

Adam Price AS/MS
Dwyrain Caerfyrddin a Dinefwr
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
37 Wind Street
Ammanford
SA18 3DN

Ystwyth Building,
Hafan Derwen,
St Davids Park,
Jobswell Road,
Carmarthen,
SA31 3BB.

Dear Dr Neil Wooding (Chair) & Prof. Philip Kloer (Chief Executive)

I am writing to you regarding the proposal to close Meddygfa'r Sarn GP Surgery in Pontyates, and to place on record my strong opposition to this decision.

I have been contacted by many constituents who are deeply anxious about both the potential closure itself and the manner in which this proposal has been brought forward.

I fully recognise the pressures facing primary care services, particularly in relation to workforce recruitment and retention, and I acknowledge the wider systemic challenges faced by Health Boards across Wales. However, these pressures cannot be resolved by decisions that risk significantly undermining access to care for rural and semi-rural communities.

The proposed closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn would require more than 4,300 registered patients to relocate to neighbouring GP practices in Pontyberem, Kidwelly and Llanelli. This redistribution of patients risks compounding existing pressures rather than alleviating them.

Of particular concern is the impact this would have on those without access to private transport. This would include many elderly and disabled residents, as well as carers. Many patients would be required to make journeys involving two separate bus routes in order to access GP services, creating a clear and significant barrier to care. In a community already facing challenges of rural connectivity, this represents a serious step backwards in terms of health equality.

It is troubling to see that closure and "managed dispersal" of patients appears to have been identified as the preferred option prior to any meaningful consultation with affected communities..

In that context, I share the concerns raised locally regarding whether a full Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment have been completed and published. It is difficult to see how consultation can be considered meaningful or fair in the absence of these essential documents.

I therefore urge the Health Board to pause the proposed consultation process and instead commit to a transparent, collaborative engagement with patients, staff, local representatives and community stakeholders to explore viable alternatives to closure. Communities must be partners in shaping solutions and not simply recipients of decisions made elsewhere.

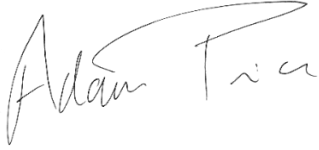
Primary care sits at the heart of our NHS. Decisions affecting its future must be grounded not only in operational pressures, but in the core principles of accessibility, fairness and social justice that underpin public healthcare in Wales.



I would welcome a written response as a matter of urgency, and I would also be willing to meet to discuss these issues further.

I will continue to stand with the community of Pontyates and surrounding villages in making the case for sustainable, locally accessible GP services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Price". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Adam Price AS / MS,
Dwyrain Caerfyrddin a Dinefwr
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr





Dr Neil Wooding CBE
Chair of Hywel Dda University Health Board
(neil.wooding@wales.nhs.uk)

Professor Philip Kloer
Chief Executive of Hywel Dda University Health Board
(philip.kloer@wales.nhs.uk)

13th March 2026

Dear Chair and Chief Executive,

Carmarthenshire County Council at its meeting held on the 25th February 2026 considered the following Notice of Motion: -

“This Council recognises the vital role that local GP surgeries play in providing accessible primary care, particularly in rural communities, and notes the growing pressures on GP services caused by workforce shortages and rising demand. Council also notes that poor public transport provision creates additional barriers for patients in accessing primary care.

Council further recognises its responsibility to raise concerns on behalf of residents where proposed changes to health services risk reducing access to care and increasing pressure on already stretched services.

This Council:

- Notes with serious concern the potential closure by Hywel Dda University Health Board of Meddygfa'r Sarn GP surgery in Pontyates, which would force over 4,300 registered patients to relocate to GP surgeries in Pontyberem, Kidwelly and Llanelli, placing additional pressure on those practices;
- Further notes that the closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn would have a disproportionate impact on older residents, disabled residents, carers, and those without access to private transport;

Cynghorydd | Councillor

Linda Evans

Arweinydd y Cyngor | Leader of the Council

01267 224050

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- Expresses serious concern that ongoing failures at national level to train, recruit and retain sufficient numbers of GPs are contributing to the closure of local GP surgeries, with the impact on residents compounded by a poor public transport network that leaves many with no realistic way of accessing alternative services;
- Notes significant shortcomings in Hywel Dda's current engagement. The aims, structure and scope of the engagement are fundamentally inadequate, narrowing consideration to the consequences of closure and preventing a full consideration of how local primary care services can be maintained in Pontyates.

Accordingly, this Council resolves to:

1. Write formally to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to:
 - set out the Council's serious concerns regarding the potential closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn, including the displacement of over 4,300 patients, the impact on access to primary care, and the resulting pressure on neighbouring GP practices;
 - seek a clear explanation of what steps Welsh Government is taking to ensure sufficient GP training, recruitment and retention are in place to prevent further closures of GP surgeries, particularly in rural communities; and
 - call on the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to set out what steps will be taken to ensure that alternatives to closure are properly considered before any final decision is taken on the future of Meddygfa'r Sarn.
2. Write formally to the Chair and Chief Executive of Hywel Dda University Health Board to:
 - request the urgent publication of both a Health Impact Assessment and an Equality Impact Assessment relating to any proposed change to services at Meddygfa'r Sarn, and to confirm that no further decisions will be taken before these assessments are published and considered;
 - seek clarification as to why the Board report considered on 29 January 2026 identified a preferred option of closure prior to any consultation or engagement with affected communities;

Cynghorydd | Councillor

Linda Evans

Arweinydd y Cyngor | Leader of the Council

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- request the urgent publication of the assessment of all alternative options to closure, including how these were evaluated and discounted”

You may view the debate on this motion via the following link (the debate commences at 1:21:21): - https://carmarthenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/1066829/start_time/4881000

The motion was duly seconded and, following a detailed debate by Full Council, was passed following a vote. I would be grateful if you could consider the Motion as submitted and provide the Authority with a response.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Cynghorydd | Councillor

Linda Evans

Arweinydd y Cyngor | Leader of the Council

01267 224050

LDaviesEvans@sirgar.gov.uk | LDaviesEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

sirgar.llyw.cymru | **carmarthenshire.gov.wales**

From: Cllr. Alex Evans <AlexEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 26 January 2026 14:39

To: Neil Wooding (Hywel Dda UHB - Chair of Hywel Dda University Health ; Philip Kloer (Hywel Dda UHB - Chief Executive)

Cc: Cllr. Tyssul Evans <WTEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Cllr. Meinir James <MeJames@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>

Subject: Meddygfa'r Sarn GP surgery, Pontyates – concerns regarding process and potential closure

Dear Doctor Wooding and Professor Kloer,

We are writing to you as the local elected members for Pontyates and surrounding villages, in relation to the proposal to close Meddygfa'r Sarn.

We recognise the very real pressures facing primary care services, particularly in relation to workforce recruitment and retention; we further appreciate that Welsh Government has not done nearly enough in this area to support Health Boards. However, we have serious concerns about both the impact of the proposed closure and the process by which it is potentially being taken forward.

As you will be aware, the closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn would require over 4,300 registered patients to relocate to neighbouring GP practices in Pontyberem, Kidwelly and Llanelli. In our view, this will place additional pressure on GP practices that are already under strain. It will also worsen access to local primary care, particularly for older residents, disabled residents, carers, and those without access to private transport. Moreover, we are concerned that a significant proportion of patients would be required to make journeys involving two separate bus routes in order to access GP provision in Pontyberem or Kidwelly, creating an additional barrier for those reliant on public transport.

Whilst we acknowledge that the Board will be asked at Thursday's meeting to agree to begin consultation rather than to agree the closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn, we are deeply concerned that Board papers already note a preferred option — closure and the “managed dispersal” of patients — prior to any consultation or engagement with affected communities.

Furthermore, we believe it is our duty as local representatives to put on record our deep unhappiness at the manner and timing in which this proposal was communicated to our communities. With no prior warning and the suddenness of the announcement, Hywel Dda has created avoidable anxiety and worry amongst our constituents.

