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Ymddiriedolaeth Brifysgol GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
University NHS Trust

**WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES UNIVERSITY NHS TRUST
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 7 OCTOBER 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hannah Rowan	Non-Executive Director and Committee Chair
Jayne Beeslee	Non-Executive Director
Hayley Hutchings	Non-Executive Director

PRESCRIBED ATTENDEES:

Jonathan Chippendale	Assistant Director for Clinical Development
Estelle Hitchon	Director of Partnerships & Engagement
James Houston	Assistant Director for Planning and Transformation
Jo Kelso	Head of Workforce Education and Development
Nigel Rees	Assistant Director of Research & Innovation
Andy Swinburn	Executive Director of Paramedicine

ATTENDEES:

Julie Boalch	Assistant Director of Corporate Governance & Risk
Colin Dennis	Chair of the Trust Board
Keith Dorrington	Ass. Director Digital – Chief Clinical Information Officer
Sarah Harland	Corporate Governance Officer
Alex Payne	Corporate Governance Manager

APOLOGIES:

Carl Kneeshaw	Director of People
Mark Marsden	TU Partner
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary
Keith Rogers	TU Partner
Jonny Sammut	Director of Digital Services

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME. APOLOGIES AND QUORUM

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members and apologies were noted. It was confirmed Keith Dorrington would be deputising for Jonny Sammut.
- 1.2 It was confirmed the meeting met quorum.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

Note the apologies and were assured that the meeting met quorum.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The Chair advised one of her conflicts of interest has come to an end and will be appropriately reported through the Corporate Governance Team.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 23 JANUARY 2025

- 3.1 The Minutes from the meeting of the Academic Partnership Committee (APC) held on 23 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

Approve the minutes of the open meeting of the Academic Partnership Committee held on 23 January 2025 which were agreed as an accurate record.

4. ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 The Action Log was considered:

53/24c University Trust Status Benefits Realisation Through the effectiveness reviews, a proposal whether learning and development remain with PCC or move to APC. A conversation to be had between Ceri, Hannah, Estelle, Andy and Carl. ***Update 7 October 2025 Julie Boalch confirmed that the paper presented under agenda Item 9, 2025/26 Quality Governance Reviews, comprehensively addresses the proposed changes and recommended that the current action is closed.***

55/24 Research Governance Framework Leanne Smith was looking at growing a data science capability to move beyond just accessing data to predictive modelling and using information to drive decision making. The Chair referenced the update on the National Data Repository, which was expected to come to a meeting post March 2025. ***Update 7 October 2025 Keith Dorrington reported there is no confirmed timeline for the national data resource, progress is ongoing and therefore to remain open.***

- 4.2 The Committee AAA Highlight Report from the meeting held on 23 January 2025 was noted.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

Consider the Action Log and receive the Highlight Report from the meeting held on 23 January 2025 was noted.

5. ANNUAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION REPORT 2024/25

- 5.1 The Chair presented the Annual Research and Innovation Report, highlighting key figures, investment returns, and collaboration opportunities. Andy Swinburn reported team growth, sector leadership, major studies such as Paramedic 3, innovative collaborations and new team members.
- 5.2 Nigel Rees praised the small, high performing research team, highlighted the risks of relying on a few senior researchers, thanked Chris Moore on his retirement, welcomed Mike Brady and highlighted the breadth of research and the success of the 999 Respond study.
- 5.3 Hayley Hutchings congratulated the team on their involvement in prestigious studies and praised the achievement of the New England Journal of Medicine publication. Additionally, Hayley commended the team's engagement across Wales through workshops and visits. The Chair acknowledged Hayley's comments, highlighting the value of having an embedded academic expert to provide sector context, and emphasised the importance of understanding the significance of recent achievements.
- 5.4 Jayne Beeslee praised the team's research and requested future reports show return on investment and patient impact, including real life examples. Nigel agreed, noting challenges in tracking outcomes, and committed to reporting on research impact. This was agreed as a formal action to be brought back to the Committee in 2026.
- 5.5 The Chair agreed on the importance of tracking research impact but noted the challenge of prioritising areas while pursuing studies with available funding. Estelle Hitchon highlighted the increased visibility of the research team's work, which is helping engagement across the Trust. The Chair thanked the team for their creativity and expressed enthusiasm for future developments.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

Noted and took assurance from the receipt of the Trust's Research & Innovation Annual Report 2024/25.

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE HEALTH CARE RESEARCH WALES REVIEW

- 6.1. The Chair introduced the Health Care Research Wales (HCRW) Review feedback item by contrasting this year's positive meeting tone with the previous year's more challenging review, attributing the improvement to the organisation's commitment to research governance and making research more visible and meaningful across the organisation.

- 6.2 Andy Swinburn noted the review meeting was more constructive than previous years, reflecting improved atmosphere and transparency. The Chair highlighted growing interest in the Trust's research from other ambulance services and stressed the need to keep research visible and regularly discussed at Board level, regardless of governance changes. Estelle Hitchon agreed, cautioning against deprioritising research. Andy also called for expanding research to include wider aspects of the organisation, for example workforce and organisational culture, and the Chair supported aligning research with organisational priorities and maintaining it as a strategic focus.
- 6.3 Hayley Hutchings congratulated the team on positive Welsh Government feedback, highlighted the challenges in measuring research impact and stressed the need for tracking outcomes and maintaining visibility. The Chair agreed, noting differing timelines for research and innovation. Nigel added that assessing impact is complex, and Andy emphasised the value of both positive and negative results in guiding clinical decisions. The Chair concluded that ongoing discussion about research impact is essential when considering future directions.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

