

**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
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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*Copied to: Clerk and Chair of Public Account Committee
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14 November 2019

Dear Adrian,

WAO Report on Primary Care Services

I welcome your report on primary care services in Wales, published on 22 October.

Some of the recommendations are directed at the National Primary Care Board so we have liaised with Judith Paget, as Chair of the Board, to provide a coordinated response to your recommendations. This is set out at Annex A to this letter.

It is encouraging to note that several of the actions recommended in this report are being progressed through our strengthening process for Integrated Medium Term Plans (IMTPs) and the Strategic Programme for Primary Care.

The Strategic Programme is now fully operational and has delivered several notable products in recent months. For example, it has produced specific advice on how primary care can prevent and respond to people's urgent care needs and this has underpinned the Welsh Government's Winter Planning Framework 2019/20. It has drawn up a plan of both national and local action to tackle challenges still facing cluster working. This has led to a national template and guidance for cluster level IMTPs for 2020-23, which I issued on 25 June 2019. The Strategic Programme has also produced a national communication plan to take a coordinated approach to informing the public in their access to and expectations of services.

Your report is helpful in highlighting important whole system issues to inform future work, such as how we further develop the way we manage and fund health bodies,

in ways that incentivise and enable planning and delivery with a focus on preventing illness and keeping people well, recognising the role of wider determinants across economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Goodall', written in a cursive style.

Dr Andrew Goodall

Director General/ Chief Executive NHS Wales

Improving Primary Care data

Monitoring of primary care performance and activity is limited. Current performance measures do not give an effective overview of whether patient outcomes are improved by primary care. Activity monitoring and planning is complicated by difficulties obtaining standardised data from independent contractors.

Recommendation 1 - The Welsh Government should work with the National Primary Care Board to agree robust measures of patient outcomes in their suite of performance measures for primary care, and in doing so, they should look to collaborate with experts in measuring whole-systems outcomes.

Response: Accept

In managing the primary care services they contract, health boards use a range of measures, such as those in the Quality Assurance and Information Framework (QAIF) of the General Medical Services contract and the outcomes of clinical audits.

I agree we need more measures for the health and care system as a whole. There is wide consensus that *time spent at home* is a good whole system measure and the Strategic Programme for Primary Care is coordinating work to agree an approach to monitor and report this measure. Whilst led by the Strategic Programme for Primary Care, such measures must be owned by the whole system. We will, therefore, drive this measure through performance management of the wider system and not just primary care.

Recommendation 2 - The Welsh Government should work with independent primary care contractors to ensure the NHS in Wales has ongoing access to standardised information about their activity, to contribute to better planning and design of services.

Response: Accept

Standardised activity data from community pharmacies, dental and optometric practices is already available to health boards.

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care is overseeing action by NHS Wales Informatics Service to implement the necessary changes to IT systems in GP practices to make activity data available. Data on GP practice contacts with people is currently being verified by health boards. The first All Wales report of activity data for the winter period (2019-20) will be available in May 2020.

Implementing the Primary Care Model for Wales

The Primary Care Model for Wales and the strategic programme provide a direction of travel but there is not yet a clear approach to quantifying the extent of progress in implementing these changes, and data on the numbers and roles of staff employed in primary care is limited. The Welsh Government should:

Recommendation 3 - Strengthen its performance management of primary care within health boards by developing a method for quantifying each health board's progress in implementing the Primary Care Model for Wales.

Response: Accept

Primary care forms part of a health and care system. The Welsh Government performance manages health boards through the NHS Delivery Framework which it issues each year. This Framework has and will continue to include measures which primary care contributes to as part of a whole system.

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care is developing a national evaluation framework for use locally in monitoring and reporting progress with implementing the Primary Care Model for Wales. These monitoring reports and progress with the Welsh Government's national delivery milestones for the Model will inform IMTPs at both cluster and health board level and help provide evidence for health boards' reports on the NHS Delivery Framework.

Recommendation 4 - Collect and regularly publish data on the number and type of staff working as part of multi-disciplinary primary care practice teams, with a view to monitoring the implementation of the multi-professional model.

Response; Accept

In March 2019, the National Workforce Reporting Tool (NWRS) was introduced in Wales as our method for capturing the numbers and skills of the multi professional teams in general medical services. This information will inform Welsh Government statistical releases.

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care is considering how this information can be used for workforce planning at practice and cluster level. This will, in turn, inform cluster and health board IMTPs.

Keeping the strategy under review

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care is in its infancy and partnership with social care and the third sector, through Regional Partnership Boards, will be crucial to transformation. The National Primary Care Board should:

Recommendation 5 - Publish a review of progress in delivering the strategic programme in 2020-21. The review should seek opinions on progress from all key partners, including the Regional Partnership Boards.