Proceeding on this basis risks consultation being perceived as a post-decision exercise rather than a genuine opportunity to engage residents and stakeholders, and for us all to work together constructively to identify suitable alternatives to closure.

In light of these concerns, we request clarification from the Board on the following points:

- **whether an Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment have been completed and published in relation to this proposal, as we do not believe consultation should begin before these documents are available;**
- **how the potential impact on neighbouring GP practices has been assessed as part of the proposal to begin consultation; and**
- **whether the Board is prepared to pause the proposed consultation and instead initiate a meaningful and collaborative engagement process with all stakeholders to explore alternatives to closure.**

We are raising these issues now in the hope that they can be addressed constructively and transparently before further decisions are taken, and before trust between our communities and Hywel Dda is damaged further.

As local members, we have a responsibility to ensure that the voices and concerns of our communities are properly heard, that processes are carried out transparently, and that any engagement undertaken is meaningful and fair.

A potential 60% increase in patient numbers at Coalbrook Surgery in Pontyberem is one consequence in particular which is causing serious concern; this would leave a rural practice with a patient list larger than several urban practices in the Llanelli Cluster, and well above the current 6,300 average within the Amman-Gwendraeth Cluster.

We would welcome a written response as a matter of urgency and would be happy to meet with you to discuss these matters further.

Yours sincerely,

County Councillor Tyssul Evans, Llangyndeyrn Ward

County Councillor Meinir James, Llangyndeyrn Ward

County Councillor Alex Evans, Glyn Ward

Appendix 15.4 Cllr Meinir James

From: Cllr. Meinir James <MeJames@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 06 April 2026 09:06

To: Communication Hub (Hywel Dda UHB - Generic Account) <ask.hdd@wales.nhs.uk>; Nichola

Couceiro (Hywel Dda UHB - Head of Engagement) <Nichola.Couceiro@wales.nhs.uk>

Cc: westwalesenquiries@llaiscymru.org; Cllr. Tyssul Evans <WTEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Cllr.

Alex Evans <AlexEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Linda Williams

<lindawilliams.hirael@icloud.com>; 'delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com'

<delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com>

Subject: Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontiets

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Annwyl Syr/Fadam

Diolch am y cyfle i roi sylwadau ar y cynnig i gau Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontiets.

Diolch hefyd i Bwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda am drefnu'r sesiynau galw mewn i'r cyhoedd ym Mhontiets, Pontyberem a threfnu un sesiwn ychwanegol yng Ngharwe. Bu'r ymateb yn arbennig o dda i rhain a'r cyhoedd wedi cael cyfle i fynegi eu barn. Gobeithio bydd Bwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda yn gwrandao a gweithredu ar y sylwadau a newid y cynnig i gau'r feddygfa. Fe wnes fynychu sesiwn ym Mhontiets a Charwe a chael cyfle i gael sgysiaiu a rhoi fy sylwadau gyda chynrychiolwyr y Bwrdd Iechyd.

Rwy'n anghygtuno'n llwyr gyda'r cynnig i gau Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontiets, a nodaf fy sylwadau isod:

Diffyg trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus

Nid oes modd cyrraedd yr un o'r meddygfeydd amgen mewn un taith ar drafnidiaeth cyhoeddus. I'r mwyafrif ym Mhontiets, Carwe a Ffoslas mae'n golygu dwy daith fws, oriau o deithio a chost ychwanegol, gan greu rhwystr gwirioneddol i gleifion yn enwedig y rhai mwyaf bregus. I bobol hŷn, pobl anabl, gofalwyr sy'n rhuthro rhwng cyfrifoldebau a chleifion bregus – mae hyn yn rhwystr go iawn i ofal iechyd sylfaenol. Nid mater o anghyfleustra yw hyn – mae'n fater o fynediad teg at wasanaethau hanfodol.

Rhoi pwysau ychwanegol ar feddygfeydd eraill

Mae'r effaith ar gau'r feddygfa a symud y cleifion i feddygfeydd eraill yng Nghydweli, Pontyberem a Llanelli – meddygfeydd sydd eisoes o dan bwysau mawr – yn mynd i achosi gofid ac anghyfleustra i gleifion, yn arbennig rhai sy'n fregus ac yn ddibynnol ar drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus. Nid yn unig bod hyn yn annheg ond yn annerbyniol o ran yr effaith ar filoedd o gleifion lleol. Bydd hyn yn achosi i gleifion gohirio neu osgoi mynd i'w meddygfa a all wedyn gynyddu'r pwysau ar ein hadrannau gofal brys yn ein ysbytai lleol.

Bydd hyn yn effeithio'n fawr ar y cleifion presennol yn y meddygfeydd ac ar y rhai sy'n trosglwyddo ac yn achosi dirywiad yn y gwasanaeth ac i gleifion allu gweld meddyg yn hwylus e.e. bydd trosglwyddo bron I 3,000 i feddygfa Coalbrook ym Mhontyberem yn cynyddu'r restr cleifion gan 60% ac mae hynny'n siwr o effeithio ar y gwasanaeth ac yn ymarferol sefyllfa cyrraedd a pharcio ger y feddygfa.

Appendix 15.4 Cllr Meinir James

- Ym Mhontyberem o 5001 o gleifion i bron 8000 – cynnydd o 60%
- Minafon, Cydweli – o 8570 o gleifion i bron 10000 – cynnydd o 11%

Bydd cynnydd mor fawr a hyn yn y nifer o gleifion hefyd yn gosod pwysau ar y llefydd parcio ar gyfer y meddygfeydd, sydd eisoes yn broblem ac a fydd yn gwaethygu'n fawr wrth gynyddu'r nifer y cleifion.

Mynd a'r gwasanaeth ymhellach oddi wrth y cleifion

Nod Bwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda yn eu strategaeth yw cynnig gofal iechyd sy'n hygyrch ac yn agosach i'n cymunedau – mae'r cynnig hwn gan Bwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda yn mynd a'r gofal ymhellach allan o'r gymuned ac yn anoddach i gleifion gael y sylw. Bydd yn ychwanegu at straen a gofid y rhai sydd mewn angen – a dweud y gwir mae'r gofid am y newid posib yma eisoes yn effeithio cleifion yn barod fel rydym fel aelodau lleol yn clywed dros yr wythnosau diwethaf.

Nid oes sylw wedi'i roi i gynyddu cleifion

Mae talgylch Meddygfa'r Sarn yn parhau i gynyddu gyda datblygiadau tai yn parhau i ddigwydd yn lleol. Nid yw'r cynnig yma wedi ystyried y cynnydd fydd ym mhoblogaeth yr ardal a'r posibiladau ddaw y bydd nifer y cleifion i Feddygfa'r Sarn yn cynyddu dros y blynyddoedd nesaf.

Roeddwn i, fel nifer fawr o'r gymuned, yn synnu ac yn siomedig gyda'r cynnig i gau'r feddygfa ac mae'r resymau dros ddilyn y cam yma'n gam-arweiniol. Nid oes digon o ymdrech i gael meddygon priodol na cheisio ffordd adeiladol ymlaen i gadw'r feddygfa ar agor gan y Bwrdd Iechyd. Mae nodi rhesymau fel llifogydd – sydd ddim wedi amharu ar yr adeilad ei hun gan ei fod wedi'i osod ar lefel uwch i osgoi'r llifogydd – hefyd yn gam-arweiniol. Mae adeilad meddygfa'r Sarn yn dda gyda nifer o ystafelloedd ymgynghori, lle aros i gleifion a maes parcio cyfleus a hygyrch iawn. Mae'r arolygon barn yn dangos bod cleifion yn hapus iawn gyda'r gwasanaeth yno.

Mae Meddygfa'r Sarn yn feddygfa sylweddol yng nghanol y pentref a'l chymuned. Mae'n wasanaeth lleol, hygyrch, dibynadwy sydd wedi gwasanaethu cleifion Pontiets a'r ardal yn ffyddlon ers degawdau. Mae Pontiets a'r ardal yn ardal sylweddol o ran poblogaeth sydd angen meddygfa lleol i'w gwasanaethu.

