compressed hours).

We offer our national roles on a pan Wales basis. This means staff can select the nearest Llais office as their base.

Expenditure on consultancy

There was £30k expenditure on consultancy in 2023/2024. This spend relates to an independent advisory review of the governance arrangements for Llais at the end of its first year. The review was commissioned by the Chair and Chief Executive.

The review was completed by the end of March 2024 and confirmed that all the governance fundamentals are in place, but that further refinement and embedding was required, which is being taken forward during the financial year 2024/2025.

Off-payroll engagements

There were no off payroll engagements during 2023/2024.

Compensation for loss of office (subject to audit)

There were no compensation payments made in 2023/2024.



Exit packages (subject to audit)

In 2023/2024, we introduced a Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) to help us adapt quickly to change and reframe how we deliver our services. Information about the scheme was shared with all staff, including those not currently at work. In line with scheme remit and rules, 5 individuals within the organisation were successful in their applications and left our organisation in 2023/2024.

Exit Package cost band	2023/2024	2022/2023
Under £10,000	0	0
£10,000-£25,000	0	0
£25,001-£50,000	5	0
Total	0	0
Resource Cost	£174,710	£0

Staff learning and development

The main learning and development opportunities offered to staff during the year were:

Course outcomes	Participants
Discrimination and Hate Crime and Cultural Awareness – providing a wider understanding of the difference between certain faiths and cultures. Explores the meaning of cultural awareness and hate crimes.	17
Fraud prevention – training delivered by counter fraud specialist to raise awareness to prevent fraud and how to report any concerns.	75
Risk awareness training – preparing participants to recognize hazards and risks and look at mitigating or reducing them as much as possible.	11

Course outcomes

Participants

Fire marshal – preparing participants how to prevent and respond to workplace fires. Identify hazards, know the different types of extinguishers and how to safely evacuate buildings.

1

Public accountability – Why public funds merit special care, consequences of being classed as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, Compliance with the guidance contained in Managing Welsh Public Money and the Llais framework document, the concept of “regularity”, occasions where highly sensitive spending decisions may need to be referred to Welsh Government and dealing with matters of “financial propriety”

51

Services design

4

Emergency first aid training – providing protocols for adult casualties in the workplace

10

Cyber security awareness training – educating participants on identifying, preventing and responding to cyber threats. Creating a culture of security awareness to protect the organisation from cyber-attacks.

55

Psychological Safety Training – provide knowledge, skills, tools and confidence to make psychologic safety for everyone in the organisation

9

Advocacy level 2 – covers principles of advocacy, duties of the role, communication and inclusion with respect to advocacy.

2

Team coaching – exploring what ‘we do well’, ‘what we need to improve’ and developing as one organisation

75

Social care awareness, and safeguarding for volunteers (also offered to staff)

76 volunteers

16 staff

We also provided tailored training for all our staff to operate new systems like our Customer Relationship Management System.

Volunteer contributions

We have 151 volunteers across all regions of Wales. During the year 32 volunteers stopped volunteering for us and 32 new volunteers started. Volunteers get involved for many reasons. Some want to make a positive difference to the lives of others; some want to develop new skills and some simply want to meet new people and have fun.

Every person who volunteers for us is important to our work.

At Llais we have a number of voluntary roles. These include:



Online Feedback Collector

Collect feedback about people's experiences of health and social care services that have been left online.



Visiting Volunteer

Meeting people online or face to face in health and social care settings on pre-arranged visits to understand what they think is working and what could be better



Community Engagement Volunteer

Support their local Voice team to meet people online and face to face in the community, to gather their views and experiences of health and social care services



Representation Volunteer

Attending meetings and events on behalf of Llais, presenting our point of view and making notes from the meeting to feed back relevant information

This year our volunteers have supported Llais activities, including 202 engagement activities and 71 visits to health and social care premises.

Volunteer impact West Wales hospital wayfaring

Following feedback, the West Wales team wanted to know what it was like to get to each of the 4 main hospitals in the region (including parking) and then use the signs and directions provided for different departments, wards and units that patients need to get to.

With the help of our volunteers, we designed some basic scenarios which aimed to check what kind of information was available and whether it was straight forward to find.

