



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**  
Social Care **Wales**

# Board Briefing July 2024

Here is a summary of our latest Social Care Wales Board meeting.

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## **Special thanks to Flintshire County Council**

Over the next two years, the Social Care Wales Board will be holding its quarterly public meetings in one of the seven Regional Partnership Board areas across Wales.

We held the first of our 'out and about' meetings in Flintshire on 18 July, after a Board development day on 17 July 2024 which was organised and jointly facilitated with Flintshire County Council.

Flintshire County Council Logo

The Flintshire Social Services team went beyond expectation to make the two days a success. The Board was encouraged to hear about some of the innovative developments which are taking place in social care services in Flintshire, particularly those around workforce recruitment and retention, training and development, and staff well-being.

During the Board development session, members received presentations including an impactful [video](#) highlighting some of the things which the County Council is doing in Flintshire to improve services for people who need care and support.

Image of Hwb Cyfle Adult Day Care Centre, Deeside

The Board development day included site visits to Marleyfield Residential Care Home in Buckley and Hwb Cyfle, an adult day care centre in Deeside for people with learning difficulties.

Members had the opportunity to meet staff and to hear about the work which they are doing as well as some of the day-to-day challenges they face. It was particularly reassuring to see Flintshire making proactive use of Social Care Wales support including We Care Wales; digital communities; innovation coaching; evaluation and leadership programmes.

The Chair and Chief Executive have written to Flintshire County Council to thank them for hosting the meeting and for contributing to the success of the Board development day.

## **Board meeting - key items for discussion, decision and action**

Image of Board meeting

The public meeting of the Board was held in Flintshire County Hall with Zoom facilities available for those who were unable to attend in person. The following key items of business were conducted:

- chairs provided a **summary** of the key issues which were discussed during the June **committee meetings** and highlighted areas where they had gained assurance or identified matters requiring the attention of the full Board;
- the Chief Executive **set the context for the meeting**, focusing particularly on receipt of the 2024/25 remit letter and her recent appearance before the

Senedd Health and Social Care Committee to give evidence about the Health and Social Care Bill;

- the Board reviewed progress against the **2024/25 business plan and budget** at the end of quarter one. They took assurance that the plan was broadly on track with robust and timely mitigating actions in place to address any variances. Members questions focused particularly on equality, diversity and inclusion, modern slavery, and overseas workers.
- the Board considered proposals for a **consultation on proposed changes to the Codes of Practice** which set standards for the social care workforce. The consultation was approved, subject to some further amendments to improve clarity and strengthen the focus on equality, diversity and inclusion;
- the Board discussed the draft **2023/24 Impact Report** and highlighted areas where further work was needed prior to publication, particularly in terms of making it more accessible and more relevant for people working in the social care sector;
- the Board considered and approved the **2023/24 Annual Equality Report**, subject to some minor amendments which would be addressed prior to publication;
- the Board considered the **Equal Pay Audit for 2024** and took assurance that there was no evidence to suggest that the organisation's pay arrangements discriminated against people with protected characteristics;
- members discussed the outcomes from most recent **Board Listening Exercise** and were pleased to note that whilst conversations with staff indicated that morale and motivation remain high, some development opportunities were identified which the senior team will be taking forward in the coming months;
- members reviewed and approved the revised **Scheme of Delegation** which had been updated following a review by the Corporate Governance Team.

If you would like to know more about any of the issues which were discussed by the Board, further details can be found at: <https://socialcare.wales/about...>

Some of the more significant items of business are explained in more detail in the section below.

## Spotlight on...

Image of a spotlight

### **Codes of Professional Practice for social care workers and employers**

The Codes are a critical part of the regulatory framework for the social care sector in Wales and approving them is a significant responsibility for the Board. They were last refreshed in 2017, and officers have been working behind the scenes with stakeholders to develop a revised set of codes which reflect developments since that time.

During the meeting, the Board was asked to support a recommendation that a public consultation to be held to seek views about the draft codes, with the intention that a final version which reflected those views, would be presented to the Board for approval and implementation during 2025.

Members reviewed the draft codes, helpful suggestions emerged from the discussions, including the need for a more pro-active approach to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion, an increased focus on relationship building within the codes and some adjustments to the wording.

Officers agreed to reflect the Board's feedback into the draft codes and on that basis, members approved the consultation and look forward to seeing a revised

version once it has been completed in 2025.

### **Equal pay audit**

Organisations which employ more than 250 employees are required by law to complete and publish the results of an equal pay audit on an annual basis. Social Care Wales is not required to do this because it does not employ that number of people but does so voluntarily in the interests of transparency and to avoid complacency.

Members discussed the equal pay audit report for 2023/24 and gained assurance that there is no evidence to suggest that the organisation discriminates against people with protected characteristics in the way that it remunerates its staff. The audit revealed that the gender pay gap was now 10.96 per cent, down from 11.8 per cent in 2022/23 which reflects the fact the predominance of females in lower pay grades.

