



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Annual Review 2022/23



CONTENTS

Page 2 - Contents

Page 3 - Introduction and overview from the Chair and Chief Executive

Page 4 - Who we are

Page 5 - Overview of activity

Page 6 - Performance overview

Page 9 - A snapshot of some of our developments in the year

Page 14 - Our plan for the future

This Annual Review offers a summary of the detailed Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.

Copies of all these documents can be downloaded from the Health Board's website at <https://bcuhb.nhs.wales/about-us/governance-and-assurance1/>

or are available on application to the Health Board's Communications Team at BCUHB, Block 5, Carlton Court, St Asaph Business Park, St Asaph, LL17 0JG, by telephone on 03000 840 008 or by e-mail to bcuhbpressdesk@wales.nhs.uk

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Annual Review 2022/23

Introduction and overview from the Chair and Chief Executive



It has undoubtedly been a very difficult and turbulent year for the organisation. A number of critical reviews and reports have identified significant failings with some aspects of our processes and performance, leading to the decision by Welsh Government to move the monitoring status of the Health Board into special measures. This has been accompanied by some major change at Board level, including our appointments in February and May 2023 respectively.



This is happening at a time when we are still trying to address the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the disruption from Covid itself has reduced, we now face a huge challenge in reducing waiting lists whilst also coping with significant growth in emergency demands.

As a result, we are focussing on the difficulties that patients experience in accessing services, including reducing the pressures on our emergency departments and working to positively impact upon the difficulties that individuals face in being able to obtain regular NHS dental treatment.

At the same time, the financial context in which we operate, in both the short and longer term, is particularly challenging. We have an underlying financial deficit, which we must address, and we continue to face shortages of staff caused by a difficult recruitment market in many health disciplines.

However, there are reasons for us to be optimistic. We must never lose sight of the fact that across North Wales, every week, many thousands of people receive high quality health care, support and treatment. This is due to the ongoing dedication and expertise of our staff, and we wish to pay tribute to them, and offer our heartfelt thanks for all that they do to look after our patients and the wider community.

Since joining the Health Board we have both been impressed by the resilience and enthusiasm of the frontline and support staff that we have met across the region, and their commitment to the patients we serve. We have also seen great examples of local innovation and improvement taking place. This is why, despite the difficulties that the organisation faces, we are optimistic for its future progress.

As examples of that progress, last year we increased the number of elective procedures carried out by 5.8 per cent on the year before, despite also seeing a 6.2 per cent increase in emergency admissions, our Gynaecology services became the first discipline in North Wales to perform robotic assisted surgery and we launched a new rapid same day diagnostic clinic for patients with suspicious lumps in the neck.

However, we recognise that the Health Board cannot develop and thrive in isolation. We are part of a much wider system of health and social care that includes independent contractors, local authority services including social services and education, the Ambulance Service and other NHS bodies, together with higher education, in North Wales and beyond. We all face similar challenges around meeting demand within available resources and we will continue to build relationships and to work closely and in partnership with colleagues in other agencies to maximise our combined abilities to deliver services for the populations that we serve. We know that we can achieve more by cooperating closely with our partners and by being open to learning from others.

This is demonstrated by our work to support training and developing health professionals locally, which is a key element in addressing recruitment challenges. During the year, working alongside Welsh Government, Bangor University, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), the All Wales Faculty of Dental Care Professionals (AWFDCP) and dental providers across the region, we opened the first phase of the innovative North Wales Dental Academy. In September 2024, students will start their studies on the first full medical degree programme in North Wales thanks to collaboration between the Health Board, Bangor and Cardiff Universities and primary care providers throughout North Wales.

There is no doubt that the current year will be challenging. But we are confident that the plans that are being developed and implemented will ensure that the organisation is moving in the right direction, embracing improvements and a position of greater stability.

Who we are

We are responsible for the delivery of health care services to more than 700,000 people across the six counties of North Wales (Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham). This includes the provision of primary, community and mental health as well as acute hospital services.



We operate three main hospitals (Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in Bodelwyddan and Wrexham Maelor Hospital) and 19 community hospitals, along with a network of health centres, clinics, mental health units and community team bases, and also deliver prison health care services within HMP Berwyn, Wrexham.

