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WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES NHS TRUST

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES NHS TRUST HELD ON TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 2024 VIA TEAMS

MEMBERS:

Hannah Rowan	Non-Executive Director and Committee Chair
Kevin Davies	Non-Executive Director
Paul Hollard	Non-Executive Director

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Brady	Consultant Paramedic 111
Craig Brown	Specialist Clinical Lead 111
Estelle Hitchon	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
James Houston	Head of Strategy Development (left during 08/24)
Angela Lewis	Director of People and Culture
Mark Marsden	Trade Union Partner
Trish Mills	Board Secretary
Alex Payne	Corporate Governance Manager
Nigel Rees	Assistant Director of Research and Innovation
Duncan Robertson	Assistant Director for Clinical Development
Jonny Sammut	Director of Digital Services
Andy Swinburn	Executive Director of Paramedicine
Jonathan Turnbull-Ross	Assistant Director of Quality Governance

APOLOGIES:

Alex Crawford	Assistant Director Strategy and Planning
Chris Evans	Research Innovation and Improvement Lead
Jo Kelso	Head of Workforce Education & Development
Keith Rogers	Trade Union Partner
Martin Turner	Non-Executive Director

07/24 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Hannah Rowan welcomed everyone to the meeting bilingually and confirmed quoracy.

Apologies were received from Alex Crawford, Chris Evans, Jo Kelso, Keith Rogers and Martin Turner.

08/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations to those already recorded on the register.

09/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2023 were approved as a correct record subject to the removal of the word "all" in minute 44/23 paragraph 9.

RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on the 24 October 2023 were approved subject to the amendment set out above.

10/24 ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

The Action log was discussed, noting that there were two actions requiring an update.

Action 25/23 relating to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Life Sciences Hub Wales (LSHW) had been discussed and a further meeting with LSHW was scheduled for February to discuss if an MOU was the appropriate way forward. It was recognised that a number of teams were working with the likes of LSHW, and Committee needed sight on the current position. The benefits and risks of an MOU were touched on and noted the Terms of Reference allowed for less rigid relationships. The action remained open

Action 32/23 concerning the engagement mapping – Hannah Rowan noted that there was still work to be done in this area and suggested that Jonny Sammut, Estelle Hitchon and Jonathan Turnbull-Ross progress this in order to provide an update at the next meeting. The action remained open

RESOLVED: That the action log was reviewed and updated as set out above.

11/24 RESEARCH GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE

The Committee received its first update following the baseline assessment submission and the recent WAST/Welsh Government/Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) annual review. This report was a more comprehensive report, and it was noted that future reports would be in highlight form.

The NHS Research & Development (R&D) Framework was developed in 2023 to outline what research excellence looks like in NHS Wales. The Framework is being used for multiple purposes including supporting broader strategic discussions between the Research and

Development Division (RDD), and Welsh Government (WG), and considering NHS organisational performance.

Hannah Rowan congratulated Nigel Rees on his role with Warwick University working in their clinical trials unit. A broad range of issues/implications were outlined within the appendix around embedding research within WAST as reflected against the NHS Research & Development Framework. Members were made aware of the need to build strength and resilience within the Research Team to be able to facilitate more staff to undertake research.

Members were asked to consider what advice and support could be offered around the Paramedic 3 trial and how recruitment to the trial, together with the generic staffing and resource issues to support the research activity. Barriers to inclusion in this research include low staff morale, but also hospital handover delays, study types not igniting sufficient interests and the feeling of practice being scrutinised.

Innovation groups such as the Digital Innovation Group, which were broader than the health aspect was noted and it was recognised that the learning and support from other organisations should be captured. It was considered important to share opportunities and be aligned to ensure a unified WAST approach.

Members discussed the use of podcasts to appeal and engage staff. It was suggested that the Trust could invite HCRW to a future meeting of the Committee to gain feedback and demonstrate commitment through a discussion with them; however, the Committee felt that it needed to mature further and welcomed the input of the new academic Non Executive Director who had been appointed, who would provide some valuable insight.

Angela Lewis commented on the omission of culture within the framework and stated how important it was to create a culture where people questioned their curiosity and wanted to improve. She spoke of the alignment with the Trust's People and Culture Plan and the expectation that managers hold regular check-ins with their direct reports. This change in practice, with the extant requirement for annual Performance and Development Reviews (PADRS) to be held, will support the continuing conversation around research, development, and innovation in the Trust.

She noted that this activity has been included in the Integrated Medium Term Plan for 2024-2027, with an emphasis on well-being, personal and professional growth and day to day development. Angela will actively feed this discussion back to her Directorate to aid integration within the Trust.

