

# New Hospital Site Consultation

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## Key consultation findings

August 2023

Prepared by Opinion Research Services  
for:



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Hywel Dda  
University Health Board



# Introduction

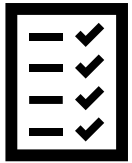
## What is public consultation?



Consultation has been described as a dialogue, based on a genuine and purposeful exchange of views.

Consultation is not a vote or referendum, but does provide an opportunity for the public and stakeholders to give feedback on proposals to be conscientiously taken into account by decision-making bodies alongside all other evidence.

## What does good consultation look like?



The Gunning Principles provide the benchmark for good consultation:

1. Consultations should take place when proposals are still at a formative stage;
2. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposals to allow for intelligent consideration and response;
3. Adequate time should be made available for consideration and response; and
4. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account before a decision is made.

## What is ORS' role?



Opinion Research Services (ORS) is a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research and major statutory consultations, including for the NHS, emergency services and local authorities.

ORS' role is to analyse the outcomes of this dialogue and to give an accurate account of the feedback received during the 12-week public consultation on the proposals and site options.

# Consultation activities and response



# Consultation activities and response



Formal public consultation over a period of 12 weeks: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023



Analysis of consultation feedback undertaken by independent research organisation Opinion Research Services (ORS)



Extensive public, staff, and stakeholder engagement across multiple consultation strands



Consultation questionnaire (open to all)  
- **842** responses in total (including some partial completions)



**730** online (incl. 24 in Welsh)  
Paper and accessible versions of questionnaire - **4** easy-read, **11** young persons, **97** paper



Staff engagement via 15 x drop-in events and meetings (**478** attendees) and **5** x in-depth interviews (undertaken by ORS)



7 x 'representative' deliberative focus groups with **73** residents  
1 in each locality (undertaken by ORS)



12 stakeholder meetings with county, town and community councils, public service boards, Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority, Stakeholder Reference Group, and Ysgol Tregroes (**225** attendees)



17 x public drop-in events (13 face-to-face and 4 online) – **682** attendees  
61 discussions at/visits to community groups and settings - c.**967** consultees  
- 12 drop-in events attended by ORS, other events/meetings only by HDdUHB  
- Summary notes of feedback analysed and reported

