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



ELUSEN
Gwasanaeth Ambiwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Service
CHARITY

CHARITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

INTRODUCTION

1. The Trust's Standing Orders and this committee's terms of reference requires that board committees evaluate their effectiveness annually and present an annual report to the Trust Board/Corporate Trustee.
2. As the factors underpinning effective governance can change, for example as people leave, organisations restructure, or strategy shifts, regular reviews of committees ensure governance remains fit for purpose.
3. Standing Orders, committee terms of reference, and codes of governance provide that boards should routinely assess the effectiveness of their governance arrangements, of which this committee forms an integral part.
4. The committee met on 14 January 2025 and through a facilitated discussion reviewed its effectiveness, its terms of reference, and its operating arrangements. This report reflects on the effectiveness of the committee in 2024/25 and proposes changes to terms of reference.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The purpose of the committee as set out in its terms of reference is to:
 - Contribute to the development of the charity's strategy and monitor its implementation.

- Assure the Corporate Trustee that charitable funds are accounted for, deployed, and invested in line with legal and statutory requirements, taking account of the public benefit guidance.
- Consider and endorse the annual report and accounts for approval by the Corporate Trustees; and
- Raise the profile and reputation of the charity within the Trust.

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

- The Committee met four times as scheduled in 2024/25, was well attended and quorate on each occasion.
- The Committee is supported by the Chair and two Non-Executive Directors. The Director of Partnerships and Engagement is the executive lead, and the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources is the charity Treasurer. Attendance in 2024/25 was excellent as is illustrated below, and in addition the Committee welcomed guests and observers at various meetings.

COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE				
Name	4 April 2024	22 August 2024	08 October 2024	14 January 2024
Ceri Jackson				
Peter Curran				
Bethan Evans				
Hannah Rowan				
Estelle Hitchon				
Chris Turley				
Lee Brooks				
Andy Swinburn				
Liz Rogers				
Trish Mills			Julie Boalch	
Hugh Parry				
Damon Turner				
Marcus Viggers				
Julie Boalch				
Jo Kelso				

	Attended
	Deputy attended
	Apologies received
	No longer member/not member

- The membership of the committee was revised effective quarter four of 2024/25 in response to changes to the Non-Executive Director membership of the Trust Board. Peter Curran will chair the committee from April 2025/26. Additionally, the Head of Charity was in post from early October 2024 and was therefore added as a prescribed attendee from quarter three. The Fundraising Officer and the Head of Commercial, once appointed, will

also be prescribed attendees for the committee. Additions to membership for 2025/26 include the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Risk, and a member of the Volunteer Steering Group. It was felt the latter will help the charity realise its strategic objective to build community resilience throughout Wales, and is the first time a volunteer member has been added to a board committee.

COMMITTEE'S VIEWS ON EFFECTIVENESS

Feedback from membership

9. The committee's effectiveness was assessed through a facilitated discussion held at the 14 January 2025 meeting, which included a review of its terms of reference and cycle of business. The key views from the committee on its effectiveness were as follows: -

Enhancing Report Writing and Assurance

- To improve reporting, clear and concise papers with strong executive summaries are essential. Consistency in format should be maintained, with only annual adjustments to avoid unnecessary tweaks. Reports should clearly align with strategic plans and include evaluations of expected outcomes.
- Reports should use simple language, state clear objectives and outcomes, and highlight expected and unexpected benefits transparently. Assurance processes should reflect both patient care improvements and staff wellness initiatives while considering long-term impacts, such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Strengths of the Committee

- The committee is well chaired, allowing for open discussions and an opportunity to share views in a safe, respectful space.
- The committee effectively balances strategic direction and governance, with robust discussions, focused agendas, and realistic meeting durations. Progress on the strategic direction has been evident in discussions and approach, with executive commitment and strong support for charity work.
- Succinct, high-level reporting provides clear risk identification, milestone tracking, and key approvals. The committee's evolution aligns with the charity's growth, ensuring engagement remains flexible and impactful. The committee has a manageable scope.

