



**CYFARFOD BWRDD PRIFYSGOL IECHYD
UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD MEETING**

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	14 December 2023
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Future provision of General Medical Services at Cross Hands and Tumble
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Jill Paterson, Director of Primary Care, Community and Long Term Care
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Rhian Bond, Assistant Director of Primary Care

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)

Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Ar Gyfer Penderfyniad/For Decision

ADRODDIAD SCAA

SBAR REPORT

Sefyllfa / Situation

On 29 September 2023, Cross Hands and Tumble Medical Partnership served notice to the Health Board on their General Medical Services (GMS) contract giving the six calendar months' notice required as a Partnership. The Practice will cease providing General Medical Services within the Amman Gwendraeth Cluster on 31 March 2024.

A Vacant Practice Panel met on 17 October 2023 to examine the options available to the Health Board to ensure that these patients continue to have access to services. These options include a formal tender process for a new provider of GMS or APMS (Alternative Provider of Medical Services), dispersal of the Practice list or Health Board Managed Practice. Based on expressions of interest received and discussions in the Cluster, the Panel identified a formal tender process and dispersal as the preferred options, and directed that a public engagement exercise be undertaken on this basis.

This paper reports on the recommendations of the Vacant Practice Panel, summarises the public engagement undertaken and asks the Board to consider the next steps in the light of the feedback received.

Cefndir / Background

Cross Hands and Tumble Medical Partnership currently provides General Medical Services to approximately 7,600 patients from their main site in Tumble as well as from a branch site located in Cross Hands Health Centre. Cross Hands and Tumble Medical Partnership is one of two Practices due to relocate to the planned new development, Cross Hands Health and Wellbeing Centre when completed (the other Practice being Meddygfa Penygroes).

Approximately 297 of the current registered population reside outside of the Practice boundary, equating to 4% of the total list size.

Historically, there were four local care homes served by the Practice, two of which have already re-registered their patients with another GP Practice. Cross Hands and Tumble

Medical Partnership has been a training Practice for approximately eight years, although the current trainee has been moved as the Practice serves its notice period.

The Practice shares a boundary with Coalbrook Surgery, Meddygfa'r Sarn and Meddygfa Penygroes. Other local GP Practices that overlap to a lesser extent are Brynteg Surgery, Margaret Street Practice and Amman Tawe Partnership. All are Independent Contractors, with the exception of Meddygfa'r Sarn, which is a Health Board Managed Practice. Meddygfa Penygroes is co-located in the current Cross Hands Health Centre premises and both Practices are due to relocate to the new Cross Hands Health and Wellbeing Centre on its estimated completion date in 2026.

Historically, the Practice has run as a three GP partnership and has operated with support from regular GP locums and its limited Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). The Practice has advertised extensively over the years but has been unsuccessful in attempts to employ a salaried GP or recruit another GP Partner. In recent years, for business continuity purposes, the Practice buddied with Meddygfa Penygroes and whilst there have been good relations between the Practices, including some limited support on occasions, this did not develop any further. Recent exploratory discussions around a merger have taken place but have not progressed.

In 2020, the Practice was one of a group identified for support through the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Practice sustainability review funded by the Health Board through the former Pacesetter programme. Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions at the time dictated that this was largely a remote exercise. Whilst the review was completed, the main report was not shared by the Practice with the Health Board. The Practice was complementary in its feedback on the process, and it was understood that work going forward focussed chiefly on leadership and management.

The Practice approached the Health Board in September 2022 reporting financial issues, which the Health Board supported the Practice with, to ensure business continuity. Despite a continued reported improvement in the financial situation of the Practice, they again approached the Health Board at the end of May 2023 expressing concerns around operational pressures.

Regular contact was maintained with the Practice over the summer months, culminating with the Partners indicating that they were considering terminating their Contract in August 2023 due to recruitment and retention issues with key clinical roles within their team, which included the resignation of one of the three GP Partners and the loss of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner. The Partners submitted their Contract termination on 29 September 2023.

Vacant Practice Panel

The Contract resignation triggered the nationally directed Vacant Practice Process, which had been revised and reviewed by the Primary Care Contracts Review Group (PCCRG) in September 2023; and on 17 October 2023, a Vacant Practice Panel was convened to consider the options for the continued provision of General Medical Services to registered patients. The options available to a Panel are:

1. Alternative Provider Medical Services contract (APMS)
2. Dispersal or Reassignment of patient list
3. Formal Tender process for new Provider/Contractor (GMS)
4. Health Board Managed Practice

The Panel are able consider a combination of the options above where appropriate and where that best meets the needs of the population. Membership of the panel includes representatives of Llais and the Local Medical Committee along with Health Board officers.

