



**PWYLLGOR DIWYLLIANT, POBL A DATBLYGU SEFYDLIADOL  
PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

<b>DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:</b>	13 June 2024
<b>TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	University Partnerships Update
<b>CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:</b>	Mr Mark Henwood, Executive Medical Director
<b>SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	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 end of year summary of progress against the University Partnerships Plan for 2023/24 and Outline Plan for 2024/25.

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 advised at the People, Organisational Development and Culture Committee (PODCC) meeting on 19 June, and subsequently updated on 10 October 2023, in 2023/24 we agreed a limited set of strategic priorities with the universities based within our region. Between March

and May 2024, as part of an annual review, we took stock of progress against these priorities and determined the broad areas of focus for 2024/25.

### Asesiad / Assessment

The 2023/24 end of year review and 2024/25 planning meetings took place with:

- Swansea University on 15 March;
- University of Wales Trinity St David on 26 April; and
- Aberystwyth University on 16 May.

At the meeting, the progress against the priorities for 2023/24 were discussed. The progress varied by university and priority area. The key points arising from the meetings are summarised at Appendix 1. Appendix 1 also contains the areas of focus for 2024/25 discussed and agreed at the meeting against each of the domains of university partnership activity. Detailed discussions will now take place to develop a granular plan for each of the prioritised areas. A further update on University Partnership activities will be brought to PODCC in October 2024.

### Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The PODCC is asked to:

- **TAKE ASSURANCE** from the report on progress in university partnership activities and note the priorities for 2024/25.

### **Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)**

#### **Objectives: (must be completed)**

Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	PODCC ToR V6 2.5 To provide assurance that the organisation is discharging its functions and meeting its responsibilities with regard to the research and innovation activity carried out within the Health Board.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	N/A
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	7. All apply
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	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: <a href="#">Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022</a>	9. All HDdUHB Well-being Objectives apply

<b>Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:</b>	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	N/A
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	N/A
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Pobl a Datblygu Sefydliadol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to People, Organisational Development & Culture Committee:	None

<b>Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)</b>	
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 – Progress Against 23/24 University Partnership Priorities and Outline Plans for 24/25, by Institution**

### **1. Swansea University**

#### **1.1 Delivery in 2023/24**

The following provides an overview of progress made against the 2023/24 commitments (*italicised*) with Swansea University, as summarised by representatives of both organisations at a meeting on 15 March.

#### **Research & Development**

*To nominate and build research programmes around a further two honorary appointments and to secure a research grant to support the University's and Health Board's work on Biophilic design.*

One new honorary appointment was made in 2024/25, in the field of medical technology innovation. Work has continued to develop research programmes in respect of previously honoured clinicians. For example, Professor Skiadaresi has advanced her Research for Public and Patient Benefit Study with the Diabetes Research Unit and Professor Cnudde continues to advance his Value Based Health Care research with the School of Management. There has been significant progress in relation to Biophilic Design, with two research funding applications submitted. One of the applications, through the Shared Prosperity Fund, was successful and has resulted in a collaboration with the Botanic Garden of Wales to create spaces for rest and recuperation at the Prince Philip and Glangwili Hospital Sites. Professor Geoff Proffitt is likely to conduct research on the impact of this project.

#### **Innovation**

*To look for additional opportunities to strengthen the relationship between Swansea University, TriTech and the University Health Board, notably in collaboration with the Computer Science department, in respect of Artificial Intelligence (AI). There is already a shared post between the Medical School and TriTech.*

Several discussions have taken place and resulted in co-applications for research funding, with the outcome of some bids still awaited. Both Swansea University and the University Health Board are involved in the Genomic AI project. This project is still in its infancy and further information will be available later this year. The University Health Board has supported one doctoral training student based within the Computational Foundry. Further updates will be provided as the student moves through their programme.

#### **Workforce – Education & Training**

*To maintain a focus on the recently agreed simulation work, identify, and consider how to maximise the shared interest both institutions have in the Pentre Awel scheme and in St David's Park.*

There has been significant progress in respect of simulation over the last year. Swansea University has increased its simulation capacity at the Singleton Campus in Swansea and St David's Park (SDP) in Carmarthen. Swansea University and the University Health Board have created virtual reality (VR) modules, which will now be piloted. Discussions have taken

place between Swansea University and the University Health Board about the functions they intend on located at the Pentre Awel Scheme and both organisations are committed to working together to maximise the value secured from any investments at the scheme. This might include collaboration around 'treat and teach' schemes.