Areas for Improvement

- The committee should showcase a broader range of charitable impacts beyond staff benefits, incorporating lived experiences. A continued focus on strategy is needed, building on recent discussions.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations should be embedded in decision-making and our strategic direction.
- More hybrid and in-person discussions could enhance engagement. Consideration of volunteer and commercial team membership to enhance discussion in 2025.
- Reporting should include tangible examples of how funds have benefited patients and staff. Meetings should stay strategic and avoid unnecessary detail, with task-and-finish groups handling specific deep dives.

Management of the committee's work programme

10. The Committee has a cycle of business that is aligned to its terms of reference. All matters scheduled for oversight and review have been brought to the committee and in this respect, it has discharged its responsibilities in providing assurance to the board and also to the corporate trustee. To ensure real-time effectiveness at each meeting the committee receives a monitoring report against the cycle of business which escalates matters for the attention of the Committee. The Committee's business in 2024/25 included:

- (a) Following the commitment to resourcing the Charity given in 2023/24 the committee received regular updates regarding the **recruitment for the Head of Charity** position. This appointment was made in Summer 2024 and David Hopkins started in post on the 07 October 2024 and attended his first meeting of the committee in October
- (b) At its meeting on 14 January 2025 an update was update was provided on achievements in the **first 100 days for the Head of Charity** and members commended the excellent progress, including the new visual identify for the charity and focused fundraising. The key priorities of the charity team over the next 15 months were endorsed, including the following key priorities for 2025/26:
 - Defining our purpose
 - Demonstrating our impact
 - Improving staff engagement
 - Making it easier to donate
 - Reviewing our Governance
- (c) **Lived experiences** from those who have benefited from charitable funds were received in year, a change implemented in 2023/24 as a result of the 2022/23 effectiveness review. The committee heard from two colleagues regarding their experiences:

- Carolyn Lewis, a well-being practitioner from the Trust's Well-being Team spoke to the committee regarding funds used to **provide holistic therapy** for Clinical Contact Centre colleagues based in Vantage Point House. The therapy chosen was a 'gong bath' (otherwise known as 'sound baths'), which is a form of meditation using sound vibrations. The feedback received from colleagues who benefitted from this therapy was overwhelmingly positive.
 - Gill Pleming, Head of Service for EMSC, shared her experience of funds used for **Zen Rooms** for colleagues based in Vantage Point House, Ty Elwy, Snowdon House, Thanet House, Llangunnor and Llanfairfechan. The Zen Rooms were used by colleagues to decompress and take time for themselves, particularly in response to difficult or stressful incidents at work. Again, the feedback from colleagues who benefitted was very positive. With this story, the committee heard about the process for applying for funds, which was understood to be straight forward.
- (d) A **financial report and a separate Charity performance report** was received at each meeting setting out fund balances and investment units, and the position with grants received and related expenditure, respectively. The performance report included updates against the NHS Charities Together grants, which included the Development Grant, Stage 3 Recovery Grant, and Ambulance Grant.
- (e) There were additional **NHS Charities Together grants** that were pursued by the Charity throughout the year and the importance of aligning charitable funding opportunities with the Trust's strategic priorities was acknowledged. The Committee noted that legal advice was received by the Trust regarding issues of liability for the charity's support of sporting events through charitable funds.
- (f) Throughout 2024/25 the committee discussed and developed **the visual identity for the Charity** for consideration by the corporate trustee. After the meeting of the committee in October, members attended a workshop with the appointed design agency Savage and Grey, where the options for the visual identity were discussed. The preferred option for the Charity's branding was presented to and approved by the corporate trustee in November 2024.
- (g) In January the committee held a discussion on the charity's strategic direction using the **theory of change** model. The theory of change will be socialised more widely and brought back to the committee later in 2025. The charity's strategy is focused on the following outcomes:
- Patients benefit through more resilient local communities, able to support each other during medical emergencies.
 - Patients benefit through a healthier, happier and more experienced workforce.
 - Patients benefit by receiving tailored care personalised to their needs.