Trish Mills accepted that there had been minimal contribution within the organisation to the Research Governance Framework response and that it needed to be revisited, acknowledging that some of the information around the ten pillars could be built with existing information and not started anew which Nigel Rees could co-ordinate to bring it together with some programme support. This would give assurance to the Trust Board that we are aligning to this and complying with the Framework. She suggested it was a programme of work which needed to be re looked at from the beginning and if necessary, a workshop to discuss further.

Nigel referred to the revival of Research and Innovation workshops of which two had been held and a third was planned. This provided an opportunity to receive feedback from the workforce to inform a plan or a strategy going forward as well as the Framework. The

feedback would also include activities staff would like to be involved in. Nigel Rees welcomed the good discussions and was keen to share the benefits of research with the whole organisation.

Members discussed the barrier to staff who felt research was only for those academics who held a degree and / or were more clinically focused, and the need to involve staff from all areas and of any academic background to encourage them to consider research activity.

The Committee acknowledged that while it was necessary to address this perception the vast majority of the Trust's research and innovation portfolio was not paramedic or clinical, but rather involved health services research, digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, and violence and aggression.

The Committee considered whether it may be necessary to ask a different question of our people; such as asking them to demonstrate the expansion of knowledge or contribution to innovative developments; but accepted that paramedic related trials might have a higher profile.

RESOLVED: That the Academic Partnership Committee continue to discuss engagement and interaction in all areas to operate in a different way going forward.

12/24 A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH BETWEEN WAST AND BANGOR UNIVERSITY TO A PHD PATHWAY

Hannah Rowan welcomed Mike Brady and Craig Brown to the meeting to share their collaboration journey between WAST and Bangor University and the creation of a PhD pathway.

Craig Brown shared a presentation with members which outlined his career progression and personal achievements, together with the structure and the conversations that had been held to get to starting his PhD.

Unaware about his neurodiversity, he was unable to complete the course in the NHS Leadership Academy due to the lack of support he received. In 2016 he underwent an assessment and gained a diagnosis of complex Dyslexia.

Proud of his journey to date he acknowledged that being able to start his journey towards a PhD was due to the support that had been offered over the last couple of years. Bangor University quickly acknowledged Craig's neurodiversity and supported him throughout.

He also praised Mike Brady who had been understanding and supportive, which led to many conversations about learning and thinking differently.

On finishing his master's and being asked "what next?", Craig didn't feel he would be able to undertake a PhD but was advised to have a conversation with the Head of the Department to see what opportunities were available.

Dr Nathan Bray had spoken to some of Craig's tutors and were supportive of the submitted assignments. Conversations were encouraged, and with Mike's support the view was that if Bangor could not assist, the conversations could be had elsewhere.

Mike Brady, Nigel Rees, and Craig Brown had discussions on what a contract looked like between two organisations and Nigel's team facilitated the conversations which led to the proposal and the joint approach to fit in with both the 111 pathway and health promotion idea of the Academy.

Funding and supervision costs were provided by the university whilst WAST supported the release fees of time. Mike Brady has been able to become a supervisor for Craig as part of the course.

Members congratulated Craig Brown on his achievement and resilience, while also recognising the support offered by Mike Brady, which was hoped to become the Trust standard. Members were keen for Craig's inspirational story to be shared far and wide across the organisation.

RESOLVED: That the inspirational support of Mike Brady and the resilience and determination of Craig Brown had led to a new PhD pathway.

13/24 IMTP 2024-2027 PRIORITIES

The report provided a brief update on the likely IMTP priorities for 2024/25 which fall within the ambit of the Committee.

Priority 1 – digitisation enabling better outcomes.

Priority 2 – advanced practice and specialist working, consult and close and service transformation, including research

Priority 3 – decarbonisation, fleet modernisation and sustainability

Confirmation of the 2024/25 IMTP priorities as they apply to this committee would help inform the scrutiny and assurance aspect of Committee's work over the next 12 months.

An extensive discussion was had at the last meeting around whether the UTS priorities/IMTP priorities were the right ones, and how to progress them in the IMTP.

A workshop on 11 January on the next iteration of the IMTP had been held and the conclusion from this was that the broad original headings would remain with a view to look through the IMTP and share those priorities that link with this Committee virtually, being mindful not to duplicate or overlap with other Committees.

The name of the Committee was considered, with a view to a change to reflect the ongoing nature of the work. It was agreed that this would be discussed further as part of the Committee annual effectiveness review item.

It was clear in the terms of reference that whatever priorities were put forward for University Trust Status maintenance, a process of scrutiny would be required. Questions of "are these appropriate, are they properly resourced, do they spread across the whole organization"

would need to be addressed. There may be an opportunity during 24/25 to for the Committee to carve out some development time to look at what goes into next year's IMTP.

