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Health Board

# Temporary Service Changes Discussion Paper Drop-in Events

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## Executive Summary

Health services in Powys are facing significant challenges related to quality, workforce and long-term sustainability.

During 2024 we introduced a number of temporary changes to help us respond to these challenges whilst maintaining vital patient care.

The Board approved the following temporary service changes:

- A change to the opening hours (8am to 8pm) for the Minor Injury Units (MIUs) in Brecon and Llandrindod Wells.
- Implementation of two Ready to Go Home Units (RTGHUs) in Llanidloes and Bronllys in combination with strengthened inpatient rehabilitation at Brecon and Newtown.

We reviewed the temporary changes in July 2025. The temporary changes were delivering benefits for patient care, but we recognise the strength of public feeling about local community hospital services.

When we reviewed the temporary changes in July 2025, we had planned a period of formal consultation from Autumn 2025 looking at all the adult physical and mental health community services we provide across the county. This would help us to make decisions about the temporary changes.

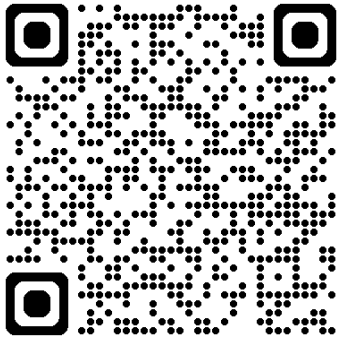
These are complex issues, and we do not want to rush the decisions that need to be made. We now expect the formal consultation to take place next year.

In the meantime, the temporary changes will remain under review. This review process will look at quality, safety, outcomes and patient experience. It will also listen to the public and local stakeholders.

This discussion paper is part of that review. It provides an update on the temporary service changes introduced by Powys Teaching Health Board in December 2024 and seeks your views. It:

- explains why the temporary changes were proposed,
- summarises the engagement undertaken during Summer 2024 and what we heard,
- sets out the decisions made by the Board in October 2024 and the implementation of the temporary changes, and
- shares the work we have undertaken to review and evaluate the temporary changes
- seeks your views by 15 February 2026

We invite you to read this Discussion Paper and the supporting documents including the Board reports and feedback posters and share your views today.



Or by completing our survey by

**Sunday 15 February 2026.**

The survey is available on our Have Your Say website.

Please scan the QR code (left) or visit:

[www.haveyoursaypowys.wales/tsc2025](http://www.haveyoursaypowys.wales/tsc2025)

Your views will contribute to a further review of the temporary changes, which will be considered by the Board in March 2026.

Thank you for sharing your views on these temporary service changes.

# Your Health Services Community Drop-in Events

You can also share your views in person by attending one of our community drop-in events which take place across the county from 3pm to 6pm at the following venues and towns:

- Wednesday 26 November at the Guildhall in Brecon
- Friday 28 November at the Strand in Builth Wells
- Tuesday 2 December at Hafan Yr Afon in Newtown
- Thursday 4 December at the Miners Welfare in Ystradgynlais
- Tuesday 9 December at the Corn Exchange in Welshpool
- Wednesday 10 December at The Comm in Knighton
- Tuesday 6 January at the Institute in Llanfair Caereinion
- Thursday 8 January at Y Plas in Machynlleth
- Thursday 15 January at the Youth & Community Centre in Llanfyllin
- Wednesday 22 January at the Swan in Hay & Talgarth
- Tuesday 27 January at the Community Centre in Llanidloes
- Tuesday 3 February at the Pavillion in Llandrindod Wells
- Thursday 12 February at Clarence Hall in Crickhowell

## 'Your Health Services'

Community drop-ins between 3pm-6pm



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Date	Locality	Venue
26th November	Brecon	Guild Hall, LD3 7AL
28th November	Builth Wells	The Strand, LD2 3AA
2nd December	Newtown	Hafan yr Afon, SY16 2NH
4th December	Ystradgynlais	Miners welfare, SA9 1JJ
9th December	Welshpool	The Corn Exchange, SY21 7JQ
10th December	Knighton	The Comm - & Community Hub, LD7 1DR
6th January	Llanfair Caereinion	The Institute, SY21 0RY
8th January	Machynlleth	Y Plas, SY20 8ER
15th January	Llanfyllin	The Youth Hall in the Youth and Community Centre, SY22 5DB
22nd January	Hay-on-Wye	The Swan, HR3 5DQ
27th January	Llanidloes	Community centre, SY18 6EY
3rd February	Llandrindod Wells	Pavillion, LD1 5EY
12th February	Crickhowell	Clarence Hall, NP8 1BN

