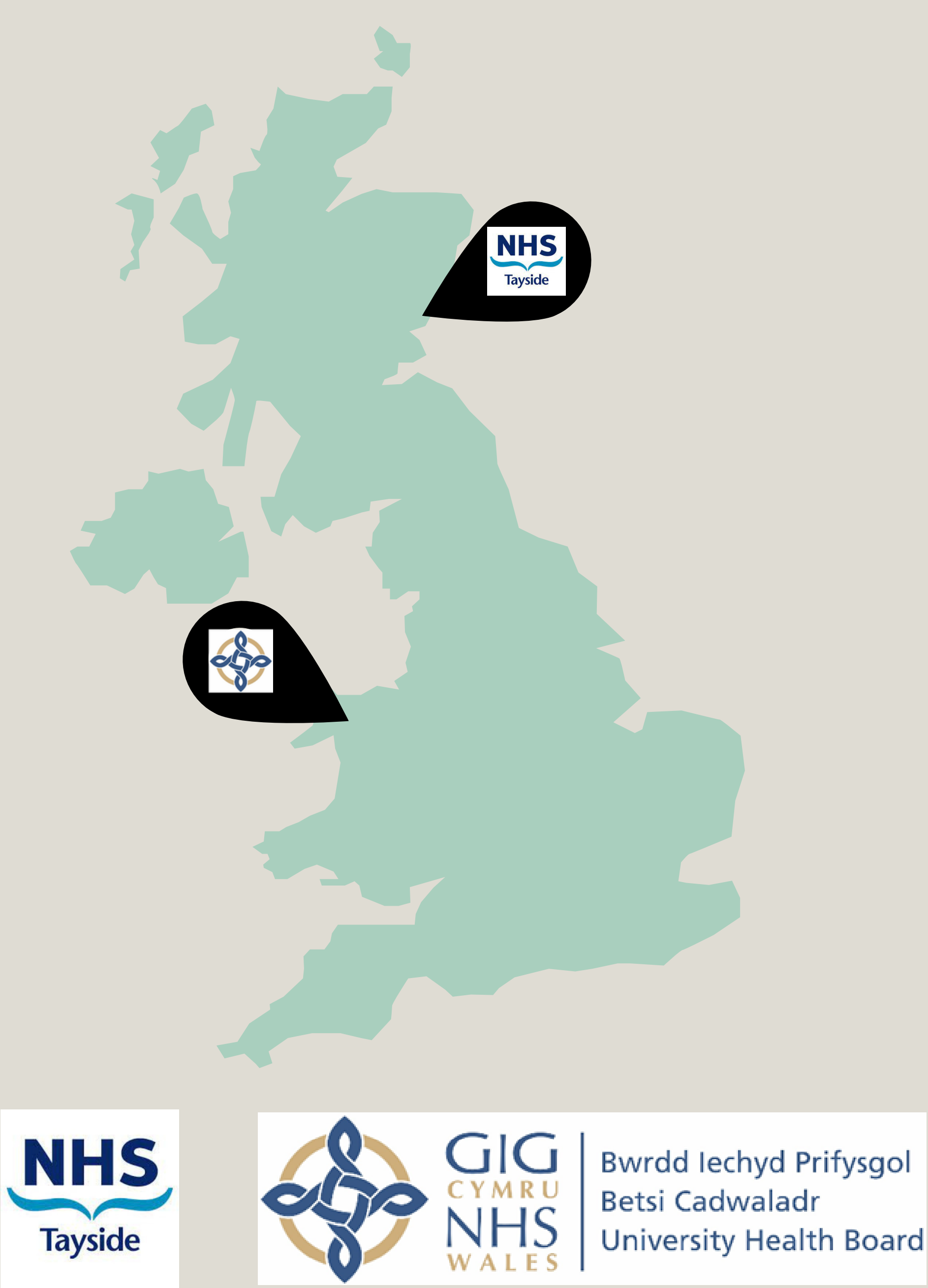


THE CELTIC EXCHANGE

Driving Innovation Through Cross-National Collaboration in Audiology

AUTHORS

Laura Turton, Consultant Clinical Scientist & Audiology Head of Service, NHS Tayside
Jane Wild, Consultant Clinical Scientist and Head of Adult Audiology Service
Susannah Goggins, Principal Clinical Scientist and Head of Adult Rehab & Balance Service, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board



BACKGROUND

Audiology services across the UK face similar challenges including rising demand, workforce sustainability, service accessibility, quality improvement requirements and financial pressures. Senior audiology leaders from NHS Tayside and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board established a "Celtic Exchange and Twinning" initiative to share learning and identify opportunities for innovation across two devolved healthcare systems.

AIMS

- Share knowledge and benchmark practice.
- Explore innovative service models.
- Compare quality and governance frameworks.
- Identify opportunities for collaborative improvement and research.

METHODS

A reciprocal exchange programme was undertaken:
PHASE 1: NHS Tayside visit to North Wales (March 2026)
Two day visit to Wrexham Maelor Hospital and wider BCUHB Audiology Service.

Exploration of leadership, service structures, innovation, reseach, quality standards and government links.

PHASE 2: BCUHB visit to Tayside (July2026)
Two day visit to Dundee.

Comparison of governance systems, accreditation approaches, pathways and innovative service developments.

IMPACT

- The exchange provided protected time to:
- Explore how and why services have evolved.
- Move beyond traditional conference-based networking.
- Share practical solutions to common challenges.
- Recognise and celebrate strengths within both organisations.
- Promote mutual learning rather than competition.

KEY FINDINGS



Learning from North Wales

- Strong national collaboration through shared networks and quality standards.
- Welsh Audiology Quality Standards Framework aligned to strategic priorities and KPIs.
- Mobile audiology assessment van improving access in rural communities.
- Specialist prison audiology services.
- Structured approach to research, audit and innovation management



Learning from Tayside

- Experience of UKAS IQIPS accreditation and quality management systems.
- Broad specialist service portfolio including newborn hearing screening, paediatric audiology, implants, vestibular services, tinnitus and hyperacusis services.
- Group hearing aid fitting clinics.
- Automated audiometry within reassessment pathways.
- Innovative vestibular assessment and rehabilitation approaches.



CONCLUSIONS

Cross-national collaboration offers a powerful mechanism for accelerating service improvement, sharing innovation and strengthening professional networks. The Celtic Exchange demonstrated that meaningful two-way learning can help audiology services respond to common healthcare challenges while improving sustainability and patient care.