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We are very sorry to be saying farewell to Lizzie who will be joining Bristol Health Board.

We wish you the very best of luck in your new role!

Welcome from our Regional Director Jemma Morgan

"I would like welcome everyone to the very first newsletter of our new organisation Llais – Gwent Region. I want to especially welcome all our wonderful volunteers that have joined us as well as our dedicated members of staff.

Preparing for the launch of Llais has been an exciting and challenging time, as it is with any large organisational change, but our local team of staff and volunteers have been welcoming and supportive of the change from the former Community Health Councils to Llais, as we now have the remit of both Health and Social Care, and giving our population an independent body to share their views with about both public services.

I want to extend a thanks to the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as well as our five Local Authority partners in Gwent, for their commitment to our collaborative working approaches and openness when receiving feedback or representation from us, on behalf of our community in Gwent. We have a busy year ahead of us, starting with our 100-day plan. We are particularly looking forward to getting out into the community, speaking with the population about the Health and Social care issues that they are facing. We are keen to acknowledge the Health and Social Care pressures and are working to establish methods of collaborative working with the NHS and Local Authorities to ensure that people's lived experiences and voices are at the heart of service plans and decision making".

**We are delighted to welcome three new advocates to our Llais Gwent Region team!
Welcome to Jamie,
Sian and Ffion!**

If you would like this news bulletin in a different language or format please contact our office

This news bulletin is available in Welsh on our website.

OUR 100 DAY PLAN



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

As an independent body, we want to be an inclusive, independent, and leading voice for people centred health and social care services. We want our activities to have a lasting impact in Wales.

We will do this by working in partnership to create more joined up health and social care services that meet people's diverse needs and improves the health and wellbeing of people living in all parts of Wales.

ESTABLISHING A SOLID FOUNDATION

During our first 100 days of engagement, we want to work with in Wales to build a strong foundation where mutual respect, inclusivity and independence drives all that we do.

To achieve this, we will work with people, communities, and our partners in all parts of Wales to help us to decide how we should work together and with others to provide a stronger voice for people in our health and social care services.



*Prof. Medwin Hughes,
Chair of Llais*

'As Chair of Llais, I am proud to publish on behalf of my fellow Board Members our Statement of Intent, outlining our focus during the first 100 days of engagement. Our statement sets out a clear and ambitious direction of travel for this national body. We believe in a healthier Wales where people receive health and social care services in a way that works best for them.'

SOME OF THE THINGS WE'LL BE DOING IN OUR FIRST 100 DAYS...



- Launching a national public consultation on our proposed vision, mission, and strategic priorities.
- Working with people in our communities to create simple & accessible ways for the people of Wales to connect with us and receive our services.
- Setting up a strong regional presence in each of the areas across Wales
- Launching a national volunteering campaign to attract a diverse community of people to help shape and support the delivery of our activities.
- Developing and agreeing how we will work together and co-operate with Welsh Local Authorities, NHS bodies and other key partners.
- Supporting people to raise their concerns about health and social services through our independent complaints advocacy service.
- Sharing what we hear with the NHS, local authorities, and other decision makers locally, regionally, and nationally, so that people's views and experiences drive the development and delivery of improvements in health and social care services for everyone.

For a full list of our proposed activities for our first 100 days, our plan is available to read in full [on our website](#). If you would like to receive it in an accessible format please contact the Llais team (p.8).



OUR LIVE SURVEYS

Your experiences could help improve NHS and social care services across Wales

CARER'S SURVEY

Are you a carer living in Gwent? As a carer, you want the best for the person you care for. But what is your experience of accessing and using health and social care services for your own needs in Gwent? Tell us your story by completing our short anonymous survey.



INFORMATION FROM SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Are you satisfied with the way you access and receive information from social care services?

Is it suitable for your needs?

Fill out our survey to let us know your thoughts.



DO YOU USE NHS OR SOCIAL CARE SERVICES?

Then you can help make them better for everyone by telling us about your experiences - good and bad.



VOLUNTEER WITH US



We want to reach as many people as possible and being a volunteer ensures you hear about the work we're doing and know about all the opportunities to have your say in the things that matter to you.



VOLUNTEERING: A WORK OF HEART

There are lots of different ways that people can volunteer with us! Our flexible models mean volunteers can get involved in any or all of the following...

- Visits to NHS health and social care sites within Gwent
- Representing Llais at external meetings
- Receiving data about NHS health and social care services in Gwent and across Wales, including service changes and consultations
- Attending virtual visits
- Collecting online information
- Representing us at engagement events all across the area

You will...