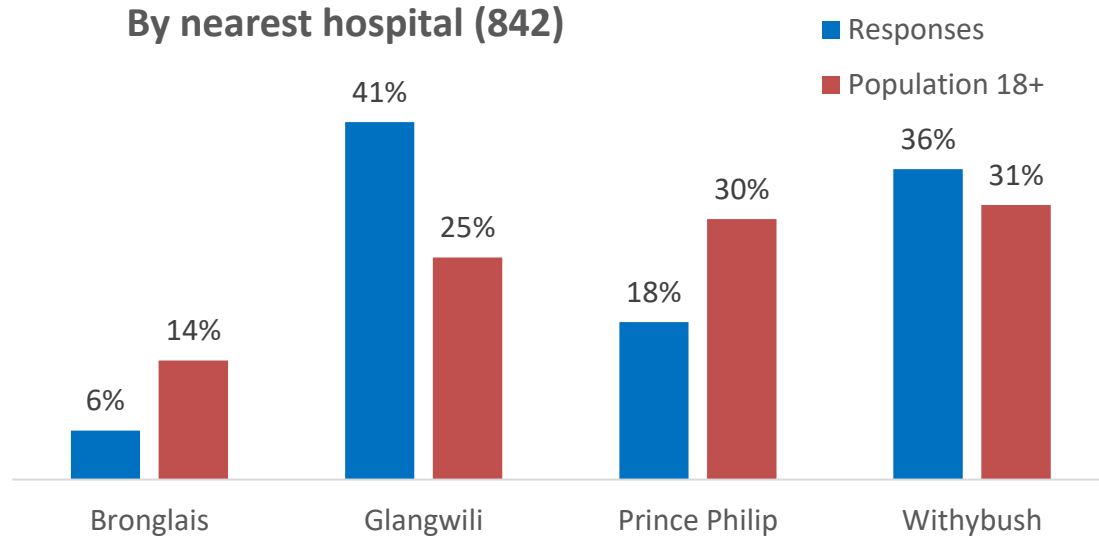


**27** x emails and letters with feedback (6 elected representatives/councils/organisations; 21 residents)

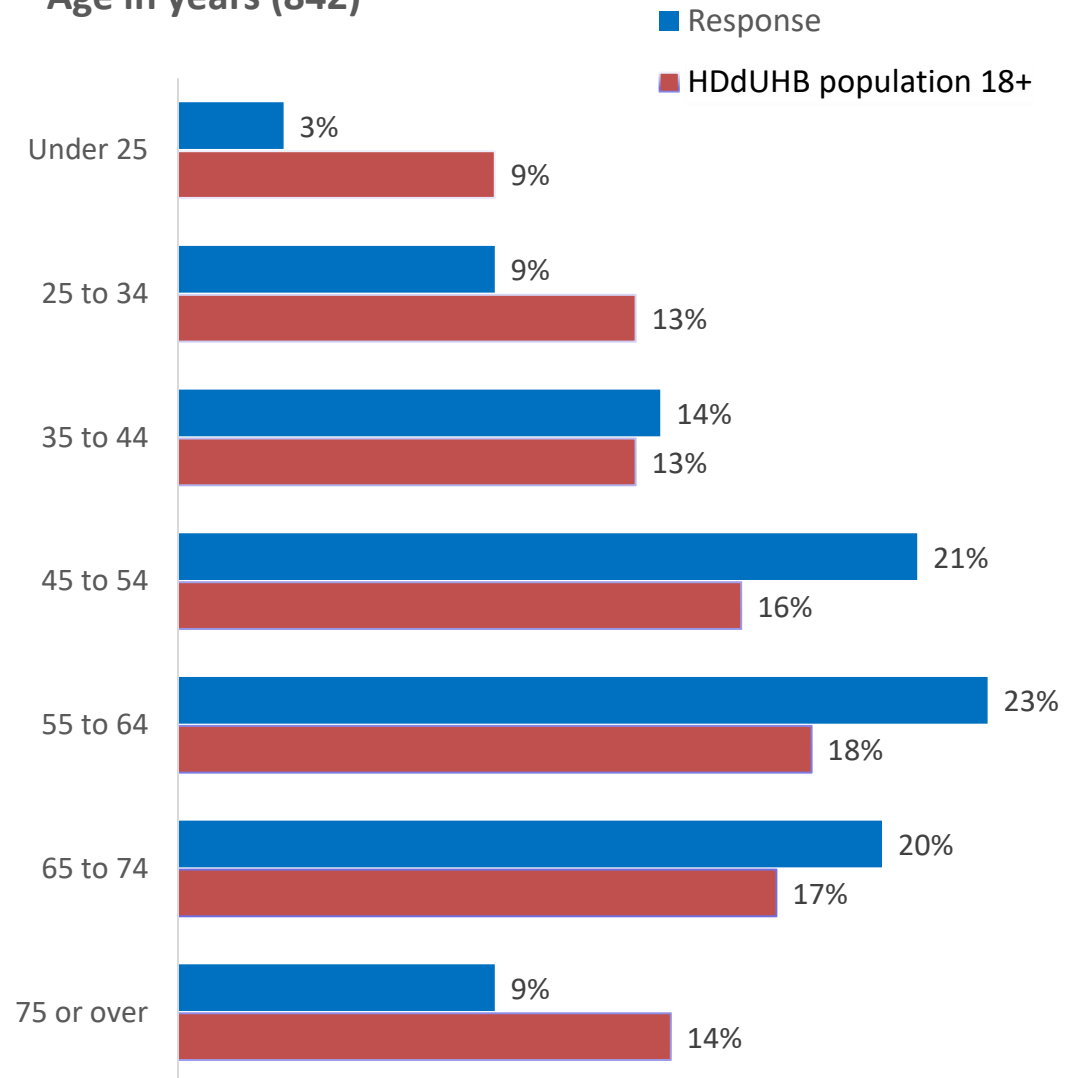
**410** social media comments/replies

# Consultation questionnaire – response data

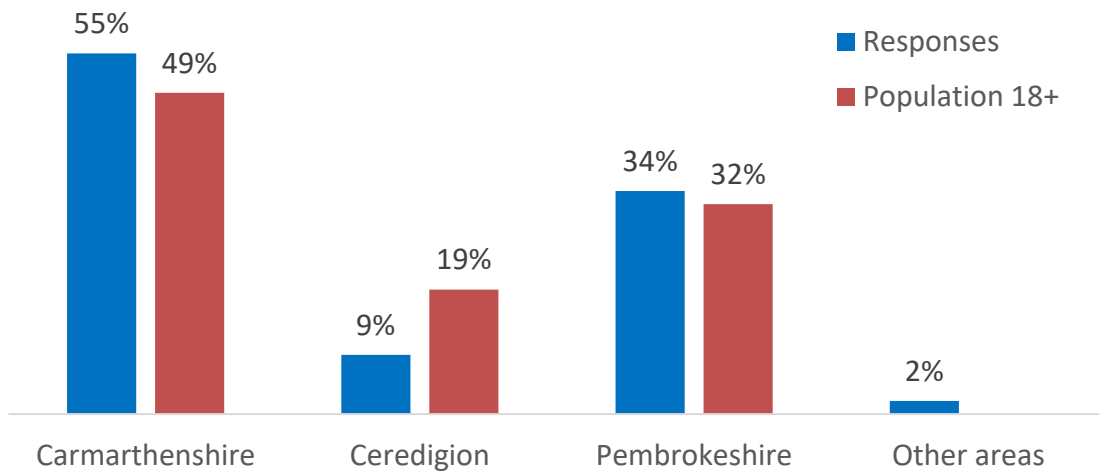
## By nearest hospital (842)