- Come and have your say on the future of health services
- pick up information that supports your health and wellbeing





[powys.engagement@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:powys.engagement@wales.nhs.uk)

## The Journey So Far

- **Spring 2024:**  
Proposals for temporary changes to inpatient wards and minor injury units were put forward
- **Summer 2024:**  
A period of engagement took place from 29 July to 8 September 2024
- **October 2024:**  
The feedback from engagement was considered at a meeting in public of Powys Teaching Health Board on 10 October 2024. Following careful consideration of the balance of benefits and risks, the Board agreed to implement the temporary changes with a six-month evaluation in place.
- **July 2025:**  
The findings from the six-month evaluation were reviewed at a meeting in public of Powys Teaching Health Board on 30 July 2025. The Board noted the benefits that were being achieved through the temporary changes and agreed that they should remain in place, with decisions on the permanent shape of services to be made through the Better Together programme. At that time, it was expected that formal consultation on Better Together proposals for adult physical and mental health community services would take place from Autumn 2025.
- **Autumn 2025:**  
The health board has agreed that further work is needed on the Better Together programme and formal consultation is now expected next year. Any decisions on the future of individual wards or urgent care services need to be made as part of the “bigger picture” being developed through Better Together rather than as standalone proposals. Planning is under way for formal consultation during 2026/27. Alongside this vital work we are keeping the temporary service changes under review. We are seeking feedback from patients, staff, communities and stakeholders between November 2025 and February 2026. Your feedback will contribute to the next review of the Temporary Service Changes in March 2026.

## Context and Background

Health services in Powys are facing significant challenges related to quality, workforce and long-term sustainability.

### *Our Minor Injury Units*

In recent years our Minor Injury Units have frequently faced staffing issues, leading to last-minute closures. Providing a safe and sustainable service was very challenging overnight due to the very low number of people needing these services between the hours of 8pm to 8am. A key risk included the deskilling of specialist nurses due to the very low number of patients.

Nearly all minor injuries overnight that are suitable for treatment in our Minor Injury Units can either safely be seen when the unit next opens or need to be seen more quickly by an alternative service such as a hospital Accident & Emergency Department (for example, our Minor Injury Units do not offer x-ray services overnight).

### *Our hospital sites and inpatient beds*

When we reviewed our hospital beds in 2024, we found that nearly half of patients were fit for discharge but waiting for onward care packages, home adaptations or assessments.

We identified that we could provide better, more person-centred care for our patients by designating some of our hospital wards as "Ready to Go Home Units" and some as "Rehabilitation Units".

"Ready to Go Home Units" would enable us to work with patients who no longer needed community hospital care, supporting them to improve their independence allowing them to move around more, get up, get dressed, socialize, and take trips out with family members – all of which would support a faster discharge home.

Meanwhile, those patients who require more intensive rehabilitation in a community setting could be better supported in a specialist "Rehabilitation Unit" with all the relevant staff on site offering physiotherapy and care to enable that person to reach safe levels of independence and prepare for discharge home. This would build on the arrangements already in place in Powys for patients needing inpatient stroke rehabilitation.

We recommended these changes to:

- ensure patients were better supported in an environment which would lead to a faster discharge and a return to independent living
- reduce "deconditioning"
- offer a more reliable service

- reduce staffing pressures, and
- create a more reliable service for our communities.

Note: Deconditioning is where a person loses muscle tone quickly over a short period of time because they are less mobile than they normally are. This is often the case when someone is in hospital if they spend extended periods of time in bed while receiving care and treatment.

## **Listening to your views in Summer 2024**

A period of engagement on these proposals took place from 29 July to 8 September 2024.

