

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

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	22 April 2025
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	University Partnership Arrangements Update
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Mr 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 arrangements to the Digital, Data and Innovation Committee.

Cefndir / Background

In order to maintain its 'University' 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 through its planning and review mechanisms to provide evidence to the Welsh Government, if requested, of purposeful university partnership activity. This should include examples of how this is improving services and benefitting its population and set out work plans for the next 12 months. There are three themes against which HDdUHB is expected to progress university partnership 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 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.

The People, Organisational Development and Culture Committee (PODCC) were advised on 13 June 2024 of a limited set of strategic priorities that would be advanced with universities based within the HDdUHB region (i.e. Swansea, Aberystwyth, and University of Wales Trinity

St David) for the 2024/25 financial year. These are provided at Appendix 1. A review of progress against each of these commitments concluded at the end of March 2025 and progress is also reported in Appendix 1.

The university partnership arrangements will change for the 2025/26 financial year. Rather than committing to a fresh set of strategic partnership actions for each institution at this point, the assessment section sets out our plans for the coming months and some key changes to how we will manage university partnerships in the context of the forthcoming Research and Innovation Strategy, developments as part of the Strategic People Planning and Education Group, and changes in the HDdUHB's Committee structures.

Asesiad / Assessment

At the end of 2024, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in place with each University partner expired. They were previously aligned to the duration of the last Research and Innovation Strategy (2021-2024), which has also expired. Two developments are taking place, which will influence our work on University Partnerships over the next six months.

Refreshing MoUs and High-Level University Partnership Commitments

Work is underway now to refresh the MoUs with Swansea University, Aberystwyth University, and University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). The MoUs are high level statements of strategic intent, signed by the Chief Executive of HDdUHB and the Vice Chancellors of the three regionally based universities. They contain high level partnership commitments, against which annual planning commitments are then set. The plan is to have all three MoUs developed and signed by July 2025. As part of the signing arrangements, a strategic level discussion between University and HDdUHB Executive Teams is proposed, to provide the mandate for the partnership over the next five years. This will ensure alignment to HDdUHB's New Research and Innovation Strategy (2025-2030) and the work plans of the Strategic People Planning and Education Group.

Evolving University Partnership Governance Arrangements

At the Research and Innovation Sub-Committee on 10 December 2024, members were advised of some changes to how we work with universities to oversee our partnership activities. The changes had resulted from a meeting involving Swansea University, Aberystwyth University, and UWTSD on 6 December 2024. All organisations agreed that:

- Bi-lateral university partner discussions would continue but reduce to an annual meeting to set plans and review progress. These meetings would continue to span research, innovation, learning and teaching. Dates are in the diary to review progress; however, the development of 2025/26 plans have now been superseded by the work to develop new MoUs containing high level strategic objectives;
- One meeting a year would take place where all universities would be brought together to share plans and developments and look for pan institution collaborations. In December 2024, the target date was late Spring 25. However, with the MoU refresh, this is now most likely going to take place in the Autumn. This will be chaired by one of the university partners on a rotational basis. The agenda will be simple, with brief updates from each Institution on the things that are important to them in relation to our partnership. A terms of reference (ToR) for the meeting is being prepared.
- University representation on the Research and Innovation Sub-Committee (R&ISC) would be reduced to one person, and this will rotate on an annual basis, with the

representative seeking the views of other partners. Professor Lloyd at Swansea University kindly agreed to represent for the first 12 months.

- University representation will continue to exist on the Strategic People, Planning and Education Group.

The process of moving to the new arrangements has now commenced.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Digital, Data and Innovation Committee is asked to:

- Receive assurance from the report on progress in university partnership activities and note the plans to refresh MoUs and evolve governance arrangements.