## Age in years (842)

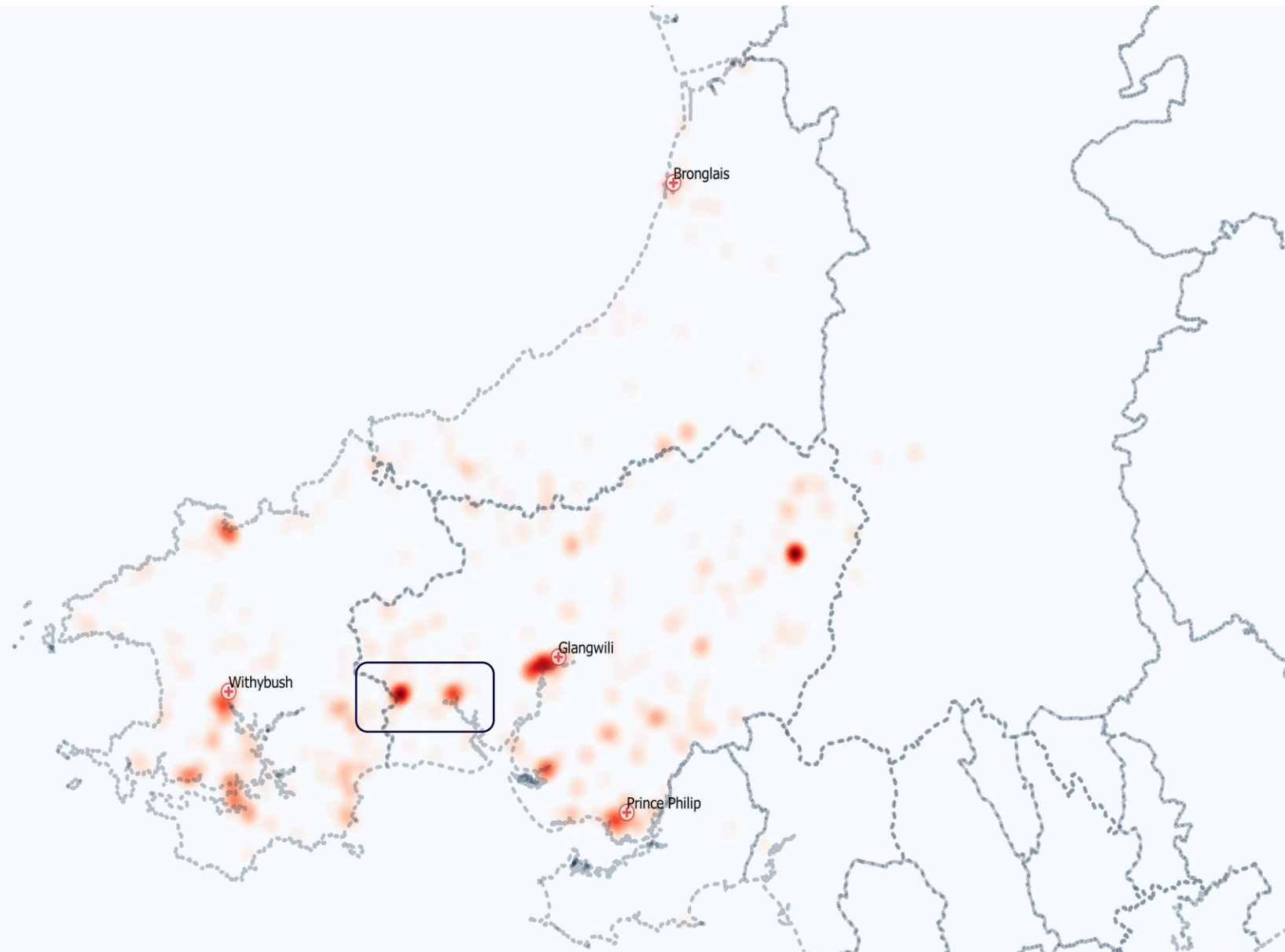


## By local authority (842)



*Not answered and 'Prefer not to say' responses are excluded from these charts*

# Consultation questionnaire - response monitoring (based on 640 postcodes)

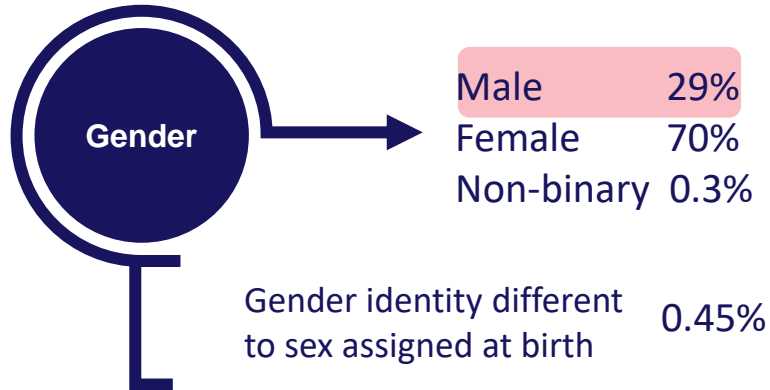


The largest proportion of questionnaire responses are from residents living in Carmarthenshire / nearest Glangwili hospital. This reflects the larger population, but also may be indicative of strong local interest.

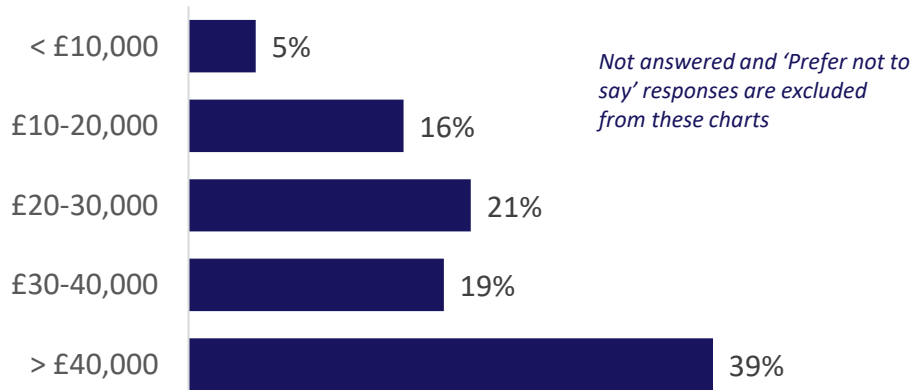


Responses, however, have been received from across the region, indicating that promotional and engagement activities undertaken by HDdUHB are reaching the wider community.

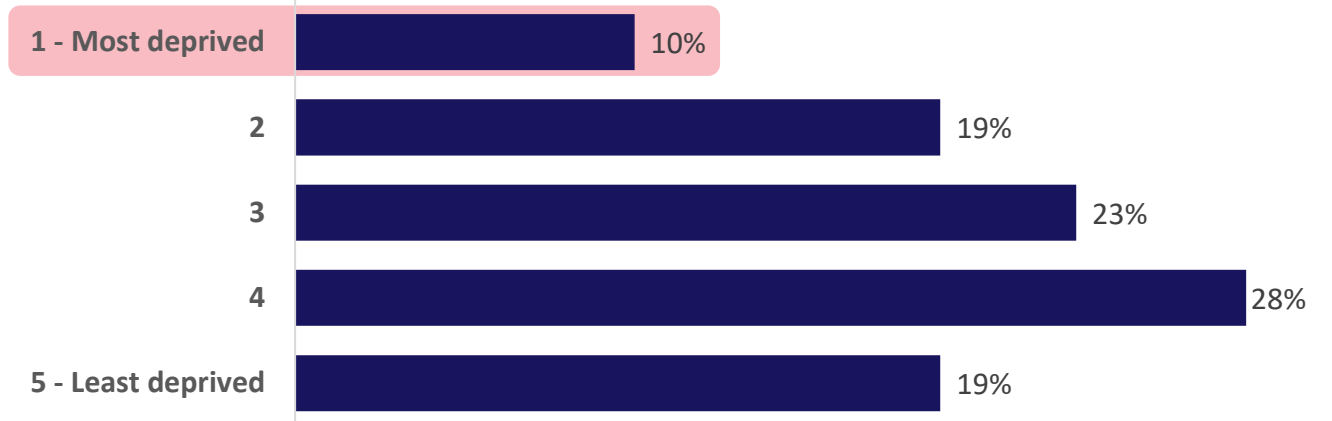
# Consultation questionnaire - equalities monitoring data



Household income (842)



Consultation questionnaire response by deprivation (842)