Gofynnaf i Fwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda ail-edrych ar y cynnig yma a'i dynnu nol ac edrych ar bob ffordd posib i sicrhau bod Meddygfa'r Sarn yn parhau i gynnig gwasanaeth i gleifion yr ardal ac yn gallu aros ar agor am flynyddoedd i ddod.

Diolch yn fawr
Meinir James

Cynghorydd | Councillor Meinir James

Cynghorydd Sir Ward Llangyndeyrn | County Councillor Llangyndeyrn Ward

Rhif ffon cyswllt | Contact phone number 07399 355790

Appendix 15.4 Cllr Meinir James

From: Cllr. Meinir James <MeJames@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 06 April 2026 09:06

To: Communication Hub (Hywel Dda UHB - Generic Account) <ask.hdd@wales.nhs.uk>; Nichola Couceiro (Hywel Dda UHB - Head of Engagement) <Nichola.Couceiro@wales.nhs.uk>

Cc: westwalesenquiries@llaiscymru.org; Cllr. Tyssul Evans <WTEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Cllr. Alex Evans <AlexEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Linda Williams <lindawilliams.hirael@icloud.com>; 'delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com' <delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com>

Subject: Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontyates

WARNING: This email originated from outside of NHS Wales. Do not open links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Dear Sir / Madam

Diolch am y Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to close the Sarn Surgery, Pontyates.

Thanks also to Hywel Dda Health Board for organizing the drop-in sessions for the public in Pontyates, Pontyberem and organizing one additional session in Carway. The response was particularly good for these and the public had an opportunity to express their opinion. Hopefully Hywel Dda Health Board will listen and act on the comments and change the proposal to close the surgery. I attended a session in Pontyates and Carway and had the opportunity to have conversations and give my comments with representatives of the Health Board.

I completely disagree with the proposal to close the Sarn Surgery, Pontyates, and I state my comments below:

Lack of public transport

It is not possible to reach any of the alternative surgeries in one journey by public transport. For the majority in Pontyates, Carway and Ffos Las it means two bus journeys, hours of travel and additional cost, creating a real barrier for patients especially the most vulnerable. For older people, disabled people, carers who rush between responsibilities and vulnerable patients - this is a real barrier to basic healthcare. This is not a matter of inconvenience - it is a matter of fair access to essential services.

Putting extra pressure on other surgeries

The effect on closing the surgery and moving the patients to other surgeries in Kidwelly, Pontyberem and Llanelli - surgeries that are already under great pressure - is going to cause distress and inconvenience to patients, especially those who are vulnerable and dependent on public transport. Not only is this unfair but it is unacceptable in terms of the impact on thousands of local patients. This will cause patients to delay or avoid going to their surgery which can then increase the pressure on our emergency care departments in our local hospitals.

Appendix 15.4 Cllr Meinir James

This will greatly affect the current patients in the surgeries and those who transfer and cause a deterioration in the service and for patients to be able to see a doctor easily e.g. the transfer of almost 3,000 to the Coalbrook surgery in Pontyberem will increase the patient list by 60% and that is sure to affect the service and practically the situation of arrival and parking near the surgery.

- In Pontyberem from 5001 patients to almost 8000 - an increase of 60%
- Minafon, Kidwelly - from 8570 patients to almost 10000 - an increase of 11%

An increase as large as this in the number of patients will also put pressure on the parking spaces for the surgeries, which is already a problem and will get much worse when the number of patients increases.

Taking the service further away from the patients

Hywel Dda Health Board's aim in their strategy is to offer healthcare that is accessible and closer to our communities - this proposal by Hywel Dda Health Board takes the care further out of the community and makes it more difficult for patients to get attention. It will add to the stress and worry of those in need - to be honest the worry about this possible change is already affecting patients as we as local members have been hearing over the last few weeks.

No attention has been given to increasing patients

The Sarn Surgery catchment area continues to increase with housing developments continuing to take place locally. This proposal has not taken into account the increase in the population of the area and the possibility that the number of patients to the Sarn Surgery will increase over the next few years.


I, like a large number of the community, was surprised and disappointed with the proposal to close the surgery and the reasons for following this step are misleading. There is not enough effort to get appropriate doctors or to seek a constructive way forward to keep the surgery open by the Health Board. Identifying reasons such as flooding - which has not affected the building itself as it was placed at a higher level to avoid the flooding - is also misleading. The Sarn surgery building is good with a number of consultation rooms, a waiting area for patients and a very convenient and accessible car park. The polls show that patients are very happy with the service there.

The Sarn Surgery is a significant surgery in the center of the village and its community. It is a local, accessible, reliable service that has served the patients of Pontyates and the area faithfully for decades. Pontyates and the area is a significant area in terms of population that needs a local surgery to serve them.

I ask Hywel Dda Health Board to re-examine this proposal and withdraw it and look at all possible ways to ensure that the Sarn Surgery continues to offer a service to patients in the area and can remain open for years to come.

Appendix 15.4 Cllr Meinir James

Thank you
Meinir James

Cynghorydd | Councillor Meinir James 
Cynghorydd Sir Ward Llangydeyrn | County Councillor LlangydeyrnWard
Rhif ffon cyswllt | Contact phone number 07399 355790

Extract from email regarding Clinical Services Plan :

The potential closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn GP surgery in Pontyates would displace more than 4,300 patients to neighbouring surgeries already under considerable pressure. The reality will be longer waits, increased difficulty in securing appointments, and rising demand across primary care. Llanelli-based GP practices are already operating at — and many would say beyond — capacity. Appointment books fill within minutes. Patients speak of repeated attempts just to try and get through on the phone at 8am. GP Practices already manage high patient lists, workforce shortages, and increasingly complex needs. To suggest that thousands more patients can just simply be absorbed at other locations without any consequence at all is just not credible.

Appendix 15.6 Cllr Tyssul Evans

From: Cllr. Tyssul Evans <WTEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 02 April 2026 16:55

To: Nichola Couceiro (Hywel Dda UHB - Head of Engagement) <Nichola.Couceiro@wales.nhs.uk>; Hyweldda Engagement (Hywel Dda UHB - Hywel Dda Engagement Mailbox) <Hyweldda.Engagement@wales.nhs.uk>

Cc: Cllr. Meinir James <MeJames@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Cllr. Alex Evans <AlexEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Linda Williams <lindawilliams.hirael@icloud.com>; 'delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com' <delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com>

Subject: Meddygfa Sarn Pontiets SA15 5TL

WARNING: This email originated from outside of NHS Wales. Do not open links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

NEGES AT SYLW Alwena, Nichola, Anna Scourfield, Gemma Evans, Mark Henwood ac aelodau perthnasol arall o Fwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda.

Diolch am y cyfle i ymateb i'r papur ymgysylltu diweddar ynglyn a bwriad Bwrdd Iechyd Hywel Dda i GAU'R gwasaneth iechyd yn Meddygfa Sarn, Pontiets. SA15 5TR.

Fel un o'r ddau Gybghorydd Sir dros Gymuned Llangyndeyrn 'rwy'n gresynnu at y bwriad hollol anheg hyn. 'rwyf eisioes wedi mynychu'r tri sesiwn ymgysylltu ac wedi gwneud fy nheimpladau cryfion yn y tri ohonynt ond dymunaf restru rhai o sylwadau / pwyntiau pellach.

