

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
Confirmed Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in Public on 29 July 2026
at Queens Market, Rhyl

Board Members present	
Name	Title
Dyfed Edwards	Chair
Tehmeena Ajmal	Chief Operating Officer
Clare Budden	Independent Member
Russell Caldicott	Executive Director of Finance
Debbie Eyitayo	Executive Director of People and Organisational Development
Urtha Felda	Independent Member
Dyfed Jones	Independent Member
Paul Lambert	Independent Member
Chris Lothian-Field	Independent Member
Jane Moore	Executive Director of Public Health
Billy Nichols	Independent Member
Teresa Owen	Executive Director of Allied Health Professionals and Health Science
Carol Shillabeer	Chief Executive
Paolo Tardivel	Interim Executive Director of Transformation and Strategic Planning
Caroline Turner	Independent Member
Rhian Watcyn Jones	Independent Member
Gareth Williams	Vice Chair
In Attendance	
Laura Jones	Corporate Governance Manager
Phylis Makurunje	Aspiring Board Member
Justine Parry	Acting Director of Digital, Data and Technology
Philippa Peake-Jones	Head of Corporate Governance
Helen Stevens-Jones	Director of Partnerships, Engagement and Communications
Pam Wenger	Director of Corporate Governance

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence The Chair welcomed Board Members, members of the public and those viewing online to the meeting. It was noted that the Annual General Meeting provides an opportunity for members of the public to engage with colleagues and visit the stalls provided to showcase the health and wellbeing services provided by the Health Board. Apologies were received for Clara Day, Mike Larvin and Angela Wood.
Declarations of Interest Relating to the Agenda No declarations of interest were raised.

Annual Report 2025-2026: Year in Review - Presentation of the Annual Report including the Annual Governance Statement

The Chief Executive presented the Annual Report and highlighted:

- The importance of holding events at the heart of local communities to provide an overview of the Health Board's work during the previous year and the beginning of the current year noting that the Annual Report provides a brief snapshot of this important work.
- As the largest Health Board in Wales, the Chief Executive welcomed the opportunity to thank all colleagues across the organisation for their continued efforts in delivering services every day, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year recognising the remarkable work undertaken by staff.
- Thanks were extended to Board Members, Executive colleagues, senior leaders and managers for their ongoing support and leadership, recognising their role at the forefront of responding to the challenges faced by the Health Board.
- The Health Board remain committed to developing local communities noting that four strategic intent statements have been agreed this year, with a clear focus on primary and community care and creating a modern, people centred healthcare system to broaden the healthcare offer available across communities.
- There is a need to strengthen working relationships with all partners including the voluntary sector, North Wales Police, Fire and Rescue services, further and higher education and the Prison service.
- There continue to be a number of key challenges with considerable public concern regarding timely access to treatment and waiting times within Urgent and Emergency Care. The Health Board will continue to ensure that data regarding performance in these areas is shared openly.
- The Health Board also faces significant challenges in maintaining a large and ageing estate, whilst also ensuring that NHS services keep pace with emerging technology, including artificial intelligence.
- Effective management of the Health Board's finances remains a key priority, recognising the progress made and the significant responsibility associated with the appropriate use of £2.5bn of public funding.
- There is also a need for a sustained focus on the long-term sustainability of services.
- A significant amount of work has been undertaken over the last year to reduce waiting lists and waiting times referring to the figures highlighted within the presentation and confirming that the Health Board is now meeting the Welsh Government de-escalation standards whilst continuing to work towards eliminating these waits entirely.
- There has been a substantial reduction in the number of people waiting longer than 12 months for their first outpatient appointment and thanks were extended to all colleagues involved, with work now focused on sustaining this progress and continuing to move forward.
- A new Master of Pharmacy Programme has been launched at the North Wales Medical School which will help to build further pharmacy provision in North Wales along with continued investment within dentistry and optometry services.
- Strategic planning arrangements have been significantly strengthened with the aim of delivering a Ten-Year Strategy and a Clinical Services Plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of North Wales.
- Audit Wales have highlighted improved governance arrangements and progress on building a firm foundation, recognising the importance of ensuring the effective operation of the Health Board.

- There is continued investment in new facilities with the North Wales Surgical Hub at Llandudno Hospital moving closer to completion and plans being announced for the redevelopment of the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Rhyl.
- Looking forward, the focus will be on building on the progress made over the past year, improving access, reducing waiting times, enhancing service quality and reducing avoidable harm.
- Workforce, leadership and organisational culture remain key priorities, with more than 200 colleagues participating in the Culture Change Leaders programme. While further progress is required, there is a clear commitment to working with staff to build an organisation where colleagues feel valued and supported.