We were also very fortunate to have the help and support of Pembrokeshire People First, (PPF) an independent charity run by and for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

This project gave us an interesting insight into people's experiences as they plan and arrive at hospital. We shared our final report with the Health Board with suggestions for improvements including parking, signage and maps.

You can [watch a video](#) about volunteering with Llais.



Diversity and inclusion initiatives

We are a new and developing organisation. Over the last 12 months we have been looking at what we need to do to be able to provide further data in terms of how we promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of services to different groups.

We are still developing our IT and data capture systems so that they can capture the information that we need to inform our work and allow us to identify any potential trends or barriers, both internally and externally.

Alongside that, the way we capture and use our data has been identified as an equality objective in our Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028.

Over the next 12 months, following the publication of our Strategic Equality Plan, we are looking to review how we capture our workforce data, where that information goes and how we are using it to inform our work.

This review means we will look at any changes we need to make to be able to better understand who our staff are, what communities we are reaching and whether there are any barriers to underrepresented groups inside and outside of our organisation.

Where barriers are identified, any planned actions to address these will be captured alongside our progress against our wider equality objectives in our annual equality monitoring report.





Throughout the year, each of our 7 regions hosted 'Opening Doors' events working with partners and community leaders to encourage those we are less likely to hear from to share their views and experiences of health and social care.

Some of the people we heard from were unpaid Carers, people with different experiences of mental health, people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, parents and carers of children with learning disabilities, veterans, and LGBTQIA+ groups.

We took this approach as we understand the importance of building trust and continuing to develop relationships to make sure we are hearing from a range of people with different perspectives and experiences. This means we can build a picture of what is happening and what matters to people, so we can work with the NHS, local authorities, and others to address issues.

Regionally, we have been using community spaces to continue establishing a hyper-local approach. This includes drop-in sessions at libraries and warm spaces, attendance at local festivals, freshers' fairs, and various forums.

We have been speaking and engaging with a variety of organisations and community-based groups who advocate for and support underrepresented people. This has included sex workers and minority ethnic groups including Ukrainian, Polish, and African community organisations.



In more rural regions, we have visited farmers' shops, livestock markets and agricultural shows to make sure we hear from people who may have different experiences to those living in urban areas. More statistics can be found under the 'Performance Metrics' section in this report.

We have participated in and raised awareness of a range of important inclusion events over the last 12 months including Social Work Week, Carers Week, International Women's Day, and Diabetes Awareness Week.

In June, many of our regions attended Pride events within their areas to hear about the health and social care experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community and how we may be able to help.

In October, we attended the Race Equality First Minority Ethnic Community Health Fair. We also hosted an event with the African Community Centre Wales that helped us have meaningful discussions about issues that matter within our communities whilst celebrating diversity with live entertainment, dancing, and food.

In February, we celebrated Neurodiversity Inclusion Week for the first time, where our people were invited to attend a range of sessions hosted by Neurodiversity Week and Lexxic to build on their knowledge of how we can work in ways that are more accessible for people who may think, communicate, and process information differently.



In the last year, we have made both big and small changes to how we do things internally to increase equity, diversity and inclusion within our organisation.

An example of a big change was asking for help to guide our equity, diversity, and inclusion work. We recognised we needed focus at a national level to be able to further support our regional teams.

We now have an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Programme Lead to help us with this focus. This has led to a scheduled programme of work across the organisation to ensure equity, inclusion, and human rights are at the centre of all we do.

Though it was published in April 2024, our first Strategic Equality Plan has been created based on what our people, our partners and the public told us about what they wanted an inclusive organisation and service to look like.

You can find out more here: [Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028](#).

An example of a small change we have made is actively encouraging our staff to include their pronouns into our email signatures. We know this can help to normalise the use of peoples' chosen pronouns and avoid misgendering someone.

By making this change we hope people both inside and outside our organisation feel safer to share their experiences and views with us knowing we respect people for who they are.

Looking forward – our regional priorities for next year have interwoven equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of their core activities. Some of the themes we will be focusing on are:

- Mental health (including young people)
- Having a baby and maternity services
- Supporting Carers
- Being supported to stay healthy if you have a learning disability
- Ethnic minority communities living with dementia

More information can be found in our [Annual Plan 2024/2025](#).

Alongside our national and regional priorities, a set of meaningful actions has been developed to support our objectives in the Strategic Equality Plan.

