**Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol/
Prif Weithredwr GIG Cymru
Grŵp Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**

**Director General Health and Social Services/
NHS Wales Chief Executive
Health and Social Services Group**

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee

29 August 2018

Dear Mr Ramsay

Implementation of the NHS Finance (Wales) Act 2014 and NHS Wales Informatics Services

Following the Public Accounts Committee meeting on Monday 16 July 2018 regarding Implementation of the NHS Finance (Wales) Act 2014 and NHS Wales Informatics Services, please find below my response to the actions raised by the Clerk of the Committee.

Note on whether from an NHS Wales perspective, there could be some additional opportunity within the performance management procedure to include probationary periods to review performance together with whether or not the current procedure supports managers enough to be able to deal with underperformance.

I agreed to reflect on the proposal for probationary periods to review performance for new starters and the current performance management procedure. I will be considering this with NHS Employers and staff side colleagues and I will be asking the Welsh Partnership Forum, our Social Partnership group, if a probationary period would be desirable and add value for the NHS in Wales and how it interacts with the performance management system to balance the need for effect performance arrangements against continuing the need to attract the best possible people to work in NHS Wales. There are concerns that this would be inconsistent with practice across the NHS that may affect recruitment into Wales as an additional obstacle, particularly where we are not just recruiting locally, but sometimes nationally and internationally. At this stage, the recruitment market in Wales is highly competitive and we have outstanding vacancies. I will report back on this as it would represent a significant change.

Note that the Cancer Network had seen the business case for the cancer delivery plan.

As I outlined I can confirm that the Business Case for the replacement of CaNISC's functions is currently in development. Directors of the Wales Cancer Network attend and support meetings of the Cancer Implementation Group and its Cancer Information and

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Intelligence Subgroup. An options paper for the proposed replacement of CaNISC functions was presented by NWIS and the development was discussed at meetings of these groups in March, May, June, September and November of 2017; as well as at meetings in January, April and July of 2018. As part of this process, the Cancer Information and Intelligence Subgroup made a recommendation to the Cancer Information Group, which agreed the approach and made a recommendation to the NHS Wales Informatics Management Board.

Note that the Joint Emergency Services interoperability programme had been shared with each health board and that it had been considered as part of their business continuity arrangements.

In a recent meeting of the NHS Wales Informatics Board, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg advised that they had adopted the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) for managing business continuity arrangements during incidents, including incidents relating to digital issues.

Welsh Government officials have now shared this with NIMB members (NHS Executive Leads for Informatics), sharing a link to the principles, and asking that they consider them for use within their organisations to support business continuity.

The Wales Gold and Silver multi-agency courses include JESIP principles, therefore NHS Wales colleagues who attend the courses will have been exposed to, and have an understanding of, JESIP.

Note on the Welsh Government technical standards on GDS and an explanation of the differences between that system and the GDS design principles.

At its June meeting the Welsh Technical Standards Board agreed to adopt the GDS Design Principles (Annex 1), along with the Welsh Government's Digital Service Standard (Annex 2), for use across NHS Wales. In making a decision on the adoption of a Digital Service Standard, the Board considered both the UK Government Digital Service (GDS) and Welsh Government version of this standard.

The Government Digital Service (GDS) was established in 2012 to lead the transformation of central UK Government services. GDS's primary focus has been on UK Government services and has provided an advisory and guidance role to all devolved administrations. In April 2014 GDS launched its Digital Service Standard, which exists to help UK Government Departments build and run effective, user-focused digital services. It was last updated in 2015, and we are aware that GDS will be releasing a further updated version shortly.

The Welsh Government's Digital Service Standard is based on the UK Standard and comprises a set of criteria to help Welsh Government build and operate good digital services.

The main differences between the two standards are as follows:
- Standard no 13 - the UK Standard says "make the user experience consistent with GOV.UK' whilst the Welsh Government equivalent reflects the need for our services to adhere to the Welsh Government style guide and design patterns (which themselves are based on GDS standards);

- Standard no 18 - the UK Standard says "Test the service with the Minister responsible for it" whilst the Welsh Government standard requires services to be tested with senior management, and ideally the responsible Minister.

Following publication of the forthcoming updated GDS service standard Welsh Government will review its own to ensure alignment with best practice.

In addition to the information I have provided here, and as you have outlined, I know that Andrew Griffiths will be writing to you separately to address the issues raised. I hope this letter provides you with the information required.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Goodall

Government design principles:

1. Start with user needs
    Service design starts with identifying user needs. If you don't know what the user needs are, you won't build the right thing. Do research, analyse data, talk to users. Don't make assumptions. Have empathy for users, and remember that what they ask for isn't always what they need.

2. Do less
    Government should only do what only government can do. If we've found a way of doing something that works, we should make it reusable and shareable instead of reinventing the wheel every time. This means building platforms and registers others can build upon, providing resources (like APIs) that others can use, and linking to the work of others. We should concentrate on the irreducible core.

3. Design with data
    In most cases, we can learn from real world behaviour by looking at how existing services are used. Let data drive decision-making, not hunches or guesswork. Keep doing that after taking your service live, prototyping and testing with users then iterating in response. Analytics should be built-in, always on and easy to read. They're an essential tool.

4. Do the hard work to make it simple
    Making something look simple is easy. Making something simple to use is much harder - especially when the underlying systems are complex - but that's what we should be doing. Don't take "It's always been that way" for an answer. It's usually more and harder work to make things simple, but it's the right thing to do.