Annual Quality Report

The Executive Director of Allied Health Professionals & Health Sciences presented the Annual Quality Report and highlighted:

- Quality is the responsibility of all staff and remains a key priority for the Health Board.
- The Annual Report is a crucial document within healthcare and will be presented to the Board in September 2026.
- During 2025/26 the overall focus has been on strengthening quality, safety, governance and organisational learning across all areas whilst the Health Board continues to operate within Special Measures.
- A major risk for the organisation is providing timely patient access to safe and effective care noting that there has been progress in this area including significant reductions in long waits, improved Mental Health access for assessment and treatment of adults and children and enhanced digital capacity with the introduction of new electronic systems.
- There have been some improvements in quality governance including timely responses to complaints, the introduction of the Quality Management System and reducing the occurrence of Never Events.
- Going forward there will be a clear focus on plans to reduce overcrowding in Emergency Departments, discharging patients in a more timely manner and ensuring that all parts of the system are appropriately aligned, alongside external partners, around a shared vision of what needs to be achieved.
- There will also be continued focus on improving performance in urgent suspected cancer pathways, the Community by Design programme to expand care for patients closer to home and embedding the patient and service user voice into improving service delivery for the future.

Audited Annual Accounts Submission 2025-2026 and Auditor Opinion

The Executive Director of Finance presented the Annual Accounts and highlighted:

- The performance requirements for the Health Board against its statutory duty including the additional financial targets as highlighted within the presentation.
- The annual accounts were submitted to Audit Wales on 31 May 2026 noting that there was no change to the outturn from the draft accounts to the final audited submission.
- The Auditor General signed off the accounts on 30 June 2026 issuing a “true and fair” audit opinion on the 2025-26 financial statements.
- Thanks were extended to all colleagues involved for their hard work to meet the deadline requirements.

- The regularity opinion was qualified as expenditure exceeded the resource limit authorised in the three-year period to 2025-26 noting that the Health Board did not achieve a break-even position.
- The Health Board did not achieve a balanced three-year Integrated Medium-Term Plan and will therefore operate under a One-Year Plan.
- Information was provided within the presentation in relation to performance against financial targets, revenue and capital expenditure and invoices paid within 30 days.
- It was reported that the Health Board submitted draft and final accounts to Welsh Government, reporting a £17.3m deficit.
- In relation to 2026-27, the Health Board have submitted a £43m deficit plan, including a £46m savings target. Achieving a 'stretch' savings target of an additional £17m would secure a £28m allocation to mitigate the anticipated additional costs of the Welsh Risk Pool and return the Health Board to financial balance.

Presentations provided by Colleagues

Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) Project Phase 1

Steph O'Donnell, Programme Director and Jade Parry, Construction Project Manager presented the item highlighting:

- A scope has now been agreed to move forward this long-awaited project.
- The strategic investment objectives of bringing services into the building will include improving the site, delivering significant benefits for the local community and increasing the range of sustainable service provision to provide better outcomes for patients and move care closer to home.
- The Phase 1 scope was highlighted within the presentation noting the range of services that will be available within the Royal Alexandra Hospital site.
- There will be a number of benefits including investment in health and wellbeing, development of integrated services, reduced pressure at Ysbyty Glan Clywd Emergency Department and increased economic activity.
- The team are currently on site to commence work on the build noting that some services will be relocated while the construction takes place.
- The timescales were highlighted within the presentation with the aim of completing construction around September 2027 and admitting the first patients by November / December 2027.

Electronic Prescribing and Medications Administration (ePMA)

Jane Brady, Chief Nursing Information Officer and Kate Davies, Lead Nurse Informatics presented the item highlighting:

- The Electronic Prescribing and Medications Administration (ePMA) system has transformed the way in which medicines are prescribed.
- The project has been completed with input from colleagues from a wide range of teams including Nursing, Pharmacy, Medicine and the operational teams.
- A rapid implementation was successfully delivered at scale noting that the system was initially piloted to identify any lessons learned to inform the wider rollout and support continuous improvement across subsequent implementations.
- Strong collaborative working has enabled ongoing feedback to be gathered, with teams sharing learning and user insights throughout the process to enable the teams to deliver the programme whilst also focusing on patient safety.

- The programme has now moved into the optimisation phase, with continued engagement to gather staff feedback and identify opportunities for improvement. Ongoing site visits and quarterly BetsiNet newsletters support user engagement, while targeted assistance is provided where required. Focus remains on ensuring the system is used safely and effectively, alongside planning for future enhancements and upgrades.
- The programme is beginning to deliver tangible benefits, including improved sustainability, enhanced staff engagement, and strengthened antimicrobial stewardship through more effective prescribing practices. There are also improvements in safer patient care, stronger clinical governance, and a more secure medication management process.
- Going forward, the focus will be on optimisation and continuous improvement, including embedding best practice, and further expanding system benefits. Ongoing developments will be delivered in partnership with colleagues and teams, maintaining a clinically led approach with patient safety at its core.
- The significant contribution of all staff involved was gratefully acknowledged.

