



NHS 111 Wales

Delivering Clinical Consultations in Welsh Plan

2026 - 2031

NHS 111 Wales Service
Delivering Clinical Consultations in Welsh Plan
(2026 – 2031)

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1. Executive Summary

NHS 111 Wales delivers a service across all regions of Wales respecting the diverse communities it serves. The service recognises the value of actively offering and providing services through the medium of Welsh.

We recognise the significant advantages of ensuring that our service users can communicate in their preferred language. This commitment not only supports inclusion and cultural engagement but also enhances the overall experience for our patients and their families. When unexpected medical situations arise, the service recognises the positive impact this may have for the caller to be able converse in their chosen language.

By actively supporting and expanding our Welsh language provision, we are ensuring that our service remains accessible and responsive to the needs of all our users. This approach is fundamental to delivering compassionate and effective care. The Welsh language is an essential factor in both the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The NHS 111 Wales service is committed to comply with its statutory duties towards the Welsh language, however, recognises that this has been challenging to achieve at times.

To meet these statutory requirements NHS 111 Wales will need to ensure that any requirements identified in relation to Welsh language will be recognised and addressed. This will be achieved through a detailed review of the success and challenges from the previous 5-year plan that then will support development of the next plan.

The Trust believes it is relevant to note that the last five years have been difficult, and the situation remains so. The COVID-19 pandemic saw all services provided by NHS Wales under intense pressure and full focus was given to ensuring patients' clinical needs were met. Additionally, the Trust, and NHS Wales in its totality, continues to have financial challenges and operational pressures. This cannot be used as justification for slower progress during the previous five years, but it is important to note the context in which services are being delivered.

2. Standard 110

As part of the Standard, the Trust is asked to: publish a plan for each five-year period setting out – a) the extent to which we are able to offer to carry out a clinical consultation in Welsh; b) the actions we intend to take to increase your ability to offer to carry out a clinical consultation in Welsh; c) a timetable for the actions that we have detailed in (b).

Standard 110 of the Welsh Language Standards sets out an expectation for the Trust to actively offer and complete clinical consultations in Welsh when required or requested.

The standard sets out a clear expectation that the use of Welsh language clinical consultations in healthcare settings has advantages for patient safety. Additionally, this will further improve the delivery of a quality focused service.

Note: The Welsh Language Standards (No.7) Regulations 2018 define a clinical consultation as “a health provision interaction between one or more individuals and a body”.

The active offer outlined in ‘More than just words’, is at the heart of all work undertaken by the Trust, which ensures patients are offered a Welsh medium service without having to ask.

Our intention for Standard 110, is to publish a plan every five years that details that details a) How well the Service can offer clinical consultations in Welsh, b) The steps it will take to improve its ability to provide consultations in Welsh and c) A timeline for implementing these steps.

3. Review of the 2019-2024 plan

Over the last 5 years the service has seen significant changes and challenges that has had a direct impact on the 2019-2024 Clinical Consultation Plan (“the 2019-2024 Plan”). The two main overriding impacts have been the COVID-19 pandemic alongside the considerable changes within the service model in the NHS 111 Service.

Soon after the 2019-2024 Plan was developed the COVID-19 pandemic began, bringing with it unprecedented demand, patient safety and workforce challenges. This had a direct impact from 2020 to 2023 on the ability to answer the enormous volumes of calls in a timely manner. The service had to drastically change its service model

beyond anything previously seen in the past to address these demands within very short time scales during the pandemic.

During the 2019-2024 Plan, and coinciding with the pandemic, the NHS 111 Wales service transitioned from NHS Direct, which operated 111 services for a small number of Health Boards in Wales, to a fully national NHS 111 Wales Service across all seven Health Boards. This roll-out started in 2017 and was completed in 2021, including the introduction of 111 Press 2.

Additionally, starting in 2024 and continuing, the NHS 111 Wales Service has further developed additional services, now operating under the umbrella of Integrated Care Services within WAST.

In April 2024 a new C3 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system was introduced in the NHS 111 Wales Service and the previous Clinical Assessment System (CAS) was decommissioned. This was a significant change completed in a relatively short period of time. Similarly, the impact of this development posed operational challenges to overall call taking performance for a period.

A new clinical model was introduced to WAST in 2025 known as the Clinical Model Transformation Programme. The new model brings together elements from the 999 and NHS 111 Wales services together to work as a singular service. The Integrated Care service will clinically assess callers that have either called 999 or the NHS 111 Wales Service to ensure the best care and advice is offered. Currently this model remains to develop with further changes planned during 2026.

Notwithstanding the challenges, there have been significant improvements in our Welsh language services in the NHS 111 Wales Service. The Trust's annual Welsh Language Standards Report sets these out; however the highlights of the 2020-2024 Plan include:

Key Achievements

- Demand Monitoring: Welsh language requests integrated into dashboards and heat maps for better rostering.
- Complaint Reduction: Complaints about Welsh language service dropped from 2–3 per month (2020) to 2 per year (2024/25).
- Awareness and Training: Welsh Language Awareness sessions and mandatory ESR training introduced over the period.
- Recruitment Efforts: Targeted campaigns to maintain Welsh language provision, with strongest success being in North Wales.