The Health Board coordinates the work of 96 GP practices, and NHS services provided by 83 dental and orthodontic practices, 69 optometry practices and opticians and 147 pharmacies in North Wales.

We are also responsible, in partnership, for improving the health and wellbeing of local people through activities such as our successful vaccination programmes and school health services.

Overview of activity

Here we would like to provide a snapshot of the services our staff deliver and the associated activity.

The majority of patient contacts – about four out of every five – with health services take place in the community, for example in GP practices, pharmacies, dental services, optometry services or patients' own homes.



In 2022/23:

- 57,905 consultations delivered in pharmacies under the Common Ailments Scheme
- 36,102 emergency medicines services consultations delivered by pharmacies
- 21,096 people received NHS dental treatment

It was also a busy year for our hospitals with increased activity levels across almost all areas, reflecting both the emergency pressures that the Health Board has faced and the work to increase our planned treatment activity as we see to recover from the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2022/23:

- There were 721,515 hospital outpatient appointments
- 222,786 Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit attendances
- 11,591 planned procedures delivered
- 94,303 day-case operations
- 5,648 births



Our Therapy services are a vital component of the whole health and social care system and during the year they received:

- 119,272 new referrals
- 37,113 referrals to the Clinical Musculoskeletal Assessment/Therapy Service

These resulted in:

- 78,667 new outpatient appointments
- 237,099 follow-up appointments
- 327,431 patients treated/seen in hospital

District Nursing services provide 24-hour care in the community and out of hospital settings. During 2022/23 our District Nurses:

- carried out 687,000 visits of which about 161,000 were outside of core hours and 100,000 at the weekend to ensure an equitable and accessible range of services.

Performance overview

2022/23 was a challenging operating year for the Health Board. At the start of the year, the Board agreed a three-year plan for the period 2022-25 to meet the requirements of the NHS Wales Planning Framework and address Ministerial priorities. However, this was not approved by Welsh Government and the Board instead worked to deliver the first year of this as an annual operational plan.



During the year, the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on delivery of health services. The planning assumption for winter 2022/23 was a “Covid stable” environment, where further waves of infection were anticipated, but did not materialise to the extent of placing unsustainable pressure on the health and social care system, but did impact on service access times across a range of services.

The ongoing impact of the pandemic also contributed to a number of other pressures in the system, including shortfalls in the workforce across the whole health and care system (both statutory and independent sectors); increasing support needs for mental health; children’s health and well-being; and ongoing challenges in delivering the levels of activity needed to address longer waiting times that were exacerbated during the pandemic.

In February it was announced by the Minister for Health and Social Care that the Health Board would be escalated into Special Measures; the highest level of intervention in the escalation framework.

As a Health Board, we know things must change. We have an opportunity to learn from our journey and experiences so far to develop real and lasting improvements for the health and care of everyone across North Wales. We know that people are frustrated about the amount of time they have to wait for appointments, whether that’s in primary care, community settings or at one of our acute hospital sites.

We want to improve our services for the people who work in them and for those who use them. We have some fantastic staff across the Health Board and we want to make sure that BCUHB is a great place to work with the ability to attract, retain and develop staff at all levels. Many of the concerns raised by Welsh Government are linked to how we are set up as a Health Board (our Governance) and we recognise that to be able to provide the best possible health and care for all, we must be set up in the best possible way as an organisation and as a Board of people responsible for healthcare.

Our staff, our teams and our communities deserve the best and we are committed to working together to provide it. Our response to being placed in Special Measures covers a number of actions to ensure we can:

- Be a well-functioning Board

- Have a clear, deliverable plan for 2023/24
- Have stronger leadership and engagement
- Have improved access, outcomes and experience for citizens
- Be a learning, self-improving organisation

These are what we refer to as our five core outcomes. We are working closely with our teams and colleagues across all areas, services and with Welsh Government to make sure we are able to improve in all areas, not just for now but well into the future.