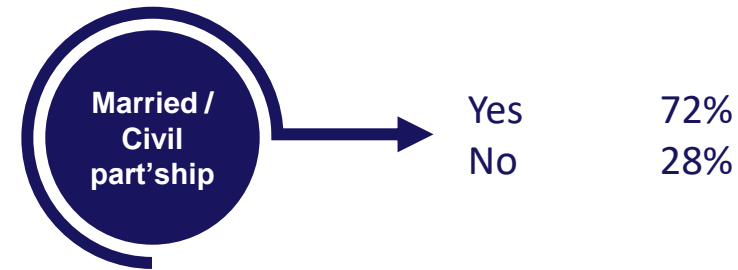
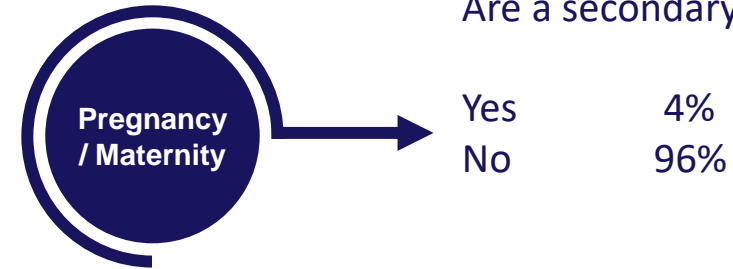
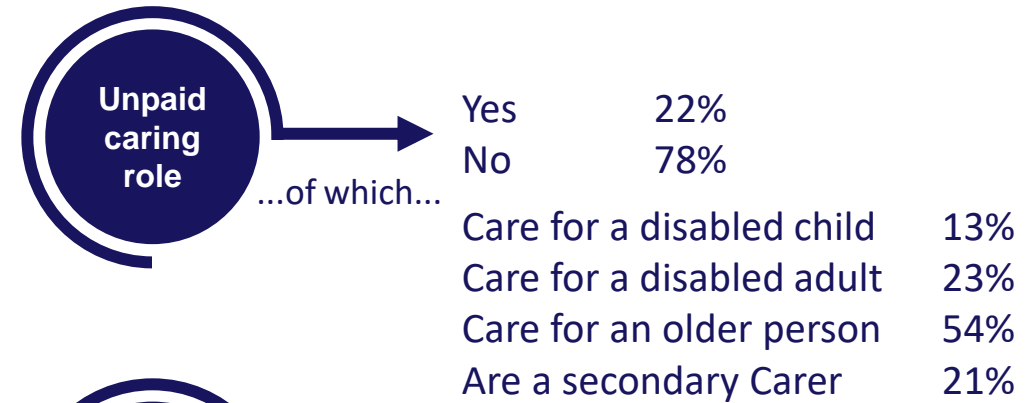
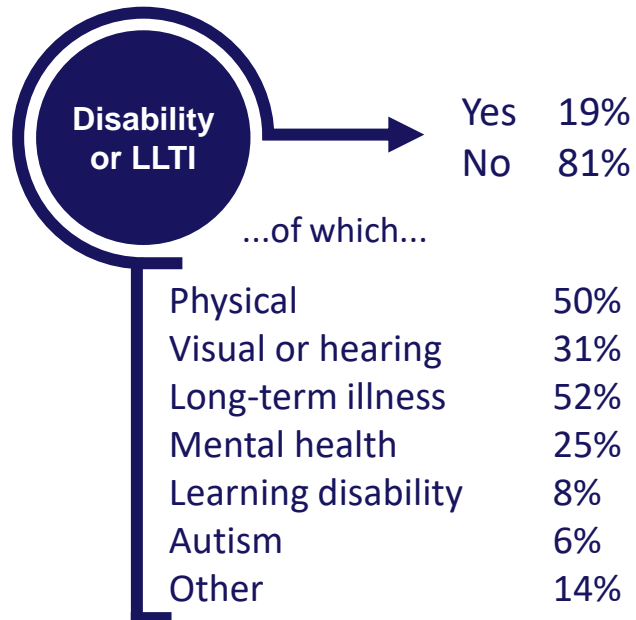
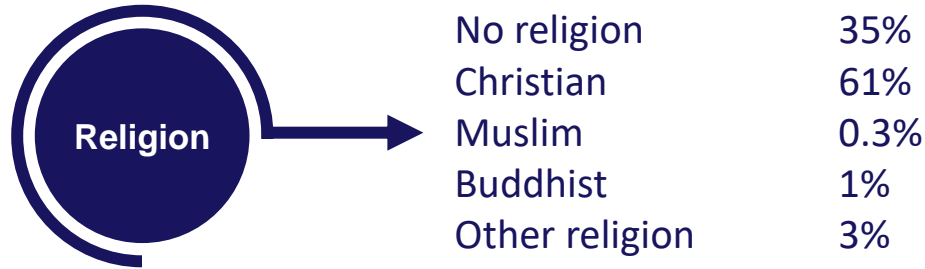
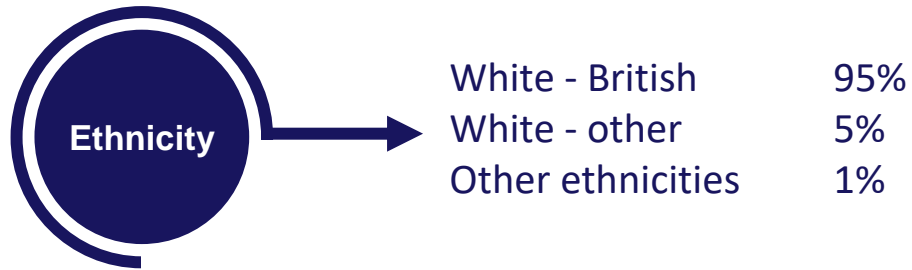
*Not answered and 'Prefer not to say' responses are excluded from these charts*

Open consultation questionnaires typically garner the greatest response from those with a strong interest in local services and the proposals that may affect them. Because of this, certain demographics are sometimes under-represented in the response compared to the affected population, particularly **younger people** and those living in more **deprived areas**.

To ensure that a diverse range of views were heard, additional consultation activities (including focus groups, and a broad range of face-to-face public engagement activities) were undertaken.



