

**Royal College of Psychiatrists in Wales (RCPSych in Wales)  
Written evidence submitted to the Public Accounts Committee  
Informatics Consultation, April 2018**

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is a professional medical body responsible for supporting psychiatrists throughout their careers, from training through to retirement, and setting and raising standards of psychiatry in the United Kingdom.

The College was founded in 1841 and officially named the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1971. The College has 7068 non-training workforce (consultants and staff grade doctors) according to the 2017 consensus. The College also represents the views of our members regarding mental health policy and psychiatric practice, providing advice on issues that affect both the profession and the patient.

In 2004, the College created a separate division in Wales (RCPSych in Wales) to meet the specific needs of over 550 Members working and training in the Jurisdiction. RCPSych in Wales is committed to raising awareness of issues around psychiatry, mental health and wellbeing with the National Assembly, the Welsh Government, the NHS in Wales and other public and charitable bodies.

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The College has an established Informatics Committee that meet to discuss issues relating to the use of technology, data, and information in health care, as well as mental health informatics in particular.

The Informatics Committee provides a source of advice for the College on all matters related to health information and developments in health information management.

Due to time constraints, response to this call for evidence has been considered by the Wales executive committee of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Wales however we will give wider stakeholder opinion and the opinion of the Informatics committee at further stages of the Public Account Committees' NHS Wales Informatics Service Inquiry.

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## Initial Observations

1. We welcome the Auditor General's report 'Informatics systems in NHS Wales'<sup>1</sup>.
2. We acknowledge the key findings concerning the difficulties around securing adequate funding to take forward the vision; and agree with the need to strengthen prioritisation processes; and the need to review the governance arrangements for NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS).
3. The digital agenda across the NHS is crucial to delivering the recommendations of the Parliamentary Review for Health and Social Care<sup>2</sup> and we would not view the work of the Public Accounts Committee as necessarily duplicating that of

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<sup>1</sup> Wales Audit Office (2017) *Informatics Systems in NHS Wales* [https://www.wao.gov.uk/system/files/publications/NHS\\_-\\_Informatics-2018%20-%20English.pdf](https://www.wao.gov.uk/system/files/publications/NHS_-_Informatics-2018%20-%20English.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Parliamentary Review of Health & Social Care (2017) <https://beta.gov.wales/review-health-and-social-care>

the Parliamentary Review, but rather an opportunity to appropriately consider the forthcoming NHS Wales Health & Social Care Plan and the crucial role that informatics will play in achieving the ambition highlighted in the parliamentary review.

4. We recognise that informatics and digital technology are essential enablers in the transformation of health and care for the people of Wales.<sup>3</sup>
5. There is a hugely significant role for informatics and digital technology to play in delivering the quadruple aim<sup>4</sup> and the priorities to be set out in the new plan NHS Health & Social Care Plan.
6. We expect that, the new plan for health and social care in Wales will build on the priorities set out in the *Informed Health and Care* strategy<sup>5</sup> and will set out a central role for information and digital technology in delivering the quadruple aim and the new priorities for NHS Wales. The plans for improving governance; clarifying accountabilities and structures are likely to impact on NWIS roles and wider informatics planning and delivery.
7. We recognise that a change in culture, behaviours and practices across the sector is required when implementing significant changes enabled by new information systems and digital technologies. Responsibility is equally dependant on wider organisational leadership, engagement with staff and the public as it is with NWIS and health board informatics services.
8. Our members, experience challenges through current systems that do have an effect on delivery of services.
9. The Interface between primary and secondary care is a historic challenge<sup>6</sup>. However, patients move not only from

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<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Informed Health and Care: A Digital Health and Social Care Strategy for Wales*

<sup>4</sup> The Parliamentary Review of Health & Social Care (2018) *A Revolution from Within: Transforming Health & Care in Wales*. Pgs 11-12

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government (2015) *Informed Health and Care: A Digital Health and Social Care Strategy for Wales*

<sup>6</sup> Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Wales (2017) *Primary & Secondary Care Interface*

primary to secondary or tertiary care, local authority/social services, but also from Wales to England/Scotland/Ireland and vice versa, we need to make sure that the IT systems are able to communicate effectively to support the ambition for one system of seamless care<sup>7</sup>

10. Furthermore, there is variation in access to medical records between sectors. This may mean urgent decisions have to be made without reference to important patient data.
11. We will be keen to give further and more detailed opinion to the Public Account Committee inquiry into NHS Wales Informatics Service at subsequent stages of Inquiry with wider consideration of the RCPsych Informatics Committee.

**END**

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<sup>7</sup> The Parliamentary Review of Health & Social Care (2018) A Revolution from Within: Transforming Health & Care in Wales. Pgs 10