

**Date:** 4 December 2002

**Venue:** Committee Room 2, National Assembly for Wales

**Title:** Informing Healthcare

## **Purpose**

To brief members on the development of, handling, and early responses to, the *Informing Healthcare* information strategy.

## **Background**

The Information Task & Finish Group (chaired by Robert Davies, Chair of Iechyd Morgannwg Health) produced its final report entitled *Informing Healthcare* in April 2002. Like the other Task & Finish Groups, this Group had a wide ranging membership, covering health professional, senior executive, trust, health authority, primary care, health informatics, local government and Welsh Assembly interests.

After considering the Report, I agreed with the Director in the Summer that a targeted consultation would be appropriate, and asked that Welsh Assembly officials produce a Summary version to aid that process. Agreement was also given for certain preparatory work to be put in hand.

Both the Summary version (attached) and full Report of Informing Healthcare were issued electronically for targeted consultation at the beginning of October. Hard copy printed version of the Summary document was widely circulated later in mid-October.

Four Roadshows were held around Wales during November, and have been attended by a cross-section of interests, including Community Health Council representatives. Officials have also attended a range of meetings with stakeholders to raise awareness and clarify issues raised in the document. All this is part of a continuing (and growing) process of stakeholder engagement. This will become more important as the detail of the Strategy Implementation Programme is developed over the next few months.

Response to the document has been very positive, with expected concerns and questions about details of implementation and resourcing. A full report of the consultation feedback is being prepared for me to consider later this month. Assuming it is broadly supportive, the TFG Report will be recast to take the responses into account, and will be published as a Welsh Assembly policy document in February. At about the same time, I hope to have approved membership and establishment of the Strategy

Implementation Programme Board. I will be providing further details of the Implementation Programme in the New Year.

This is a most important initiative. The proposals in the document respond directly to the spirit and detail of the reforms and developments in Improving Health in Wales. I am glad that Jane Jeffs, Professor John Williams and Dr Hywel Lloyd will be able to join the discussion, so that members can hear directly from a patient representative and two practising clinicians why these proposals are so warmly welcomed.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no additional implications for the Assembly in this financial year, but there are potential financial implications for future years. The strategy has been developed on the assumption that NHS Wales will at least double its spending on information and IT from 1% to 2% of budget in the next 3-4 years, in line with "Improving Health in Wales" commitments.

### **Compliance**

Powers contained in Section 1 of the NHS Act 1977 and Section 40 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 allow the development and implementation of the strategy.

### **Action for the Committee**

The Health and Social Services Committee are asked to note the above.

**Jane Hutt**

**Minister for Health and Social Services**

**Contact:** John Morgan, Health Information and Facilities Division, NHS Wales Department, Tel 029 2080 1416