

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
SeneddHealth@senedd.wales

Mark Isherwood MS
Chair, Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
seneddPAPA@senedd.wales

17 August 2023

Dear Russell and Mark,

Thank you for your letter of 5 July and attached report. The use of digital services across Wales is key to ensuring the effective operation of all health services, and so I welcome the joint Committees' report into Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) following this Special Health Authority's first year of operation. I am particularly pleased to see the joint Committees' recommendations align with our current and future plans, also the plans I know that DHCW have in place.

I would also like to draw the joint Committees attention to my Written Statement¹ from 27th July 2023, in which I launched the refreshed Digital and Data Strategy for Health and Social Care in Wales. This provides digital and data transformation direction to help people in Wales lead happier, healthier and longer lives through user-centred digital services built on better digital skills, partnerships, data and platforms. DHCW as our trusted, strategic, digital delivery partner has an integral role in helping WG and NHS Wales achieve the ambitions set out in the Strategy, successful delivery of these recommendations will further strengthen this role and accountability to all.

I have set out my responses to the Report's individual recommendations, as appropriate, in the attached Annex A.

Yours sincerely

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

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-launch-refreshed-digital-and-data-strategy-health-and-social-care>

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Health and Social Care and Public Accounts and Public Administration joint Committee, titled “Scrutiny of Digital Health and Care Wales”.

Recommendation 1

The Committees recommend that:

The Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales should provide further information about their respective roles in determining DHCW’s priorities and delivering major projects. This should include:

- *How the Welsh Government assures itself that DHCW’s priorities are aligned to and support delivery of the Welsh Government’s priorities for health and care in Wales.*
- *How decisions are taken on DHCW’s priorities, including when and by whom.*
- *How DHCW’s Board and executive team monitor progress on major projects, including whether key timelines and milestones are being achieved.*
- *What role, if any, will be played by the NHS Wales Executive.*

Response:

- A. Since the receipt of evidence by the joint Committees, the Welsh Government appointed Mike Emery as its new Director of Technology, Digital and Innovation within Health and Social Services in January 2023. Mike is also the Chief Digital Officer (CDO) for Health and Social Care for NHS Wales. The CDO meets with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DHCW on a fortnightly basis, to discuss and decide priorities for delivery, including any resultant challenges, aligned with Welsh Government / NHS Wales evolving priorities – typically these are set out in Programme for Government priorities, the Digital and Data Strategy for Health and Social Care and additional priorities responding to specific needs. DHCW, as a Special Health Authority, also undertakes the annual Integrated Medium Term Planning (IMTP) process¹ and participates in quarterly Integrated Quality Planning and Delivery meetings (IQPD) and six monthly Joint Executive Team (JET) meetings. Individually and collectively, these conversations consider, discuss, challenge, appraise, decide and resolve all points regarding DCHW’s delivery priorities as aligned to Welsh Government priorities.
- B. Within the NHS Executive, the Office of the Chief Digital Officer will be responsible for overseeing digital developments, coordinating and defining technical standards, and ensuring whole system approaches are adopted. This includes working with DHCW to ensure that Once-for-Wales i.e. national systems are implemented, iteratively improved, and adopted across Wales.

¹ Production of plans by all NHS Bodies on an annual basis to meet the prevailing [NHS Wales Planning Framework](#)

- C. The CDO will also chair the proposed National Strategic Portfolio and Investment Board (housed in the NHS Executive). This forum will bring together the Welsh Government and NHS and Social Care representatives to identify, consider, and propose recommendations for the Welsh Government to submit for Ministerial approval. The Board's role will be to:
- a. Review and scrutinise, and recommend to Welsh Government (and so to Ministers) and the NHS Executive, digital and data investments, covering appropriate initiatives across the Health and Social Services' portfolio;
 - b. Act as a Gateway review point for key programmes and projects, aligned to the Welsh Government Gateway process;
 - c. Provide oversight of Health and Social Care digital and data Infrastructure and Architecture;
 - d. Undertake commissioning of delivery partners including DHCW;
 - e. Provide oversight of Health and Social Care data, procurement, interoperability and Artificial Intelligence standards' governance.