Additionally, during the year there were a number of other complex and difficult issues raised with the Board:

- Waiting times for a number of operations such as replacement joints or eye surgery have significantly increased during the pandemic and whilst we have begun to reduce some of the longest waits, there is much more to do and this will require changes to how we deliver services.
- Primary care services have been under exceptional demand, and have had to adapt rapidly to address growing community need at a time of increasing recruitment difficulties.
- Social care services have experienced similar difficulties in being able to sustainably provide the staffing required to care for individuals in their own homes or care home settings, with demand outstripping capacity.
- Our ability to move patients through our hospitals has been impacted by the difficulties social care services have experienced in being able to sustainably provide staffing required to care for individuals in their own or care home settings. As a consequence of this, as well as other pressures within and on our organisation, too many people have waited for unacceptably long periods to be admitted to Emergency Departments from ambulances, to be seen by a clinician for assessment in Emergency Departments or being admitted to a bed following this assessment.
- Like many NHS organisations we face challenges in recruiting and retaining staff in a number of specialties and staff groups, including our ambition to increase bilingual skills; and
- The UK wide economic position and rising cost of living has had an adverse impact on the population, our staff, and the cost of supplies and energy used by the Health Board.



Throughout the year, the Health Board continued to work to meet these challenges. Designing and delivering improvements to support sustainable services and improve the experience our patients, communities and staff receive.

The Health Board also demonstrated areas of progress throughout the year. Our activity levels increased across nearly every aspect of our services and our staff successfully delivered a number of key strategic projects and developments. The introduction of our Integrated Health Communities structure will help progress our working relationships with local authorities, especially in relation to social and education services, and schemes such as the Discharge to Assess model delivered in partnership with social services are helping to address the issues of patient flow resulting from the challenges facing the wider care sector.

The Health Board also met its statutory financial duty to operate within the funding available to it over a three-year period. However, this has been achieved with the assistance of some non-recurring sources of funding and strategic support from Welsh Government to address specific cost pressures during this period, and work is needed in the current year to address the underlying financial deficit.



2022/23 – A snapshot of some of our developments in the year

This has been another challenging year for the Health Board with the publication of a number of critical reports and escalation into Special Measures

Betsi Cadwaladr: NHS health board back in special measures

Damning Audit Wales report finds
'deeply worrying dysfunctionality' at
Betsi Cadwaladr health board

However, we know that every day our staff do amazing things to support our communities across North Wales and each other. We feel it is important for us to share these incredible stories, not only to celebrate their dedication and commitment, but to also help people get a better understand of the services we provide and how they can access them appropriately.

April 2022: Specialist mental health service for new and expectant mums to be expanded

We announced that a specialist mental health service for new and expectant mums in North Wales was set to undergo a significant expansion.



Investment in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Perinatal Mental Health Service will ensure that women who experience moderate to severe mental health difficulties during pregnancy or the postnatal year can access specialist support sooner.

Once recruitment of additional staff is complete, the service will be the first in Wales to meet the Royal College of Psychiatrists' community perinatal standards for staffing.

May 2022: More than 1.6 million COVID-19 vaccinations given to people living or working in North Wales

In May, more than 1.6 million COVID-19 vaccinations had been given to people living or working in North Wales.



This significant achievement was down to the hard work of our staff and volunteers and played a key part in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At that time, 50,000 more jabs had been delivered as part of the spring booster phase – the most in Wales – and this was followed by a wider round of booster vaccinations delivered in the Autumn.

June 2022: New Urgent Primary Care Centres will help to reduce pressures on GPs and Emergency Department



We announced that three new Urgent Primary Care Centres (UPCC) would be located across Gwynedd and Anglesey to help reduce pressures on GPs and Ysbyty Gwynedd's Emergency Department.

The Health Board was successful in obtaining Welsh Government funding to provide the service that will replicate the UPCC already established in Wrexham and Flintshire.

The initiative delivered three primary care centres at Ysbyty Alltwen, Ysbyty Penrhos Stanley and within the outpatients department at Ysbyty Gwynedd.

The project targeted on the day urgent primary care presentations, creating capacity to support GP surgeries and reducing unnecessary Emergency Department attendances.

July 2022: Pioneering Hepatitis C project helps more vulnerable people get tested and treated

In July we announced that an award-winning outreach project which has helped dozens of the most vulnerable people in North Wales get treated for Hepatitis C would be rolled out in Bangor.



The team behind the health board's Rapid Test and Treat programme said their approach had already helped marginalised communities in Wrexham and Rhyl get faster access to potentially life-saving medicines.

Their pioneering new approach – the first of its kind in Wales – has made getting tested easier and faster for homeless and other disadvantaged people.