- Receive our regular newsletter updating you on our current work
- Be contacted about any consultations running so you can give your opinion
- Be able to influence our future work priorities in our annual plan
- Be able to share your experiences both negative and positive
- Help let more people know about Llais and how to contribute to improved services

**Find out
more!** 

 01633 838516



Where we'll be in 2023



Llais staff will be visiting libraries throughout the Gwent region week commencing 7th August to talk to members of the public



We'll be a lots more events through 2023 - keep an eye on our social media and upcoming newsletters!

Throughout the summer we will also be visiting several events across Gwent - keep your eyes peeled in upcoming issues for more information and dates for your diary!



In April & May we heard from....

3 people from Torfaen

2 people from Blaenau Gwent

3 people from Monmouthshire



GP Surgery

"After 10 days I decided to make an appointment with my GP, I filled in [the] form explaining that I've been ill for 10 days, self-medicating, however symptoms didn't improve. They sent me a message and advised me to go to the pharmacy. I was sure I needed antibiotics at this point. I run to the pharmacy, the pharmacist looked in my throat and said "You already have a lump there and I see an infection, you need antibiotics immediately". I burst out crying, desperate for antibiotics because I felt so poorly. I told her the GP refused to see me. So, she sent me back and said she would give them a call herself.

It is absolutely disgusting that they wouldn't even give me a phone call, but sent me to a pharmacy when I clearly explained I've done the self-medicating part for 10 days. This needs to change. If you feel that you need to see the doctor, you should be allowed to see one. And it shouldn't be complicated to get an appointment, to be filling in forms and then to be told a NO. You should be allowed to speak to a person and voice your medical concerns"

Hospital

"Discharged from hospital - did not supply medicines like they promised. Treated me badly. Need some help with mental health and physical health."



GP Surgery

"My old surgery in Ebbw Vale (Glyn Ebwy Surgery) closed because both of the doctors retired. I was then transferred to a different surgery (Pen-y-Cae) in October 2022. I have never visited this surgery to date. I have been offered telephone consultations, but I have a hearing impairment and cannot talk well on the telephone. My husband always talks to the receptionists on my behalf. This week I wanted a blood test, which I had regularly for the last 40 years (quarterly), but I emailed them twice and my husband rang them 4 times, before the appointment could be made. This is not acceptable - I appreciate Covid-19 has changed the way GP's work - but how can you get to see a doctor now!! The records of the patient should be checked so that their history is known by the GPs and nurses. Then the patient will not be upset if requested to do a particular task (e.g. talk on the telephone)."

Diabetic Care

"I have been type 1 diabetic for 59 years now and I have not had any appointments for my annual review, my medication review since March 2021 and the same for retinopathy despite repeated attempts to book an appointment. I am now 75 and feel like many other diabetic patients in Torfaen and Gwent, that we have just been abandoned. Where is the duty of care I ask?"



Cancer Care and Dental Treatment

"I seem to get forgotten with annoying regularity and only gets actioned when I call to find out what the delay is. My cancer treatment should have started last September, but due to an 'Admin error', it didn't start until December... even that was only after me making an enquiry.

I'm also receiving dental treatment, to replace my top teeth, having had them all removed in preparation for possible radiotherapy treatment. I've had a few fittings and was told on my last visit that I would be

receiving notification regarding my next appointment by post. This appointment was due to be roughly 3 weeks later. Having heard nothing for a few weeks, I called yesterday. Apparently the dental practitioner 'forgot', so the next available appointment is now on the 5th of June!

These are just 2 examples. This has been a common theme throughout. I don't like bothering people, but it really does feel like you don't get any attention if you're not 'the squeaky wheel!'"



Domiciliary Care

"My husband already had many health problems before being hospitalised with Covid & pneumonia for three weeks. Everyone really pulled together to make his homecoming as smooth as possible. The care team we had for the first six weeks were excellent. We now have carers via direct payments. They're all polite & friendly & good at their job. There are so many of them, I feel that I'm meeting several new carers every week! If it wasn't for the carers, I wouldn't be able to work."



Domiciliary Care

"Approximately 10 years ago my mother-in-law was diagnosed with dementia... which made things difficult for the family to manage... So with the support of social workers the family went about trying to set up home care support... The company selected started with being very involved and professional. However, this changed as soon as the family relaxed and was confident that my mother-in-law was being look after well. The selected company started... asking her to sign paperwork of which she was still intelligent enough to refuse and redirect them to her 'power of attorney' her daughter. My mother-in-law... was in hospital for 4 hours; in that time the selected care company withdrew their support which meant she was in hospital for a further 3 weeks. Number 2 care company took over home care support - they were a total joke, never provided a full service at any point. Social workers [were] involved on a daily basis trying find a suitable solution. This company... had a job to do and did [so] without feeling or compassion. On many occasions we would find ourselves in the hospital as she was admitted due some minor reason or ageing reason which could have been managed from home. The final company that took over home care support (3rd or 4th company) - I insisted that [the family] set the policy for home care as this was previously communicated by the social worker... Two of the carers took this onboard and within a short period of time was fully understanding of my mother-in-law, so much that she was calling them her friends."