We published an Issues Paper which explained why the health board was proposing the temporary changes. This was supported by additional information in a “Your Questions Answered” document, and a survey to gather views.

Feedback was also gathered through online webinars, the health board’s website, social media sites, posters placed in libraries and other local venues, information shared by the health board’s free e-newsletter, and attendance by health board representatives at public meetings.

In addition to the feedback, we heard through events and meetings, nearly 170 responses were received via our survey, letters and emails during the engagement period.

## **Feedback on the proposals for Minor Injury Units**

During the engagement we heard a lot of misunderstanding about the conditions that can be treated in a Minor Injury Unit in Powys overnight. Our engagement document aimed to reinforce that these units are strictly for minor injuries only, and that x-ray services are not provided overnight. However, some people shared concerns about medical treatment of illnesses (which are not treated in MIUs) or for more serious injuries (which require treatment in a main A&E department or by ambulance paramedics).

We heard concerns about the impact reducing the overnight hours would have on local patients and communities needing treatment for minor injuries overnight. There were comments regarding travel distances to other hospitals, ambulance waiting times, and waiting times at A&Es if a person needed medical attention. People shared concerns about the ability to travel to A&E departments outside the county overnight, particularly those who do not have access to transport.

We also heard support of the proposal. There was recognition that the units had very low levels of use overnight, and that in many cases the conditions presenting overnight either could safely wait until the MIU next opened or would need to be treated in a hospital A&E department outside the county. Responses recognised that staff were under-utilised and risked being de-skilled, that services like 111 and 999 are available 24 hours a day to provide advice and guidance and direct people to appropriate treatment, and that ShropDoc GP Out of Hours services were not affected.

We heard valuable feedback from staff including on changes to the skill mix and staffing model across the county.

## **Feedback on the proposals for Ready to Go Home Units**

We heard concerns from people in the Llanidloes and Bronllys areas about proposals to make temporary changes to the role of Graham Davies Ward in Llanidloes and Llewelyn Ward in Bronllys. This included:

- additional travel to visit patients with clinical needs that could not be met in a Ready To Go Home Unit,
- care for patients at end of life and the impact on palliative care units funded through public fundraising,
- impact on the future role of the ward including whether the changes may become permanent,
- whether patients may experience multiple transfers between hospitals and the impact this may have,
- impact on staffing and skills including working together with GP practices to reduce the need for acute hospital admission.

We also heard support for the proposals including:

- providing an environment that reduces deconditioning with a focus on supporting people who are ready to go home,
- reducing delays in District General Hospital outside the county and bringing patients back into Powys more quickly,
- supporting patients to return home more quickly as nursing and social care teams can work together in Ready To Go Home units to develop a package of care and support.

We heard valuable feedback from staff including overall impact on the staffing model and skill mix, and support to maintain skills for those staff working in Ready To Go Home Units.

## Feedback on the proposals for Rehabilitation Units

Feedback about the proposals to strengthen the role of the Rehabilitation Units was generally positive – although some respondents were not aware that Brecon and Newtown are already the designated centres for stroke rehabilitation, and that this proposal would build on existing arrangements.

Many respondents recognised the benefits in bringing together patients who required higher levels of rehabilitation in a community setting, so that the right levels of staffing and skills can be brought together to speed up their recovery. Some respondents wanted these services to be provided in every community hospital.

## Summary of Summer 2024 Engagement Feedback

We developed feedback posters to summarise the feedback we heard. These are available in **Appendix A**.

## Consideration by the Board on 10 October 2024

The proposals for temporary service change were given conscientious consideration by the Board at a meeting in public on 10 October 2024.

This included review of the potential benefits for the quality and outcomes of care, particularly in reducing delays for patients in district general hospitals outside the county and to reduce the risk of deconditioning. It is recognised the challenges for maintaining and appropriately skilled workforce in the minor injury units, the low levels of attendance overnight, and the risks of deskilling our staff.

The Board also acknowledged the strength of feeling heard during the engagement period but agreed that on balance the proposed changes were needed to offer the best experience and outcomes for patients and to address the challenges faced by health services.