## **1.2 Priorities for 2024/25**

On 15 March, the following priorities were set for this financial year.

### **Research and Development**

The discussion highlighted several areas of research, each warranting further exploration. The areas prioritised for 24/25 were:

- Developing at least two regionally driven research programmes. Two areas where there was thought to be regional strength and the ability to do more through a co-ordinated approach were cancer and ophthalmology research. While there could be other areas, the immediate task would be a focus on these two.
- Public Health Research. The Executive Director for Public Health had several areas to explore with Swansea University, including developing new ways to use data resources and analytical capability within data science to explore: the wider social determinants of health outcomes; factors influencing higher rates of suicide and self-harm; and an early warning system for Accident and Emergency attendances. The task for the next six months would be to scope out each of these areas, before some concentrated work on at least one in the second part of the financial year.
- Developmental support for researchers. It was acknowledged that undertaking research, through a doctoral programme or leading a research project could be a challenging endeavour. The third prioritised area was to create a developmental support for emerging or advancing researchers, pooling expertise and the benefits that arise from successful research and researchers.

### **Innovation**

The areas of innovation collaboration prioritised for 24/25 were:

- Developing the next phase of partnership on cardiovascular disease risk factors and mitigation, building on the work undertaken with Amgen Biotech but also learning from other project activity with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) including Bloom Standard;
- Developing a support structure for Social Innovation in the context of the HDdUHB's strategy. The initial task will be to identify where both organisations can support each other, including learning from the ongoing work on Biophilic Design.
- To conclude the next phase of developmental support for Cansense and determine the next steps.
- To maximise opportunities to collaborate through Swansea Bay City Deal and the Digital Infrastructure project with Vodafone.

### **Learning, Teaching and Workforce**

The areas of learning, teaching, and workforce collaboration prioritised for 24/25 were:

- Identifying opportunities across the wider university and in professions beyond healthcare, including Business Management. This scoping would consider a wider range of educational opportunities, including placements, research opportunities, scope for micro credentials, and intensive learning opportunities.
- Partnering around the Pentre Awel, in recognition that the scheme will be operational within 12-18 months and it provides the opportunity for high quality courses and facilities within Carmarthenshire. A plan to harness the benefits both organisations bring to the scheme will be developed this year.
- To enable some free and strategic thinking about future 'dual professional' roles, acknowledging that our workers of the future might not fit into traditional career pathways. On a related point, Swansea University committed to exploring how to develop non-medical prescribers.
- Partnering around training opportunities at SDP. A plan to harness the benefits both organisations bring to the scheme will be developed this year.

## **2. University of Wales Trinity Saint David**

### **2.1 Delivery in 2023/24**

The following provides an overview of progress made against the 2023/24 commitments (*in italicised*) with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), as summarised by representatives of both organisations at a meeting on 26 April.

#### **Research & Development**

*To develop structured arrangements to facilitate joint organisational support for PhD and Masters Students.*

This takes place on a case-by-case basis and has worked well in 2023/24, with strong links between the University Health Board's Research and Innovation Divisions and academics at the University. As part of developing a new structured arrangement, the Director of Research, Innovation, and Value at the University Health Board has joined the University's Research Committee and the Provost of the University is also a member of the University Health Board's Research and Innovation Committee.

#### **Innovation**

*To design and hold a celebratory event, putting the spotlight on what university partnership has achieved and providing a platform to identify new opportunities.*

The relationship between the Assistive Technologies and Innovation Centre and the TriTech Institute has continued to strengthen. In the Autumn of 2023, both organisations collaborated on the 'Catalyse' conference, celebrating how by coming together the two organisations have provided practical support to developers of new healthcare technologies across the region. However, the relationship between organisations extends far beyond organising events, with several grant applications made, new commercial projects secured, and educational collaborations, including clinical scientist trainee positions and developmental work around a new MSc programme.