- 1. Were assured from the outcome of the Health Care Research Wales review.**
- 2. Recognised the progress made.**
- 3. Supported further developments in embedding research across the organisation.**

7. NHS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 7.1 The Chair introduced the NHS Research and Development Framework, acknowledging that the agenda included a summarised self-assessment against the Framework and suggested previous discussions had covered much of the relevant ground.
- 7.2 Nigel Rees noted that the self-assessment relies on the Trust's Research and Innovation tracker, but feedback from Directorates is inconsistent, so some projects may be missed. Nigel suggested reviewing whether the reporting process is sufficient. The Chair agreed, recommending that governance changes and better integration with planning and performance could improve visibility, and highlighted the need for consistent reporting and flexibility in future methods.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

- Take assurance from the receipt of the NHS Research & Development Framework update.**

8. UPDATE FROM RESEARCH CHAMPION NED

- 8.1 Hayley Hutchings reported she has joined "Championing Research" as an independent member, a committee organised by Health and Care Research Wales. The publication of the "Strategic Action Plan for Building Research Capability for Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Healthcare Professionals in Wales" was presented at her first meeting, key priorities from the report were: embedding a research culture; supporting infrastructure and leadership; aligning education and workforce priorities with research; building capability; and valuing research impact. Hayley also reported that she attended a Trust Research and Innovation workshop in Baglan, emphasising the importance of showcasing research within the organisation.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

Note the update from Research Champion NED.

9. 2025/26 COMMITTEE QUALITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

- 9.1 Julie Boalch outlined the proposed direction of travel for the Trust's governance and quality reviews (formally known as effectiveness reviews) for 2025/26 and explained that a project team had been established by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee to ensure that the spread of board responsibilities is redistributed in a more efficient and effective way and to respond to key drivers identified in the comprehensive reviews undertaken in 2024/25 including Non-Executive Director availability, quorum pressures, and the high volume of meetings.
- 9.2 The paper highlighted that the preferred option is to reduce Board committees from seven to six, with APC's responsibilities redistributed given that it has come to a natural crossroads. The committees foundational contributions and its legacy in supporting the Trust to achieve University Trust Status (UTS) were recognised and it was noted that research is now embedded across multiple areas of strategy and planning now making it a timely opportunity to consider integrating these responsibilities elsewhere to make sure they have the greatest impact and are aligned to our Standing Orders.
- 9.3 The three specific areas of responsibility delegated to the APC of research, partnerships and UTS were considered, and it was noted that any changes will be deferred whilst an external board effectiveness review is undertaken and whilst the new Chief Executive's transition takes place, which understandably will be the focus of the Trust Board Chair for the immediate term.

- 9.4 Julie outlined the proposal for the redistribution of APCs responsibilities as follows:
- Research is to transfer to the Finance and Performance Committee (FPC)
 - Education and training partnerships and collaborations will transfer to the PCC
 - Commercial partnerships collaboration will be overseen by the FPC
 - UTS oversight will be managed through the Integrated Medium-Term Plan
- 9.5 The APC may meet twice in 2026/27 for research oversight, and Julie noted that there is no regulatory requirement for a UTS committee, but maintaining research visibility and governance remains important to the Trust.
- 9.6 Estelle Hitchon clarified that UTS is an ongoing designation earned through sustained work in research, innovation and learning, not a standalone programme. Estelle prioritised quality discussion over committee structure, expressing concern that dispersing responsibilities could risk deprioritising research and innovation, and suggested dedicated time for these topics if moved to another committee. The Chair agreed, emphasising meaningful discussion over structure. Julie noted that transferring research to FPC would better support activities and the potential allocation of funding streams. Jayne highlighted the need for flexibility and sufficient time for partnership work. Jo Kelso supported streamlining but stressed the importance of cross-functional collaboration, especially between research and education, and warned against oversimplifying reporting. The Chair agreed, noting committee structures help protect time for collaborative work and focused attention.
- 9.7 Julie confirmed that all feedback will shape ongoing committee structure discussions, stressing the need to preserve collaborative value, potentially through internal groups that sit within the governance structure. Julie also highlighted that the committee's legacy provides a strong foundation for future work and that redistributed responsibilities will build on these achievements.
- 9.8 The Chair invited further questions to be directed to Julie after the meeting, encouraged input from colleagues, and thanked everyone for their perspectives. The Chair confirmed the committee's endorsement of the proposed direction, noting ongoing external review and the highlighted risks.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

Subject to further discussions and approvals at the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and the Trust Board, the committee endorsed:

1. The redistribution of its responsibilities as follows:

1.1 Research to Finance and Performance Committee

1.2 Education and training partnerships and collaboration to the People and Culture Committee

1.3 Commercial partners collaboration to the Finance and Performance Committee

1.4 University Trust Status to be subsumed into the annual planning process

- 2. That the implementation of the 1.1 above is deferred until after the externally facilitated board development programme, and in the meantime, APC meets twice in 2026/27 for oversight of the research portfolio only.**

10. REFLECTIONS AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS/ACTIONS

- 10.1 Members reflected that the meeting shone a light on the significant research and innovation activities within the Trust. Members acknowledged the importance of integrating research into strategic planning, maintaining visibility of research activities, and not losing the committee's positive legacy as the board committee framework evolves. The Chair stated that she values bringing together people who don't often interact, ensuring the committee balances assurance with meaningful discussion, and that it continues to highlight research achievements, whilst having honest conversations regarding associated barriers.
- 10.2 The Chair thanked everyone for their engagement, contributions and preparation for the meeting, and closed by wishing everyone well and looking forward to seeing them again soon.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 None declared.

12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 The next meeting is scheduled for the 15 January 2026.

The meeting closed at 11:09am