# Consultation questionnaire - equalities monitoring data



Not answered and 'Prefer not to say' responses are excluded from these charts





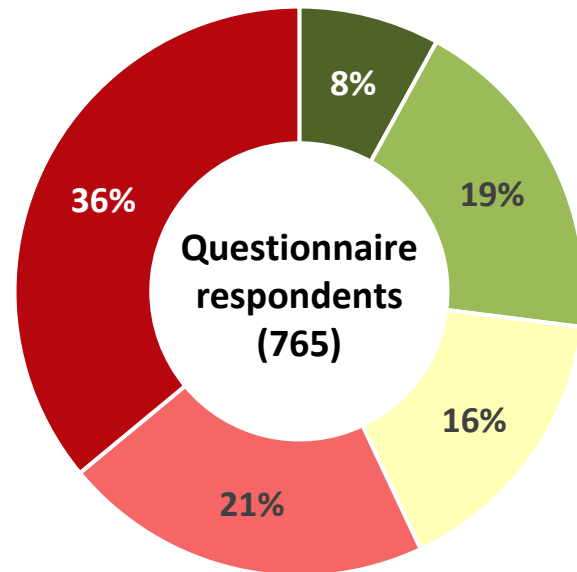
# Views on the proposed location of the new hospital



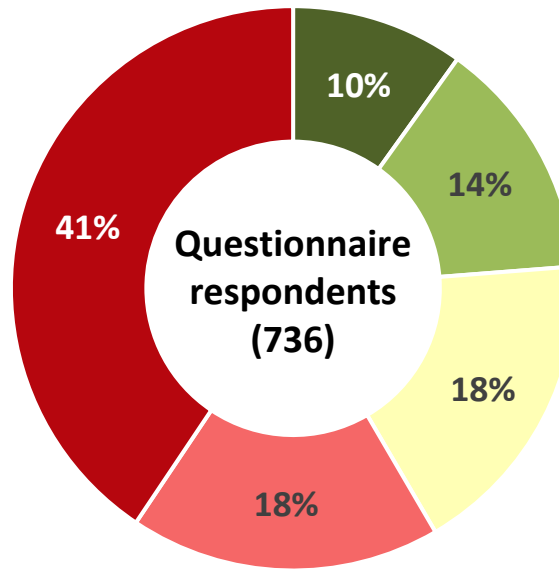
# Is this site a good or poor location for the new hospital? INDIVIDUALS

More respondents rate all sites as poor, but of the sites, *overall* views are more evenly balanced in connection to St Clears. Only 24% of respondents rate **Whitland: Tŷ Newydd** as good, whilst 40%\* rate **St Clears** as good. It is important to note that views differ markedly by respondents geography/nearest current hospital.

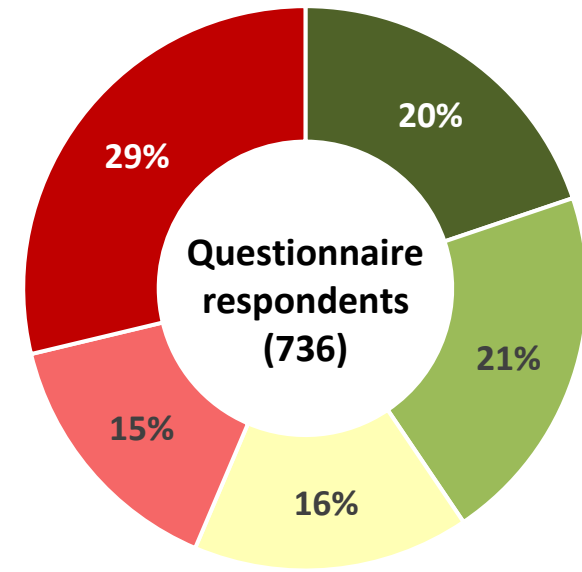
**Whitland: Spring Gardens**  
(formerly site 12)



**Whitland: Tŷ Newydd**  
(formerly site C)



**St Clears**  
(formerly site 17)



- Fairly good or very good location
- Neither a good nor poor location
- Fairly poor or very poor location

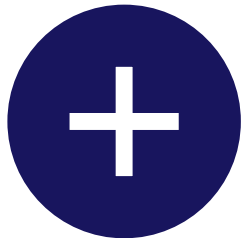
*Questionnaire results include some partial responses  
'Don't know' responses are excluded from these charts  
\*Chart labels are rounded for convenience, and therefore may not sum to exactly 100% or match the accurate grouped results used in the narrative*

# Comparison by nearest hospital

Site	Respondents nearest hospital							
	Bronglais		Prince Philip		Glangwili		Withybush	
1. Whitland: Spring Gardens	13%	56%	7%	77%	26%	56%	42%	46%
2. Whitland: Ty Newydd	13%	53%	8%	75%	21%	58%	38%	49%
3. St Clears	45%	24%	49%	38%	49%	35%	31%	58%

- Fairly good or very good location
- Fairly poor or very poor location

# Views on Whitland: Spring Gardens (formerly site 12)



**Direct access from A40 (road infrastructure needs less upgrading than Ty Newydd)**

*Good that it is close to A40 for people that drive (Mencap)*

**Cheapest option**

**Train station nearby**

**Housing being built nearby**

**Staff accommodation**

**Well located on the 'edge of town'**

**Equidistant between Glangwili and Withybush**

**Potential for offsite renewable energy**

**Flat site**

**Closer to Pembrokeshire**

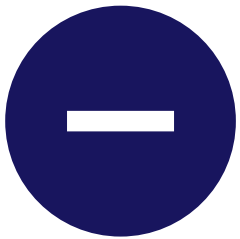
**Would benefit local area**

*It does have the direct access from the A40 and it's the cheapest of the three options" (Focus group participant, North Pembrokeshire)*

*A good choice to build as good for developing town and community (Friday Prayers)*

*Good to have hospital in Whitland to help regenerate the town (Whitland drop-in event attendee)*

# Views on Whitland: Spring Gardens (formerly site 12)



## Access

Poor road infrastructure  
Accidents, road closures, and congestion on A40 (single point of access)