August 2022: Patients to benefit from Wrexham Maelor Hospital expanding into technology park



Patients of Wrexham Maelor Hospital will benefit from a new dedicated outpatients building thanks to the purchase of Plas Gororau, based at Wrexham Technology Park.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has bought the building, with funding support from the Welsh Government, to move outpatient services and expand the Emergency Department and clinical areas within the main hospital site.

Some outpatient services that are currently in the main hospital will move into the Ty Derbyn building, which is within the hospital grounds, and services currently located in Ty Derbyn, that do not need an acute base, will be moved into Plas Gororau.

September 2022: First patients undergo robotic assisted surgery in Wales under innovative national programme

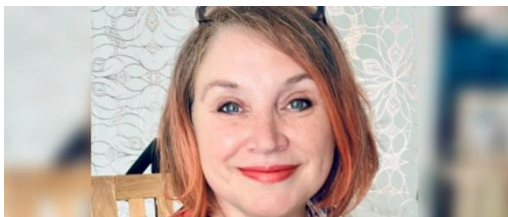
State-of-the-art surgical robots are now helping to treat colorectal and gynaecological cancer patients in Wales as part of the new National Robotic Assisted Surgery Programme.



The National Robotic Assisted Surgery Programme was introduced by the Welsh Government to improve outcomes for cancer patients by increasing the number of patients across Wales who have access to less-invasive, minimal access surgery (MAS). MAS offers well-recognised benefits to the patients, when compared to open surgery, including reduced pain, scarring and recovery time.

The first robotic cases were carried out within Gynaecology at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in earlier in September.

October 2022: "Chemo fatigue is so debilitating - but a new clinic has helped me plan things better"



Patients struggling with one of the least discussed side effects of cancer diagnosis and treatment can refer themselves to a vital service.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Macmillan are tackling Cancer Related Fatigue (CRF) head on as part of a much-needed programme.

As many as nine out of 10 people complain of tiredness or fatigue at some point during their cancer treatment journey.

November 2022: New Dental Academy aims to tackle North Wales' chronic shortage of NHS dentists

A new dental practice has opened its doors in Bangor, completing the first stage of an ambitious plan to help tackle a chronic shortage of NHS dentists across North Wales.

As well as providing much needed NHS dental services to thousands of local patients each year, the exciting new venture on the city's High Street will soon play a leading role in training dental professionals across the region.



Located in the spacious Ty Glyder building, which has undergone an £1.6m refurbishment, the Bangor Dental Academy forms part of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's ambitious efforts to attract, train and retain more dental professionals, in response to a UK wide shortage.

December 2022: New App to offer pregnant women reliable nutrition and physical activity advice and support



A first of its kind mobile App has been launched to help support pregnant women with information from NHS professionals that they can rely on.

The App called Foodwise in Pregnancy, includes six sections to work through at your own pace with recipes, shopping tips and a meal planner, as well as step-by-step exercises ideal for pregnancy. The App also allows people to set goals throughout their pregnancy, record food and exercise activity, and includes interactive games, quizzes, and tools.

Public Health Dietitian Andrea Basu and dietetic colleagues from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) have been working with Nutrition Skills for Life, which is an organisation made up of dietitians and nutritionists from Health Boards across Wales, to help plan, develop and review content for the App.

January 2023: Record number of people supported at pharmacies and GP surgeries, with health services at 'breaking point'

New figures revealed the critical role that pharmacies and GP Practices have played in supporting the NHS during the busiest period in its history. With the health service experiencing record demand at that time, thousands of people across North Wales turned to their local pharmacy to access care - often for the first time.



Meanwhile, GP Practices, which were already providing more patient consultations than ever before, also reported a significant additional spike in demand.

Community pharmacies in North Wales reported a 345 per cent increase in the number of people seeking emergency medicines during December 2022, compared to the same period in 2021, with 3,229 consultations carried out. Consultations under the community pharmacy Common Ailments Service also increased by 177 per cent during the same period, with 6,278 benefitting from the scheme, which offers free advice and treatment for common ailments that cannot be managed by self-care, avoiding the need for a GP appointment

February 2023: Public invited to have their say on plans for 'world class' Denbighshire mental health unit



Plans for a 'world class' inpatient mental health unit and multi-storey car park at Glan Clwyd Hospital went on display to the public.