The Board approved the following temporary service changes:

- A change to the opening hours (8am to 8pm) for the Minor Injury Units (MIUs) in Brecon and Llandrindod Wells.
- Implementation of two Ready to Go Home Units (RTGHUs) in Llanidloes and Bronllys in combination with strengthened inpatient rehabilitation at Brecon and Newtown.

The Board also agreed that there would be a formal evaluation of these changes over a six-month period, with updated recommendations presented to Board on 30 July 2025. This would consider patient safety, patient experience, and patient outcomes as well as

feedback from patients, PTHB staff, primary care, social care and third-sector colleagues.

## **Implementation**

Following the decisions of the Board on 10 October 2024, work took place to implement the temporary changes:

- November 2024: Temporary changes to the opening hours of the Minor Injury Units in Brecon and Llandrindod Wells
- December 2024: Temporary changes to inpatient wards including temporary establishment of the Ready to Go Home Units and Rehabilitation Units.

## **Six-Month Evaluation in July 2025**

Following the implementation of these changes in December 2024, a six-month period of evaluation took place. The findings of this evaluation were presented to a meeting in public of the Board on 30 July 2025.

The July report considered a wide range of data relating to the safety and experience of services, as well as feedback from interviews conducted with people using services.

Findings from the evaluation indicated:

- The change to MIU opening times had broadly positive effects, including improvements to service reliability, to staff and patient safety and to staff satisfaction. No significant increases in GP attendances have been identified; use of bank staff has reduced, and staffing costs have reduced by 9%. There have been no unplanned closures to the service in the last six months. Staff utilisation has improved.
- Similarly, broadly positive effects were identified for Ready to Go Home Units and Rehabilitation Units. These include a sustained improvement in efficiency and flow, early signs of improved outcomes, reduced lengths of stay, more efficient deployment of staff and efficiencies in staffing costs.

Key findings from the interviews with residents staying in the units included:

- Improved service reliability and patient outcomes
- Positive feedback on the care received, the cleanliness of the wards and the catering
- Positive feedback regarding the physiotherapy offered
- A desire for more physiotherapy staff and sessions
- Reduced travel time for many families and improved visiting flexibility

- A lack of knowledge about the purpose of the Ready to Go Home units when a resident was transferred either from a district general hospital or another Powys hospital

A small selection of some of the feedback given by those in the units follows.

*"I am amazed at how many patients have come through the unit and now gone home."  
(Ready To Go Home Unit)*

*I have been to exercises and bingo and quizzes. I enjoyed them. It makes it enjoyable having something to do. Over Christmas I went out for three nights with family."  
(Ready To Go Home Unit)*

*"Going to the Gym has been the best, in the last few days I feel I have turned a corner, doing the horizontal bars. The second time I tried, I feel I can do it, it gives you a boost."  
(Rehabilitation Unit)*

Feedback was also received independently from visitors to the wards by the community connectors (PAVO) and representatives from Llais.

Based on this evaluation, the Board agreed that the temporary changes should remain in place for a further temporary period, with decisions due to be made through continuous engagement and future engagement on the health board's Better Together Programme.

## **Keeping the Temporary Service Changes under review in Autumn 2025**

The Health Board undertook a detailed review of the temporary service changes in July 2025. At that time, it was expected that formal consultation on Better Together proposals for adult physical and mental health community services would take place from Autumn 2025.

The Health Board has agreed that further work is needed on the Better Together programme, and formal consultation is now expected next year.

Any decisions on the future of individual wards (e.g. Brecon, Bronllys, Llanidloes or Newtown) or urgent care services (e.g. MIU opening times) need to be made as part of the "bigger picture" being developed through Better Together rather than as standalone proposals.

Planning is under way for formal consultation during 2026/27. Alongside this vital work we are keeping the temporary service changes under review.

We are seeking feedback from patients, staff, communities and stakeholders between November 2025 and February 2026. This includes keeping the quality and safety of

these services under review, talking with patients using the services, talking with staff, and hearing from the public and wider stakeholders.

Your feedback will contribute to the next review of the Temporary Service Changes in March 2026.

## **Next Steps and Contact Information**

Your views will contribute to an update report to our Board in March 2026.