Working with our newly established Welsh language and equity, diversity and inclusion working groups, we have used what our people have been telling us (through conferences and feedback) to identify the first set of actions we will be working on over the next year.

These actions include recruitment and retention, training, integrated impact assessments, and our inclusion calendar.

A separate Welsh language action plan is being developed to ensure that we are helping the language to thrive beyond our statutory duties.

Updates on how we are delivering the general and specific equality duties and progressing against our actions set out in our [Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028](#) will be published in our annual Equality Monitoring Report.

J A Thomas

Alyson Thomas
18 December 2024



05. The Certificate and report of the Auditor General for Wales to the Senedd

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care, Wales (known as Llais) for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

The financial statements comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayer's and related notes, including the significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Llais' affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its net expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Ministers' directions issued under the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for Llais is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and parts of the remuneration report that are audited and my auditor's report thereon. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Ministers' directions made under the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Ministers' directions made under the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the body and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit;
- proper accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration Report are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;
- information specified by Welsh Ministers regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed;
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made or parts of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements and Annual Report in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring that the Annual Report and financial statements as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable;
- ensuring the regularity of financial transactions;
- internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing Llais' ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Llais will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, Llais' head of internal audit, and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Llais' policies and procedures concerned with:
 - * identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - * detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - * the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: posting of unusual journals and management override of controls;
- Obtaining an understanding of Llais' framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Llais operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Llais; and
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of Llais' controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Senedd and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them. I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
18 December 2024

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

06. Finance overview

Llais Financial Statements 2023/2024

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2023/2024 £'000	2022/2023 £'000
Operating Expenditure			
Staff costs	2	5,246	110
Other Operating Expenditure	3	1,590	22
Depreciation/Amortisation	3	196	0
Provision provided in year	3	129	0
		7,162	132
Finance Activities			
Interest Payable – Right of Use Asset	4	8	0
		7,170	132

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.
There are no recognised gains or losses in 2023/2024 or 2022/2023.
Llais receives funding from the Welsh Government.

Statement of Financial Position for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Sunday, 31 March 2024		Friday, 31 March 2023		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Non-current assets:						
Right of use assets	4	353		0		
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	8		0		
Intangible assets	6	622		0		
Total non-current assets			983		-	
Current Assets:						
Trade and other receivables	7	155		0		
Cash and cash equivalents	8	72		0		
Total current assets			227		-	
Total assets			1,210			
Current liabilities:						
Trade and other payables	9	(731)		(21)		
Right of Use Lease	4	(218)		0		
Provisions	10	(73)		0		
Total current liabilities			(1,022)		(21)	
Total assets less current liabilities			188		(21)	
Non-current liabilities						
Right of Use Lease	4	(136)		0		
Provisions	10	(195)		0		
Total non-current liabilities			(331)		0	
Total assets less total liabilities			(143)		(21)	
Taxpayers' equity (SOCTE)			(143)		(21)	
General Reserves			(143)		(21)	

J A Thomas

Alyson Thomas
18 December
2024

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2024

		Sunday, 31 March 2024	Friday, 31 March 2023
	Note	£'000	£'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net expenditure		(7,170)	(132)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	3	325	0
Adjustment for Notional 6.3% Pension Contribution		195	0
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	7	(155)	0
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	9	583	21
Provision utilised	11	(15)	0
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(6,237)	(111)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		0	0
Purchase of intangible assets		(622)	0
Proceeds from disposals		0	0
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(622)	0
Cash flows from financing activities			
Funding from Welsh Government		6,849	111
Cash to match Assets and Liabilities transferring from Powys tHB		269	0
Payments of lease liabilities		(195)	0
Right of Use Assets; interest	10	8	0
Net financing		6,931	111
Net increase/(decrease) in cash equivalents in the period		72	0
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	0	0
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	72	0

Statement of Changes in Taxpayer's Equity for the year ended 31 March 2024

	General Reserve	General Reserve
	1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024	1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000
Balance as at 1 April	(21)	0
Right of Use Lease Adjustment	4	0
Net expenditure	(7,170)	(132)
Total recognised income and expense	(7,187)	(132)
Funding from Welsh Government	6,849	111
Notional Welsh Government Funding	195	0
Balance as at 31 March	(143)	(21)

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government Accounts Direction and the 2023/2024 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM). The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which has been judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of Llais for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by Llais are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

1.1 Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis under the historical cost convention.