*The A-road takes you through Narberth, which would not be great for emergency transport. Alternatively, the B-roads through Red Roses, well you know what they are like. What considerations will be made if Whitland is chosen? (Pembrokeshire County Council)*  
*\*also applies to Tŷ Newydd*

**Multiple private landowners = potentially costly/complicated sale**

*... Spring Gardens has multiple landowners. That's going to be a problem (Carmarthen drop-in event attendee)*

**Clinical/recruitment risks of siting a hospital further west**

*I would be very concerned about either of the Whitland sites because they could lose their accreditation for neo-natal and paediatric services (Focus group participant, South Ceredigion)*

**Limited room to expand**

**Some flood risk**

**Some → large hospital in Whitland would destroy the character of the town**

*Spring Gardens is limited. Does that mean you have to purchase more land if you want to expand in 10 to 20 years? (St Clears drop-in event attendee)*

# Views on Whitland: Tŷ Newydd (formerly site C)

## Site in public ownership

### Access

Good public transport links  
(closest to train station)

### Largest site with some scope for expansion

Parking, visitor accommodation, amenities  
etc.

Potential for more green space

### Room for onsite renewable energy

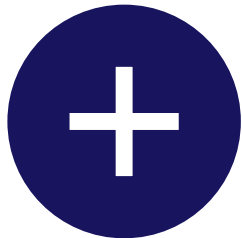
### Closer to Pembrokeshire

*... To consider the other two sites when you have a perfect site in public ownership which can be expanded considerably is a no brainer (Withybush Hospital Medical Committee)*

*Choosing the site with the least distance from a railway station on the West Wales Lines – i.e., Tŷ Newydd (formerly site C) – would make it most accessible in terms of people with mobility difficulties (e.g., disability and pregnancy categories), as well as for people with low incomes (not having a car, combined with less public transport costs from needing to use a bus between the station and hospital) and those with small children... [Railfuture Cymru-Wales]*

*Because of the scope for expansion, it looks like the most positive site out of the three because you just don't know how advancements and technology is going to take us in the future. They have changed so much over the last 50 or so years (Staff member, Glangwili Hospital)*

*... We [...] feel that any hospitals being built from scratch should be investing in technology which enables them to be at least carbon neutral going forward. This site is flagged as the only site with potential for on-site renewable energy [Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth]*



# Views on Whitland: Tŷ Newydd (formerly site C)

## Access

Lack of direct access

New link road needed → expensive/disruptive

*For Tŷ Newydd site, there may be extra infrastructure needs to build a new road to access the site – so not [great] with green agenda. Other sites have existing road infrastructure (Staff member, Aberaeron Integrated Care Centre)*

## Some potential for flooding

May need elevated road access/car parking/walkways

*The cost of a new road will likely increase by a lot as every other road/bridge scheme around the country seems to. It is already much more expensive than the other two sites (Mencap)*

## Clinical and recruitment risks of siting a hospital further west

*Both Whitland sites are at risk of not catering for enough patients (Focus group participant, North Pembrokeshire)*

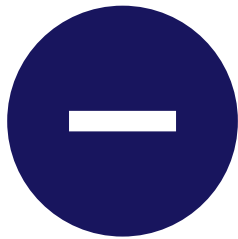
## Mixed views on potential impact of new hospital on local area

Some → siting a large hospital in Whitland would destroy the character of the town

*Even if there is a low risk ... is it wise to build on a site with any risk of flooding? (Ceredigion Public Service Board)*

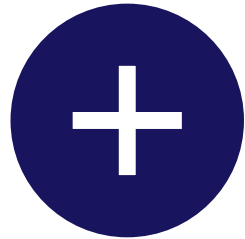
Others → would benefit the local economy

*It'll completely change Whitland, and I don't like change ... (Whitland drop-in event attendee)*





# Views on St Clears (formerly site 17)



## Access

Good access from A40/A477

Geographically central

Public transport links

## Nearest large centres of population

## Existing infrastructure/amenities locally

Housing being built

## Single private landowner

## No flood risk

## Less additional travel time

## Easier to recruit/retain staff

## Less disruptive to local residents

## Less clinical risk

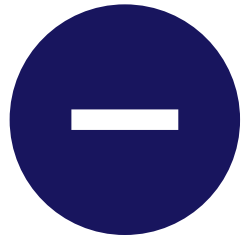
*St Clears layout and access is best, less disruption to houses, it also has public transport which is the future. I think the hospital is good for the area, and from a patient's point of view this is good as it attracts expertise (St Clears drop-in attendee)*

*St Clears is more accessible, because you have two roads – from Tenby [A477] and from Haverfordwest [A40] (Sign and Share Deaf Group)*

*The emergency travel time is nine mins longer [for both Whitland sites] and then six minutes longer for St Clears ... That is time in which you could save someone's life (Focus group participant, Tywi Taf)*

*If being too far west is going to drive people out of the area, I think it's super important to keep the specialist obstetricians and midwives in the Hywel Dda area (Focus group participant, Amman Gwendraeth)*

# Views on St Clears (formerly site 17)



## Limited scope for expansion

### Access

Distance from train station (also need clarity on reopening)

Further from Pembrokeshire

**St Clears already too congested to cope with increased traffic to/from the site**

**Lack of onsite renewables**

**Topography**

Site is “on a slope”

**Proximity to residential areas of St Clears**

**Located next to A40 → goes against biophilic principles**

*Limited scope for expansion is a worry – do you build a hospital you know is going to be too small in 20 years’ time? Will they be looking for somewhere else to go again then? (Staff member, Glangwili Hospital)*

*You’re basing it on railway investment that might not happen (Haverfordwest drop-in event attendee)*

*St Clears is too busy – too much traffic. This is a real problem*

# Other key themes



# Travel and access

Widespread concerns about plans for new hospital → primarily around geography/access

Specific worries about accessibility to proposed sites due to...