These comments offer a snapshot of people's experiences. Thanks to everyone who shared their feedback with us. Share your experiences by [completing our short anonymous surveys](#), to help make local NHS and social care services better.



Regional Partnership Board

"No public attendance allowed at any RPB meetings across Wales? Previously resident of Bridgend. No public awareness of RPB. No information available at all in main public libraries in RPB area. Now [a] resident of Gwent. Applied for copy/info on RPB meetings as per website information. After several emails and a Freedom of Information request, eventually obtained limited access to requested meeting minutes."



Communication in Care

"Social workers are often a total stranger reading records of 3 to 4 years old and not understanding the current situation. District Nurses don't listen to carers' professional information; in fact they look down on the caring staff so training on how to benefit from information given. What I suggest is that a tablet or electronic device is used by carers/district nurses/doctors for each visit, updating the current situation of all clients. This information is then made available to Social workers and key family members. Where there's a need for a district nurse requiring another person then carers and district nurse should work together. The electronic updates should be used to inform all professionals of the current situation Doctors/District Nurses/professional caring staff/family members and Social workers."



Complaints

Advocacy

If you need to raise a concern about an NHS or social care service, you can talk to us. Our trained, dedicated complaints advocacy staff will provide you with the free, independent, and confidential support you are entitled to.

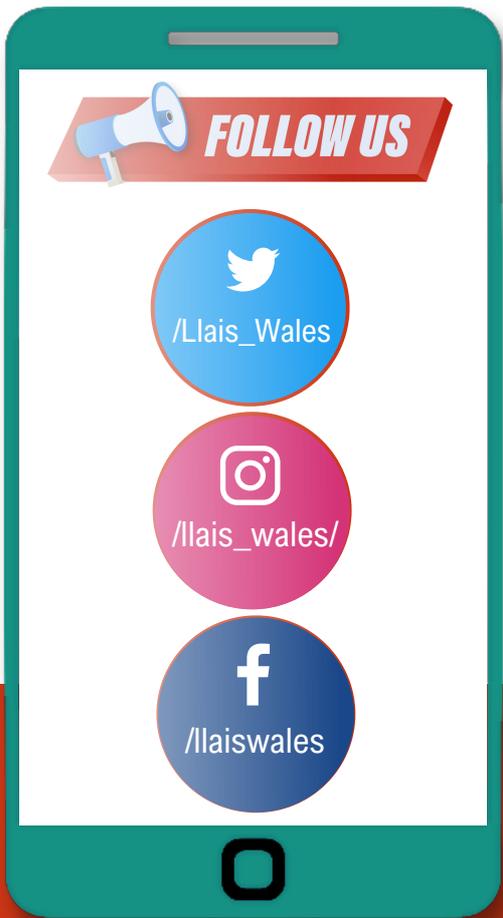
They will help you raise your concern and:

- Support you to make a complaint about a service, care or treatment provided or paid for by the NHS or local authority
- Support you to make a complaint on someone else's behalf, including if someone has died
- Listen to your concerns
- Put you in touch with other organisations if we think that someone else can also help
- Answer questions about the process and explain your options
- Provide a step-by-step guide to the process and offer some tips

Get in touch with our team at Gwent Llais Region and one of our team will talk to you about your concern. If we can help you, we'll tell you how. If we can't, we'll do our best to advise who can.



Please note that we do not provide advocacy services directly to children and young people about social care services (children's services). But we can help children and young people with their concerns about NHS care.



Advocacy stats for April and May

Since the 1st April 2023, our advocacy service has received 107 new contacts from members of the public with enquiries or formal concerns about health or social care.

- 98 contacts were about the NHS and 9 contacts about Social Care.
- 34 cases were general enquiries about the NHS and resolved quickly. Enquiries have been mixed in terms of their subject and the service from minor GP queries, the ambulance service (waits), pharmacy, mental health services, BSL needs for appointments or in hospital, and waits at the Emergency Department. We have also received positive feedback about the weight management service, good care experienced in a care home and commendations to NHS staff "for their hard work during these very difficult times".
- Where people wished to raise more formal concerns, 73 people requested an advocacy service pack to consider a formal complaint. Since the 1st April, 25 authorisation forms to proceed to a formal complaint have been received back.

KEEP IN TOUCH



01633 838516



gwentenquiries@llaiscymru.org



www.llaiswales.org/in-your-area/gwent

