

PWYLLGOR DIGIDOL, DATA AC ARLOESI
DIGITAL, DATA AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	15 January 2026
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	University Partnership Update
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Mark Henwood, Executive Medical Director
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Dr Leighton Phillips, Director of Research, Innovation, and Value

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)
Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

ADRODDIAD SCAA
SBAR REPORT

Sefyllfa / Situation

To provide an update of university partnership activity for assurance.

Cefndir / Background

In order to maintain its 'University Health Board' designation, Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) is required to demonstrate continuous improvement in collaborative working with its university partners. University designation represents a commitment on behalf of HDdUHB to ensure that university activity is demonstrably improving the quality of care, improving patient outcomes, and enhancing the reputation of the Health Board to attract people to work in Wales.

On an annual basis, HDdUHB is required by the Welsh Government to provide evidence of purposeful university partnership activity, with examples of how this is improving services and benefitting our population and to set out our plans for the next 12 months aligning to the Integrated Medium plans. There are three themes against which we are required to report our activity: Research and Development; Innovation; and Workforce, Training, and Education.

Given the importance HDdUHB attaches to university status, partnership activities are reflected in its planning objectives, particularly those relating to research, innovation, and workforce, however, university partnership can be useful to advancing many of the HDdUHB's ambitions, in areas including engineering, building design, law, management, and ecology.

The focus on the university partnership arrangements driven corporately is not to keep track of every area of activity being advanced between universities and the health board; rather, it is to ensure that a limited number of priorities receive the corporate focus and energy they deserve.

As members were advised at the inaugural Digital, Data and Innovation Committee (DDIC) in April 2025, work had commenced to refresh and re-invigorate our university partnership arrangements with our regionally based Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Aberystwyth University;

- Swansea University; and
- University of Wales Trinity St David.

This paper sets out progress made and early plans and priorities with each partner for the next 12 months.

Asesiad / Assessment

The new Research and Innovation Strategic Plan (2025-2030) was published in June 2025 and formally launched at an event at Pentre Awel on 16 October 2025.

The Strategic Plan committed to improving the alignment and reciprocity between current university partners and HDdUHB's research and innovation plans. The Strategic Plan included a commitment to refreshing collaboration agreements with each university partner and developing an improved way of managing bilateral and multilateral partnerships. It also contained a commitment to agree a maximum of three long term research and innovation goals with each university partner, strongly aligned to their plans.

New agreements, in the form of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), are now in place with all regionally based HEIs. The MoUs were signed at Joint Executive Team meetings, led by the Chief Executive of HDdUHB and Vice-Chancellors of the respective HEIs on the following dates:

- 23rd June 2025 – Aberystwyth University.
- 9th July 2025 – Swansea University.
- 12th September – University of Wales Trinity St Davids.

The MoUs are broad in scope, allowing HDdUHB to collaborate with HEIs in a wide range of areas as documented within Appendix 1.

At the Joint Executive Team meetings, achievements were recognised, and discussions took place about potential long-term research and innovation goals. The Director of Research, Innovation and Value has held follow up discussions with all HEIs and the collaborative areas of interest included:

- The Social Model for Health and Wellbeing and supporting community-based research and innovation, including maximising the opportunities associated with existing research studies including the Local Policy and Innovation Partnership.
- Collaboration in support of the National Network for Innovation in Sport and Health (NNISH).
- Maximising the opportunities associated with the Centre for Social Innovation, and its early priorities, which include community health and wellbeing workers and advancing biophilic design principles.
- Deepening partnership activity in respect of AI, optimising its potential benefits, guided by core principles and regulatory frameworks designed to protect patients and maintain trust.
- Working together to strengthen regional approaches to research and innovation, leveraging the translational research capabilities known to exist in West Wales and building on the recent cardiovascular disease project.
- Widening the reach of research and innovation partnership activity into disciplines and faculties of potential relevance to HDdUHB but have received limited exploration to date.

These areas will be further explored and honed with university partners between now and the end of the 2025/26 financial year, with projects and work programmes for delivery during 2026/27.

In addition to this activity, all university partners were brought together for the first time under the leadership of the Medical Directors of HDdUHB and Swansea Bay UHB on 31 October 2025 at Pentre Awel. This meeting served to share the Research and Innovation priorities of both Health Boards and the three university partners collectively and was beneficial to the identification of new collaborative areas and something that all partners wished to continue.

In relation to ongoing monitoring of these activities and routine engagement with the HEIs, the following has been determined:

- The Medical Director of HDdUHB, alongside Executive colleagues, will convene an annual review meeting with each HEI partner to review progress against the long-term goals and in-year priorities. These will be known as annual bilateral university partnership meetings. The first will take place between March – May 2026 and will achieve final agreement of the long-term priority areas with each HEI.
- The annual regional R&I summit, involving all university partners, will be repeated in 2026/27. This will be known as the annual trilateral university partnership meeting.
- The Director of Research, Innovation, and Value will continue to have Bi-lateral meeting with each University partner at a Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean level, focused on project activity, twice a year.
- The Chief Executive has instigated bi-annual meetings with the Vice-Chancellors of each Institution.

A further update on University Partnership activities will be presented to DDIC at the July 2026 meeting.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The DDIC is asked to:

- **TAKE ASSURANCE** from the report on progress in university partnership activities.

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)	
Objectives: (must be completed)	
Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	3.1.16 Seek assurance that the university partnership arrangements are operating effectively and continue to protect the Health Board's 'university' designated status.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	Not Applicable
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality	7. All apply

Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	6. All Apply
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	All Strategic Objectives are applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	All Planning Objectives Apply
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022	9. All HDdUHB Well-being Objectives apply

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Not Applicable
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Not Applicable
Partion / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Digidol, Data ac Arloesi Parties / Committees consulted prior to Digital, Data and Innovation Committee:	Research and Innovation Sub Committee

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	Not Applicable.
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	Project partnerships have the potential to improve care quality. Potential benefits will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Gweithlu: Workforce:	University partnerships offer the potential of joint and honorary posts, which alongside the positive impact of

	research and innovation can support recruitment and retention.
Risg: Risk:	Not Applicable
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	Not Applicable
Enw Da: Reputational:	University partnership activities have the potential to reflect positively on HDdUHB.
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	Not Applicable
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	Not Applicable

Appendix 1 – Potential Areas for Collaboration

Research and Development, with examples including:

Use of specialist facilities

Clinical and non-clinical trial sponsorship Collaborative research projects

Developing and managing an active trial portfolio, spanning health and social care

Knowledge mobilisation, including approaches to ensure research is leading to quantifiable impact Research income capture

Enterprise and Innovation, with examples including:

University, Health Board, and Industry collaborations

New device and technology development

Managing joint innovation assets, through intellectual property and commercialisation Shared services

Consultancy

Innovation income capture, particularly taking advantage of post Brexit opportunities

Workforce, Education, and Training, with examples including:

Managed placement activities in clinical and non-clinical settings Honorary posts

Fellowships and studentships

Managed graduate and undergraduate training opportunities
New educational programme developments
Joint posts
Continuing professional development
Workforce planning and commissioning, linked to national processes, including those overseen by Health Education and Improvement Wales