1. Fel un o gleifion Meddygfa Sarn, a hynny ers dros 55 mlynedd dim ond canmoliaeth allai roi i'r staff a'r gwahanol feddygon dros y cyfnod hir hwnnw. Fel mae'n digwydd bod 'rwyf wedi mynychu'r feddygfa yn wythnosol yn ddiweddar ac ar adegau yn ddyddiol i weld y Nyrs a'r doctoriaid dros y pymtheg mis diwethaf a phob tro 'rwyf dim ond wedi teimlo caredigrwydd a chefnogaeth ar bob achlysur 'rwyf wedi bod yno. Dim ond canmoliaeth allai roi iddynt bob un.
2. Mewn ymateb i rhai o osodiadau hollol anheg y Bwrdd lle maent yn dweud fod y feddygfa ar ei ffurf bresennol yn rhy fach, wel dyna beth yw gosodiad camarweiniol. Ma' oleiaf chwech ystafell yn y feddygfa ym Mhontiets sydd i gymharu a nifer llai yn meddygfa Coalbrook Pontyberem.
3. Ma'r Bwrdd yn dweud fod llifogydd yn effeithio ar y feddygfa, ac unwaith eto dyna esgus arall a NID rheswm. Sdim llif wedi bod yn y feddygfa o gwbl, oes ma' dwr wedi cronnu yn maes parcio'r staff yn y cefn ar achlysuron yn dilyn glaw trwm ond SDIM diferyn yn, neu wedi effeithio ar yr adeilad ei hunan.
4. I gymharu a meddygfeydd Minafon Cydweli a Coalbrook Pontyberem ma' 'na ddigoned o lefydd parcio i gleifion i barcio o flaen y feddygfa ym Mhontiets ac os fydd angen llefydd parcio ychwanegol fel sydd yn digwydd ambell dro yna ma' maes parcio Cyngor Sir Gâr reit gyferbyn a'r feddygfa lle gall cleifion barcio a hynny yn rhad ac am ddim.
5. Yn gohebiaeth y Bwrdd Iechyd maent yn honni ei bod yn cyflenwi gwasaneth gofalgaf i'r holl gleifion. Wel dyna beth yw gosodiad arall anheg a chamarweiniol. Os fydd y Bwrdd yn llwyddo gyda'i bwriad i gau'r feddygfa ym Mhontiets yna dyna fydd engrafft arall o 'ganoli' gwasanethau yn hytrach na 'datganoli' gwasanethau i'r cleifion yn y gymuned lle maent yn byw.
6. Shwd yn y byd ma'r Bwrdd Iechyd yn disgwyl i gleifion o'r Meinciau a Phontiets yn enwedig yr henoed, yr anabl a phlant bach fynychu meddygfeydd Cydweli a Phontyberem heb fod unrhyw fath o drefnidiaeth cyhoeddus ar gael ? Yr unig ffordd all cleifion y ddau bentref hynny gyrraedd Pontyberem yw trafeilio ar drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus o'i cartrefu wrth ddal bws 197 yn gyntaf i Lanelli neu Caerfyrddin ac yna newid bws yn y un o'r trefu hynny a mynd ar yr X11 nôl am Gydweli trwy bentrefi Porth Tywyn a Phenbre - taith o dros 20 milltir un ffordd neu o Gaeryrddin heibio Cwmffrwrda Llandyfaelog. Wedyn os ydynt am fynd i'r feddygfa ym Mhontyberem rhaid fydd iddynt ddal y bws 197 i Lanelli neu Caerfyrddin, wedyn wedi iddynt gyrraedd un o'r ddwy dref hynny newid bws a mynd ar y gwasaneth 195 am Bontyberem, taith o tua 22 milltir un ffordd.
7. A beth am gleifion pentref Carwe ? - dim gwasaneth cyhoeddus o'r pentref i Bontyberem na Chydweli ac yn yr un modd a phentrefwyr Pontiets a'r Meinciau rhaid iddynt fynd i Lanelli neu Caerfyrddin yn gyntaf cyn cyrraedd Pontyberem neu Cydweli. Sdim hyd yn oed gwasaneth bws o Garwe i Gydweli. Rheswm NID esgus pan fod y syniad yn un gwallgo.

Appendix 15.6 Cllr Tyssul Evans

8. A sdim ystyriaeth wedi ei roi o ran y nifer o dai sydd yn cael eu hadeiladu ar hyn o bryd ym Mhontiets, Meinciau a Carwe : stad o 18 o dai yn cael eu codi yn y Meinciau) tri ohonynt wedi eu cwblhau ac yn barod i'w gwerthu), stad arall o 16 o dai ar fin dechrau ar dir tu ol Limegrove, Heol y Meinciau Pontiets yn ogystal a nifer sylweddol o dai yn cael eu hadeiladu ar dir Ffoslas Carwe.
9. A beth am y pwysau ychwanegol fydd cau posib Meddygfa Sarn yn ddodi ar feddygfeydd arall gyda tua 1,000 ychwanegol o gleifion yn gorfod symud i feddygfa Minafon yng Nghydweli, 3,000 ychwanegol i feddygfa Coalbrook ym Mhontyberem a thros 300 i feddygfeydd arall yn Llanelli a Chaerfyrddin ?
10. A beth am y pwysau ychwanegol ar Adranau Damweiniau a Brys yn ysbytau Glangwili Caerfyrddin ac Ysbyty Bryngwyn Mawr yn Llanelli tase Bwrdd Hywel Dda yn perswadio aelodau'r Bwrdd i gytuno a'r argymhelliad o gau Meddygfa Sarn ?
11. Ers cyhoeddi'r bygythiad i gau Meddygfa Sarn dros dri mis yn ol 'rwyf wedi derbyn nifer fawr o alwadau boed ar ffurff e-bost, ar stepen drws yn fy nghartref yn ogystal a mewn gwahanol ddigwyddiadau yn ein pentrefi allai ddweud yn hollo lonest and wyf wedi cwrdd ac UNRHYW unigolyn sydd yn cytuno a bwriad y Bwrdd Iechyd.
12. Mae'r bygythiad hyn wedi creu gofidhollol ddiangen i lu o drigolion yr ardal, ac yn wir wedi rhoi pwysau ychwanegol ar broblemau iechyd a iechyd meddwl nifer fawr o gleifion y feddygfa.

Diolch

Tyssul Evans (Cynghorydd Sir)

From: Cllr. Tyssul Evans <WTEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 02 April 2026 16:55

To: Nichola Couceiro (Hywel Dda UHB - Head of Engagement) <Nichola.Couceiro@wales.nhs.uk>; Hyweldda Engagement (Hywel Dda UHB - Hywel Dda Engagement Mailbox) <Hyweldda.Engagement@wales.nhs.uk>

Cc: Cllr. Meinir James <MeJames@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Cllr. Alex Evans <AlexEvans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk>; Linda Williams <lindawilliams.hirael@icloud.com>; 'delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com' <delyth.thomas12@btinternet.com>

Subject: Meddygfa Sarn Pontiets SA15 5TL

WARNING: This email originated from outside of NHS Wales. Do not open links or attachments unless you know the content is safe.

MESSAGE FOR THE ATTENTION of Alwena, Nichola, Anna Scourfield, Gemma Evans, Mark Henwood and other relevant members of Hywel Dda Health Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the recent engagement paper regarding Hywel Dda Health Board's intention to CLOSE the health service at Sarn Surgery, Pontyates. SA15 5TR.

As one of the two County Councillors for the Community of Llangyndeyrn I regret these completely unfair intentions. I have already attended the three engagement sessions and have made my strong feelings in all three of them but I wish to list some further comments / points.

1. As a patient of Sarn Surgery, for over 55 years, I could only praise the staff and the various doctors over that long period. As it happens I have attended the surgery weekly recently and at times daily to see the Nurse and the doctors over the last fifteen months and every time I have only felt kindness and support on every occasion I have been there. I can only give them all praise.
2. In response to some of the Board's completely unfair statements where they say that the surgery in its current form is too small, well that is what a misleading statement is. There are at least six rooms in the surgery in Pontyates which is to be compared with a smaller number in the Coalbrook Pontyberem surgery.