5. Iterate. Then iterate again
    The best way to build good services is to start small and iterate wildly. Release minimum viable products early, test them with actual users, move from alpha to beta to live adding features, deleting things that don't work and making refinements based on feedback. Iteration reduces risk. It makes big failures unlikely and turns small failures into lessons. If a prototype isn't working, don't be afraid to scrap it and start again.

6. This is for everyone
    Accessible design is good design. Everything we build should be as inclusive, legible and readable as possible. If we have to sacrifice elegance - so be it. We're building for needs, not audiences. We're designing for the whole country, not just the ones who are used to using the web. The people who most need our services are often the people who find them hardest to use. Let's think about those people from the start.

7. Understand context
    We're not designing for a screen, we're designing for people. We need to think hard about the context in which they're using our services. Are they in a library? Are they on a

phone? Are they only really familiar with Facebook? Have they never used the web before?

8. Build digital services, not websites
   A service is something that helps people to do something. Our job is to uncover user needs, and build the service that meets those needs. Of course much of that will be pages on the web, but we're not here to build websites. The digital world has to connect to the real world, so we have to think about all aspects of a service, and make sure they add up to something that meets user needs.

9. Be consistent, not uniform
   We should use the same language and the same design patterns wherever possible. This helps people get familiar with our services, but when this isn't possible we should make sure our approach is consistent. This isn't a straitjacket or a rule book. Every circumstance is different. When we find patterns that work we should share them, and talk about why we use them. But that shouldn't stop us from improving or changing them in the future when we find better ways of doing things or the needs of users change.

10. Make things open: it makes things better
    We should share what we're doing whenever we can. With colleagues, with users, with the world. Share code, share designs, share ideas, share intentions, share failures. The more eyes there are on a service the better it gets - howlers are spotted, better alternatives are pointed out, the bar is raised.

Much of what we're doing is only possible because of open source code and the generosity of the web design community. We should pay that back.

Welsh Government - Digital Service Standard:

The Welsh Government's Digital Service Standard is a set of 18 criteria to help us create and run good digital services. It is used by many other Departments and is based on the Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Standard.

1) Undertake research of who the service users are, to understand user needs.
Undertake research to develop a deep knowledge of who your service users are and what that means for the design of the service so that it:
o   helps users do the things they want to do at the first attempt
o   is built on your users' real needs, not your assumptions.

2) Have a plan in place for ongoing user research and usability testing.
This will seek feedback from users to improve your service. Also it will ensure your service is helping users do the tasks they need to do, and to keep improving it based on their needs.

3) Have a multidisciplinary team.
Put in place a sustainable multidisciplinary team that can design, build and operate your service, led by a suitably skilled service manager with decision-making responsibility. This will help to:
o   build your service
o   keep improving it based on user needs
o   make decisions quickly.

4) Build your service using agile iterative and user-centred methods.
Using agile methods helps you to build services that:
o   meet the needs of your users
o   are easy and convenient for people to use
o   you can change easily if for example policy changes
o   you can keep improving for example based on user feedback
o   cost less and are more accountable.

5) Build a service that can be iterated and improved on a frequent basis and make sure you have the capacity, resources and technical flexibility to do so.
This will help to easily respond to changes in policy affecting the service and continues to make sure your service keeps meeting user needs.

6) Evaluate what tools and systems will be used to build, host, operate and measure the service, and how to procure them.
This will help you:
o   check any risks or constraints associated with them
o   avoid contracts that lock you in and stop you improving your service
o   build a sustainable system which you can easily manage after your service goes live.

7) Understand security and privacy issues.
Evaluate what user data and information the service will be providing or storing, and address the security level, legal responsibilities, and risks associated with the service (the

Welsh Government's Project Managers' Security Handbook sets out more details on this). This will help your users to have confidence that you look after their information properly.

8) Consider making source code open and reusable, and, if appropriate, publish it under relevant licenses.
This will enable other services to reuse the software you've created.

9) Use open standards and common platforms where available.
This can save time and money by reusing things already available and give your users a more consistent experience of using government services online therefore building trust.

10) Test the end-to-end service.
Be able to test the end-to-end service in an environment identical to that of the live version on all common browsers and devices, using dummy accounts and real users.

11) Make a plan for being offline.
Have a back up plan. In the event of your digital service being taken temporarily offline, you need to have a plan for how your service will continue to operate, what to do, how your users will be affected and how to get it back online.

12) Create a service that's simple and intuitive that users succeed first time.
This will help ensure users are able to complete the task your service provides the first time they try, as quickly and easily as possible. Your service delivery plan needs to take account of users with disabilities and those who need assisted digital support. You will need an assisted delivery plan.

13) Make the user experience consistent with the rest of Welsh Government.
Build a service consistent with the user experience of the rest of Welsh Government services including using the design patterns and style guide. This will help users to trust Welsh Government services because they recognise the style.

14) Encourage everyone to use the digital service with assisted digital support if required.
Develop a plan to phase out non-digital channels/services. This will help to save money by reducing the numbers of people using non-digital channels and help users develop their digital skills.

15, 16 and 17) Identify your baseline information to measure performance, collect that information regularly and report on performance.
When designing your service, decide what performance data you wish to collect which could include 4 key performance indicators (KPIs):
o   digital take up
o   completion rate
o   user satisfaction
o   cost per transaction.

Setting performance indicators allows you to continuously improve your service by learning its strengths and weaknesses. Welsh Government has committed to open data and reporting on the performance of your service will help to make decisions on how to improve the service, demonstrate openness and transparency.

18) Test your service from beginning to end with your Director General, or ideally, your Minister.