The Committee agreed to roll over the priorities for the 2024-27 IMTP with respect to the priorities in the Committee's remit, and to consider different priorities for future iterations of the IMTP.

The Committee felt that priorities that fell within its remit did not mean they would be the only focus on them, understanding that a flow of information between the areas of relevance was needed.

The Committee noted that language and definitions were key to ensuring everyone's understanding was the same for example "commercialisation", "partnerships" and "working with industry".

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The Committee noted the content of the paper and the verbal update provided, and**
- 2) The Committee agreed to roll over the priorities for the 2024-27 IMTP with respect to the priorities in the Committee's remit, and to consider different priorities for future iterations of the IMTP.**

14/24 APC TASK & FINISH GROUP UPDATE

The Academic Partnership Committee (APC) Task & Finish group was convened predominantly to support the recruitment of the new Non-Executive Director to ensure sufficient input to securing the right candidate.

The stakeholder group which had taken place before Christmas had seen a successful candidate confirmed by the Minister on the 15 January 2024. This was Ian Mathieson from the University of South Wales, who would be joining the Trust from 1 April 2024.

This would also allow for full University Trust Status to be gained due to meeting the Welsh Government requirements, which would come with legalities and the change of title for the Trust as a corporate body.

It was confirmed that the Task & Finish Group would close, however there was still some work to do prior to a closing report being produced. The closing report will be programmed at a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Task & Finish group closeout report be produced once some work had been completed.

The Trust's Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference require that Board Committees evaluate their effectiveness annually and prepare an annual report which will be presented to Audit Committee, then to the Trust Board in May.

Annual effectiveness reviews are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Board and its Committees, review its operating arrangements, and proposing changes to improve its support, challenge, scrutiny, and oversight responsibilities. Whilst the duty of quality, by adopting a continuous improvement methodology to the Board and its Committees throughout the year was demonstrated, the annual effectiveness review was an opportunity to formally review membership, look back at the work of the Committee during the year, and set the Committee's priorities for the coming year.

The report included the responses to the questionnaires, a draft Annual Report from the Committee to the Board and proposed marked up changes to the Terms of Reference. As a result of the response to a questionnaire completed by members and attendees, a number of changes had been proposed to the Committee's operating arrangements and its Terms of Reference.

The survey was to gauge opinion on areas of good practice and areas for improvement. Throughout the year our Duty of Quality is exercised by ensuring that operating arrangements are constantly improved.

A review of the Terms of Reference provided an opportunity for the Committee to ensure it was comfortable with the focus and direction. It was suggested that a colleague from the Operations Directorate be invited to attend the Committee to assist in sharing the work of the Committee with front line staff. It was noted that the funding for the Research Improvement Innovation Lead was due to end during 2024-25.

Audit Wales - who had observed a couple of meetings as part of the Structured Assessment were content that there were no concerns identified in the Committee's operations. Trish Mills confirmed that the Cycle of Business monitoring report was presented to each meeting for the Committee to be assured that it was adhering to its work plan.

Trish Mills talked to the changes in the Terms of Reference presented in the paper, for ease. The change of name for the Committee was referenced and it was noted that this would be discussed further at a planned Committee development day, once the new Non Executive Director was in place.

This committee was about promoting and supporting opportunities with key partners, with education providers, with commercial partners to develop collaborative activities and where program design was to ensure proper arrangements were in place with those partners.

Members liked the report and suggested that a face to face meeting could take place in July and that an Operational member of staff to join the group would be of benefit. Hannah Rowan thanked Trish and her Team for putting in the work, recognising the Committee had flexibility to dip into areas that other Committees were not able to do so.

The priorities agreed were to have a focus on risk reporting and communicating to the organisation the purpose and focus of the Committee with an additional priority around the collaborative and communication pieces that as the third.

RESOLVED: That the

- 1) the draft Annual Report was reviewed and approved;**
- 2) changes to the terms of reference as set in the annex and above were endorsed, subject to the adjustments discussed;**
- 3) changes to operating arrangements in response to issues raised in questionnaires as set out in the draft Annual Report were confirmed; and**
- 4) priorities as set out above for the Committee for 2024/25 were set.**

16/24 COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT REPORT 24 OCTOBER 2023

This was a consent item and therefore was not discussed by the Committee.

17/24 COMMITTEE CYCLE OF BUSINESS MONITORING REPORT

This was a consent item and therefore was not discussed by the Committee.

18/24 KEY MESSAGES FOR BOARD DECISIONS / ACTIONS

These messages would be picked up in the highlight report and reported to the next Trust Board meeting.

Paul Hollard was thanked by members for his contribution to the Committee, noting that this would be his last Committee meeting.

19/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date of the next Committee meeting is 23 April 2024.