Recommendation 2

The Committees recommend that:

The Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales should set out who is responsible for leading the Welsh Community Care Information System programme. This should include information about the programme's Senior Responsible Officers.

If the interim Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is continuing as an SRO for the WCCIS programme, the Welsh Government and DHCW should provide an assessment of whether it is realistic for one individual to undertake both roles concurrently, and information about any steps that are being taken to mitigate any risks associated with the roles being undertaken concurrently.

Response:

: At the time of this submission, the joint SROs (the interim Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the Deputy Chief Executive at Caerphilly County Borough Council) remain accountable for the successful delivery of the programme. However, in line with revised governance arrangements for all Welsh Government funded Digital Transformation projects, as discussed and agreed between myself, the DHCW Chair and my officials, WCCIS is expected to be among the first programmes transitioning to adopting these arrangements, resulting in DHCW's CEO becoming accountable for WCCIS' delivery.

Recommendation 3

The Committees recommend that:

The Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales should provide the Health and Social Care Committee and the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee with six-monthly updates on progress on the delivery of the Welsh Community Care Information System. The updates should include information about

expenditure to date, planned expenditure, uptake of WCCIS among health boards and local authorities, engagement or consultation undertaken with relevant partners. The first update should be provided in the responses to this report.

Response:

After recess, I will provide an update to the Committees with further detail on the strategic direction for WCCIS. The future general approach, as set out in the Digital and Data Strategy for Health and Social Care, will be focussed on better sharing of data between settings, enabled by systems/services being better aligned by developments in shared care records across the NHS and Social Care. In terms of agreed budgets, there has to date been no change from the overall position set out in the Audit Wales letter (July 2022) to the PAPAC Chair.

Recommendation 4

The Committees recommend that:

In their responses to this report, the Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales should provide an update on the outcome of the WCCIS contracting strategy review that was due to report by March 2023.

Response:

DHCW will provide an update on this commercially sensitive strategy review. The Welsh Government is supportive of the review which will ensure the programme is able to leverage commercial relationships in the most appropriate way to achieve its vision of more effective use of joined up health and social care data to support the delivery and effective implementation of a digital solution, to further enable the goal of integrated services across health and care.

Recommendation 9

The Committees recommend that:

By the end of 2023 Digital Health and Care Wales should publish a clear, realistic and prioritised plan for increasing its engagement with the social care sector, including public, third and private sector providers, Regional Partnership Boards and the Social Partnership Council. The plan should be developed through engagement with the social care sector, and should include clear timescales and assessment of the resource required for its delivery. DHCW should provide a copy of the plan to the Health and Social Care Committee and the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee, and provide six-monthly updates on progress against the plan.

Response:

The Welsh Government's recently appointed CDO for Health and Social Care and the Chief Social Care Officer for Wales are working jointly to ensure that Social Care policy priorities are supported within existing digital priorities. Key to achieving this will be DHCW's similar engagement with the Social Care sector.

Recommendation 13

The Committees recommend that:

The Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales should provide further information about their respective roles in providing leadership and drive for digital transformation in health. This should include:

- *How the Welsh Government assures itself that decisions taken by DHCW and other health bodies in Wales on the prioritisation of capital funding align with Ministers' transformation priorities.*
- *How DHCW works with health bodies and encourages them to allocate sufficient funding and other resources to delivering sustainable digital transformation.*

Response:

The Welsh Government provides DHCW with funding (both revenue and capital) from two primary sources: a core allocation (which is profiled around the IMTP plan and monitored via the associated IQPD and JET meetings), and the Digital Priorities Investment Fund (for targeted strategic digital transformation activities). For the latter, proposals must be submitted to the Welsh Government for consideration and demonstrate alignment with priority policy goals, strategic alignment, Ministerial priority areas and Programme for Government commitments.

These are considered by a panel of Welsh Government officials (with a representative from the Welsh Government funded Centre for Digital Public Services) to provide advice on best practice approaches etc before advice is then provided to Ministers on committing funding (both revenue and capital) to a particular digital transformation programme. The improved governance processes to discuss, agree and monitor how DHCW utilises Welsh Government funding to deliver Ministers' transformation priorities is set out in Recommendation 1, B.

