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**Maria Battle
Chair**

9 April 2018

Mr Nick Ramsay AM
Chair Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
By email: SeneddPAC@assembly.wales

Dear Mr Ramsay

I write further to our attendance at the Public Accounts Committee on 25 September 2017 to provide an update as requested in your letter of 31 October 2017.

I attach a copy of the updated action plan which has been monitored by our Audit Committee (at its meetings in September and December 2017 and February 2018) and considered at the September 2017 and March 2018 meetings of the UHB Board, all in public session.

The action plan reflects the progress that has been made since the last report to the Public Accounts Committee. A review has also been conducted by Internal Audit to establish if the reported improvements being made by the Health Board are occurring as stated, and I am pleased to say that this has resulted in a finding of Substantial assurance. Three recommendations for improvement were made by Internal Audit; these were accepted and responded to as part of the report presented to the February Audit Committee. A copy of the completed Internal Audit report is also provided with this letter.

The NHS Wales Audit and Assurance Services undertook a similar review specifically within NHS Wales Procurement Services in August 2017.

As referenced by the Public Accounts Committee, Internal Audit is also to conduct a review within the Health Board of contracts. This will take place this financial year and the outcome reported to our Audit Committee, I will also share the final Internal Audit report with the Committee.

Summary of action plan progress

Of the 26 actions contained within the action plan, only 4 now remain outstanding.

The action around review of the procedures used to recruit Executive Directors and other Senior Managers has been amended as partially complete acknowledging that even though the review of the procedures was conducted by July 2017, amendment of the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure is needed to reflect the

changes in practice to fully conclude this action and provide robust assurance. The updated policy and procedure is due for approval in May 2018.

Full closure of the Action Plan was intended for March 2018, the following 4 actions have not yet been concluded:

- Full implementation of the no purchase order no payment system – the initial date set for completion of this action has been extended to ensure there are no unintended consequences to patients or impact on continuity of service, this will now be achieved by June 2018;
- Development of an internal protocol providing a system for senior leaders to raise concerns – a number of systems are currently in place. The Safety Valve and Freedom to Speak Up were launched in 2013 and 2016 respectively. However, the Executive Nurse Director, the Head of Corporate Governance and I, taking into account the observations of the Public Accounts Committee, have ensured further work is undertaken and there will be a re-launch of the procedure for NHS staff, including senior leaders, to raise concerns. A Working Group chaired by the Executive Nurse Director has been established to take this work forward and a report is to be presented to the UHB Management Executive on 9 April 2018. This is in addition to work outlined below in relation to culture;
- Circulation of a bulletin to the UHB Board and throughout the UHB reinforcing the Nolan principles of Good Governance – finalisation of this communication will form part of the Working Group's agenda to ensure the content aligns with outcomes of the Group and will be launched at the same time as the procedure.
- Standing Financial Instructions and Standing Orders – revision will take place to reflect the model Standing Financial Instructions and Standing Orders being developed on an All Wales basis. This National work is not yet concluded.

UHB Culture

In 2016 we launched our Freedom to Speak Up helpline, supported by a number of information sources. This was on the basis of research in partnership with Cardiff University and our own cultural workshop in which we explored the experience of those who had raised concerns previously.

The learning from this has been integrated in our Values Programme and we have recently commissioned an evaluation of Freedom to Speak Up activity. The evaluation shows us that since its launch in July 2016, the Freedom to Speak Up pages have been accessed over 4300 times, the YouTube videos 590 times and the information about how to raise a concern 718 times. The next phase of evaluation will collect further information about staff awareness and feedback from those who have used the helpline. This intelligence will be fed into the aforementioned Working Group to enable us to develop further resources to improve UHB culture and increase confidence around raising concerns.

We continue to make a significant investment in our Values Programme. Throughout 2017 we heard from staff, patients and their families and carers about their experiences and these have formed the basis of a Values Behaviour Framework which we launched at the end of 2017. We are explicit in the Framework about our expectation that staff speak out. More than 3000 staff were involved in its development and trained on how to give feedback about issues of concern. We also now include this training in all our leadership, management and supervisor programmes. Our Assistant Director of Organisational Development chairs the All Wales Staff Survey Project Board and has ensured the 2018 survey contains questions about raising concerns, enabling us to monitor our progress over time.

The All Wales Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns was updated in December 2017, and the revised version adopted by the UHB's Resource and Delivery Committee on 30 January 2018. This provides that the CEO and Vice-Chair can be contacted should a staff member feel they cannot raise a concern with their manager. In addition I am joined by our Independent Member (Legal) as the named Independent Member for Freedom to Speak Up. Again the Working Group is looking at how we can continue to strengthen the internal processes that support this procedure and ensure that the system adequately serves those that speak up and gives all staff the confidence to do so.

Review of payments

As the Public Accounts Committee is aware, following an internal review of all manual payments made to Consultants or individuals, we referred two contracts to NHS Counter Fraud Service Wales in addition to the referral made by the Wales Audit Office. These investigations are nearing conclusion and I will provide an update to the Committee as soon as the outcome is available.

Following final completion of the action plan, closure reports will come back to the Audit Committee and Board and I will of course share the completed signed off action plan with the Public Accounts Committee.

Yours sincerely



Maria Battle
Chair

Encs:

- Action plan dated 5 April 2018
- Internal Audit report dated 14 February 2018