1.2 Going Concern

Llais is expected to remain in existence for the foreseeable future and will receive funding from the Welsh Government to meet all of its current liabilities when they mature in 2024/2025 financial year. It has accordingly been considered appropriate to adopt a 'going concern' basis for the preparation of these financial statements.

1.3 Establishment of Llais 1 April 2023

The Non Current and Current Assets and Liabilities transferring to Llais from Powys tHB were transferred in line with Welsh Government issued guidelines and statements. These Assets and Liabilities are recorded in Llais accounts as being transferred on 1 April 2023. These transfers have been reported tracking the changes between the closing position disclosed as at 31 March and the opening position at 1 April in the relevant underlying accounts.

1.4 Income, Funding and Expenditure

The main source of funding for Llais is from Welsh Government via an annual funding allocation.

The accruals basis of accounting means that income and expenditure disclosed in the accounts are accounted for in the year that it takes place, not when cash payments are made or received.

Expenditure is that which relates directly to the activities of Llais.

Llais met its financial obligations by ensuring net expenditure did not exceed the net revenue resource allocation.

1.5 Pensions

Llais Chief Executive and directly employed staff are eligible for membership of the NHS Pension Scheme. The scheme is an unfunded, defined benefit scheme that covers NHS and other employers, General Practices and other bodies, allowed under the direction of the Secretary of State, in England and Wales. The scheme is not designed to be run in a way that would enable NHS and other bodies to identify their share of the underlying scheme assets and liabilities. Therefore, the scheme is accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme: the cost to the body of participating in the scheme is taken as equal to the contributions payable to the scheme for the accounting period. The latest NHS Pension Scheme valuation results indicated that an increase in benefit required a 6.3% increase (14.38% to 20.68%) which was implemented from 1 April 2019.

As an organisation within the full funding scope, the joint (in NHS England and NHS Wales) transitional arrangement operated from 2019/2020 where employers in the Scheme would continue to pay 14.38% employer contributions under their normal monthly payment process, and in Wales the additional 6.3% would be funded by Welsh Government directly to the Pension Scheme administrator, the NHS Business Services Authority (BSA, the NHS Pensions Agency).

While Llais budgets and accounts for their staff employer contributions of 14.38% in the financial plan and finance reports, the notional cost of the additional 6.3% funded by Welsh Government, equating to £195,307 is included in the annual accounts.

1.6 Employee Benefits

Salaries and national insurance contributions for current employees are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure as the employees' services are delivered. The Llais accounts for paid annual leave as a liability where the compensation for absence is due to be settled within twelve months after the end of the period in which the employees render the service.

1.7 Property, Plant and Equipment

The minimum level for capitalisation for Property, Plant and Equipment is £5,000 inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Depreciation is provided at a rate calculated to write off the assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is provided from the date the asset commences its useful life.

Asset lives are normally, as follows:

Leaseholds improvements	Term of the lease or to break clause up to a maximum of 5 years
Office equipment	5 years
I.T related equipment	5 years
Right of use asset	Term of the lease or to break clause up to a maximum of 5 years

Property, Plant and Equipment are included at costs as, in the opinion of Llais, any adjustments arising from revaluation would not be material.

All property occupied by Llais is leased.

1.8 Intangible Assets

The minimum level for capitalisation for an intangible asset is £5,000 inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Software licences, information technology software and the website have been capitalised as intangible assets and amortised on a straight-line basis over their expected useful lives (normally five years).

1.9 Right of Use Assets

IFRS 16 has replaced the current leases standard IAS 17 and requires that contracts are assessed to confirm if they convey the right to use an asset in exchange for consideration. If they do, they are accounted for in accordance with IFRS16 with a right of use asset and lease liability being recognised at the commencement date. The right of use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for initial direct costs, prepayments and incentives.

The right of use asset is depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right of use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right of use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment assets

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, using the HMT issued incremental borrowing rate. As the Llais leases for the offices do not contain an implicit rate of interest, the HMT discount rate has been used.

1.10 VAT

Llais is not registered for VAT. All expenditure is reported inclusive of VAT where applicable, as VAT is irrecoverable.