Appendix 15.6 Cllr Tyssul Evans

3. The Board says that flooding affects the surgery, and once again that is another excuse and NOT a reason. There has been no flood in the surgery at all, yes water has accumulated in the staff car park at the back on occasions following heavy rain but NOT a drop inside, or has affected the building itself.
4. To compare with Minafon Kidwelly and Coalbrook Pontyberem surgeries there are not enough parking spaces for patients to park in front of the surgery in Pontyates and if additional parking spaces are needed as happens occasionally then there is a Carmarthenshire Council car park right opposite the surgery where patients can park free of charge.
5. In the Health Board's correspondence they claim that it supplies a caring service to all patients. Well that's another unfair and misleading statement. If the Board succeeds in its intention to close the surgery in Pontyates then that will be another example of 'centralising' services rather than 'decentralising' services to the patients in the community where they live.
6. How in the world does the Health Board expect patients from Meinciau and Pontyates especially the elderly, the disabled and small children to attend Kidwelly and Pontyberem surgeries without any type of public transport available? The only way patients from those two villages can reach Pontyberem is to travel by public transport from their home by first catching bus 197 to Llanelli or Carmarthen and then changing buses in one of those towns and going on the X11 back to Kidwelly through the villages of Burry Port and Pembrey - a journey of over 20 miles one way or from Carmarthen past Cwmffrwd and Llandyfaelog. Then if they want to go to the surgery in Pontyberem they will have to catch bus 197 to Llanelli or Carmarthen, then when they have arrived in one of those two towns change buses and go on service 195 for Pontyberem, a journey of about 22 miles one way.
7. And what about the patients of Carway village? - no public service from the village to Pontyberem or Kidwelly and in the same way as the villagers of Pontyates and Meinciau must go to Llanelli or Carmarthen first before reaching Pontyberem or Kidwelly. There's not even a bus service from Carway to Kidwelly. Reason NOT an excuse when the idea is crazy.
8. And consideration has not been given in terms of the number of houses that are currently being built in Pontyates, Meinciau and Carway: an estate of 18 houses being built in Meinciau (three of which have been completed and are ready to be sold), another estate of 16 houses is about to start on land behind Limegrove, Heol y Meinciau Pontyates as well as a significant number of houses being built on the land of Ffos Las Carway.
9. And what about the additional pressure the possible closure of Sarn Surgery will place on other surgeries with around 1,000 additional patients having to move to Minafon surgery in Kidwelly, an additional 3,000 to Coalbrook surgery in Pontyberem and over 300 to other surgeries in Llanelli and Carmarthen?
10. And what about the additional pressure on the Accident and Emergency Departments at Glangwili Carmarthen and Bryngwyn Mawr Hospital in Llanelli if the Hywel Dda Board persuades the Board members to agree with the recommendation to close Sarn Surgery?
11. Since announcing the threat to close Sarn Surgery over three months ago I have received a large number of calls whether in the form of e-mail, on the doorstep at my home as well as at various events in our villages I could honestly say that I have not met ANY individual who agrees with the Health Board's intention.
12. These threats have created unnecessary distress for many residents of the area, and have indeed put additional pressure on the health and mental health problems of a large number of the surgery's patients.

Thank you

Tyssul Evans (County Councillor)

Appendix 15.7 Joyce Watson, MS

From: Madge, Kevin (Staff Cymorth yr Aelod | Member Support Staff)

<Kevin.Madge@Senedd.Wales>

Sent: 16 February 2026 12:13

To: (Hywel Dda UHB -Assistant Director of Corporate Legal Services and Public Affairs)

Subject: FW: Urgent Appeal to Support Meddygfa'r Sarn and Oppose Closure

Dear

We received this email from Ms. Redacted regarding the proposed closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn Surgery in Pontyates and the proposal of relocating 4,300 patients to other practices if the closure goes ahead.

Ms Redacted would like a genuine consultation of alternatives regarding the closure and would like clear answers on recruitment efforts, premises options, lease issues, and GP expressions of interest.

She also calls for a transparent and independent review of the process for continued GP provision serving Potyates and surrounding communities.

I would be grateful if you could investigate these matters raised in the Email from Ms Redacted in the hope that this proposed closure can be avoided for the community of Pontyates and surrounding areas.

Regards

Kevin



Kevin Madge
COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER/
CASEWORKER TO JOYCE WATSON MS

Kevin.Madge@senedd.wales
www.joycewatson.org.uk
(0300) 200 7093

Kevin Madge
SWYDDOG CYSWLLT CYMUNEDOL/
GWEITHIWR ACHOS JOYCE WATSON AS

Kevin.Madge@senedd.cymru
www.joycewatson.org.uk
(0300) 200 7093

Welsh Labour **Llafur Cymru**
Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament



Any of the statements or comments made above should be regarded as personal and not necessarily those of the Welsh Parliament, any constituent part or connect body.

Appendix 15.7 Joyce Watson, MS

Dylai unrhyw ddatganiadau neu sylwadau uchod gael eu trin fel rhai personol ac nid o reidrwydd fel datganiadau new sylwadau gan y Senedd Cymru, unrhywn ran ohoni neu unrhywn gorff sy'n gysylltiedig a hi.

From: Redacted

Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 10:49:57 PM

To: Watson, Joyce (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd)

<Joyce.Watson@senedd.wales>

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Support Meddygfa'r Sarn and Oppose Closure

Dear Joyce Watson MS,

I am writing as a constituent living in Ponthenri to ask for your urgent support in opposing the proposed closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn in Pontyates by Hywel Dda University Health Board.

This issue is of particular concern to residents here in Ponthenri because we lost our own village surgery many years ago when the practice that operated from the hall closed. Since then, access to GP services has been more difficult and transport links remain poor. Buses are infrequent, with gaps of around two hours between return journeys. If Meddygfa'r Sarn closes and patients are dispersed further afield, many people without cars — especially older and vulnerable residents — will face real barriers to accessing primary care.

It is understood that around 4,300 patients could be redistributed to other practices if the closure goes ahead, and local councillors have said they have lost all confidence in the Health Board's process. Most concerning is the reported confirmation that alternatives to closure will not be considered as part of the engagement exercise. Learning that alternatives to closure will not be considered as part of the engagement was, in our view, the final straw. A process that rules out alternatives from the outset cannot be regarded as fair or meaningful consultation.

I would also like to place on record how highly many of us value Meddygfa'r Sarn and its staff. As a patient with chronic conditions, I rely heavily on the surgery and its team, who do an excellent job under difficult circumstances. Patients are treated with care and respect, and it is very upsetting to feel that both staff and patients are being let down.

There are several specific points which I believe deserve scrutiny:

- Allegations about flood risk at the surgery site appear to be unfounded. While the road outside has flooded in the past, the surgery building itself is raised above floor level and, to local knowledge, has not flooded internally.

Appendix 15.7 Joyce Watson, MS

- Claims have circulated locally and on social media that GPs have expressed interest in taking over the practice and have written to the Health Board but received no reply. If true, this should be independently verified.
- The last recruitment attempt for doctors was reportedly over a year ago. If GP shortage is being cited as a reason for closure, why have there been no recent and active recruitment efforts?
- There appears to have been more focus on recruiting a salaried GP rather than seeking new partners to run the practice.
- The lack of a practice manager has also been mentioned as a factor — yet the role was not widely advertised. It is difficult to understand how this can justify closure if proper recruitment steps were not taken.

If the building's size or condition is being cited as a reason for closure, why have no suitable alternative premises been seriously proposed? There are potential local options, such as the redundant former day centre opposite, and if Pontyates Primary School closes as proposed, that building may soon be available. From a patient perspective, no realistic alternatives to closure appear to have been publicly explored.

I am also concerned about the impact on neighbouring surgeries. When the Pontyates practice partners handed back their contract in 2017, Coalbrook Surgery reportedly closed their lists and did not want additional patients from this area because they were already struggling to cope. I have been told there were signs stating they were not accepting new patients in anticipation of an influx from Meddygfa'r Sarn. Even now, friends registered with Coalbrook report that it is extremely difficult to get an appointment. Redistributing thousands more patients risks worsening access across the whole area.

Many patients feel there have been no genuine attempts to save the practice and that closure is being treated as inevitable rather than a last resort. There is also a strong local belief that the approaching lease expiry is a key driver behind the decision, despite the leaseholders — the former GPs — being supportive of the community and wanting the surgery to remain open. Greater transparency on this point would be welcome.

