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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Eluned Morgan, AS/MS
Minister for Health and Social Services
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
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Ein cyf / Our ref: MP/LMR

Eich cyf / Your ref:



Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Llinos Roberts

E-bost / Email:

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Dyddiad / Date: 6 April 2022

Dear Minister

Update on Actions to Improve Vascular Services at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

I write to report on the progress, in what you will be aware has been a challenging month in vascular services in BCUHB.

The Health Board's focus has been, and will remain, on ensuring the quality and safety of services.

You will be aware of incidents in early March that led the Executive Team to put in immediate make safes in the service, including enhanced consultant cover and closer decision-making support from the regional vascular service in Liverpool.

The immediate make safes were put into place on 11th March 2022 and formally agreed from 17th March 2022 for a period of 28 days.

Close scrutiny of the service, and incidents associated with the service, led to the agreement on 30th March 2022 of an extension of these extra support measures to 23rd May 2022 (with the inclusion of further multi-disciplinary team (MDT) discussions for patients being transferred within the Health Board from the spoke sites to the hub at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd). These further considerations and measures have been overseen by my Vice Chair and me.

I attach with this letter the latest version of the Vascular Improvement Plan.

Particular areas I would like to highlight include:

- The appointment of a Professional Standards Vascular Lead for the Health Board, a widely respected vascular surgeon who has recently retired to the area
- Improvement work and the support of Improvement Cymru in this and the adoption of an Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) methodology
- The involvement of the Health Board in the Vascular Community of Practice in Wales being led by Dr Allan Wardaugh



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- The receipt of an application for the key role of Clinical Director of vascular services with a selection panel being arranged as soon as possible
- An application for a Consultant Vascular Surgeon position being taken forward in response to the recent advert for the post, with an interview panel to take place on May 20th 2022

In addition, in line with the framework agreed with your officials, I provide updates as follows:

Closer working with the regional tertiary centre in Liverpool

The need for working with the regional tertiary centre was a central part of the Royal College of Surgeons' recommendations in January 2022.

- The Memorandum of Understanding with Liverpool University Hospital Foundation Trust (LUHFT) was signed on 23rd March 2022
- The closer working outlined in the MoU has already commenced, but will be further taken forward to include all of the relevant Royal College of Surgeons recommendations this month
- Shared MDT working for out of hours work has already been adopted and, from this month, Liverpool will support the Friday "planned care" MDT
- Additionally, the support goes beyond the College recommendations in supporting surgeons from both centres to be working alongside each other
- Liverpool will support in ensuring clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place and are used as part of the MDT process

Improved Record Keeping and Consent

The poor quality of record keeping and evidence of decision making is a key concern and has led both to the actions below but also the appointment of the Professional Standards Vascular Lead who is now working closely with the clinical teams.

- The adoption of the Digital Health Record in vascular services has taken place, a first step in moving records from paper to an electronic patient record
- The ongoing weekly audit of clinical notes and consent continues on all 3 acute sites which is highlighting some significant improvements
- A formal audit of clinical notes, using the methodology set out in our 2022/23 clinical audit plan, will take place in May 2022
- Consent training and an audit of the quality of consent taking took place on 4th March 2022 and this work will now be extended to other surgical specialities
- The initial work on clinical note keeping is now being developed to inform a Health Board wide audit for 2022/23, ensuring that any issues identified in the vascular service that are present more widely across the Health Board are identified and addressed



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- The quality of Duty of Candour discussions and recording is now being reviewed and this learning will be shared more widely across the Health Board.

Strong Governance in Vascular Services

The quality governance is a key part of the Board's assurance framework in ensuring transformation and learning are taken forward and change the outcomes and experience for patients using the service.

- The first Vascular Quality Panel meeting is to be held on the 7th April 2022 in line with the recommendations within the Royal College of Surgeons report. Letters have been issued to the first 47 patients (and/or their families as appropriate) whose notes are to be reviewed
- The current governance and oversight arrangements are being reviewed to consider whether they should be strengthened and a Clinical Lead for Quality and Effectiveness is being recruited, initially on an interim basis
- There remains close Executive oversight of the vascular work with meetings chaired and led by the Executive Medical Director
- Vascular services have been subject of scrutiny and discussion at both regular and extraordinary meetings of the Quality, Safety and Experience (QSE) Committee and the Board
- Community Health Council (CHC) and patient representation continues on the monthly Vascular Steering Group
- Professional standards discussions have taken place on a 1:1 basis with all consultant vascular staff (a process completed on 1st April 2022)
- A workshop with the General Medical Council (GMC) will take place on 5th May 2022. This work is supported by the Professional Standards Lead referred to earlier in this letter
- Recruitment of medical staff continues but further work is now under development to review the role of specialist nurses and allied health professionals and their potential to support the care of patients in this service
- A focus on support for staff is in place and the Hospital Management Team now meet the vascular team on a weekly basis

Patient Feedback

- A survey of patient experience has taken place (this included 10 telephone interviews and 10 face-to-face interviews). This demonstrated that more work is needed to ensure that patients feel listened to and their treatment is fully explained. The results have been shared with the clinical teams and the survey will be repeated later this month



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- Work is progressing to develop Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMS) to be included in the recently developed Vascular Quality Dashboard

In addition:

- A Patient Safety Culture Survey will take place in April 2022
- Mentoring and coaching arrangements for members of the senior management team have commenced but will be developed more formally with the team over the coming month
- The Board has Commissioned AQuA (Advancing Quality Alliance) to support with a Human Factors Programme, which focuses on the science and integration of human factors. This approach encompasses the safety culture and human errors, and will provide mentoring and coaching to enable sustainable capabilities with the vascular service. The work commences in this month too

The Health Board recognises that these actions are focussed primarily on the vascular service, however I recognise that some of the issues that have contributed to concerns in this service are likely to be present in other services in the Health Board. The Executive Team are alive of this.

I have highlighted that audits and training are now being rolled out more widely across the Health Board and are to be formalised through the Clinical Audit Plan for 2022/23.

The Executive Team are also working very closely with the Hospital Management Team in Ysbyty Glan Clwyd following the recent HIW report on the Emergency Department on that site and are also prioritising the existing Urology Improvement Group work to ensure that any patient safety and experience issues are prioritised.

I am very happy to provide any further information or updates but will formally again write to update on progress in the first week of May.

Yours sincerely

Mark Polin OBE QPM
Cadeirydd / Chairman

Enc Vascular Improvement Plan (dated 5th April 2022)