Response: Accept

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care has formally established a Programme Management Office (PMO) to ensure that proven programme and project methodologies are applied and that the Programme is robustly monitored. As part of

the PMO processes, a defined quality, risk, governance and operating model has been agreed reporting into the National Primary Care Board (made up of representation from wider stakeholders). This will be a continual process, reporting on a quarterly basis and will inform a programme review in 2020-21.

In addition, attendance at all Regional Partnership Boards to promote and discuss the Primary Care Model for Wales is ongoing.

Strengthening clusters

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's cluster inquiry made 16 recommendations and the: Public Health Wales subsequently led the development of a good practice guide for cluster governance. Much work remains to be done to ensure clusters have a clear remit, broad membership and are able to drive change at pace and scale. The Welsh Government should:

Recommendation 6 - Undertake and publish a stocktake of progress against the recommendations from the cluster inquiry and in implementing the cluster governance framework, with a view to supporting further development and maturity of clusters.

Response: Accept

Much work at both national and local level has taken place to deliver on the commitments made by the Minister for Health and Social Services in his response in November 2017 to the inquiry into primary care clusters by the Health, Social Services and Sport Committee.

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care has undertaken a stocktake of the challenges still facing cluster working and has put in place a plan of both national and local action to address these challenges. For example, the plan identified the need for national guidance to clusters as they developed their IMTPs for 2020-23. I issued this guidance on 25th July 2019. This plan is monitored and kept under regular review.

The National Primary Care Board will monitor progress with this action plan during 2020-21.

Shifting resources to primary care

From the existing data, it is difficult to quantify exactly how much the NHS in Wales is spending on primary care, and to assess whether health boards are succeeding in shifting resources towards primary and community care. A Welsh Health Circular¹ from July 2018 set out a new financial framework for supporting such shifts.

Recommendation 7 - The Welsh Government should consult with health boards, to

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agree an approach to clarifying and standardising the way that primary care expenditure is recorded and reported.

Response: Accept

Welsh Government is working with health boards to clarify and standardise the expenditure recorded in annual NHS accounts as “Other Primary Health Care Expenditure”. Combined with the other elements of primary care expenditure included in note 3.1 of the accounts, this will ensure a more consistent analysis of total primary care expenditure between health boards.

Recommendation 8 - The Welsh Government should work with health boards to evaluate, and if necessary, improve the effectiveness of the financial framework in supporting a shift in resources towards primary and community care.

Response: Accept

Health boards are required to quantify the funding, and also the services and workforce, which they plan to re-provide in the community in their IMTPs. There is a specific template for this purpose. We monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the financial framework issued (under cover of WHC 025 2018) in strengthening this shift through our IMTP scrutiny and approval process.

The Welsh Government issued the first National IMTP on 20 September 2019. This is a stocktake of the 2019-22 IMTPs and includes commentary on the pace and scale of this shift towards more preventative care closer to home. This National IMTP was issued alongside and sets the tone and context for the NHS Planning Framework for 2020-23. This reflects strengthened requirements designed to increase the pace and scale at which health boards, with their partners, transform the health and care system towards the vision in *A Healthier Wales*. So that people access the majority of the care and support they need at or close to home.

Recommendation 9 – As part of the Joint Executive Team process, the Welsh Government should require health boards to report annually on their progress in shifting resources towards primary care. The coverage of these reports should not be limited to financial resources and should include other resources such as staff and services. Through this process, the Welsh Government should hold to account the entire executive team of health boards, not just the executive directors for primary care.

Response: Accept

I accept responsibility for planning and implementing the shift of services, funding, financial and workforce resources out of hospitals rests with all members of the Board. From 2020-21 on, I will require specific reports from each health board for the Joint Executive Team process setting out progress with its plans to move services and resources into the community as set out in its IMTP or equivalent plan.

Involving the public

Little has been done to involve the public in primary care changes. There is a risk that people will not understand or agree with the new ways of working. A centrally funded and led communication strategy is now in development and the Welsh Government has allocated each health board £20,000 recurrently since 2018-19 to improve public messaging about the model. The National Primary Care Board should:

Recommendation 10 – Involve the public and/or bodies that represent the public in evaluating the approaches taken by health boards to improve their public messaging on primary care, with a view to sharing learning to inform the forthcoming communication strategy.

Response: Accept

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care has developed a national communication plan, listening and learning from local experience in engaging with the public and/or bodies that represent the public.

This plan includes a campaign to be launched in March 2020 outlining the changes being introduced in the delivery of local health and wellbeing services. Health boards will adapt this national narrative for use locally, building on their involvement with, and learning from the public.