People were invited to share their feedback on the Health Board's plans for the new 63-bed unit and multi-storey car park ahead of a full planning application being submitted to Denbighshire County Council.

The new unit, which could cost up to £84.5m, will replace the hospital's Ablett Unit and the older people's mental health inpatient facility at Bryn Hesketh, Colwyn Bay.

The plans were developed following comprehensive engagement with patients, carers, staff, partner organisations and the wider public.

March 2023: 'They've helped me learn to walk and talk again': New stroke rehab centre opens in Llandudno

A new stroke rehabilitation centre opened in Llandudno General Hospital to ensure patients have the best chance of a good recovery after having a stroke.

One of the first patients in the rehabilitation centre was Ann Ellis, 78 from Bagillt. Ann had a stroke on Christmas Eve and was taken to Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and then transferred to Llandudno three weeks later.



When Ann first arrived she found it difficult to talk, walk and move her right arm, but thanks to the support from a full range of multidisciplinary specialist staff including Physiotherapists, Nurses, Doctors, Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists, Ann can now communicate again and is learning to walk with an aid.

Our plan for the future

In March 2022 the Board approved a three-year plan for the period 2022 to 2025 which included actions to comply with the NHS Wales Planning Framework 2022-25. Additionally, our plan identified how the Board would address the Ministerial priorities and measures contained within the Planning Framework which were:



- A Healthier Wales - as the overarching policy context;
- Population health;
- Covid – response;
- NHS recovery;
- Mental Health and emotional wellbeing;
- Supporting the health and care workforce;
- NHS Finance and managing within resources;
- Working alongside Social Care.

This plan was not able to be formally approved by Welsh Government because of a number of challenges in the delivery of health care and therefore the Board worked to deliver year one of this plan.

In July 2022, the Chief Executive received confirmation, from the Director General Health and Social Services / NHS Wales Chief Executive, of the accountability conditions which the Health Board was expected to deliver against, and which formed the basis of ongoing review and accountability meetings during the year. The conditions included the following areas:

- The “five ways of working” sustainable development principle
- Clinical strategy and addressing clinical risks
- Planned care
- Primary care
- Urgent & Emergency Care
- Workforce
- Climate change
- Financial Impacts

In addition, further considerations were raised in respect of mental health and dementia, neurodevelopmental services, digital development and responding to the cost-of-living crisis.

Our plan recognised the recovery programmes, which were developed as we moved away from the Covid-19 pandemic to a position where Covid-19 is endemic within our population. This work required strong partnership working to support vulnerable communities and protect the health and wellbeing of the population to support the principles of ‘A Healthier Wales’.



We continued our work towards improving how we work to the sustainable development principle in our everyday business, to meet the spirit and the intent of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Act sets out duties for the Health Board with the other public sector bodies in Wales to contribute towards achieving seven national well-being goals, to broaden our outlook and to think longer term in doing so. During 2022/23 we worked with partners to refresh the local well-being plans which set out our shared aims in this area.

The Health Board continues to work on strengthening its population health focus, working in partnership with a range of organisations across north Wales. During 2022/23 we worked with partners to respond to the findings of the updated regional population health needs assessment by developing a regional area plan which supports our planning activity alongside colleagues on the Regional Partnership Board. We remain committed to tackling inequalities and our 'Well North Wales' programme continues to provide a focus for this work within the Health Board. We also work with national partners to ensure delivery of a range of national programmes such as screening, vaccination, and child health at the local level.



As well as improving health and delivering clinical and care services, the Health Board has a wider public sector duty to support national policy, for example in respect of matters such as promoting equality and human rights, the environment, sustainable development, the Welsh Language and in moving forward socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

To achieve our goals, we work closely with partner organisations such as local authorities and the voluntary sector, to discuss and address health inequalities, promote community engagement and maximise joint working opportunities. The bodies include:



- County Voluntary Services Councils and third sector partners;
- Local Authorities (Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham);
- Mid Wales Joint Committee;
- Neighbouring NHS bodies in England and Wales;
- North Wales Community Health Council (from 1st April 2023 superseded by Llais);
- Public Health Wales;
- Public Service Boards / Regional Partnership Board;
- Regional Leadership Board;
- Regional Safer Communities Partnership;
- Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust;
- Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee.

