

## Hywel Dda May 2023 Consultation

Response from CRAiG Sir Gar

Hywel Dda's consultation is fatally flawed and is in danger of undermining the viability of medical services in West Wales. From the start the entire process has been cloaked in secrecy as to what facilities will be available in which hospitals. Moreover, there has been extremely low engagement with the public and with staff at the Glangwili Hospital as to precisely what the new service will look like, where services such as accident and emergency and intensive care will be located and how patients and staff alike will utilise them. This is absolutely fundamental, as given the large geographical area covered and the other healthcare options available to a large proportion of the population in nearby Swansea. It is transparently obvious that it would not take too much of a tilt in patient numbers and staffing to render whole swathes of services currently provided at Glangwili unviable at the new sites.

It has become readily apparent on consultation sessions and calls, such as the one call for councillors on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, or the public zoom on the 16<sup>th</sup> May, that serious questions around transport and access to the new hospital site remain unresolved. Not only do Hywel Dda's transport timings fail to reflect changes to speed limits on local roads and the A40 since they were conducted, they bear no resemblance to the lived experience of residents. These transport timings have been disputed at every public consultation session by frequent users of the roads in question ranging from members of the public to emergency service professionals with experience of blue light driving.

More worrying yet were staff comments at the Zoom session on the 16<sup>th</sup> April where medical staff raised concerns over the movement of the service west of Carmarthen. This in their opinion would reduce accessibility to staff and interest at working at this out-of-town location. Coupled with the potential loss of Llanelli patients to Morriston, as raised by several participants at this and in other sessions, there is danger of rendering a swathe of services at the new site unviable before it has even opened. This is due to the inability to fill staffing rotas because of the remote location or because there will no longer be the patient footfall to sustain the service.

Hywel Dda has already had to dismiss one of the potential sites due to the risk to the sustainability of maternity, paediatric and obstetric services as detailed in the 2022 Clinical Land Appraisal Project Discussion Report on Neonatal Services. Such is the skew in population across Carmarthenshire it is likely that a substantial loss of patients from Llanelli would make many other services unviable also at the new site. Furthermore, when challenged on response times the persistent reference by senior members of the Hywel Dda management team to Air Ambulance services is deeply troubling. This seems like an extraordinarily cavalier approach to a charitable service. The change in availability and location of health services is likely to massively increase the pressure on the Air Ambulance yet little effort seems to have been made to model this change with realistic transport timings during the summer tourist peak.

Hywel Dda needs to recommence this consultation from scratch clearly setting out to residents and staff what services will be available at which hospitals and undertake a serious engagement exercise with its workforce to determine if its plans are actually viable. The 1% response rate mentioned on p9 of the 2022 Workforce Land Appraisal Project Report is risible. Future health services in West Wales need to be based on an honest understanding of the likely movements of patients and medical staff, not on optimistic assumptions that "if we build it, they will come". There is a considerable risk that far from ensuring the future stability of health services in Carmarthenshire and



Pembrokeshire these proposals will fatally undermine them due to a haemorrhage of patients and personnel unwilling or unable to access the new more rural site.

**CRAiG Sir Gar**  
**May 2023**