My grandfather was a lifelong Labour supporter and a miner who believed strongly in the Labour movement's commitment to working communities and public services. He always welcomed Labour representatives warmly, displayed signs outside his home, and believed deeply in protecting community infrastructure like local healthcare. I would be very grateful if you could honour those values by giving this issue your full attention and fighting for our surgery — which is truly the heart of the community.

I respectfully ask that you:

Appendix 15.7 Joyce Watson, MS

- Raise these concerns directly with Hywel Dda University Health Board and Welsh Government ministers
- Press for a genuine consultation that includes consideration of alternatives to closure
- Seek clear answers on recruitment efforts, premises options, lease issues, and GP expressions of interest
- Support calls for a transparent and independent review of the process
- Advocate strongly for continued GP provision serving Pontyates and surrounding communities including Ponthenri

Thank you for your time. I would be very grateful for your support and your response.

Yours sincerely,

Redacted

**CYNGOR TREF CYDWELI
KIDWELLY TOWN COUNCIL**

Swyddfeydd y Cyngor
Canolfan Gwennlian
Filas Caerbryn
Cydweli
Sir Gâr
SA17 4UL



Council Offices
Gwennlian Centre
Hillfield Villas
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☎ 01554 890203
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Website: www.kidwelly.gov.uk

Corporate Offices
Second Floor
Block C
Government Buildings
Picton Terrace
Carmarthen, SA31 3BT

Dear Sir

Re: Closure of Meddygra's Sarn and potential traffic and parking impact associated with the redirection of patients to Meddygfa Minafon

Kidwelly Town Council wishes to express its concerns regarding the potential increase in traffic volume and parking demand within Kidwelly and the surrounding area should patients from Meddygfa'r Sarn Surgery be redirected to Meddygfa Minafon Surgery.

We understand that the proposed withdrawal of services at Meddygfa'r Sarn Surgery may lead to a significant number of patients being transferred to Meddygfa Minafon. Such a change carries potential implications for the local transport network, including:

- **Increased traffic flows** along the approach routes to Meddygfa Minafon, including lanes not designed to accommodate higher levels of regular vehicular movement;
- **Parking pressures** at and around the Meddygfa Minafon Surgery , where capacity is already limited at peak times;
- **Safety concerns** for pedestrians, particularly those accessing the surgery on foot from nearby residential areas;
- **Potential congestion** affecting residents, local businesses, school routes, and emergency vehicle access

Kidwelly Town Council has already requested that Carmarthenshire County Council consider the potential impacts on Kidwelly and Meddygfa'r Sarn Surgery as part of the consultation process.

/overleaf...

The council asked that a **comprehensive traffic and parking assessment** be undertaken, taking into account:

1. Projected additional patient numbers;
2. Modal transport choices likely to be used;
3. Existing parking and highway constraints.
4. Any mitigation that may be necessary to maintain safe and efficient access to local services.

In addition to this matter, councillors expressed concern at the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th March about the consultation process and expressed their hope that, in the interests of transparency, the decision hasn't already been made to close Meddygfa'r Sarn. They stated their expectation that the evidence gathered during this consultation period will fully inform any decision about the surgery's future.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Yours faithfully,



Jacinta Bell
Acting Town Clerk
Kidwelly Town Council

LEE WATERS

Aelod o'r Senedd dros
Etholaeth Llanelli

—
Member of the Senedd for
Llanelli Constituency

Senedd Cymru

Yr Hen Festri, Stryd y Bont, Porth Tywyn, SA16 0NR
Lee.waters@senedd.cymru

Welsh Parliament

The Old Vestry, Bridge Street, Burry Port, SA16 0NR
Lee.waters@senedd.wales

01554 774902 

@amanwy 

leeforllanelli 

17 02 2025

Dear Mr Kloer,

I am writing regarding the proposed closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn in Pontyates, about which I have received a significant number of concerned representations from constituents.

There is deep concern locally that closure is being treated as a foregone conclusion rather than a last resort. Patients have raised serious and credible questions about the consultation process being followed, including whether genuine alternatives to closure are being considered at all. If it is the case that alternatives have been ruled out in advance, this calls into question the fairness and integrity of the engagement exercise.

I am also concerned by the lack of clarity around recruitment efforts. Constituents report that there has been no recent visible attempt to recruit new GPs or partners, despite workforce issues being cited as a justification for closure. Claims that expressions of interest from GPs have not been responded to, and that key roles such as practice manager were not properly advertised, require clear and evidenced answers.

Questions have also been raised about the rationale relating to the building itself, including assertions about flooding risk and suitability, which local knowledge strongly disputes. It is not apparent that alternative local premises have been seriously explored, despite options existing within the community.

Given the potential impact on access to primary care for thousands of patients, and the knock-on effects for neighbouring practices that are already under strain, I expect full transparency from the Health Board. I am asking you to set out clearly what steps have been taken to retain



GP provision in Pontyates, what alternatives to closure have been assessed, and how patient feedback will influence the final decision.

I would be grateful for a substantive response addressing these points.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LW', written over a light grey grid background.

Lee Waters MS/AS

Appendix 15.10 Llandyfaelog Community Council

Dear all,

Llandyfaelog Community Council would wish to note its opposition to the proposals being made in relation to Meddygfa'r Sarn in Pontyates. The suggestions to transfer patients to Coalbrook Surgery in Pontyberem or Meddygfa Minafon in Kidwelly appear to be unworkable with a complete lack of available public transport links for patients and the already incredibly busy conditions at both these surgeries which lead to difficulties already being experienced by patients in attempting to obtain appointments. The Community Council has very serious concerns in relation to the consequent impact on the patients of Meddygfa'r Sarn and of the current patients at Ponytberem and Kidwelly. Please can we therefore receive confirmation that the Council's objections are noted?

Best wishes Arfon, Arfon Davies,

Clerc / Clerk, Cyngor Cymuned Llandyfaelog Community Council

Dame NIA GRIFFITH DBE MP

Member of Parliament for Llanelli

Aelod Seneddol dros Lanelli

Email: nia.griffith.mp@parliament.uk

Website: www.niagriffith.org.uk

Facebook: [Nia Griffith MP](#) / Twitter: [@NiaGriffithMP](#)



12th February 2026

Dr Neil Wooding, Chair of the Hywel Dda University Health Board

Dr Philip Kloer, Chief Executive of the Hywel Dda University Health Board

Re: possible closure of Pontyates surgery

Residents in Pontyates are understandably very concerned that the Hywel Dda University Health Board are considering closing Meddygfa'r Sarn surgery in Pontyates.

The surgery is conveniently situated on the main road between Carmarthen and Llanelli, on a regular bus route, with the pharmacy and shop opposite. Patients have told me how they would find the journey to the proposed alternatives in Pontyberem or Kidwelly difficult or impossible.

I would stress very strongly to the Board the need to keep a daily surgery open in Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontyates.

To provide this, if there is no viable option for a standalone surgery, I would ask the Board to look again at their Option two in their report of 29th January 2026, namely that, as it is the Health Board that already runs the Kidwelly Surgery, a daily surgery in Meddygfa'r Sarn could be provided by an outreach service from Kidwelly Surgery, similar to the branch surgery in Trimsaran which is also run from Kidwelly surgery.

The option that many of the patients would be "dispersed" to Pontyberem is not viable for many. The 195 bus which serves the Heol Llanelli side only goes once every two hours to Pontyberem, and the 197 which serves the Meinciau side of Pontyates does not go to Pontyberem and the timetable does not meet up with the 195.

Yours sincerely,



Dame Nia Griffith DBE MP

Etholaeth/Constituency
43 Pottery Street,
Llanelli,
SA15 1SU
01554 756374

San Steffan/Westminster
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA
020 7219 4903

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES,
MYRDDIN
Church and Society Committee

FAO:

Chief Executive and Members of Hywel Dda University Health Board

It was with disappointment that the above Committee heard of the Health Board's intention to close the Sarn Surgery in Pontiets (SA15 5TR). This causes considerable distress to the population of Cwm Gwendraeth who are concerned if this happens. How they are going to get medical care in their community? I therefore write stating our concern as follows in the hope that you will consider it deeply before reaching your final decision.