Members sought assurance that there were arrangements in place for senior managers to monitor situations where individuals were appointed on a salary point above the bottom of each pay grade. Officers confirmed that individuals were only started above the bottom salary point, where evidence was provided that they were on a higher salary in their previous role.

Members also explored where jobs were being advertised and whether that might influence the ability to recruit certain genders to specific roles. Officers agreed to look at advertising routes through this lens to ensure that there was no gender impact.

### **Board listening exercise**

Members discussed a report from the Chair summarising the results of a series of online conversations with staff which took place in March and April 2024. This

is the fourth successive year that the Board has completed a listening exercise.

The exercise provides the Board with the opportunity to experience at first hand the culture of the organisation and re-enforces the Board's strategic responsibility for ensuring a workplace environment which is conducive to the well-being and motivation of staff.

Around 66 per cent of the organisation's 220 staff participated in the exercise. In the first part of the meeting, Board members shared feedback about the organisation's performance, teams were thanked for their contributions and Board membership news was shared. Staff were also provided with an update in relation to the Chief Executive recruitment process.

For the second part of the meeting, groups were asked to look at the following questions;

- **CONTINUE** - What are the things that make Social Care Wales a great place to work ... and so we should continue to do them?
- **STOP** - What are we currently doing that doesn't add value or gets in the way of you doing your job well?
- **START** - What could we do differently which would make you more effective in your job?

Members discussed the contents of the report and were asked to take assurance that the culture of the organisation remains healthy and consistent with the organisation's strategic objectives. They noted the opportunities for further development which have been identified by the management team and the actions which are proposed as a result.

The management team provided responses to the key areas of further development derived from the Board listening exercise.

## **Emerging issues**

### **Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Independent Culture Review Report July 2024**

The Board discussed the most recent report on the NMC. Officers acknowledged this is a significant report and although focussed on NMC recognised that the report provides considerations to be made by all workforce regulators including Social Care Wales and their Fitness to Practise operations.

Officers acknowledged how working in Fitness to Practise for any regulator is a challenging role. The report has reminded Social Care Wales to continue looking at how best to support Fitness to Practise officers further in their work. The report also spoke about the pressures of individuals going through the investigation process. Social Care Wales confirmed it has a well-being offer to individuals under investigation, along with support for victims.

The report provides Social Care Wales with important considerations for officers, that will be shared at the Regulation and Standards Committee for further discussion.

### **Recruitment of nurses working in social care**

During the update from Regulation and Standards Committee, members discussed the challenges finding nurses to work in social care settings.

It was confirmed that a 'Nurses in Social Care' group has been established by the Chief Nursing Office in Welsh Government to look at nursing through a social care lens. The group has considered support for nurses in social care settings, with pilot programmes to support care workers into nursing degrees.



Management confirmed there is a Nurses Workforce Plan led by Health Education and Improvement Wales and further exploration work with stakeholders is required to review the role the new proposed nursing associate roles could play in social care.

### **Modern slavery**

Members asked if there were more opportunities to gather data on modern slavery. It was acknowledged that the Unseen report identified modern slavery as rising in the care sector. Social Care Wales is working with Welsh Government who have established a group to look at this issue.

Members asked if there was more that can be done in the registration application process and within workforce newsletters. Officers confirmed these are being explored, along with research into what other regulators are doing. All agreed that Social Care Wales has a role to upskill and educate individuals in the sector and staff to help identify victims of modern slavery, along with ensuring the workforce know their rights and where to seek assistance. Officers confirmed further work on modern slavery will be coming back to the Board at a later stage.

## **Next Board meeting**

This will be held in Powys on 24 October 2024. The following items are currently scheduled for discussion:

- update from committee chairs
- context setting and key messages from the Chief Executive

- annual accountability meeting with the Deputy Minister
- Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24, audit of accounts report
- Chair of Audit and Risk Committee assurance report to the Board
- Social Care Wales Workforce Development Plan end of year monitoring report 2023/24
- Social Care Wales Workforce Development Plan draft remit letter for 2025/26
- business plan quarter two progress report
- Board development synopsis
- meeting effectiveness

## Board news

From left to right: Chair of the Board Mick Giannasi, Outgoing Chief Executive Sue Evans and Chief Executive Sarah McCarty

- Outgoing Chief Executive, Sue Evans was presented with a memento and a thank you from the Board for her work. She took a moment to thank the members, noting her confidence in the incoming Chief Executive, Sarah McCarty.
- [Social Care Wales | Wishing our Chief Executive Sue Evans a fond...](#)

## Coming up

**16 to 19 September** - Committee meetings

**24 October 2024** - Public Board Meeting and strategic development session in Powys

**December 2024** - Committee meetings

**February 2025** - Public Board meeting and strategic development session in Pembrokeshire

**March 2025** - Committee meetings

**May 2025** - Public Board meeting and strategic development session in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr and Bridgend

## **Previous Board newsletters**

[Board Briefing May 2024](#)

Board Briefing May 2024

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