We would also like to invite and encourage you to sign up for our regular email newsletters. We will ensure that our Board update in March 2026 is shared with newsletter prescribers and via our wider communication channels including our website and social media accounts.

You can sign up at [pthb.nhs.wales/news-sign-up](https://pthb.nhs.wales/news-sign-up)

Further information is also available from the PTHB Engagement and Communication Team, Bronllys Hospital, Bronllys, Powys LD3 0LY – [powys.engagement@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:powys.engagement@wales.nhs.uk)

# Seeking your views on temporary changes to health services in Powys



## Minor Injury Units in Brecon and Llandrindod Wells What We Heard:



- **Praise for MIU services** with respondents sharing personal and family experiences of excellent care and treatment.
- Concerns about the potential **travel and transport** impact if MIU hours are reduced (for example if there is a need to travel to urgent care services elsewhere including A&E outside the county).
- Concerns that the proposals would have an impact on **A&E and ambulance services**.
- That **people feel reassured** that the MIU is there for the times when they may need it particularly given that A&E services are not provided in the county.
- Concerns about **care and treatment overnight** for people who may still attend a community hospital even though the MIU is closed.
- Some **misunderstanding regarding the role of MIU** and the services provided, for example in relation to the treatment of medical emergencies and life-limb-threatening conditions.
- Calls for **increased marketing/promotion** of the services provided (and those not provided), including that some people were not aware of MIU.
- That people have civic pride in local community hospitals and concerns that **services may decline** or be downgraded.
- Concerns whether the proposals were **temporary or permanent**, including whether this may affect recruitment and retention of clinical staff and maintenance of skills.
- Some **support for the proposals** as a prudent step to address demand within available resources.
- Comments regarding a **staffing model for MIU services** which are outside the scope of this engagement as they do not affect where and how people access MIU services.
- A number of potential **equality and wellbeing impacts** in relation to Equality Protected Characteristics and Well-being of Future Generations Goals.
- Some alternative or complementary proposals, including that MIU opening hours be maintained and/or increased at these and other sites in the county, and that Brecon remain open until midnight.
- Suggestions for **mitigating potential impacts of any changes**, for example through promotion and marketing of alternatives to MIU.
- **Calls for expanded facilities in Powys** including the provision of District General Hospital Services, comments about the way the NHS is funded locally and nationally, and questions about the sustainability of services outside the scope of this engagement including maternity and outpatients.
- Comments about the **engagement and decision-making** process, including requests to stop or pause engagement on proposed changes.

## What happens now?

At a meeting in public of the Board, (10 October) members approved a recommendation to temporarily change the opening hours for Minor Injury Units in Brecon and Llandrindod Wells to 8am to 8pm for a six month period. The changes will be in place by December 2024. The health board will launch a marketing campaign ahead of the change in MIU opening hours, which is expected to begin during November. Other urgent care services such as 111 and ShropDoc are unchanged.

**Dr Carl Cooper**, Chair of Powys Teaching Health Board said: "We are grateful to the many people, groups and communities that have participated in the engagement exercise. The Board has given full and conscientious consideration to all the feedback."

**Kate Wright**, Executive Medical Director said: "These temporary changes will allow our Minor Injury Units to provide a more reliable service. During the engagement period we heard a lot of misunderstanding of the role of Minor Injuries Units. We cannot stress strongly enough that these units are for the treatment of minor injuries only. They are not for life or limb-threatening injuries or for major illnesses. In an emergency people should call 999 or go to A&E. Visiting an MIU with an urgent medical condition can delay access to life-saving care."