- (h) The **Bids Panel** and the **Bursary Panel** reported on the applications it reviewed and approved. Each of these were reported to the corporate trustee by way of the committee AAA report after each meeting. The committee approved one request for charitable funds over £5K in year for Christmas dinners which was approved by Chair's Action.
- (i) A **Charity Risk Register** was developed, the first iteration of which was received in April 2024. The Charity governance risk full risk assessment, which included controls, assurances, gaps and mitigations was received for consideration in August. At the August meeting the committee were assured on the work undertaken to articulate and finalise the risks.
- (j) In line with the approach to the examination of the Charity accounts undertaken for the 2022/23 financial year, it was confirmed that for the **2023/24 financial year an Independent Examination** would be appropriate. The Committee acknowledged that in 2024/25 the Charity income would likely require a full audit for 2024/25. This revenue boost for 2024/25 was attributed to the receipt of three substantial NHS Charities Together grants.
- (k) Development of the **2023/24 Annual Report and Accounts** was steered by a Charity Annual Filings Task and Finish Group, which reported to the Assistant Directors' Leadership Team. The unamended and unqualified independent examination of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24 were presented to the committee in January 2025. Both were recommended to the corporate trustee for approval, ahead of their submission to the Charity Commission at the end of January 2025.
- (l) Each meeting included a **reflections** session which was included a range of views on items before the members. These included:

From the April meeting:

- the maturation of the Charity with the receipt of standalone Performance Reports and a dedicated Risk Register;
- the welcome receipt of the lived experience;

From the August meeting:

- that it would be helpful to have a lived experience form template to inform the presentations given by colleagues and that the updates given at the meeting were clear and the assurances given from management were robust;

From the October meeting:

- that the Charity had matured over the last year, particularly with the appointment of the Head of Charity.

- there was a sense of optimism and enthusiasm for the future and that the lived experiences would be received at every other meeting of the committee.

From the January meeting:

- It was noted that this was the last meeting of the committee with Ceri Jackson as Chair of the committee and it was noted that this would be moving to Peter Curran. Regrettably, time constraints prevented members from expressing their gratitude to Ceri for guiding the Charity through challenging times and offering the clarity of thought that has enabled the Charity to make great strides in its strategic direction.

(m) The Committee **cycle of business** was approved.

(n) The **annual effectiveness review** was conducted on 14 January 2025 meeting with a revised approach taken across all committees. A discussion was facilitated to consider what changes and improvements could be made to the Committee's operations. The draft annual report was reviewed, however the final Report for submission to Corporate Trustee and the revised terms of reference for 2025/26 will be discussed at the April 2025 committee meeting.

11. The board/Corporate Trustee received a AAA highlight report from this Committee by email circulation following each meeting which included alerts, advice, and areas of assurance. This was also presented to the next public meeting by the Chair of the committee.

SUB-COMMITTEES AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

12. The Bids Panel and Bursary Panel are the established sub-committees of the committee. As set out above, they report to the committee by way of a AAA report and the committee in turn reports to the corporate trustee on their work. The Bids Panel has an authority level of £5k and Bursary Panel of £3K.

13. The Bids Panel and Bursary Panel demonstrate the application of the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) guidance on the use of NHS Charitable Funds.

14. The Bids Panel has held 7 meetings in 2024/25. The Bursary Panel usually meets twice a year, however due to uncertainty as to funding of bursaries they only met once in 2024/25.