1.11 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include all funds held in accounts to which Llais has instant access. Funds are drawn down into the bank account to pay liabilities as they fall due.

1.12 Accrued Leave

Staff annual leave accrual is accounted for within Note 2 – Staff costs. The accrual is a calculation to reflect the net annual leave owed or owing to staff at the year end. Movement in year is now charged as an accrual within salaries.

1.13 Provisions

Provisions are included in the accounts for liabilities that are likely or certain to arise but uncertain as to the amount or dates on which they will arise. Provisions are created or increased by making a charge to revenue expenditure in the year of creation. When the expenditure is actually incurred, the expenditure is charged directly to the provision. The provision included within these accounts are regarded as short term, within one year and medium term, between two and five years. All provisions are subject to annual review, to ensure they are still relevant and sufficient to fund the specific future liability.

The provision in the accounts includes that for the works required to restore the property back to its original condition prior to tenancy. This is a requirement of lease agreements, and the clause is activated when Llais vacate offices. Also a provision for future reimbursements for an historic Permanent Injury Benefit claim.

1.14 Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

IAS 8 requires disclosure in respect of new accounting standards, amendments and interpretations that are, or will be, applicable after the accounting period.

In Llais' opinion, no standards that have been issued and have not yet been implemented will impact the organisation.

2. Staff costs

2.1 Employee costs

			2023/2024	2022/2023
	Permanent staff	Other staff	Total staff costs	Total staff costs
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Salaries	3,604	459	4,063	100
Social Security costs	364	0	364	5
Employer contributions to NHS Pension Scheme	446	0	446	5
Other Pension Costs	0	0	0	0
Total net salary costs	4,414	459	4,873	110
Voluntary Early Release Scheme	175	0	175	0
Apprentice Levy	3	0	3	0
Notional 6.3% Pension Contribution	195	0	195	0
Total Staff Costs	4,787	459	5,246	110

Further information on staff costs is included within the Remuneration & Staff Report on page 70.

3. Other Operating Expenditure

Other operating expenditure consists of:

		2023/24	2022/23
	Note	£'000	£'000
Operating Expenditure			
Rentals under operating leases		254	0
Other accommodation costs		219	0
Information technology		301	0
Professional fees		86	0
Training & development		88	0
Travel & subsistence		41	1
Audit fees – Internal audit		19	0
Audit fees – External audit		30	20
Specific Programmes		252	0
Service Level Agreements		147	0
Other staff related costs		18	0
Other administrative expenses		135	1
		1,590	22
Non-cash items			
Depreciation on right of use asset	4	192	0
Depreciation of PPE	5	4	0
Amortisation	6	0	0
Provision	10	129	0
		325	0
Total		1,915	22

4. Rights of Use Assets

	Digital	Buildings	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2023	0	0	0
Additions	454	91	545
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024	454	91	545
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	0	0	0
Charged in the year	162	30	192
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024	162	30	192
Net book value at 31 March 2024	292	61	353
Net book value at 31 March 2023	0	0	0

Maturity Analysis

	2024		2023	
	Digital	Buildings	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Contractual undiscounted cash flows relating to lease liabilities				
Within one year	0	0	0	0
Between one and five years	300	66	366	0
After five years	0	0	0	
Sum	300	66	366	0
Less future charges allocated to future periods	6	6	12	0
Minimum lease payments	294	60	354	0
Included in				
Current trade payables	195	23	218	0
Non current trade paybles	99	37	136	0
	294	60	354	0

Amount recognised in SoCNE

	2024		2023	
	Digital	Buildings	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Depreciation	162	30	192	0
Interest on lease liabilities	7	1	8	0

Amount recognised in Statement of Cashflows (net of irrecoverable VAT)

Interest expense	7	1	8	0
Repayments of principal on leases	(167)	(28)	(195)	0
Total cashflows	(160)	(27)	(187)	0

5. Property, Plant and Equipment

	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Leasehold Improvements	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2023	0	20	0	20
Additions	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024	0	20	0	20
Depreciation and impairment				
At 1 April 2023	0	8	0	8
Charged in the year	0	4	0	4
Disposals	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024	0	12	0	12
Net book value at 31 March 2024	0	8	0	8
Net book value at 31 March 2023	0	0	0	0