# Seeking your views on temporary changes to health services in Powys



## Community Hospital inpatient services What We Heard:



- **Praise for community hospital inpatient services** with several respondents sharing personal and family experiences of care and treatment in Powys community hospitals.
- Concerns about the potential **travel and transport** impact, particularly for family and unpaid/informal carers, if patients do not meet the criteria for admission to their most local hospital and that this may also impact on patient care and recovery if they have less access to their family during their hospital stay.
- Concerns about **continuity of care** including whether patients may experience multiple hospital moves if their condition improves or deteriorates.
- Concerns about the **potential impact on the range of services** available at their most local community hospital, including in relation to **end of life care, direct GP admissions**, and the potential to reduce or prevent acute hospital admissions.
- About the **civic pride in local community hospitals**, the way in which facilities had benefited from public subscription and fundraising and concerns that services may decline or be downgraded.
- Concerns whether the proposed model would **tackle the challenges** in relation to extended stay in hospital and **deconditioning**, particularly without improvements in **social care**.
- Concerns whether the proposals were **temporary or permanent**, including whether this may affect recruitment and retention of clinical staff and also the maintenance of their skills in "Ready To Go Home Units".
- **Scepticism** that the proposals were **financially driven** rather than also responding to **quality and safety** challenges, but also scepticism that the proposals may not deliver financial benefits.
- A number of potential **equality and wellbeing impacts** in relation to Equality Protected Characteristics and Well-being of Future Generations Goals were identified.
- Alternative or complementary proposals, including that the model should be piloted at a single site.
- Comments about the **engagement and decision-making process**, including requests to stop or pause

engagement on proposed changes.

- **Support** for the proposals as a step to address the challenges to quality and sustainability of health services in the county but also that further discussion and design would be needed in order to agree the permanent sustainable shape of services.
- Suggestions for **mitigating potential impacts** of any changes, for example through awareness of flexible visiting and promotion of travel and transport support.
- Calls for **expanded facilities** in Powys including the provision of District General Hospital Services, comments about the way the NHS is funded locally and nationally, and questions about the sustainability of services outside the scope of this engagement including maternity and outpatients.

## What happens now?

*At a meeting in public of the Board, members approved a recommendation to temporarily change the clinical model for inpatient care in Brecon, Bronllys, Llanidloes and Newtown for a six month period. The changes will be in place by December 2024. The Chair thanked all for their views which were given conscientious consideration. End of life care will continue to be provided in Bronllys and Llanidloes hospitals, and step-up care will continue to be available for GP admissions.*

**Claire Roche, Executive Director of Nursing, Quality, Women and Family Health said:**

*"We are confident that this temporary model of inpatient care will help us deliver better outcomes and experiences for patients. Bronllys and Llanidloes will be designated as "Ready To Go Home" units and provide more focused care and support for people who are ready to return home but are waiting for a package of care in the community. We can help people to remain mobile and active. Similarly we can ensure a faster recovery for more patients by strengthening the role of wards in Brecon and Newtown for the provision of specialised inpatient rehabilitation. This builds on their existing role as our centres for stroke rehabilitation."*

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

Having read through the Issues Paper and the Board reports (if you want to do so) please give your view on the Temporary Service Changes.

Alongside this survey we have been going out to capture views by visiting all three units. We have and are seeking views from those individuals who may be waiting to see a nurse in a Minor Injury Unit or who may be staying in one of the other units. We also recognise that other residents who may not have used any of the units will have a view and we'd like to hear those views.

### A) Minor Injury Units

Please provide any comments you would like to share with us about the temporary changes to Minor Injury Unit opening hours in Brecon and Llandrindod (for example positive or negative experiences of the service)?

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### B) Ready to Go Home Units

Please use this space to share your views and comments about the Ready To Go Home Units in Llanidloes and Bronllys (for example positive or negative experiences of the service)?

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C) Rehabilitation Units Please use this space to share your views about the Rehabilitation Units in Newtown and Brecon (for example positive or negative experiences of the service)?

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## About You Questions

Q1. Firstly, are you responding as:

- a resident of Powys ( a patient, a family member/carer)
- on behalf of an organisation that supports patients/family members/carers  
.....(name of organisation)
- in a professional capacity/as a member of staff in the health board or elsewhere

Q2. Please state where you live? (town) .....

Q3. Which best describes your gender identity?

- Male  Female  Prefer not to say

Q4. Which age category applies to you?

- Under 16  25 – 34  35 – 44  45 – 54   
55 – 64  65 – 74  75 – 84  85+

Q5. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses?

- Yes  No  Prefer not to say

Q6. Are you an unpaid carer?

- Yes- Adult Carer 25+  Yes- Young Adult Carer 14-25   
Yes Young Carer under 16  Prefer not to say  No