



To:

Local Authorities

31 March 2023

Dear Colleagues,

**Establishment of “Llais” (the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care, Wales)**

I am pleased to inform you that the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 (the Act) will commence on 1 April. The last few years have been extremely challenging for those in health and social services and it is a great accomplishment by all involved, especially stakeholders, who have supported the implementation of this Act.

The Act sets out provisions on the establishment of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care Wales, its functions, general objective and powers. The Citizen Voice Body will operate under the name “Llais”.

From 1 April 2023, Llais will replace and build on the achievements of Community Health Councils in the healthcare system. It will work to strengthen and make a greater impact by amplifying the public’s voices to shape services and its remit will now include social care services.

Llais will be an independent national body that represents the people of Wales in shaping social care services. It is a major step towards the integration of social and health services and Llais will represent the views and experiences of people using services which are often so closely intertwined in people’s care.

Llais will work with local authorities, NHS bodies, and volunteer organisations, alongside the people of Wales to ensure people are continually heard and represented in their services.

The main aims for Llais will be to:

- listen to and represent the interests of the public, in all parts of Wales, in matters related to social and health services;
- support individuals throughout Wales with advice and assistance when making a complaint in relation to their care; and
- provide an effective mechanism to raise people’s experiences to drive improvement in services – influencing local, regional and national policy.

## **What this means for Local Authorities?**

The Act places duties on local authorities to:

- make arrangements to support Llais in seeking the views of the public;
- promote awareness of its activities amongst people who are receiving, or may receive, social or health services; and
- supply Llais with such information as it reasonably requests for the purposes of carrying out its functions.

Llais and local authorities must make arrangements to co-operate, with a view to supporting each other in the exercise of their relevant functions. In relation to Llais, these are its functions in seeking the views of the public in respect of health services and social services and taking steps to promote public awareness of Llais. In relation to local authorities these are functions in making arrangements to bring the activities of Llais to the attention of people who are receiving, or may receive, health services or social services, which local authorities and NHS bodies are subject to a duty to do.

To support this, Welsh Ministers will publish a Code of Practice about requests from Llais to enter health and social care premises to seek the views of individuals, and where access to those premises is agreed, engagement with individuals at those premises for that purpose. The Code of Practice on Access to Premises will be finalised ready for issue on or by 1 July 2023.

There will also be statutory guidance to which local authorities must have regard when dealing with representations made to them by Llais. It is anticipated that the statutory guidance will be issued on 3 April 2023.

Welsh Ministers intend that these activities of Llais will contribute to the goal of improving the health and well-being of the population and will help ensure those outcomes which are most important to people are brought to the attention of local authorities and our NHS, as the public bodies with statutory responsibility for the planning and delivery of our health and social care services. As organisations that provide or commission the vast majority of health and social care in Wales, you are best placed to take an overview of services in your area and will be most effective in compelling changes on the ground, including in response to the matters raised in representations.

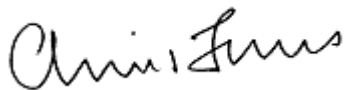
Strengthening the citizen voice in health and social care supports key wellbeing principles and helps deliver on Welsh Ministers' vision for 'A Healthier Wales', where the voices of citizens are continuously engaged and listened to in public services. Listening and responding is the key to improving and developing services, as services will be better designed and more acceptable to citizens if their views are understood and taken into account.

These are unprecedented times for us all, and especially for our health and social care system and those that work within it. There has been a relentless demand on services and the prospect of many services having to face difficult decisions, as they

shift to more targeted use of resources is a daunting one. Llais will play a pivotal role sharing the people's voices in these decisions, processes, and ensuring decision makers know when things are not right.

We look forward to seeing how our local authorities can work in partnership with Llais from 1 April 2023.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Chris Jones**

**Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Wales**



**Albert Heaney CBE**

**Chief Social Care Officer for Wales**