There has been no impairment of any assets and they are shown at cost which is considered to be the 'fair value'

6. Intangible Assets

	Software Licences	Information Technology	Website	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2023	0	0	0	0
Additions	0	622	0	622
Disposals	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024	0	622	0	622
Amortisation				
At 1 April 2023	0	0	0	0
Charged in the year	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024	0	0	0	0
Net book value at 31 March 2024	0	622	0	622
Net book value at 31 March 2023	0	0	0	0

There has been no impairment of any assets and they are shown at cost which is considered to be the 'fair value'

7. Trade and other receivables

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000
Current Assets:		
Trade and other receivables	0	0
Prepayments and accrued income	155	0
Total trade and other receivables	155	0

A prepayment is an amount paid in advance, usually for items such as rates or rent. It is initially recognised as an asset and is expensed in the period when the benefit is received.

There were no receivables falling due after more than one year.

8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2023/2024	2022/2023
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	0	0
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	72	0
Balance at 31 March	72	0
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	72	0
Balance at 31 March	72	0

9. Trade payables/accruals

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000
Current liabilities:		
Trade payables	25	0
Other payables & accruals	448	20
Pay accruals	258	1
Total trade and other payables	731	21

10. Provision for Liabilities and Charges

	£'000	31 March 2024	£'000	31 March 2023
	Permanent Injury	Dilapidations	Total	£'000
Balance at 1 April	101	53	154	0
Provided in year	0	129	129	0
Provision utilised in year	(15)	0	(15)	0
Unwinding of Discount	2	0	2	0
Provision released	(2)	0	(2)	0
Balance at 31 March	86	182	268	0
Falling Due:				
Within one year	15	58	73	0
Between two and five years	58	124	182	0
Later than five years	13	0	13	0
Total	86	182	268	0

The Permanent Injury provision relates to an injury benefit of a former employee of the Board of Community Health Councils, this liability was transferred from Powys Health Board to Llais on the 1 April 2023.

The dilapidation provision has been established to recognise the condition within Llais' 12 building leases to restore the premises to their original state upon termination of the lease. An approximate 'cost per square foot' has been obtained, from an independent source, on which to base this calculation.

11. Financial Instruments

Llais' cash requirements are met through funding provided by the Welsh Government.

Llais is not therefore exposed to significant liquidity risks.

The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with Llais' expected purchase and usage requirements and the Commissioner is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity, interest rate or foreign currency risk.

There is no material difference between the book values of the organisation's financial assets and liabilities at 31 March 2024 (31 March 2023; £nil).

12. Related-Party Transactions

In 2023/2024, Llais received cash funding of £6.849m from the Welsh Government, against confirmed Grant-in-Aid funding of £7.744m. Confirmed Grant-in-Aid funding split between Revenue of £7.122m and Capital of £0.622m.

In resource accounting terms this equates to confirmed resource allocation of £8.298m, split between revenue resource allocation of £7.131m and Capital allocation £1.167m.

The Welsh Government is regarded as a related party. Material transactions with the Welsh Government during 2023/2024 are:

- funding of £7.744m from Welsh Government (£0.132m 2022/2023)
- notional funding of £0.195m from Welsh Government to cover Notional 6.3% Pension Contribution
- Llais paid Welsh Government £0.104m, mainly for reimbursement of staff salaries and corresponding deductions they pay on our behalf (nil in 2022/2023)
- Llais had £0.017m accruals with the Welsh Government (nil 2022/2023)

During 2023/2024 Llais, in the normal course of its business, entered into the following transactions with the following organisations in which Board and Executive Members or other related parties had an interest.

Name	Relationship with related party
Adenipekun, Bamidele	Associate – Practice Solutions Limited

The above individual has not undertaken any material transactions with us.

Practice Solutions Limited was paid £29,400 – this is included in note 3; no balances were owing to/from this supplier as at 31 March 2024.

13. Events after the reporting period

There were no significant events occurring between the year end and the approval of these accounts.

These financial statements were authorised for issue on the 18 December 2024 by Alyson Thomas.