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:	N/A
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	7. All apply
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	4. Learning, improvement and research
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:	N/A
Rhestr Termau: Glossary of Terms:	Within report
Partion / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Digidol, Data ac Arloesi Parties / Committees consulted prior to Digital, Data and Innovation Committee:	University partners / R&ISC

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	N/A
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	N/A
Gweithlu: Workforce:	N/A
Risg: Risk:	N/A
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	N/A
Enw Da: Reputational:	N/A
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	N/A
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	N/A

Appendix 1 – Outline Plans for 24/25, by Institution

1. Swansea University

Commitments for 2024/25	Achievements (reported on 17 March 2025)
Research, Enterprise and Innovation	
<p>Strengthening the clinical research relationship with the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences Group, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalising the current arrangements around the Novel Technologies for Diagnosing Respiratory Disease Study, including planning a successor for when the 	<p>Progress has been made on the Novel Technologies study, including the signing of a collaboration agreement, establishment of a study management group and a potential new pan university research collaboration. There is also the prospect of licensing a discovery to a commercial partner, subject to necessary agreements being in place.</p>

<p>current research protocol ends in 2026; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing clear plans and grant applications linked to research time award holders with established links to the University, starting with stroke and bowel cancer research, widening to other areas as appropriate. 	<p>In respect of research award time holders, Dr Tench continues to advance her stroke research study proposal with IBERS and Dr Munro is developing a proposal linked to women's health.</p>
<p>Developing plans to exploit wider health and healthcare related research in areas of established academic strength and where there is a clear University Health Board interest, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting research outside hospital settings, including primary care; rural health economics and Value Based Health Care; and social innovation, including the recently announced Rural Wales Local Policy and Innovation Partnership. - To identify at least one new and funded (through a competitive grant scheme or commercial investment) project collaboration between the University Health Board's TriTech Institute and the Department of Computer Science at the University. 	<p>The collaboration with the rural health economics team has experienced some system and process challenges but is delivering useful insights in areas including children's epilepsy nursing models, respiratory research, and maximising the economic impact of health expenditure. However, this model is unlikely to continue in the future in view of funding constraints. Good connections have been made with the Rural Wales Local Policy and Innovation Partnership, opening the prospect of collaborative projects over the next period.</p> <p>The Hywel Dda UHB team is not aware of progress in relation to the computational science opportunity, but opportunities exist in the context of the Health Board's new Research and Innovation strategy and good relationships have been developed between both organisations.</p>
<p>Workforce, Education, and Training</p>	
<p>Develop and, if feasible, operationalise a proposal for establishing a flexible staffing pool that would give students the opportunity to take up opportunities working with the University Health Board alongside their studies.</p>	<p>Good progress has been made in relation to established courses, notably nursing. A wider discussion has started around developing a Service Level Agreement, which would afford greater opportunity for Hywel Dda UHB to access support and advice from Aberystwyth University through a 'call off' arrangement. A target of July has been set to get the SLA in place.</p>
<p>Determine whether the University can help overcome the education and training space constraints experienced by the University Health Board at Bronglais General Hospital.</p>	<p>A solution was found and will remain in place until at least November.</p>
<p>In the context of the University Health Board Strategic People Planning and Education Group, hold a pan university workshop to identify current and future workforce training needs where there is an aligned programme development opportunity for the university.</p>	<p>There have been recent changes to the leadership structure of the University, involving the appointment of new personnel. Until recently, advancing this action would therefore have been inappropriate. The conclusion of structural changes means a workshop will now be arranged, coinciding</p>

	with the refresh of the MoU and the Executive level discussion. It should be noted, however, that in some areas (e.g. nursing), long term strategic planning is already happening.
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2. University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Commitments for 2024/25	Achievements (Reported on 31 March)
Research, Enterprise and Innovation	
To develop a model of support for the creation and testing of Social Innovation in the context of the University Health Board's commitment to developing a Social Model for Health and Wellbeing and UWTSD's Civic Mission. This spans several areas, but one additional common interest discussed was the therapeutic benefit of 'Arts in Health';	Good progress made, with a collaboration agreement signed and key staff members and resources in place. An expected acceleration of activities in Q1 2025/26.
To develop the next phase of the TriTech and ATiC collaboration, which has brought significant benefits to both organisations, including exploring the opportunities associated with the Innovation Matrix and Pentre Awel Scheme.	Collaboration with ATiC is redeveloping after a period of change, with new personnel now in place in UWTSD. Discussions are underway about collaboration at the Pentre Awel scheme, linking to a piece of work undertaken by Hywel Dda UHB.
To work with UWTSD to identify whether there is a research development programme that can support the University Health Board's current and future time award holders in developing as investigators, particularly in view of depleted nationally supported researcher development investment.	A recent research development appointment has been made in Hywel dda UHB, which will facilitate greater partnership with UWTSD in respect of researcher development activities. An exploratory discussion with the appointee and UWTSD will be arranged, including exploring the ability to connect to national programmes, and the Health and Care Research Wales faculty.
Workforce, Education, and Training	
To work in partnership with UWTSD and the construction industry to harness opportunities associated with the capital investments made through Healthier Mid and West Wales Programme, in a way that embrace biophilic design principles.	Good progress made, with a workshop convened. However, the work is ultimately on pause, due to a Strategy refresh within Hywel Dda UHB.