The Chair noted that the Annual General Meeting provides an opportunity for staff to showcase their work, share the developments taking place and highlight the range of initiatives being undertaken to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of North Wales.

Questions and Answers to the Health Board

The Chair noted that a number of questions have been raised by members of the public and the questions and answers will be available on the website following the meeting.

The Chair responded to a number of the questions raised in relation to Tywyn Community Hospital highlighting:

- There continues to be significant public interest in the future of Tywyn Community Hospital noting that the level of interest reflects the importance of considering the long-term health and care needs and service provision requirements of the local population within the Tywyn area.
- The Board will consider the next steps at the Health Board meeting taking place on 30 July 2026 and will make a decision on the way forward.
- This follows a comprehensive programme of engagement events, including meetings with community groups and community councils. The views and feedback received will help inform the Board's discussions and shape future plans for services in the area.
- Whilst Tywyn Hospital has not closed, a ward has not been operating as previously due to staffing challenges, and it is important that the terminology used accurately reflects this position.
- The concerns being expressed by local communities have been recognised, which extends beyond the future of the hospital itself. It was noted that residents in rural areas can feel that services are being reduced or overlooked, and that these perceptions will be carefully considered as part of the wider discussion.
- The Board's discussion will need to focus on the services required to meet the future needs of the population. The issues under consideration extend beyond a single ward or hospital and reflect wider changes in population needs, workforce availability, and the ongoing challenges associated with recruiting to a range of healthcare roles.
- Addressing these challenges may require a collaborative approach with partners including local authorities and Welsh Government working together to consider the future model of service provision.

- It is important to use accurate and sensitive language throughout the discussions, recognising the strength of feeling within local communities, emphasising that differing views should be expressed and considered respectfully.

The Chair responded to a number of additional questions raised highlighted:

- A question has been raised in relation to utilising community hospitals and it was noted that the Community by Design programme will provide opportunities in this area and the ambition of the Health Board is to move toward community led services noting that constructive discussions are taking place in this area of work.
- In relation to making contact with the Chair and Chief Executive, it was confirmed that the Chair and Chief Executive are happy to meet concerned members of the public while highlighting that processes and guidelines in place need to be adhered to.
- Mr Milne raised a matter regarding a meeting with the Chair and Chief Executive. The Chair confirmed that the Chair and Chief Executive welcomed opportunities to meet with members of the public to hear about their experiences of Health Board services and to identify learning and opportunities for improvement. The Chair clarified that such meetings were not intended to revisit matters that had previously been considered and concluded, or to discuss individual members of staff or operational matters. These matters would continue to be managed through the Health Board's established policies, procedures and governance arrangements. The Chair emphasised that the Health Board welcomed constructive feedback and remained committed to listening to and learning from the experiences of patients, service users and members of the public.
- A question has been raised in relation to the recommendations within the Royal College of Psychiatrists report, it was confirmed that the Board continue to oversee and operate in accordance with the recommendations which continue to be addressed.
- A number of questions have also been raised in relation to responding to concerns and it was confirmed that the Health Board have a highly effective team who continue to provide responses to all queries raised.

The floor was opened up to questions and the following was raised:

- What is the future of the Ablett Unit, and in particular what plans are in place to provide appropriate accommodation for the perinatal unit?
- It was confirmed that work is continuing alongside dialogue with Welsh Government and the next Project Board is due to take place in August 2026. The project remains challenging and discussions are ongoing in relation to the building and commencement of the next phase of work. A paper is due to go to the Executive Committee for full discussion before being shared with Board members. In relation to the perinatal unit, the plan is to move the unit into Caledfryn and discussions are taking place with the team.
- The Older Peoples Forum in Tywyn were unable to hear the response from the Chair in relation to the questions raised regarding Tywyn Community Hospital. The Chair thanked the members for travelling to the meeting and confirmed that a recording of the meeting will be available online and a decision will be made at the Health Board meeting being held on 30 July 2026.
- A question was raised around St Davids Hospice in Holyhead being closed at the end of last year and it was queried how this has moved forward and what is the future for these services?
- It was confirmed that the service is provided by St Davids Hospice and not the Health Board noting that the Health Board do work closely with a number of hospices to provide services within local communities. Welsh Government are currently reviewing how hospices are

funded and work is taking place to review whether Anglesey have the required palliative care services available.

Closing Remarks

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all those who had joined the meeting and welcomed the feedback received.