14. Statement of Assets and Liabilities transferring from Powys tHB at 1 April 2023

	1 April 2023	
	£'000	£'000
Non-current assets:		
Right of use assets	0	
Property, Plant and Equipment	12	
Intangible assets	0	
Total non-current assets		12
Current assets:		
Trade and other receivables	0	
Cash and cash equivalents	269	
Total current assets		269
Total assets		281
Current liabilities:		
Trade and other payables	(126)	
Right of Use Lease	0	
Total current liabilities		(126)
Total assets less current liabilities		155
Non-current liabilities:		
Provisions	(155)	
Right of Use Lease	0	
Total non-current liabilities		(155)
Total assets less total liabilities		0
Taxpayers' equity		
General reserves		0

Llais became operational on the 1 April 2023 when all staff, assets, liabilities (contracts) were transferred from Powys Teaching Health Board.

The statement above provides a breakdown of the agreed balances transferred to Llais and are included in the calculations for the following notes:

Note 5 - Property, Plant & Equipment
Statement of Cash Flows
Note 10 - Provisions



Glossary of terms

Agenda for Change – These are the pay and conditions framework used in Llais. It provides a fair and transparent system of pay, job evaluation, conditions and pay progression.

Capital – Spending on land and premises and provision, adaptation, renewal, replacement or demolition of buildings, equipment and vehicles.

Community care – A way of providing services to people to help them stay in their own homes as long as they are able, or in other settings in the community such as residential homes.

Complaints advocacy – Complaints advocacy is a specialist service which supports people who are considering, or wishing to make a complaint about the health and social services they receive.

Consultation – The action or process of formally consulting or discussing.

Co-production – Co-production is when professionals work in partnership with people who have lived experience, to develop solutions to challenges in public services and communities.

Corporate governance – A system of accountability to citizens, service users, stakeholders and the wider community within which health and social care organisations work, take decisions and lead their people to achieve their objectives.

Digitally excluded – Not able to use digital devices (such as computers or smart phones and the internet).

Engagement – An active and participative process by which people can influence and shape policy and services that includes a wide range of methods and techniques as explained within the National Principles for Public Engagement Wales.

Equity – Recognising that we do not all start in the same place, and we may have to change to make things more balanced for everyone.

General practice – Refers to the services provided by general practitioners (GPs), also known as family doctors.

Insights – Insights are valuable pieces of information or understanding that are gained from analysing data or observations from our engagement work. They provide a deeper understanding of a situation or issue and can help in making informed decisions.

Mean – Is the average of a set of numbers. To calculate the mean, you add up all the numbers in the set and then divide that sum by the total number of numbers. For example, if you have the numbers 2, 4, and 6, the mean would be $(2 + 4 + 6)$ divided by 3, which equals 4. The mean gives you an idea of the “central” value of the numbers in the set.

Median – The middle value in a set of numbers when they are arranged in order from smallest to largest. If there is an odd number of values, the median is the number right in the middle. If there is an even number of values, the median is the average of the two middle numbers. The median gives you a good sense of the “middle” of the data, especially when there are extreme values that might skew the ‘mean’.

Outpatient – Provided on an appointment basis without the need to be admitted to or stay in hospital, e.g. assess need for further treatment, follow up appointment after a period of treatment.

Primary care – Primary care refers to services provided by providers who act as the principal point of consultation e.g. GP practices, dental practices, community pharmacies and high street optometrists.

Representation – Representations made by Llais to NHS bodies and local authorities, and those acting on their behalf or working jointly e.g., Regional Partnership Boards regarding the provision of health or social services.

Secondary care – Also known as acute care, this refers to specialist medical care or surgery provided in a hospital setting either as an in-patient or outpatient service. Patients seen in hospitals are generally under the care of consultant, not a GP.

Service change – Service change can include service reorganisation, reconfiguration, service redesign, service variation, service improvement, or service expansion.

Stakeholder – An individual or organisation with an interest in health and/or social care initiatives. Stakeholders can be organisations such as local authorities or individuals such as residents.

Terms and conditions – The specific details of a job agreement between an employer and an employee. These terms outline important aspects of the employment relationship, such as salary, benefits, leave entitlements and working hours.

Third sector – The part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit-making organisations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc.

Under-represented groups – This refers to groups of people who are socially marginalized or under-recognised. This can include people from minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, people who are neurodivergent, people from a lower socioeconomic background, LGBTQIA+ people and people with different religious backgrounds.

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