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Ms Judith Paget CBE
Director General Health and Social Services/
NHS Wales Chief Executive
Health and Social Services Group

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Dear Judith

Audit Wales Report - Tackling the Planned Care Backlog in Wales

Thank you for your letter of 24th June 2022 setting out the Welsh Government's response to the recommendations within my report on Tackling the Planned Care Backlog in Wales. I am pleased that the Welsh Government has accepted each of the recommendations and I note that successful implementation of the Welsh Government's Planned Care Recovery Plan will be a key means of addressing many of the issues raised in my report.

We did feel, however, that the Welsh Government's response to some of the recommendations was a bit narrow and did not quite cover off all of the issues on which we were prompting action. I have set out below the areas where it would be helpful to receive a fuller response from the Welsh Government:

Recommendation 1: We note the targets that are in the Welsh Government's plan and the work that Andrew Sallows will be doing with health boards to develop baseline assessments and delivery targets and milestones. However, the thrust of this recommendation was around setting clear ambitions for introducing the new ways of working that the plan identifies, and the Welsh Government's response is silent on that. Accepting that there will need to be some work done with individual health boards in preparing their implementation plans, it would be helpful for Welsh Government to provide some further information on the ambitions and timescales for

introducing the new ways of working that will support the planned care service transformation that is envisaged.

Recommendation 2: The additional funding that has been made available to support the recovery of planned care is noted and welcomed. Our recommendation was prompting for a strategic approach to funding planned care recovery that supports the service transformation that is required and maximises the benefit from the significant additional investment identified. This includes the use of capital funding. It would be helpful to understand how Welsh Government see the additional investment being used and in particular whether it has any plans for a longer-term approach to capital funding to support recovery and service transformation.

Recommendation 4: The Welsh Government response seems to have missed the main thrust of this recommendation which was to prompt for a clear system leadership approach across the entirety of plan, rather than just for diagnostic services. It would be helpful to understand how Welsh Government see that broader system leadership working in practice for planned care recovery. It is encouraging to note that lessons have been learnt from previous programme board arrangements, but it would be good to know what those lessons were and how they are shaping new system leadership arrangements going forward.

I would be grateful to receive an updated response to our recommendations that pick up on the points highlighted above, and which includes clear timescales for action where these can be identified. If you or Welsh Government colleagues have any queries on the above, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Dave Thomas or Andrew Doughton.

Yours sincerely



ADRIAN CROMPTON
Auditor General