Recommendation 14

The Committees recommend that:

The Welsh Government and Digital Health and Care Wales should provide a frank appraisal of the impact of the limited availability of capital funding on the delivery of digital transformation in health services. This should include information about any projects or programmes which have been, or are likely to be, delayed because of a lack of capital funding, an assessment of the implications of such delays, and what alternative approaches are being considered to fund/support growth in the digital space.

Response:

Digital services are becoming less dependent on capital funding as they gradually switch to more cloud-hosted services which require ongoing revenue commitment. Capital funding is still required for underpinning physical infrastructure (e.g. network hardware, desktop and laptop computers, etc).

Due to historic budget settlements from Westminster and the prioritisation of funding for front-line services, there is a growing technical debt within the NHS in Wales,

caused by limited available funding for the replacing of legacy underpinning infrastructure, which presents a cyber risk to NHS Wales. Addressing this technical debt would require significant investments in terms of funding and expertise. This capital pressure is on Health Board and Trust budgets, not on digital transformation programme budgets, which would also require additional ongoing revenue commitments to fund more cloud hosted services to replace some of those currently hosted on-premise.

It is difficult to quantify the impact of a lack of capital on digital transformation projects or programmes in the way the Recommendation has described. As the Committees are acutely aware, there are challenging budget decisions which need to be taken with prioritisation of capital funding to maintain frontline services. This means that programmes need to carefully consider the funding profiles they request, including exploring alternate delivery methods – for example working with other bodies to jointly deliver digital transformation. These are undertaken before funding requests are submitted, so it is not easily quantifiable how the limited available capital impacts on digital transformation.

However, as noted above re technical debt, this is layering modern digital services on top of increasingly aging IT systems (e.g. structural networks and hardware etc), which will only be able to accommodate a certain amount of technical change before they themselves become a barrier to transformation.

Recommendation 16

The Committees recommend that:

We wish to ensure that Digital Health Services are appropriately accessible to patients in Wales when they receive NHS services in England. We recommend that the Welsh Government engage with the UK Government to consider ways in which digital health services in England and Wales can be better aligned and connected.

Response: Accept in Principle

The Welsh Government continues to work successfully with NHS England, at Ministerial and at Official level, with both parties learning lessons from approaches taken to date. Wales is an active member of the Four Nations' group for Health, including work on common data standards. The Health and Social Care CDO will continue to take a lead role in these discussions with counterparts in other areas of the UK. Powys Teaching Health Board is leading work under the Powys Cross Border Pathways programme, with DHCW support, to exchange health data with English NHS Trusts and Integrated Care Systems for patients whose care spans the English/Welsh border. Such cross border working results in a more streamlined patient experience, with less delays encountered (caused by waiting for files) and with better clinical decisions being made by NHS England, for Welsh patients. This will be enabled by improved and fuller access to Welsh data, which will include further work on considering and adopting international standards in relation to data sharing between countries.

In Wales, the approach set out in our Digital and Data Strategy for Health and Social Care (as noted on page 1) is to increase the utilisation of Once for Wales systems, adopting open and consistently applied standards and architecture frameworks to improve interoperability and leveraging existing platforms to simplify access to data by clinicians and support staff. We have a single patient record for secondary care. In primary care we use two system suppliers across Wales to provide the electronic GP record and for community pharmacies we have the all-Wales Choose Pharmacy system. However, health care providers in England have separate strategies for the integration of patient information for those circumstances where the patient moves outside of their geographical care provider in England. This means that Wales' services and systems would need to integrate separately with each health provider and system in England, resulting in very significant technical challenges and requiring substantial investment from both Governments.

