



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

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	19 May 2026
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Health Board Staff Partnership Forum Update
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Lisa Gostling, Executive Director of Workforce & Organisational Development and Deputy Chief Executive Officer
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Nadia Probert (Unison) – Vice Chair of Staff Partnership Forum

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)

Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

ADRODDIAD SCAA

SBAR REPORT

Sefyllfa / Situation

Hywel Dda University Health Board provides publicly available annual assurance reports to its Board via its People Committee which receives updates from the Health Board Staff Partnership Forum (HBSPF) through appointed representatives.

These reports have been created to provide transparency on HBSPF contributions, including issues raised and include our respective trade union priorities to ensure that issues relevant to the Social Partnership Duty are duly considered.

This summary provides the People, Organisational Development and Culture Committee (PODCC) with assurance and visibility of issues requiring oversight or further action.

Cefndir / Background

The HBSPF is the formal social partnership mechanism between management and trade unions where key stakeholders engage with each other to inform, debate and seek to agree local priorities on workforce and health service issues.

The HBSPF therefore reviews key workforce, operational, and strategic issues, including planning updates, wellbeing objectives, facilities and financial challenges. Feeding into the HBSPF are three local Partnership Forums, one for Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. Each one discusses issues at a local level and escalates matters that they have been unable to resolve at a local level or require escalation on a cross-county or service basis.

The January 2026 meeting took place against a backdrop of severe winter pressures, prolonged system escalation, and significant workforce impacts.

Asesiad / Assessment

The HBSPF last met on 20 January 2026 and was chaired by the Staff Side Vice Chair. The minutes remain unapproved due to the cancellation of the March 2026 HBSPF meeting.

Issues Escalated from Local / County Partnership Forums

The following matters were escalated for discussion or resolution:

Escalation of Unfilled Shifts (Bank / Overtime / Agency)

- Concern raised that, in practice, agency staff were being engaged before substantive staff were offered additional hours.
- Management confirmed the correct escalation sequence (bank → substantive additional hours → overtime → agency) and that deviation should not occur.
- **Action:** Written escalation timeline to be re-circulated; staff side to provide specific examples for investigation.

Band 2 to Band 3 Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) Transition

- Concerns raised about the impact on bank HCSWs currently contracted at Band 2 however working at Band 3 level.
- Management confirmed creation of a Band 3 bank role, conversion of booked shifts where appropriate, and targeted communications to staff.
- Skills validation ongoing; training and Electrocardiograph (ECG) competency requirements reinforced.
- **Action:** Training packages and competency documentation to be reviewed and applied consistently.

Professional Behaviour and Delegation

- Concerns raised about inappropriate comments made by some new Band 3 staff regarding Band 2 colleagues' training capability.
- **Action:** Issue to be raised with nursing leadership to reinforce professional behaviour and safe delegation standards.

Bank Worker Agreement and Sick Pay

- Clarification sought on updated bank worker agreement and sick pay arrangements.
- Management confirmed agreement not yet issued pending All-Wales confirmation; sick pay arrangements remain unchanged.
- **Action:** Staff side invited to submit individual cases for review where concerns persist.

Parking Pressures at Wwithybush Hospital

- Ongoing workforce impact noted.
- Management confirmed availability of 24 interim staff parking spaces at adjacent retail park, with further update to follow.
- **Action:** Detailed update to be provided once arrangements are finalised.

Uniform Consistency (Advanced Clinical Practitioners)

- Concern raised about inconsistent uniform provision across Health Boards and associated professional identity risks.
- **Action:** All-Wales report to be presented at Deputy Directors of Nursing meeting on 19 February 2026.

Role Title Changes – Emergency Nurse Practitioners (Cardigan)

- Query raised regarding change to Urgent Care Practitioner titles.
- Management clarified distinction in role scope and job descriptions.
- **Outcome:** Explanation accepted; no further action.

Occupational Health Access

- Concerns raised about telephone-only consultations.
- Management confirmed availability of Teams or face-to-face appointments.
- **Action:** Audit to be undertaken where staff details are provided.

Adverse Weather Conditions Policy

- Serious staff safety and fairness concerns raised, including pay deductions, unsafe travel expectations, and inconsistent policy activation.
- **Action:** Policy review paused and extended to strengthen activation criteria, management responsibilities, and staff protections.

Supporting Transgender Staff Policy

- Risk identified that policy may not reflect recent legal developments.
- **Action:** Review being expedited; working group established with intention to submit revised policy to the August 2026 PODCC meeting.

Attendance at County Partnership Forums

- Ongoing concern regarding inconsistent management attendance, particularly during winter pressures.
- **Action:** Revised Terms of Reference to be developed and implemented to strengthen accountability.

Carmarthenshire Partnership Forum Co-Chair Arrangements

- Query raised regarding interim arrangements following retirement.
- **Outcome:** Management confirmed arrangements finalised and to be confirmed imminently.

General Practitioner (GP) Appointment Apps

- Variation in usage across practices highlighted.

- **Action:** Practice-level data to be shared as part of forthcoming Freedom of Information response.

N.B – the above list did not include items already on the HBSPF Agenda as any concerns could be raised directly during those discussions.

Main Agenda – Summary of Issues, Discussion and Actions

Planning Updates – Clinical Services Plan (CSP)

- **Issue:** Progress and assurance on CSP decision-making, consultation spend and clinical safety.
- **Discussion:**
 - Extraordinary Board meeting for CSP on 18–19 February, with final decision on 19 February 2026.
 - Consultation costs confirmed within budget, with no financial loss from the contract.
 - Assurance sought regarding alignment with draft All-Wales Stroke Standards; national clinical feedback confirmed models without a traditional Emergency Department can be clinically appropriate if robust pathways and risk mitigations are in place.
 - Staff side emphasised the need to maintain clinical safety, particularly around ambulance conveyance and acute stroke assessment.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Following Board decision staff engagement to continue during implementation phase.