Identify further ways of providing support for non-clinical career pathways, including offering bridging courses to support employees to step up and into academic courses.	A connection has been made to the Curriculum Review currently underway at UWTSD, enabling a portfolio of programmes that could address both organisation's priorities.
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3. Aberystwyth University

Commitments for 2024/25	Achievements (Reported on 6 March)
Research, Enterprise and Innovation	
<p>Strengthening the clinical research relationship with the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences Group, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalising the current arrangements around the Novel Technologies for Diagnosing Respiratory Disease Study, including planning a successor for when the current research protocol ends in 2026; and - Establishing clear plans and grant applications linked to research time award holders with established links to the University, starting with stroke and bowel cancer research, widening to other areas as appropriate. 	<p>Progress has been made on the Novel Technologies study, including the signing of a collaboration agreement, establishment of a study management group and a potential new pan university research collaboration. There is also the prospect of licensing a discovery to a commercial partner, subject to necessary agreements being in place.</p> <p>In respect of research award time holders, Dr Tench continues to advance her stroke research study proposal with IBERS and Dr Munro is developing a proposal linked to women's health.</p>
<p>Developing plans to exploit wider health and healthcare related research in areas of established academic strength and where there is a clear University Health Board interest, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting research outside hospital settings, including primary care; rural health economics and Value Based Health Care; and social innovation, including the recently announced Rural Wales Local Policy and Innovation Partnership. - To identify at least one new and funded (through a competitive grant scheme or commercial investment) project collaboration between the University Health Board's TriTech Institute and the Department of Computer Science at the University. 	<p>The collaboration with the rural health economics team has experienced some system and process challenges but is delivering useful insights in areas including children's epilepsy nursing models, respiratory research, and maximising the economic impact of health expenditure. However, this model is unlikely to continue in the future in view of funding constraints. Good connections have been made with the Rural Wales Local Policy and Innovation Partnership, opening the prospect of collaborative projects over the next period.</p> <p>The Hywel Dda UHB team is not aware of progress in relation to the computational science opportunity, but opportunities exist in the context of the Health Board's new Research and Innovation strategy and good relationships have been developed between both organisations.</p>

Workforce, Education, and Training	
Develop and, if feasible, operationalise a proposal for establishing a flexible staffing pool that would give students the opportunity to take up opportunities working with the University Health Board alongside their studies.	Good progress has been made in relation to established courses, notably nursing. A wider discussion has started around developing a Service Level Agreement, which would afford greater opportunity for Hywel Dda UHB to access support and advice from Aberystwyth University through a 'call off' arrangement. A target of July has been set to get the SLA in place.
Determine whether the University can help overcome the education and training space constraints experienced by the University Health Board at Bronglais General Hospital.	A solution has been identified.
In the context of the University Health Board Strategic People Planning and Education Group, hold a pan university workshop to identify current and future workforce training needs where there is an aligned programme development opportunity for the university.	There have been recent changes to the leadership structure of the University, involving the appointment of new personnel. Until recently, advancing this action would therefore have been inappropriate. The conclusion of structural changes means a workshop will now be arranged, coinciding with the refresh of the MoU and the Executive level discussion. It should be noted, however, that in some areas (e.g. nursing), long term strategic planning is already taking place.