Expressions of Interest for other Practices to take over the provision of General Medical Services under a GMS contract (or potentially APMS) for Cross Hands and Tumble Medical Partnership were requested in writing from all Carmarthenshire GP Practices and those in neighbouring Swansea Bay University Health Board. Two expressions of interest were received from neighbouring GP Practices and stakeholders' views were sought to help inform the preferred option for the ongoing provision of General Medical Services to the registered population.

The Vacant Practice Panel, in considering the information that was presented, discussed the implications of each of the four options for consideration. It was noted that option one (APMS) and option three (GMS) are essentially the same option with a variance in the contracting mechanism. Given that there had been an expression of interest in providing General Medical Services to the totality of the Practice list, it was agreed that public engagement should include the recommendation that a formal procurement exercise be undertaken to secure a new Practice to take over the delivery of General Medical Services from within existing premises and with the commitment to move into the new space at Cross Hands Health and Well Being Hub. The financial implications of this option were discussed by the Panel.

Similarly, given that there had been informal interest from a number of local GP Practices in taking over the provision of General Medical Services for proportions of the Practice list, it was agreed that the option of a list dispersal should also be considered as part of the public engagement. In considering the principle of delivering care closer to home it was noted that there are occasions where patients live closer to a GP Practice other than the one that they are registered with. The financial implications of this option (discretionary payments, data transfer costs etc) and the need to identify funding to support the receiving Practice were considered and discussed by the Panel. The costs of a managed dispersal would be in the region of £228k (£30 per patient discretionary support) plus a further £30k for data transfer costs (however, this is an estimate as actual costs would only be attributed on quotations from the clinical system providers). There is the potential that receiving Practices could request additional support to ensure the smooth transfer of patients and this could include additional clinical time for pharmacists etc, which would need to be considered on an individual Practice basis.

In considering the potential for the Practice to become a Health Board Managed Practice the panel were mindful that there are already two Managed Practices within the Amman Gwendraeth Cluster (Meddgyfa'r Sarn and Meddygfa Minafon). In both instances and in common with all the Health Board Managed Practices, the mainstay of the medical workforce is reliant on GP Locums, highlighting the recruitment and retention issues that the Practice themselves have experienced. The financial implications of operating a Managed Practice were also considered and it was noted that, due to high staff costs and lower income streams, there was a financial risk in considering taking Cross Hands and Tumble as a seventh Health Board Managed Practice at a time when there are significant financial challenges being faced by the NHS in Wales. Panel members noted that, given that there was interest in either taking the Practice list in its totality or partially across a number of Practices, the public engagement should be undertaken on the basis that the Vacant Practice Panel recommendation was to either seek a new GMS/APMS contract or to disperse the Practice list. It was noted that this was a recommendation and that any decisions, following public engagement, would require Board consideration and approval.

Accordingly, a Public Engagement Plan was developed to seek the views of patients and other stakeholders on the preferred options identified by the Vacant Practice Panel, working closely with Llais. Where options are identified as not the preferred option because other options are seen as more favourable for the patients, Practice and wider sustainability of the Cluster, the Health Board undertakes to explain in full the rationale for this as part of the engagement.

Asesiad / Assessment

An analysis of the feedback received from the public engagement is at *Appendix 1*.

Patients were able to engage:

- In writing by returning paper questionnaires to FREE POST address. Paper copies of the questionnaire were made available at both Tumble and Cross Hands and all Community Pharmacies locally.
- Online through 'Have Your Say / Dweud eich Dweud' site (online version of the same questionnaire, no registration required). Link with QR code was included in a letter to all patients.
- By telephone to the Communications Hub. All callers were spoken to by the team at the Hub or were individually responded to by the Primary Care team where a response was indicated
- By email to the Communications Hub, responded to where indicated
- In person at either of the two drop-in public engagement events (Tumble village hall on 8 November 2023, and Cross Hands Club & Institute on 21 November 2023)
- Feedback direct to Llais online (using the Health Board questionnaire)

A questionnaire was developed with the Engagement team to ask patients about their views on the viable options and to explain why the Health Board had identified these options as most viable. Patients were also asked what was important to them about their Practice. 500 questionnaire responses were received either electronically or paper form, alongside another 88 responses by email, letter, telephone or via Llais. A verbatim report of the questionnaire responses produced by the Engagement team is at *Appendix 2* (English) and *Appendix 3* (Welsh).