Well-being Objectives Review

- **Issue:** Statutory refresh of Well-being Objectives under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFGA) and Social Partnership legislation.
- **Discussion:**
 - Extensive review undertaken with trade unions and stakeholders since September 2023.
 - Four overarching themes retained; supporting objectives revised to improve clarity, measurability and national alignment.
 - Strong evidence of positive trade union engagement.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Approved for submission to the Strategy & Planning Committee.

Job Evaluation Update

- **Issue:** Capacity, consistency and process improvements within Job Evaluation.
- **Discussion:**
 - High activity levels in 2025, with expanded practitioner training.
 - Process improvements implemented to improve efficiency and practitioner support.
 - Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) clarified as limited to job description structuring only, not banding decisions.

- Concerns raised regarding Welsh-essential criteria and capacity to release practitioners for panels.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Discrepancies in Welsh language criteria to be reviewed.
 - Collaboration with neighbouring Health Boards to be explored to increase capacity.

Organisational Service Development / Current Pressures / Facilities

- **Issue:** Sustained extreme operational pressures and workforce impact.
- **Discussion:**
 - Prolonged Level 5 Business Continuity initiated across acute sites, exacerbated by ambulance handover protocol changes.
 - Unsafe overcrowding, boarding and surge area use acknowledged.
 - First-hand staff accounts highlighted dignity, safety and leadership visibility concerns.
 - Corridor care identified as becoming normalised due to system pressure.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Winter Resilience Incident Control Group established with defined escalation/de-escalation metrics and red lines.
 - Commitment to recalibrate escalation thresholds, improve senior visibility, and strengthen discharge and admission-avoidance pathways.

On-Call Variation – Initial Discussion

- **Issue:** Inconsistent application of on-call arrangements and compensatory rest.
- **Discussion:**
 - Significant variation across departments, with reports of staff fatigue and mixed managerial messages.
 - Staff side stressed urgency, noting issue has been raised for an extended period.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Dedicated Working Group established to review local and All-Wales arrangements and develop clear implementation guidance.

Financial Plan

- **Issue:** In-year financial position and forward risks.
- **Discussion:**
 - Welsh Government funding confirmed for Band 2–3 uplift and Welsh Risk Pool pressures, reducing forecast deficit.
 - Rising sickness levels increasing agency reliance; prescribing pressures noted.
 - Challenging outlook for 2026/27 with limited uplift.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Immediate mitigations required; prescribing and variable pay targeted for review.

Matters from County Partnership Forums

- **Issue:** Partnership effectiveness and workforce concerns.
- **Discussion:**
 - Persistent issues with management attendance at County Forums.
 - Uniform consistency, parking and adverse weather matters noted as already addressed earlier in the meeting.
 - Salary sacrifice constraints clarified as His Majesty Revenue & Customs (HMRC) driven.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Revised Terms of Reference for Partnership Forums to be implemented
 - Training accommodation issues to be followed up and reported back.

Corridor Care

- **Issue:** Patient safety, dignity and professional accountability.
- **Discussion:**
 - Staff side described unacceptable care in non-clinical spaces and associated risks.
 - Regulatory exposure for staff highlighted.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Reinforcement of escalation red lines, including avoidance of overnight corridor boarding except in exceptional circumstances.

Policies

- **Issue:** Status of workforce policies.
- **Discussion:**
 - Most policies approved for onward consideration.
 - Adverse Weather Conditions Policy paused due to concerns.
 - Supporting Transgender Staff Policy expedited due to legal position.
 - Uniform issues to be progressed through All-Wales mechanisms.
 - On-Call Agreement to be addressed via Working Group.

Any Other Business

- **Issue:** Additional workforce and safety updates.
- **Discussion:**
 - Improvements in mental health pathways reducing bed pressures.
 - Flu vaccination uptake noted, with concerns noted about staff behaviours.
 - Violence & Aggression (V&A) Officers recruited across sites.
- **Action / Outcome:**
 - Managers to reinforce organisational values.
 - Outstanding V&A post to be re-advertised.

The next HBSPF meeting was due to take place on 17 March 2026 however was cancelled due to a diary clash for a number of colleagues.

In its place, an informal meeting took place between the Staff Side and Executive Director of W&OD and Assistant Director of People Management. This was a productive meeting, with a broad range of issues informally discussed, including a Questions and Answers session (Q&As) and some actions agreed.

The next meeting of HBSPF will take place on 7 May 2026.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- **NOTE** the Health Board Staff Partnership Forum Update, and
- **TAKE ASSURANCE** that our partnership forums promote the sharing of issues and concerns and working together to achieve appropriate resolution.

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau) Objectives: (must be completed)	
Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	3.1.13 To receive assurance through Sub-Committee Update Reports and other management group reports that risks relating to their areas are being effectively managed across the whole of the Health Board's activities (including for hosted services and through partnerships and Joint Committees as appropriate).
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	Not applicable
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	Not Applicable
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	2. Culture and valuing people
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	2. Develop a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS 5. Offer a diverse range of employment opportunities which support people to fulfill their potential 4. Improve Population Health through prevention and early intervention, supporting people to live happy and healthy lives

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Not applicable
Rhestr Termau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained in body of report
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Pobl a Datblygu Sefydliadol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to People, Organisational Development & Culture Committee:	Not applicable

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	Not applicable
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	Not applicable
Gweithlu: Workforce:	None arising from the report
Risg: Risk:	None arising from the report
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	None arising from the report
Enw Da: Reputational:	None arising from the report
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	None arising from the report
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	None arising from the report