

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Minister for Health and Social Services**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Russell George MS  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

18 May 2022

Dear Russell

I have today made a written cabinet statement providing Members of the Senedd with an update on work to set up an NHS Executive for Wales. I know this matter will be of interest to your committee, so I wanted to write to set out how this work will be taken forward within Welsh Government.

Setting up an NHS Executive is an essential part of making our health system fit for the future – it will drive improvements in the quality and safety of care, as well as ensuring consistency and equity with the implementation of clinical standards across the NHS.

As you know, the decision to establish an executive function was announced in *A Healthier Wales* in 2018, and reconfirmed in the Programme for Government. This decision was based on the findings and recommendations of both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Delivery (OECD) Quality Review and the Parliamentary Review of the long-term future of Health and Social Care, published in 2018. Both of these reviews called for a stronger centre, additional transformation capacity and streamlining of current structures.

Work on establishing the NHS Executive was paused in early 2020 to focus efforts on the Covid-19 response. However, this has allowed further work to be undertaken to ensure that learning from the pandemic is built in to proposals. Building on this, the decision has now been taken by Ministers to establish the NHS Executive in a hybrid model, rather than a standalone body at this time. It will comprise a small strengthened senior team within Welsh Government, bolstered and complemented by the bringing together of existing expertise and capacity from national bodies within the NHS, which will operate under a direct mandate Welsh Government.

### **Role and purpose**

The NHS Executive's key purpose will be to drive improvements in the quality and safety of care - resulting in better and more equitable outcomes, access and patient experience, reduced variation, and improvements in population health.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Working on behalf of Welsh Government, the NHS Executive will provide strong leadership and strategic direction – enabling, supporting and directing the NHS in Wales to transform clinical services in line with national priorities and standards by:

- Strengthening national leadership and support for quality improvement;
- Providing more central direction to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to national and regional planning based on outcomes;
- Enabling stronger performance management arrangements, including capacity to challenge and support organisations that are not operating as expected.

## **Functions**

The high level functions proposed for the NHS Executive are:

### **Reinforcing and refocusing national leadership for quality improvement and transformation including:**

- Developing quality indicators and outcomes;
- Driving the implementation of the National Clinical Framework and other national programmes of work;
- Developing bespoke mechanisms for the system to learn from transformational success and share best practice – with a greater expectation of compliance across the system.

### **Planning**

- National and regional planning capability and support for national decision making alongside regional and local delivery.
- Development of the NHS Wales Planning Framework
- Supporting and challenging local IMTP development
- NHS emergency planning arrangements
- Design and delivery of the NHS Wales Planning Programme for Learning to enhance planning capacity and capability across Wales

### **Enable stronger performance management and quality improvement support arrangements**

- Building highly skilled additional capability and capacity to support organisations at risk of, or in escalation, that can be deployed flexibly across Wales.
- Organising and leading performance management and delivery conversations with all NHS bodies
- Leading escalation arrangements and support

## **Building the NHS Executive**

The NHS Executive will bring together and repurpose - where necessary - existing national capacity into a single delivery and accountability structure, operating against a mandate agreed by the Health and Social Services Group in Welsh Government. However, bringing this existing system capacity together will now be done in a virtual way and with as little disruption to staff as possible. The logistics of this will be looked at as part of the implementation programme that will now be taken forward and with the engagement of staff.

In the first instance, the national bodies that will come together virtually under the banner of the NHS Executive will include:

- Finance Delivery Unit;
- Performance Delivery Unit;
- Improvement Cymru; and
- NHS Collaborative, including key national programme directors, clinical networks and national implementation programmes.

As well as:

- Additional capacity to evaluate and support efficient and effective deployment of workforce resources;
- Increased capacity and expertise to enable accelerated support for organisations in escalation; and
- Central planning and transformation capacity and expertise.

Under these new arrangements statutory accountability mechanisms will not change. All NHS organisations are already directly accountable to Ministers, and the Welsh Government, and will continue to be. Ministers will also continue to set priorities, targets and outcome measures for the NHS, which will feed into the mandate for the NHS Executive and wider NHS. However, the NHS Executive will provide additional capacity at a national level to oversee and support delivery of these priorities.

### **Implementation programme and transition**

Within Welsh Government steps are now being taken to set up a formal implementation programme, which Judith Paget will chair. This will oversee the establishment of the NHS Executive and the detailed work that will now begin. The aim is to have made substantial progress on how the NHS Executive will operate by the end of this year.

The views of staff within Welsh Government and staff within the national NHS bodies that will form part of the NHS Executive, as well as wider stakeholders, will be particularly important to the successful delivery of this work. The implementation programme will include engagement with NHS Chairs and Chief Executives, the leads of national NHS bodies, Welsh Government and NHS staff, and wider stakeholders to help shape what the NHS Executive will do and how it will operate.

I will keep the committee updated on progress with the establishment of the NHS Executive and would be happy to discuss further if you would like to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

### **Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**        **Update on setting up an NHS Executive for Wales**

**DATE**        **18 May 2022**

**BY**            **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services**

This statement updates Members about our plans to establish an NHS Executive to drive improvements in the quality and safety of care across Wales.

The decision to set up a national executive function was outlined in *A Healthier Wales* in 2018, and reconfirmed in the Programme for Government, and is based on the findings and recommendations of the OECD's Quality Review and the Parliamentary Review of the Long-term Future of Health and Social Care. Both of these reviews called for a stronger centre, additional transformational capacity and streamlining of current structures.

Work to establish the NHS Executive was paused in 2020 to focus on the pandemic response. As we move beyond the emergency response to the pandemic, we can ensure the learning from the pandemic is built into the development of the NHS Executive.

I have decided to establish the NHS Executive as a hybrid model, rather than a standalone organisation. It will comprise a small, strengthened senior team within Welsh Government, bolstered and complemented by the bringing together of existing expertise and capacity from national bodies in the NHS, which will operate under a direct mandate from Welsh Government.

Setting up the NHS Executive is an essential part of making our health system fit for the future. Its central purpose will be to support the NHS to deliver improved quality of care to people throughout Wales, resulting in better and more equitable outcomes, access and patient experience, reduced variation and improvements in population health.

The NHS Executive will provide strong leadership and strategic direction – enabling, supporting and directing the NHS in Wales to transform clinical services in line with national priorities and standards by:

- Strengthening national leadership and support for quality improvement;
- Providing more central direction to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to national and regional planning based on outcomes;

- Enabling stronger performance management arrangements, including capacity to challenge and support organisations that are not operating as expected.

It will bring together existing national capacity into a single delivery and accountability structure, operating to a mandate agreed by Ministers.

Under these new arrangements statutory accountability mechanisms will not change. All NHS organisations are already directly accountable to Ministers and the Welsh Government and will continue to be. I will continue to set priorities, targets and outcome measures for the NHS, which will feed into the mandate for the NHS Executive to deliver with the wider NHS.

The NHS Executive will provide additional capacity at a national level to oversee and support delivery of these priorities.

An implementation programme to take forward the detailed work about how the NHS Executive will operate will be established. This will be led by Judith Paget, chief executive of NHS Wales and the Director General for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government. As part of this programme there will be full engagement with NHS chairs and chief executives, the leads of national bodies, NHS and Welsh Government staff and wider stakeholders.

I will update Members further as this work progresses.