NHS England announced² in 2022 a major investment “to support electronic patient records to be in all NHS trusts”. The wording of the statement suggests this is the sharing of data between settings within each Integrated Care System (ICS), rather than between areas of England or potentially with Devolved Governments; officials are seeking to clarify this. The Welsh Government continues to work with NHS England to understand how we explore potential opportunities for sharing digital platforms, whilst retaining data sovereignty for Wales, to benefit Welsh citizens.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-digital-health-and-social-care/a-plan-for-digital-health-and-social-care#section-1-embedding-digital-technologies>

PAPA(6)-12-23 -PTN8

UK REGISTERED AIRCRAFT SUMMARY 2001 TO 2023

Aircraft Class	MTOW kg	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	change since 2022	change since 2011	change since 2001		
		AIRSHIP (GAS-FILLED)	1 - 750 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1			1	-1
AIRSHIP (GAS-FILLED)	751 - 5700 kg	3	4	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	-1	-1	
AIRSHIP (GAS-FILLED)	5701 - 15000 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
AIRSHIP (GAS-FILLED)	15001kg - 50000kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
AIRSHIP (GAS-FILLED) (UNMANNED)	1 - 750 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1		0	1	1	
AIRSHIP (HOT AIR)	1 - 750 kg	14	10	11	10	10	9	8	8	8	5	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	2	2	0	-1	-12		
AIRSHIP (HOT AIR)	751 - 5700 kg	16	14	15	15	14	13	13	13	11	12	10	11	14	13	14	15	12	12	12	12	12	11	12		1	2	-4	
BALLOON (GAS-FILLED)	Not known	8	7	9	9	9	7	6	6	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-2	-8	
BALLOON (GAS-FILLED)	1 - 750 kg	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	6	5	2	1	2	2	2	3	4	5	4	2	0	1		1	-1	-2		
BALLOON (GAS-FILLED)	751 - 5700 kg	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	6	6	5	5	3	2	3	4	5	6	5	3	3	3	0	0	-3	2	
BALLOON (GAS/HOT AIR)	Not known	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-3	
BALLOON (GAS/HOT AIR)	1 - 750 kg	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-2	
BALLOON (GAS/HOT AIR)	751 - 5700 kg	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	3	3	2		-1	2	-4		
BALLOON (HOT AIR)	Not known	142	116	114	107	108	105	102	102	87	57	38	38	34	34	23	17	13	13	10	8	8	8	8	8	0	-30	-134	
BALLOON (HOT AIR)	1 - 750 kg	699	624	612	626	636	641	652	657	677	630	592	569	573	583	577	587	604	619	653	637	638	639	622		-17	30	-77	
BALLOON (HOT AIR)	751 - 5700 kg	965	936	955	961	1000	1043	1056	1090	1103	1045	981	943	927	905	905	890	867	867	817	817	796	789	774		-15	-207	-191	
BALLOON (MINIMUM LIFT) (UNMANNED)	Not known	150	118	99	99	99	99	100	100	100	99	99	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	97	97	97	0	-2	-53		
FIXED-WING AMPHIBIAN	1 - 750 kg	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	0	0	0	1	
FIXED-WING AMPHIBIAN	751 - 5700 kg	9	9	8	8	9	10	11	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	13	14	15	14	14	14	12	10	10	0	-2	-1		
FIXED-WING AMPHIBIAN	5701 - 15000 kg	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	
FIXED-WING LANDPLANE	1 - 750 kg	2824	2832	2859	2914	2994	3022	3077	3153	3186	3235	3217	3199	3245	3269	3300	3325	3346	3395	3385	3379	3381	3385	3369		-16	152	545	
FIXED-WING LANDPLANE	751 - 5700 kg	5429	5442	5461	5556	5647	5711	5822	5887	6000	5907	5764	5663	5564	5505	5484	5493	5503	5497	5484	5434	5404	5385	5349		-36	-415	-80	
FIXED-WING LANDPLANE	5701 - 15000 kg	262	276	267	254	254	254	253	258	270	256	253	228	219	212	200	190	179	174	176	163	155	141	124		-17	-129	-138	
