

Adferiad: The Blind Veterans Centre Proposal

05/09/2025

Attendees:

- Alun Thomas, CE
- Clive Wolfendale, Vice Chair of Trustees
- Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS
- Cllr Antony Bertola, Mayor of Llandudno
- Cllr Chirs Hughes
- Two officers from North Wales Police
- Members of the public

Notes:

- There will be an opportunity to meet in due course at Craig y Don Community Centre, out of hours

Adferiad:

- Largest health and social care charity
- Support 30,000 each year
- Link with veterans with the change step project
- 750 staff
- Substance misuse, mental health, gambling, criminal justice etc
- The organisation is embedded in our community: Café Cais opened in 2011 – Troop Café; Porter's Café, Llandudno Junction Railway Station; Station Court, Colwyn Bay – a centre in support of their activities, such as a social supermarket

The Plan:

- Have been working with Blind Veterans UK
- Adferiad currently run a centre in Wrexham, and are looking to re-locate. The link to health and wellbeing here has made the site appealing
- It was while working here that the idea for Hafan Wen was developed
- They have three sites: Wrexham, Old Colwyn, Lancashire
- Registered with Health Inspectorate Wales, Care Quality Commission etc
- Intention is to register this site as an independent hospital, so it is not going to be a home. Patients would be coming for 10 – 14 days for medical treatment
- This site is not dissimilar to the three other sites they have
- The building was established as a convalescent home. The mission remains the same
- Adferiad are committed to maintaining the building to its high standards
- Relocate Hafan Wen to Llandudno and to expand that offer. This would involve over 70 well paid jobs with at least 30 of these being new opportunities for people in the locality

- 40 bed hospital
- Staffed 24/7 with qualified staff providing care and managing the security functions
- There would be doctors, nurses, grounds staff, catering staff etc
- They want to recruit veterans to provide security. There is extensive CCTV on site which would be monitored
- The bedrooms are on the 1st and 2nd floor. Access to the smoking area is at the back end, which is enclosed
- Have had these services with success over 30 years
- People are not allowed to use substances on site
- The organisation will be bringing people in and out
- It is unlikely that any of the patients would be well enough to wander off site
- The patients will be discharged from here ready to go home and live the rest of their lives
- Contracts: 10 beds to Betsi Cadwaladr, and provide beds for other areas, such as Blackburn and Lancashire
- Detox – drug, alcohol, and gambling only. Rehab will be undertaken in Old Colwyn
- Looking at this starting in early 2026

Cllr Bertola

- **Is it correct that the patients would be detoxed within 10 – 14 days?** Medical detox is managed with prescribed appropriate medication. The chemical dependence can go in 10 – 14 days. That's what can be achieved here
- **Raised concern that Maes Berllan is not fenced off and that residents are feeling vulnerable?** Any individuals going outside would be with a support worker

Resident

- **Could there be a mission creep?** It would be registered as an independent hospital, so it would have a medical mission

Resident

- **How was this meeting publicised locally?** Posted 120 letters to Maes Berllan and those along the border of the site; spoke to the Cllrs; and spoke to the MP

Resident

- **Are you saying that this is not a done deal?** This is already registered as a hospital, so there is no change of use they would need. What they do is subject to contract with Blind Veterans

Resident

- **Is there a history at other centres where people discharge themselves?** Yes, but they are taken home by Adferiad staff or St John's Ambulance

Resident

- **Will the patients be allowed visitors?** Very rarely. Cannot recall anyone visiting Afon Wen in the last 3 months. Adferiad are seeing a lot of young people. A part of the detox is not to see parents within that period
- **There are no restrictions on the number of visitors who can come?** Generally there are no visiting hours during detoxification. They will not allow visitors through the door

Resident

- **40 beds, so what do you propose for the houses around the back?** The beds would be on the 1st and 2nd floor. The ground floor would be for ancillary staff. The other buildings would be used for staff accommodation. Potentially they would look at having support for children

Resident

- **How are you going to get staff for your hospital?** Already have staff eager to come, and they will be advertising. 85% of staff say that Adferiad is a great place to work. Many of the staff have lived experiences

Resident

- **Why are you emphasising veterans when they are a small part of what you do?**
- **Will you be brining high risk sex offenders here?** No. This will never be a sex offender registered centre

Resident

- **What procedures do you have in place to stop confused patients wandering off?** We cannot restrain patients if they are deemed to have capacity. The building will be locked

Resident

- **We have concerns about children safety. How do we find out the details for the meeting at Craig y Don Community Centre?** If anyone wants further information, Adferiad asked for contact details

Resident

- **45 residents in Maes Berllan, and the freeholder is Blind Veterans. Will you become our landlord?** Yes, Adferiad would
- **If you become our landlords, what guarantees do we have in terms of security and lease continuity?** Adferiad have not seen the lease. Blind Veterans have not yet sent the legal pack. At that point they will look at it
- **They pay a management company £300 a month to a management company, will you be changing that?** We are here today at the soonest possible point we can talk to you. It was suggested that there will be a special meeting with the concerned residents of Maes Berllan

Resident

- This town has a long history of convalescence

Resident

- **When they go to the smoking zone, will there be somebody watching them?** It is an enclosed area

Resident

- **Is there a covenant on the building saying that it must be used for medical purposes?** Unclear

Resident

- **What are the risks?** There are no more risks with what we are proposing here than if you go to your GP practice or hospital. It is more likely that someone will walk to your house from the main road than from this building. It will have strong security. We are here to be part of your community

Resident

- **Are police worried about increased work?** No, but they have come here to learn because people ask questions

Resident

- Highlighted that people with mental health are more risk to themselves rather than others

Resident

- **Will there be day patients?** No

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS

- Explained that she has worked with Clive for years
- She has confidence in the work that is carried out
- The last thing she wants is an empty building
- This scheme has been brought to our attention early. Yes there is room to improve communication, but as we move on through this process there is time for further discussions
- Negotiations with Maes Berllan need to take place separately
- **Is it going to be a locked facility?** Yes, but it's not a prison
- **Will there be any ex-offenders as part of the patients here?** There may be, but Adferiad wouldn't know. If there was risk there would be a duty on the referring agency to notify us of that
- **Will the extra beds be awarded to North Wales patients, or those from outside of the region?** We would like to see Betsi Cadwaladr make more use of the beds. There are only 4 others in Wales. Authorities are currently referring outside of Wales

END OF MEETING