- There was disappointment in the first place on how the health board announced the above intention, that is, the population finding out on the social media which to some extent showed a lack of respect for the population in general.
- Uniting the reasons said to be closed to say the Surgery is in a flood risk area but the committee would like to know what evidence there is that water has entered the Surgery.
- It is also said that there is a lack of doctors for the Sarn Clinic. On the other hand there was information that Nantyglo is expanding with the intention of employing more doctors? If there is truth in this, would it be an idea for the Health Board to support Nantyglo in order to ensure a medical service using the Sarn building?
- Concern regarding the lack of transport between Pontiets and Nantyglo in Pontyberem and Pontiets and Minafon in Cydweli - 'There is no bus connection between these villages. How do elderly people without transport want to get to the surgery?
- A further concern from the over 70-year-old population who are still driving at the moment is if it becomes law to have to re-take a driving test. This will cause more of a problem because these will also be dependent on public transport therefore, the demand for it will increase.

- Concerned about getting appointments in surgeries which are already under pressure with current patients saying it is difficult to get an appointment to see a doctor. This will possibly create more of a problem with patients turning to the Emergency Department in the hospital which is already under stress, thus creating more of a problem in that department.
- The large increase in patients arriving at the door of Nantyglo or Minafon in one wave will place a great demand on the reception staff. After all, the reception staff already get a bit of an aggressive response from some of their current patients so it can create more bad feeling.
- House building work can be seen going on in every village across the Gwendraeth Valley. The population is expected to increase, and if history follows, a large proportion of the residents will be retired people. Before long these will need medical care, so will the resources you suggest be suitable to meet their needs in the future? We have been waiting a long time for the new health centre in Cross Hands and we had the pleasure of seeing the final plans on display in the Tumble Hall in July 2019. Unfortunately it is now understood that re-planning is needed and that for a smaller building which does not make much sense? For us, the public, this shows that there has been a great waste of energy, time and money from the public coffers.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Professor Phil Kloer
Chief Executive
Hywel Dda University Health Board
Ystwyth Building
Hafan Derwen,
St Davids Park
Job's Well Road
Carmarthen
SA31 3BB

CC: Copy to Jeremy Miles MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

13 March 2026

Dear Professor Kloer,

Petition P-06-1575 Protect GP services at Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontyates

The Petitions Committee met on 2 March and considered the above petition, submitted by Clare Treharne.

The Committee expressed sympathy with the petitioners and acknowledged their concerns and the significant attention the petition had brought to the issue. It was noted that it was an ongoing issue subject to local consultation and decision-making. The Committee agreed to write to you as Chief Executive of the Hywel Dda University Health Board with the petitioners' questions to seek clarification on the consultation timing, fairness, and whether alternative arrangements had been properly considered. The correspondence will be shared with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care. Having done so, the Committee agreed to thank the petitioners for raising the issue and close the petition.

The full details of the Committee's consideration of the petition, including the correspondence and the actions agreed by the Committee can be found here: [P-06-1575 Protect GP services at Meddygfa'r Sarn, Pontyates](#).

I would be grateful if you could send your response by e-mail to the clerking team at petitions@senedd.wales.



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn". The script is cursive and fluid.

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Evidence Submission to the Senedd Petitions Committee

Re: Proposed Closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn Surgery

Consultation by Hywel Dda University Health Board (Closing 6 April 2026)

1. Introduction

We submit this evidence as a newly formed community working group. We have had only a few weeks to gather documentation and analyse the available material. This submission therefore represents early-stage evidence and we anticipate providing a full report at the end of the Hywel Dda public engagement period.

This submission concerns the proposal by Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) to close Meddygfa'r Sarn Surgery, which currently serves approximately 4,300 patients (4,347 registered patients as confirmed in the January 2026 Board Paper, Figure 3).

We respectfully request that the Petitions Committee examine:

- The impact of the proposed closure on a rural and vulnerable population;
 - The adequacy, fairness and openness of the consultation process;
 - Whether closure is genuinely a last resort after alternatives have been explored;
 - The implications for democratic accountability and public confidence.
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2. Background and Community Context

Meddygfa'r Sarn serves a rural population characterised by:

- Limited and infrequent public transport;
- High reliance on private vehicles for essential services;
- Pockets of deprivation;
- An ageing patient demographic.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD 2019 & 2025) shows that access to services is consistently the worst scoring domain across all local LSOAs within the area.

Access to primary care in rural Wales is not a matter of convenience — it is a determinant of health equality.

3. Demographic Profile and Age Characteristics

The Health Board's own report (January 2026 Board Paper, Figure 3) confirms that Meddygfa'r Sarn serves 4,347 registered patients.

The age distribution demonstrates a significant proportion of patients within older age bands, particularly:

- 60–64
- 65–69
- 70–74
- 75–79
- 80+

The demographic profile is not weighted toward younger working-age adults but reflects a substantial older population cohort.

Older patients are statistically more likely to:

- Live with chronic conditions;
- Require more frequent GP contact;
- Experience mobility limitations;
- Be reliant on public transport or family support.

In this context, the removal of a locally accessible GP practice would disproportionately affect those with the greatest clinical need and the least travel flexibility.

Any decision to disperse the patient list should therefore include a clear, published assessment of the impact on older residents and those with age-related mobility or health challenges.

4. Strategic Planning and Population Growth

The Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (2018–2033) provides for approximately 9,704 new homes, 550 within our area, over a 15-year period. Development is concentrated in key growth areas, with Service Centres identified to ensure sustainable communities.

Within the catchment of Meddygfa'r Sarn, designated Service Centres include:

- Pontyates/Meincau
- Trimsaran
- Pontyberem

The period 2018–2033 broadly overlaps with the period during which Meddygfa'r Sarn experienced instability under Health Board management.

While housing delivery has progressed — including development at Ffos Las and other sites — there has not been corresponding visible investment in primary care infrastructure. Over the Plan period some 550 new houses could be built without any increase in GP provision, with up to 93 new homes in Pontyates alone.

The issue extends beyond a single village and must be assessed across the wider catchment area.

The County Council has fulfilled its statutory duty to allocate sufficient land for housing. However, healthcare infrastructure planning must align with that growth. Withdrawing a GP surgery from a designated Service Centre during a period of population increase appears inconsistent with sustainable development principles.

Public bodies in Wales are subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Decisions should support cohesive communities, prevention and long-term resilience. Closure risks undermining those objectives.

5. Impact on Vulnerable Patients and Transport Barriers

Redistribution of 4,300 patients to neighbouring practices would result in:

- Longer journey times;

- Increased missed appointments;
- Reduced preventative engagement;
- Deterioration in chronic condition management.

Bus services can be up to two hours apart, with last return journeys typically around 5:00–5:30pm.

Example journeys (from the existing surgery):

- Ashgrove – uphill walk, 30-minute bus, further 11-minute walk;
- Pontyberem (Coalbrook Road) – 38-minute bus, two buses for patients on the 197 route, plus walking;
- Minafon (Kidwelly) – multi-stage journey, approximately 3-hour round trip minimum.

The 08:00 call-back system is incompatible with these transport constraints.

For elderly, disabled, low-income patients or carers with children, these journeys are not merely inconvenient — they are often impracticable.

6. Pressure on Neighbouring Practices

The proposed redistribution of approximately 4,300 patients raises significant capacity and quality considerations.

The Health Board report acknowledges that Meddygfa'r Sarn is the smallest practice in the Cluster. However, it does not provide detailed comparative analysis demonstrating that neighbouring practices have confirmed workforce capacity, estate space, and governance resilience to absorb substantial additional demand without impacting access standards.

Recent inspection findings at neighbouring practices have identified governance, safeguarding, storage and workforce challenges. Four-week waits for face-to-face GP appointments have also been reported in the Cluster.

In this context, transferring a large patient cohort into already stretched environments risks compounding existing operational pressures.