Public engagement

The first public engagement event was held on 8 November 2023 in Tumble Village Hall. Whilst it was identified prior to the event that the individual patient letters had not been sent due to issues with the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) bulk mailing service, the Communications and Engagement Team felt that through the level of information that had been shared on social media and through local media that the event should continue. 97 people attended this event, and it was agreed with Llais that a further event should be held. The second public engagement event was held on 21 November 2023 in Cross Hands Working Mens Club where 151 people attended. Both events were successful in their aim of providing a platform for face-to-face discussions between Health Board staff and patients with detailed conversations on the situation, background, concerns raised and the options going forward.

588 responses were received in total, which equates to 7.7% of the Practice population. 65.9% of the respondents were aged over 55 years old, 27% considered themselves to have a disability and 23% identified as being carers. From the 500 questionnaires that were completed 48.4% said that they had been seen at either Practice site in the last month, however some of

those would have been for the Autumn Booster or flu vaccination, compared to 24% of people who said that they had not been to the Practice in the last six months. 81% of respondents advised that they got to the Practice by car, with 14% walking to the Practice and 1.6% by public transport and 3.4% by other transport methods such as cycling or taxi.

426 people (85%) said that they would like to see the provision of General Medical Services continued to be delivered out of Tumble and Cross Hands by a new Service provider whilst 46 people said that they were happy to be dispersed to another GP Practice that might be closer to where they live. Seven people identified a Health Board Managed Practice as their preferred option. Patients attending the drop-in events told us they viewed this as the option closest to the current service provision and the option that would cause the least change as it would mean that there would continue to be a Practice for them in the community, even if the current Partnership could not continue.

46 patients (9% of respondents) indicated they would prefer their registration to be transferred by the Health Board to another local GP Practice. Conversations at the drop-in events suggest that these may be patients living more rurally who already travelled some distance.

28 patients (5.6%) ticked the box in the questionnaire for 'Other', although the free text responses by these patients tended to be comments on the dispersal or tender options rather than an alternative. Seven patients or 1.4% of respondents cited Health Board Managed Practice as their preference.

When asked what was most important to patients about their Practice, patients consistently responded that they wanted to be able to get through easily on the telephone, and to be able to make appointments on request. Patients also valued continuity with regular doctors and a stable Practice team. Very many patients felt that the continuation of the Practice was central to the community, which itself is expanding with new housing developments.

Stakeholder feedback

Stakeholder feedback is at *Appendix 4* and respondents include the Amman Gwendraeth Cluster Lead, Community Councillors for Llannon and Gorslas Wards, Dame Nia Griffiths MP and Practice submissions from Penygroes Surgery and Llandeilo Surgery. Feedback from Llais on the engagement process is attached at *Appendix 5*.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- **NOTE** the recommendations of the Vacant Practice Panel
- **CONSIDER** the outcome of the public and stakeholder engagement, including the response from Llais
- **AGREE** that, in response to the public and stakeholder engagement, a formal Procurement exercise should be undertaken to secure a new General Medical Services provider to deliver care to the current registered population for Tumble and Cross Hands
- **AGREE** that, if the Procurement exercise does not identify a suitable single GMS provider for the onward provision of General Medical Services, the Board gives full consideration to the other options available which includes managed list dispersal or Health Board Managed Practice

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau) Objectives: (must be completed)	
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	1451 Score: 16 (for review 16 December 2023)
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)	5. Whole systems perspective
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	All Strategic Objectives are applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	7a Population Health 7c Social model 1a Recruitment plan 6a Clinical services plan
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022	4. Improve Population Health through prevention and early intervention, supporting people to live happy and healthy lives 8. Transform our communities through collaboration with people, communities and partners

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Contained within the body of the report
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained within the body of the report
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Cyfarfod Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to University Health Board:	Contained within the body of the report

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	Potential financial impact if there is not the successful awarding of a GMS or APMS contract and the Practice operates as a Health Board Managed Practice. There is also an additional cost in relation to the managed dispersal of the Practice list.

Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	N/A
Gweithlu: Workforce:	N/A
Risg: Risk:	There are a number of potential risks associated with the contract termination which have been considered.
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	N/A
Enw Da: Reputational:	There is the potential for media, public and political interest.
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	N/A
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	