- Poor road infrastructure
- Poor public transport links
- Traffic congestion, especially in summer

Also, concern about

- Ambulance response times
- Ambulances being called out more often as people cannot transport themselves to A&E
- Availability of air ambulance

Suggested → carbon footprint of new hospital will increase due to lengthier journeys/people switching to car travel

*Road networks. There are frequent accidents on A40 and A477, the two roads into Pembrokeshire both converge on the access to new hospital sites. Traffic is extremely slow in the summer months and the population of Pembrokeshire rises to 2 million ... (Pembrokeshire County Council)*

*The public transport network in Ceredigion is poor ... and definitely does not link directly to either St Clears or Whitland. It requires numerous changes and considerable cost and time. There is no Sunday service and the rail network between Aberystwyth and anywhere to its south is non-existent (Individual respondent, written submission)*

*You've got insufficient ambulances as it is, unless you can increase WAST services, you'll be putting lives at risk (Staff member, Tregaron Hospital)*

*Are you incorporating the Air Ambulance calculations in your time estimates? Because you shouldn't as they are privately funded (Pembrokeshire People First)*

# Travel and access

Scepticism about accuracy of 'additional' travel time estimates by ambulance and car...

Difficulties travelling around the Hywel Dda area, especially in the summer

Take sufficient account of 20mph/50mph zones being introduced?

...and about achievability of improvements to road infrastructure and public transport network

Particular concerns over whether WG would invest in road network, and ability to influence public transport improvements

*The figures are grossly misleading. It's irresponsible ... (Haverfordwest, public drop-in event)*

*... The traffic on that road in half term and with tourists will cause so much harm. That road is either completely jammed or there is an accident blocking the road. Your travel/commute times on that consultation are laughable ... have they even been assessed during busy times on that road? (Social media comment)*

*... I don't buy the arguments you are putting forward regarding transport and connectivity to the new hospital. You won't have a public transport network to Whitland and St Clears in same way as there is to Haverfordwest ... I have not heard that this has been considered properly or will be (Pembrokeshire County Council)*

*When questioned in detail about the discussions that were being held with Transport for Wales, County Councils and the transport minister, it became clear that the Health Board has no power to require improved public transport links, and can rely only on hope and lobbying (Individual respondent, written submission)*

# Travel and access: mitigations

- Road infrastructure improvements
- Shuttle buses between train station/hospital
- Flexi-bus systems
- Park and ride
- Subsidised on-site accommodation
- Designated railway station
- Footpaths/cycle paths for active travel
- Ensuring public transport caters to shift patterns of staff, visitors and patients
- Investment in community transport
- Staff “*delivery and collection hubs*”
- ‘Break service’ (i.e., “*a bus to pick up nurses to go to work for different shifts, instead of 10 cars*”)
- Adequate parking, with electric charging points

## Specific mitigations from Railfuture Cymru-Wales (re Tŷ Newydd)

- Orienting ‘public side’ of site closest to railway station, with a clearly signposted, lit and covered walking route between
- *Car parks (aside from possible blue badge spaces) should not occupy any land between the public side and station... Placing car parks at the front of the hospital has been an all-too-common mistake in past new sites / site reconstruction...*

*The parts of Tŷ Newydd closest to the railway station ... fall in the medium-risk flood zone ... This could be overcome in a minimally invasive and 'working with nature' manner by using the slab-on-stilts / plinth-on-piles construction method in that area to raise the base of the structures (and the access footpaths) above the flood level. [...] Additionally, such a method would allow the use of geothermal piles to supply a heat pump central heating + cooling system [Railfuture Cymru-Wales]*

*“The Health Board must look at patient transport strategically and innovatively with a commitment to invest appropriately. It will be important that looking to the future, this model is based on a sound understanding of transport needs as service changes develop and that providers of transport services are put on a sound footing to meet those needs” (Llais, written submission)*



# Staff recruitment and retention

Significant doubt around HDdUHB's ability to recruit enough staff (specialist staff in particular) to a relatively rural/remote site

- *We find it difficult to recruit into Carmarthen, so going further west again means that recruitment and retention of staff is still going to be very difficult (Staff member, Glangwili Hospital)*

Concerns that existing staff might leave rather than relocate to new hospital owing to longer commutes

- *Have the plans considered medical staff going to other health boards because the new sites are too rural compared to Cardiff or Swansea? (Aberystwyth drop-in event attendee)*

Proposed locations might be a barrier to recruiting/retaining ancillary staff

Some focus group participants → filling these roles could be a “massive opportunity” for local residents

- *Whitland is a low wage economy in a relatively high unemployment area and so we need a range of jobs for our children to have choice without having to leave the area they grew up in and move to get a job (Focus group participant, Tywi Taf)*

Proposed network of community hubs viewed positively, but feasibility of staffing them in addition to new hospital questioned

- *I don't believe that you will keep the other hospitals open ... You will gradually close them down as you will not have the staff and the money to run them ... (Individual respondent, written submission)*

Some → modern, state-of-the-art hospital would encourage more specialists and staff to work there

- *Everyone likes something new and shiny ... The staff will see the investment there and the opportunities for development which is good for their careers (Staff member, Withybush Hospital)*



# Future proofing, site design, and infrastructure

People questioned futureproofing potential of all three sites

*... We have to look to the future; we can't be in this state again and we have to think 50 years ahead ... Wherever it goes, and the way modern science and technology is moving, a site has got to have room to grow, and the population is growing ... (Focus group participant, Llanelli)*

Need to consider car parking, green space, and HDdUHB's carbon footprint in hospital design

*I encourage a consideration on green spaces and other green infrastructure as part of the project (Pembrokeshire Public Service Board; Pembrokeshire Town and Community Councils)*

Some suggestions made for facilities/amenities e.g., staff housing, visitor accommodation (i.e., reasonably priced hotel), shops, cafes/restaurants, and a helipad

*The Golden Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank has a 4/5-star hotel onsite that families can stay in at a subsidised rate, and a conference centre ... A hotel would help relatives from further reaches of the health board area (Pembrokeshire Town and Community Councils)*

Some questioned ability of Whitland/St Clears to cope with infrastructure requirements needed to sustain new hospital (e.g., housing, larger schools, improved public transport, and better roads)

*You would have to double the size of Whitland or St Clears to have capacity for staff and families ... this is going to be something absolutely devastating for the villages ... (Focus group participant, Tywi Taf)*

# Other key issues

## Clinical sustainability

Worry about viability of services at new site due to patients seeking health services elsewhere