FIXED-WING LANDPLANE	15001 - 50000 kg	288	296	307	264	271	256	272	257	270	292	306	297	293	289	272	260	274	261	242	239	233	205	184		-21	-122	-104	
FIXED-WING LANDPLANE	> 50000 kg	592	624	645	644	662	679	712	760	760	766	742	742	755	761	791	806	833	844	770	753	709	713		4	-29	121		
FIXED-WING LANDPLANE (UNMANNED)	751 - 5700 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	6	2	6	6		
FIXED-WING SEAPLANE	1 - 750 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	2	
FIXED-WING SEAPLANE	751 - 5700 kg	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	
FIXED-WING SEAPLANE	15001 - 50000 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
FIXED-WING SLMG	1 - 750 kg	203	203	199	204	203	204	204	206	209	206	202	200	208	211	220	221	225	216	216	214	213	212	212	0	10	9		
FIXED-WING SLMG	751 - 5700 kg	70	70	71	70	73	76	76	80	86	86	85	85	88	91	94	100	103	106	104	104	167	167	165		-2	80	95	
GLIDER	1 - 750 kg	1	1	1	1	2	43	147	1094	2241	2289	2277	2235	2228	2226	2246	2238	2242	2232	2241	2210	2205	2193	2184		-9	-83	2183	
GLIDER	751 - 5700 kg	0	0	0	0	2	2	13	17	17	18	21	20	21	21	22	23	25	24	25	26	26	26	26	0	8	26		
GYROPLANE	1 - 750 kg	233	242	244	247	250	248	259	277	305	305	312	324	322	327	329	342	336	341	352	358	361	360	361	1	49	128		
GYROPLANE	751 - 5700 kg	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
HANG GLIDER	1 - 750 kg	7	10	11	12	12	13	13	13	13	12	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0	1	2	
HELICOPTER	1 - 750 kg	275	267	273	277	291	293	288	289	279	257	238	228	211	208	203	199	202	201	193	180	174	167	168	1	-70	-107		
HELICOPTER	751 - 5700 kg	715	755	794	814	882	952	1026	1120	1136	1088	1042	989	954	914	901	907	921	912	905	902	872	859	872	13	-170	157		
HELICOPTER	5701 - 15000 kg	67	68	67	68	65	69	72	81	80	83	84	82	95	110	127	152	167	170	158	165	162	143	134		-9	50	67	
HELICOPTER	15001 - 50000 kg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
MICROLIGHT	1 - 750 kg	3478	3531	3618	3828	4070	4118	4254	4392	4447	4375	4071	4043	4045	4029	3998	4015	4028	3993	3918	3832	3791	3747	3721		-26	-350	243	
TOTAL		16473	16474	16663	17013	17588	17894	18445	19890	21331	21063	20379	20040	19939	19851	19846	19924	20027	20028	19810	19599	19496	19288	19144		-144	-1235	2671	
Aircraft Class	Weight group	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023					
AIRSHIP	All weights	33	28	31	30	29	27	24	24	24	22	18	19	21	20	21	23	20	20	17	18	17	16	18		2	0	-15	
BALLOON	All weights	1829	1694	1700	1713	1763	1806	1822	1862	1883	1743	1621	1557	1541	1527	1509	1500	1493	1510	1494	1474	1450	1442	1410		-32	-211	-419	
BALLOON (MINIMUM LIFT)	All weights	150	118	99	99	99	99	100	100	100	99	99	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	97	97	97		0	-2	-53	
FIXED WING	All weights	9412	9487	9555	9650	9848	9943	10157	10338	10510	10490	10304	10151	10099	10060	10070	10098	10160	10195	10081	10010	9952	9850	9767		-83	-537	355	
FIXED WING SLMG	All weights	273	273	270	274	276	280	280	286	295	292	287	285	296	302	314	321	328	322	320	318	380	379	377		-2	90	104	
GLIDER	All weights	1	1	1	1	2	45	149	1107	2258	2306	2295	2256	2248	2247	2267	2260	2265	2257	2265	2235	2231	2219	2210		-9	-85	229	
GYROPLANE	All weights	233	242	244	247	251	249	260	278	306	306	312	324	322	327	329	342	336	341	352	358	361	360	361	1	49	128		
HANG GLIDER	All weights	7	10	11	12	12	13	13	13	13	12	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0	1	2	
HELICOPTER	All weights	1057	1090	1134	1159	1238	1314	1386	1490	1495	1428	1364	1299	1260	1232	1231	1258	1290	1283	1256	1247	1208	1169	1174		5	-190	117	
MICROLIGHT	All weights	3478	3531	3618	3828	4070	4118	4254	4392	4447	4375	4071	4043	4045	4029	3998	4015	4028	3993	3918	3832	3791	3747	3721		-26	-350	243	
TOTAL		16473	16474	16663																									