

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

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1 December 2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee – 1 December 2010

Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust Response

Purpose – Inquiry into Reviews undertaken in the NHS and the Welsh Assembly Government Guidance on conducting Reviews

1. This paper is being presented to the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee of the National Assembly for Wales by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust in response to a request to provide evidence for the above Inquiry.

Current Guidance

2. The Draft Guidance for Engagement and Consultation on Changes to Health Services is currently out for consultation. The Interim Guidance issued by WAG in 2008 is the guidance to which the Trust adheres. It is relevant to the work of the Trust and the Trust undertakes a process of continuous engagement in accordance not only with statutory requirements but best practice.

3. The Trust has a Public Health and Community Engagement Strategy 2010-2012 and has established a partners in healthcare network to increase patient and public involvement. Membership ranges from individuals to representatives of wellbeing groups. The network allows members to comment on services and take part in surveys.

4. The Trust has not had the requirement to undertake any formal service reviews since the introduction of the current interim guidance.

WAST's development of the Service Workforce and Financial Framework (SWAFF)

5. The Trust is currently in the process of developing a SWAFF for 2010/2015 and is aiming to have the plan signed off by the Board on 8 December. The SWAFF is a strategic framework for the Trust which will set out:

A clear sense of direction

The key organisational priorities

An outline work programme for the next 5 years

6. The nature of a strategic framework dictates that the document is largely aspirational and does not deal with any specific issues regarding service change issues.

Engagement Process in Developing the SWAFF

7. There has been informal and ongoing engagement through the development cycle of the SWAFF as follows:

Unions/Partnership Forum – we have worked in partnership with our unions, acting on behalf of the majority of our staff, to develop the document, meeting informally on a number of occasions over the past months

Local Health Boards – we have engaged informally with our partners Health Boards to gain a clear understanding of their needs in order that our plans are congruent with those of our partners

Professions – we have discussed a number of our intended clinical improvements with the various professions including the BMA and RCN

Government – we have had a number of discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government regarding our intended strategic direction and its congruence with national policy

Engagement/Consultation Processes following production of final SWAFF

8. If the Board agree the SWAFF on 8 December there are a range of continuous engagement processes planned to ensure that all of our stakeholders are fully aware of our strategic intentions, are provided with any information they require regarding them, are fully briefed and are provided with the opportunity to fully engage in the improvement process, offer their views and influence the direction. A

number of stages are planned. These are as follows:

Stage 1:Initial engagement

Public – we will be making the SWAFF available to the public via a range of media including hard copy and internet. We will also be utilising our Expert Patient programme, where we have a number of service users who we regularly engage with, to engage on our plans.

Staff – all staff will be provided with a copy of the plan and a number of roadshows will be held throughout the Trust which will enable us to have a conversation with our staff about the SWAFF and how they can further shape it.

Unions/Partnership Forum – as above together with regular meetings with the Unions through existing arrangements and the National Joint Consultative Committee.

Local Health Boards – all will receive a copy of the plan and we will follow this up with a series of meetings with each Health Board with a view to further developing arrangements for ongoing engagement in respect of the SWAFF.

CHCs – all will receive a copy of the plan and we will follow this up with a series of meetings with each Health Board with a view to further developing arrangements for ongoing engagement in respect of the SWAFF.

Professional Bodies - all will receive a copy of the plan and we will follow this up with a series of meetings with each of the appropriate professions with a view to further developing sustainable arrangements for ongoing engagement in respect of the SWAFF.

Other emergency services - all will receive a copy of the plan and we will follow this up with a series of meetings with emergency service with a view to further developing sustainable arrangements for ongoing engagement in respect of the SWAFF.

Voluntary organisations / third sector - all will receive a copy of the plan and the offer for further discussions as and when appropriate .

Stage 2:Continuous engagement

There will be a clear need for a continuous level of engagement with the key stakeholders we have identified, together with a number of others. This will be pursued utilising the range of engagement communication channels e.g. hard copy, internet, expert patients etc, together with a range of engagement methods e.g. meetings, existing professional/clinical networks etc.

Stage 3:Formal Consultation

Given the infancy of the SWAFF, it is too early to determine whether there are any issues which would need to be progressed through this route.

Estate Strategy

9.A key element emanating from the SWAFF will be agreement of the Trust's Estate Strategy. The Estate Strategy, to be presented to the Board also on 8 December will set out the Trust's vision for the Estate over the next seven years. It is the long-term plan for developing and managing the estate in an optimum way. The strategy builds on the accepted concept of an operational estate based around Ambulance Resource Centres (ARCs), Make Ready Depots (MRDs) and Reporting Stations (RS) based on an overarching "hub and spoke" model. The model being underpinned by an integrated network of standby and response points using Status Plan Management (SPM) to optimise vehicle location according to demand requirements. Therefore the location of the Trust's future Estate will be determined by future service demand.

North East Wales Estate Development

10.Within the Estate Strategy it is likely that the first area for development and implementation of the "hub and spoke" concept through the introduction of an MRD will be North East Wales. These proposals are as yet still in their developmental stage however a draft communication plan has been written with the aim of establishing and maintaining clear and regular channels of communication with internal and external stakeholders.

Reviews currently being undertaken by other Health Boards in Wales

11.This Trust has a close planning relationship with the Local Health Boards and is working with other parts of NHS Wales on a Health Board by Health Board basis with regard to their health service reviews, particularly where a change in service provision may require the Ambulance Service to adjust its conveyance arrangements.