It is notable that the merger option with Meddygfa Minafon was considered potentially viable by the Vacant Practice Panel but discounted due to concerns about configuration across multiple sites and required investment.

This suggests that continuation of services at Pontyates as part of a reconfigured cluster model was not inherently unworkable, but would require appropriate planning and resource alignment.

Closure and dispersal should not be regarded as the only sustainable outcome where alternative stabilisation or satellite arrangements could preserve local access while addressing workforce and estate challenges in a phased manner.

7. Workforce Recruitment and Locum Dependency

The Board report states that Meddygfa'r Sarn is "entirely locum-dependent" and that this presents a sustainability concern. It further notes that 49% of projected pay expenditure relates to locum GP sessions.

While reliance on locum GPs is clearly not ideal as a long-term model, it is important to consider this in the wider workforce context. Locum use is widespread across Wales due to national GP recruitment pressures.

The report does not provide:

- Comparative data on locum usage across other practices in the Amman Gwendraeth Cluster;
- Evidence that Meddygfa'r Sarn's locum reliance is materially higher than neighbouring practices;
- Analysis of whether temporary locum reliance could be stabilised through active recruitment or partnership models.

Following publicity about closure, four GPs contacted the community expressing interest. One has formally written to the Health Board considering to take on the practice as a partnership.

It is unclear why substantive GP roles have not been visibly advertised over the past year.

During engagement regarding the proposed closure of Meddygfa'r Sarn, one GP advised that they had expressed a willingness to support the practice. They stated "I volunteered to go there as part of my current role but the health board seem set in closing in". The GP further commented on the current staffing position, noting, "They are actually well staffed on 'permanent' locums, I am lead to believe and haven't advertised for permanent staff".

In the absence of comparative workforce data and transparent recruitment evidence, it is difficult to conclude that locum dependency alone justifies permanent dispersal of 4,300 patients.

8. Estates, Maintenance and Building Viability

Inspection reports in 2017 and 2018 identified maintenance and governance issues while the practice was under Health Board management. The 2018 follow-up noted repeated contact with the Health Board estates department, with many matters outstanding.

Landlord Position and Lease

We have engaged directly with the landlords.

They have informed us that:

- Certain issues cited in inspection reports were not formally raised with them;
- They would have been willing to rectify such matters if notified;
- Rent has not been increased for ten years;
- Lease expiry is not a barrier — they are willing to extend or renew without rent increase;
- They own adjacent land and would consider expansion proposals.

Under the lease, some maintenance responsibilities fall to the Health Board. Issues within its control appear not to have been resolved.

Flood Risk Clarification

While mapping by Natural Resources Wales identifies medium river flood risk in the wider area, the surgery itself has never flooded. It was purpose-built on a raised plinth specifically to mitigate flood risk.

Historic Functionality

The building operated effectively for many years prior to Health Board management. Having reviewed building plans and historical operation, it is difficult to conclude that the premises are inherently unsuitable.

The more plausible explanation is either under-utilisation of space or deficiencies in estate and operational management.

Closure appears disproportionate to remediable estate issues.

9. Managed List Dispersal and Pre-Consultation Recommendation

The Vacant Practice Panel report (October 2025) indicates that the preferred option was “managed list dispersal” of the Meddygfa’r Sarn patient list, with a proposed implementation date of 30 June 2026.

The report states:

“There have been strong indications given to the Health Board by Coalbrook Surgery in Pontyberem that they are proactively interested in growing their list sizes to future-proof their own sustainability...”

This wording suggests that Coalbrook Surgery approached the Health Board expressing interest in increasing its patient list to secure its own sustainability. We have been unofficially told that this formed a significant part of the rationale for recommending dispersal.

It is unclear whether all neighbouring practices potentially affected by redistribution were formally consulted prior to the recommendation.

The report refers specifically to “strong indications” from Coalbrook Surgery but does not provide equivalent documentation evidencing feedback or structured consultation with other practices.

A managed dispersal of 4,300 patients would have material operational, workforce, governance and estate implications for multiple practices. It is difficult to understand how a recommendation could properly be formed without documented consultation with all affected providers.

We have also been informed that Coalbrook Surgery is not yet operationally ready to absorb additional patients, with building works still required before expansion can take place.

Patients of Meddygfa'r Sarn were not consulted prior to this recommendation being advanced.

A specific implementation date appears to have been identified prior to completion of public consultation.

Once patients are transferred to an independent contractor practice, they are no longer part of a Health Board-managed service. While oversight mechanisms exist, operational responsibility shifts to the contractor. This alters the governance relationship between patient and Health Board.

10. Internal Audit Findings and Strategic Context

An Internal Audit report (Managed Practices Final Report 2025/26) provided only “Reasonable” overall assurance, with “Limited” assurance regarding strategic planning for transitioning managed practices back to commissioned services.

The audit noted:

- The strategic vision for managed practices requires updating;
- It is unclear what the current strategic plans are;
- Risk management and financial oversight arrangements require improvement;
- Budgets are based on historic allocations not aligned to current requirements;
- Incomplete complaints oversight arrangements;
- Inconsistent risk management processes.

The audit also confirmed:

“A recommendation following a Vacant Practice Panel for Meddygfa'r Sarn will be considered by Board in January 2026.”

This indicates that a formal recommendation had progressed through internal governance mechanisms before public engagement commenced.

A major service change affecting over 4,000 patients should sit within a clearly articulated and updated managed practice strategy supported by robust alternatives appraisal.

11. Consultation, Engagement and Process Integrity

Concerns include:

- Internal recommendation progressing prior to public engagement;
- Consultation focusing on redistribution and mitigation rather than alternatives;
- Hywell Dda Survey design; requesting extensive equality data without clear explanation of safeguards; deterring participation. Community feedback indicates that; the approach was perceived as overly intrusive and appeared to focus more on data collection than on understanding the patient's perspective.
- Proposal becoming widely known via social media;
- Landlords reportedly not directly notified prior to publication;
- Possible cessation of blood collection services prior to consultation conclusion (unverified but concerning if accurate).

Correspondence from Llais West Wales (28 January 2026) stated:

- No prior conversations with the community regarding challenges at Meddygfa'r Sarn;
- The public had not been given opportunity to hear directly from the Health Board regarding findings;
- A Board decision at that stage would be premature and inconsistent with engagement duties.

These concerns align with those expressed locally.

12. Statutory Duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Act places statutory duties on public bodies including local health boards to apply five "ways of working":

1. Long-term
2. Prevention
3. Integration

4. Collaboration
5. Involvement

Application to this proposal raises questions regarding:

- Adequate long-term impact assessment;
- Prevention of worsening health inequalities;
- Integration with housing, transport and social care planning;
- Meaningful collaboration with stakeholders;
- Inclusive involvement of affected communities.

Failure to meaningfully demonstrate compliance risks undermining legal robustness.

13. Wider Welsh GP Context

The Wales Save Our Surgeries campaign reports:

- 100 practices closed since 2012;
- GP funding reduced by approximately 2.6% since 2005;
- 48% of GPs report compromised care due to workload;
- 95% feel negatively about the future of Welsh general practice.

This proposal must be viewed within that systemic context.

14. Community Engagement and Public Concern

The proposal has generated:

- Petition signatures submitted to this Committee;
- Public meetings;
- A dedicated Community Working Group and Volunteers group;
- Representations from local councillors who state they have “lost all confidence” in the process and warn that an independently overseen consultation may be required. <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/south-wales-evening-post/20260217/281629606728704>

There is strong local perception that the surgery is essential and viable.

15. Request to the Committee

We respectfully request that the Petitions Committee:

- Seek clarification regarding timing of the internal recommendation;
- Examine whether consultation meets required standards of fairness and openness;
- Assess whether estate and workforce alternatives have been properly explored;
- Consider whether independent review is warranted;
- Ensure rural access, housing growth and inequality impacts are fully assessed before any final decision.

This submission is provided in good faith and reflects the best evidence available at this early stage. We remain willing to provide further documentation as it becomes available.