E.g., Llanelli patients choosing to access services in Morriston Hospital

*Llanelli is very close to Swansea, a distance away from Carmarthen, and will be further away to the new hospital site. Llanelli is closer to Morriston (Llanelli Town Council)*

## Future of Bronglais Hospital

Some concern → new hospital = loss of specialist staff/services from Bronglais Hospital  
Reassurance sought that future of Bronglais as DGH is assured

*What are we going to lose from Bronglais? There will inevitably be slippage of staff from there and Bronglais will be downgraded to supply what is needed in terms of funding and personnel ... there is a scepticism [that Bronglais won't be affected] and that there will be a bright, shiny, new toy and everything else will get bugger all*  
(North Ceredigion, public focus group)

## Timetable and costs

Participants in resident focus groups/other events expected significant cost inflation and timetable slippage

Safety and sustainability of services in interim period was a concern

*... We have seen inflation effect our capital planning. Seen 20% increase on our builds. From a Welsh Government perspective this would put pressure on their budgets. Do Welsh Government have concerns around this? (Carmarthenshire Public Service Board)*

# Alternative suggestions

Many participants across all consultation methods...

Remain fundamentally opposed to idea of new hospital

Support refurbishing existing Glangwili and Withybush sites and retaining services there

Pembrokeshire residents → particular concern that none of the three sites are accessible – but also worry among some in east Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion

BUT also recognition that modern, fit-for-purpose hospital of sufficient size not possible on existing sites

*... We would be far more in favour of the hospital remaining in Carmarthen. We have concerns regarding accessing the A48 and getting through Carmarthen towards ALL of the sites. The journey would be far longer in summer months when Carmarthen is regularly gridlocked ... [St Ishmael Community Council]*

*... The buildings need to change ... and Glangwili and Withybush are very difficult geographically. They need to expand (North Ceredigion, public focus group)*

# Some positivity

Some positivity about new urgent and planned care hospital across all consultation methods

Those in favour felt it would...

Be beneficial for the area economically/in improving health and wellbeing outcomes

Help overcome HDdUHB's staffing challenges

New hospital with specialisms/up-to-date technology → attractive to prospective staff, especially younger generations

Provide modern, fit-for-purpose environments for patients and staff

Enable repatriation of some services

Be a catalyst for infrastructure improvements, especially roads, public transport, and schools

Some feeling that people will be prepared to travel for the best and more streamlined care

But nervousness of change → ongoing dialogue essential

Proposed network of community hospital and hubs also welcomed (subject to robust pathways)

*It's brilliant news for either Whitland or St Clears. It really helps lift our economy ... and it means young people don't have to leave the area to get well paid jobs. And if it's planned properly ... it would be an absolute game changer across the three counties for our health, wellbeing and our economy. So, I am a huge fan (Tywi Taf, public focus group)*

*Glangwili staff are brilliant, but the infrastructure is failing ... (Staff member, Prince Phillip Hospital)*

*At present people have to go to Morriston spending lots of money on transport/accommodation and a long time away from families, will we see an improvement in situations like this with the new hospital? (Ceredigion County Council)*

*We need to be pressing on with the idea of Integrated Community Networks, the development of integrated health and wellbeing centres, and community preventions work through the hub and connectors and town and community councils and community buildings, etc. This is a necessary foundation to the development of the new hospital and is worth doing even if the new hospital does not happen (Pembrokeshire Public Service Board)*

# Consultation and decision-making processes

Some → consultation events have been helpful and informative, and have allayed concerns  
Others → criticised venues, timing, and promotion

- *The consultation took place in a cordial atmosphere and the Board's representatives were approachable and sympathetic (Individual respondent, written submission)*
- *The public haven't got a clue what is going on (Cardigan drop-in event attendee)*

Comments around transparency, accuracy, and accessibility of information provided, and cost of consultation  
Some feeling of 'not being listened to'

- *What is the point of wasting everyone's time by having a public consultation when you don't want to listen to the wishes of the people of Pembrokeshire and have no doubt made your minds up already ... (Individual respondent, written submission)*
- *Information about the sites needs to be more accessible. You have to give the full story to have people on your side (Haverfordwest drop-in event attendee)*

Many questions about decision-making process (i.e., who makes decision and how; timescales) and what services will be in the new hospital

- *When will the consultation period finish? What happens after this? What is the next step after the decision on the land? (St Clears drop-in event attendee)*

Ongoing provision of information/reassurance essential

- *About assurances to residents, the message has not been properly conveyed. You need to get that message across ... (Pembrokeshire County Council)*
- *"Continuous engagement with stakeholders and the public should highlight the progress that workforce plans are making" (Llais, written submission)*

Questions about what would happen if WG funding does not materialise

- *Welsh Government hasn't agreed the money yet ... How can we continue to plan without financial support from Welsh Government? Do you have a plan B if the money is refused? (Ysgol Tregroes)*

# Equalities Impacts

Most equalities concerns centred on travel and access generally, and the ease with which patients/visitors/staff would be able to travel to the new hospital

Several groups were highlighted as being particularly vulnerable to impacts, including:

- Vulnerable and older people

- People with disabilities

- People on lower incomes and/or without access to private transport

- Expectant parents (e.g., mothers with conditions such as diabetes requiring monitoring and having to give birth at the new hospital) and parents of babies requiring neonatal care

- People with additional/complex needs (like neurodivergence and learning disabilities)

Also concerns about the impact of the proposals on outcomes for people in different geographies

- Particular access concerns for...

  - ... residents of west Pembrokeshire, east Carmarthenshire, and some parts of Ceredigion

  - ... people in rural isolation (especially if reliant on public transport)

  - ... those living in areas with poor internet connections (unable to access telemedicine and other digital healthcare opportunities)

  - ...Welsh speakers (if displaced to Swansea → less likely to access services where Welsh is spoken)

*Elderly patients and those dependent on public transport will be particularly badly affected by the move to a more rural location as the new site is poorly connected to public transport and many will need to travel long distances to access urgent and planned care. Moreover, the likely displacement of patients and services such as maternity and obstetrics to Swansea will undermine access to Welsh Language based healthcare given the lower levels of Welsh spoken outside Carmarthenshire... [CRAiG Sir Gar]*