15. The terms of reference of both panels are out of date and they will be reviewed in 2025.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

16. The proposed changes to terms of reference for this committee for 2025/26 are in **Annex 1** and include:
- 16.1. The purpose section has been amended to include a responsibility to take account of the Trust's wellbeing objectives.
 - 16.2. Given the fact that there is now executive leadership of the charity and a Head of Charity in post, it was agreed to remove 3.2: *Ensure there is clear, consistent strategic direction, strong leadership, and transparent lines of accountability*. This was a committee priority in 2024/25.
 - 16.3. Removal of 3.3 to *promote the charity within the Trust* as this was not a committee responsibility, however it was agreed that members and Corporate Trustees would individually and collectively support the charity. This includes by way of lived experiences at the committee, and focus at CEO roadshows etc. The requirement to 'raise the profile and reputation of the charity' is set out in the purpose section of the terms of reference in any event.
 - 16.4. The fundraising section has been moved to just after strategy development and delivery given the close connection to the charity's strategic approach.
 - 16.5. No change has been made to the policy section of the terms of reference, however the priorities presented by the Head of Charity in January outlined those in the pipeline.
 - 16.6. The committee previously had the authority to 'approve' strategies and plans, however in keeping with other board committees, this has been amended to 'endorse' for approval by the Corporate Trustee.
 - 16.7. An additional responsibility has been added to enable the committee to endorse the annual income targets and expenditure budgets before they are approved by the Corporate Trustee.
 - 16.8. Approval of applications for grants has been delegated to the Executive Leadership Team. This will ensure they are done in a timely way and outcomes and performance against successful grant bids will be reported to the committee.

17. The cycle of business for the committee has been amended in line with the adjustments to the terms of reference. Reporting frequency was discussed in the January meeting and has been reflected in the cycle of business for 2025/26 which was approved at the April 2025 meeting.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

18. Proposed changes to operating arrangements for this committee are set out below. Some are relevant to arrangements across other committees also and they include:

- 18.1. Lived experience to demonstrate on new proforma the charitable impacts beyond staff benefits.
- 18.2. Committee to maintain a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion in its strategic direction.
- 18.3. Where possible in 2025/26 the introduction of more hybrid meetings.
- 18.4. A reduction in the reporting against the audit tracker is being considered by ARAC in an attempt to reduce volume for committees and increase assurance. More detail on this will come back to the committee in due course.
- 18.5. New report front covers and SBAR templates have been developed. They include a short form report which includes a requirement to set out purpose of report and alignment to strategic objectives, wellbeing objectives and health and care quality standards. This will be accompanied by writing guidance and presentation guidance.
- 18.6. Writing guidance will set out the purpose of executive summaries in an attempt to ensure they are reflective of the comments received by members of this and other committees.
- 18.7. Feedback following meetings on reports – both positive and where there are areas of improvement – are encouraged from committee membership. This will ensure we are working towards a continuous improvement in paper length and assurance.
- 18.8. A 'reading room' will be established in Ibabs for documents that members may wish to review for further information, but which are not vital for scrutiny and oversight.

18.9. A further development session to be considered for Corporate Trustees in 2025/26 on trustee responsibilities.

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Priorities for 2024/25

19. The Committee received an update on progress against its 2024/25 priorities at each meeting and as can be seen below, progress on agreed priorities has been good:

- (a) Priority 1: Monitoring the recruitment of the Head of Charity and the charity's strategic objectives and outcomes.
 - The Head of Charity started in post in early October 2024 and the recruitment for the Fundraising Officer will commence in 2025. The charity's strategy and associated strategic objectives will develop throughout 2025, with the Committee having received a substantive update at its meeting in January 2025.
- (b) Priority 2: Ensure a development session is held at an agreed time with respective to duties and responsibilities of the Corporate Trustee.
 - The progress of this session was dependent on the appointment of the Head of Charity and will be progressed throughout 2025.
- (c) Priority 3: Ensure that the work of the Charity and its governance arrangements and those involved in the Charity's leadership and decision-making, are more visible internally and externally.
 - The progress of this priority was somewhat dependent on the appointment of the Head of Charity. The Head of Charity did facilitate 'carousels' at the October 2024 Chief Executive Roadshows, however the more detailed approach requires further discussion.

Priorities for 2025/26

20. It is good practice for Committees to set priorities for the forthcoming year when they review their effectiveness. The committee will do so at its April 2025 meeting, and these will be provided to the board at its May meeting.

21. Progress on priorities will be reported to the Committee quarterly and to the Board through its highlight report.