#### **Workforce – Education & Training**

*To consider and implement further programmes to widen access to careers in health and care, working with colleges and schools. To maximise opportunities for professional*

*apprenticeships. To explore opportunities for jointly utilising the forthcoming Carmarthen Hub and Pentre Awel Schemes.*

The collaborative education and training work has been exemplary, covering a wide range of opportunities. Perhaps the best example was the Therapy Assistant Practitioner (TAP) Diploma pilot. This pilot was the first of its kind in Wales, as a collaboration between the University Health Board, UWTSD, Agored Cymru and Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW). Twelve participants successfully completed the Diploma programme last year from the disciplines of Neuro TAP service, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Dietetics and Podiatry. Following the successful pilot, the programme is now being offered across Wales via the Welsh Government's Apprenticeship Framework through Coleg Sir Gar. Participants already enrolled onto the programme are from Aneurin Bevan, Cardiff and Vale; Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Powys and Swansea Bay University Health Boards, as well as further students from HDdUHB.

Other educational partnership activity has taken place in fields including digital health, project management, and note taking. The short course provision has been particularly welcomed by the University Health Board. Both the University Health Board and UWTSD are in ongoing discussions about how to work together in respect of their facilities and estate. While the opportunities in respect of education, research, and innovation are clear, developing business cases and plans will take place throughout 2024/25 in the lead up to the schemes opening.

## **2.2 Priorities for 2024/25**

On 26 April, the following priorities were set for this financial year.

### **Research, Development, and Innovation**

The discussion highlighted several areas of research, each warranting further exploration. The areas prioritised for 24/25 were:

- 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';
- To develop the next phase of the TriTech and Assisted Technologies Innovation Centre (ATiC) collaboration, which has brought significant benefits to both organisations, including exploring the opportunities associated with the Innovation Matrix and Pentre Awel Scheme;
- 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.

### **Learning, Teaching and Workforce**

The areas of learning, teaching, and workforce collaboration prioritised for 24/25 were:

- 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 embraces biophilic design principles; and

- 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.

### **3. Aberystwyth University**

#### **3.1 Delivery in 2023/24**

The following provides an overview of progress made against the 2023/24 commitments (in italics) with Aberystwyth University, as summarised by representatives of both organisations at a meeting on 17 May.

#### **Research & Development**

*To turn the findings from the recent research networking events into a clear and actionable plan, with the development of one new area of research endeavour, to be supported through dedicated clinical and academic time.*

A different approach to achieving this objective has ultimately been adopted, helped by a new Pro Vice Chancellor for Research at Aberystwyth joining the Research and Innovation Sub Committee. There is now a fast way of identifying the key individuals from both organisations to develop and enable research proposals. Perhaps the best example has been the development of a joint research programme to support the improvement of care for stroke patients, whereby the lead research nurse from Bronglais General Hospital now spends a day a week working on research proposals at the University. There are several other examples including health economics, biomarkers for respiratory disease, and digital research.

#### **Innovation**

*Develop a challenge-led innovation scheme, working with Aberystwyth Innovation. The scope would need to be identified, and funding secured, but possible areas of focus could be the social model of health or sustainable food systems.*

A proposal for running a challenge-led innovation scheme was developed as a collaboration between Aber Innovation, the University Health Board's TriTech Institute, and the innovation leads from across the Welsh NHS. A funding request to run the scheme was submitted to the Welsh Government but ultimately was not supported. While the scheme not being supported was disappointing, good working relationships have been formed with the University, which is leading to the University Health Board's involvement in other challenge led schemes being led by Aber Innovation.

#### **Workforce, Education & Training**

*To undertake a short and sharp scoping exercise to ensure we are identifying all possible links across the university and professional groups at the Health Board. To identify and, if appropriate, implement programmes that widen access to health and healthcare careers, working closely with colleges and schools.*

Initial scoping work has been undertaken and led to a deepening of the relationship in areas including nursing, human biology, and biomedical sciences. As many of the relationships developed around these areas have now become 'business as usual' the intention moving

forward will be to explore the connections with other subject areas and consider how they too can widen access to health and healthcare careers.

### **3.2 Priorities for 2024/25**

On 17 May, the following priorities were set for this financial year.

#### **Research, Development and Innovation**

The discussion highlighted several areas of research, each warranting further exploration. The areas prioritised for 24/25 were:

- Strengthening the clinical research relationship with the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences Group, to include:
  - formalising the current arrangements around the New 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.
- 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:
  - 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.

#### **Workforce, Education & Training**

The areas prioritised for 24/25 were:

- 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;
- Determine whether the University can help overcome the education and training space constraints experienced by the University Health Board at Bronglais General Hospital; and
- 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.