Challenges Identified

- Clinician Skills: 17% of call handlers and 11% of registered clinicians could consult in Welsh (2020 baseline).
- Recruitment Gaps: Limited success for recruiting Welsh speakers outside of North Wales despite advert changes and campaigns.
- Training Uptake: Low participation in advanced Welsh language development; no full profile was created
- External Pressures: COVID-19, service expansion, industrial action, cyberattack, and Strep A outbreak diverted resources.
- Introduction of a new C3 / CAD system April 2024
- The time between the end of the 2019–2024 plan and the start of the 2026–2031 plan reflects significant changes within the NHS 111 Wales Service and Integrated Care during 2024/25, including the introduction of new organisational structures, a new computer-aided dispatch system, and a new clinical model.

Impact/Improvements

- Service maintained Welsh language provision but did not achieve significant growth in clinician capability. Patient experience improved through reduced complaints and improved rostering of Call handling staff.
- Development of an NHS 111 Wales Improvement Plan in answering Welsh language calls that included targeted recruitment, weekend call handler profiling, and opt-out flexibility for callers. Results of the improvement plan which was introduced in 2022 saw performance on answering Welsh language calls rise from 18% in 2022/23 to 45% in 2023/24 and performance has remained stable at 45.7% in 2024/25.

Recommendations for Next 5-Year Plan

- Recruitment: Develop targeted strategies for regions with low Welsh-speaking applicants.
- Training: Increase uptake of advanced language development and confidence-building sessions.
- Data and Feedback: Create comprehensive staff profiles and improve patient feedback mechanisms.
- Sustainability: Embed Welsh language compliance into operational planning and workforce development.

4. Delivering Clinical Consultations in Welsh Plan 2026-2031

Scope

The aim of the new plan will be to set out an achievable 5-year strategy for the NHS 111 Wales Service on how it will ensure continuation and improvements in its Welsh Language Clinical Consultations performance.

The plan will focus on:

- Callers who initiate contact through the NHS 111 Wales Service. Not all 111 services are delivered by WAST (for example, Mental Health Press 2 and Health Boards Out of hours services). Under the Welsh Language Standards (No7) Regulations 2018, there is no legislative requirement for the Trust to provide an active offer of Welsh to callers contacting the Trust via the 999 service.
- Staff delivering clinical services (clinicians) who are employed by WAST and are registrants. Currently this includes Paramedics, Nurses and Midwives, Doctors and Pharmacists.
- All NHS 111 Wales Inbound calls to the service. This will include call handling, Health information and dental calls.
- The ambition of the next five-year plan is to maintain a strong focus on NHS 111 Wales call handlers, while also incorporating 111/RICS clinicians and the 111 digital offer. Within the RICS service delivery area, both 111 and 999 calls are managed seamlessly through a single system. The intention is to incorporate the RICS service area following the mid-plan review at the end of year 3, with a clear commitment to further improving the Welsh language offer and its delivery.
- Explore opportunities for any improvement to the NHS 111 Wales digital offering

Key Elements of the 2026 – 2031 Plan

The key element of the new plan includes:

Workforce

- Training and Development
- Workforce planning
- Recruitment and retention

- Review of the service workforce Welsh language skills (verbal/written)

Service Process and Digital Innovations

- Review of current call / patient flow and process to further improve Welsh Language consultations.
- Rostering and assurances checkpoints
- Digital innovations and improvements
- Systems (CAD) improvements
- Data reporting for Welsh Language Consultations
- The NHS 111 Wales Online Symptom Checker redevelopment and made available in Welsh.
- The NHS 111 Wales AI- powered assistant, Albot which is available in Welsh.

Communication and Engagement

- Communication of final plan to all stakeholders
- Communication of plan to all staff within the NHS 111 Wales Service.
- Collaborative development with the Trust's Peoples Experience Team on the requisite initiatives and feedback from patients regarding the access to NHS 111 Wales Service through the medium of the Welsh language.

Monitor and Evaluate

- Auditing plan (Quality analysis of Welsh language consultations).
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan through the 5-year plan with key milestones incorporating internal (Trust) and external quality reports on progress.
- Regular plan review checkpoint meetings.
- At the end of year 3 an interim evaluation will be conducted.
- The NHS 111 Wales service will report on the progress in implementing the plan to the Welsh Language Advisory Group during the lifetime of the 5-year plan. Escalations will be in place where the plan requires re-adjustment. Progress will be reported to the public through the Trust's annual Welsh Language Standards Report.

1. Workforce

Objective	Aims & Objectives	Performance Indicator	Completed by Year (1 to 5)	Responsibility
W1. Workforce Welsh Language Skills Review	Establish Welsh language baseline skills for all operational call taking staff.	Measure 1: The percentage/Number of staff per role who provide clinical consultation in Welsh. Measure 2: The percentage of staff who have basic Welsh language skills, level 2 or level 3.	Year 1	Welsh Language Services Manager NHS 111 Wales Service Managers
W2. Recruitment & Retention	Establish recruitment initiatives / plans with a focus on Welsh language recruitment for all call taking staff.	Measure 3: The percentage/Number of Welsh speaking staff who are successful during recruitment stages. Measure 4: The percentage/number of Welsh speaking staff that leave the NHS 111 Wales service.	Year 2	People Services Welsh Language Services Manager NHS 111 Wales Service Managers
W3. Support and training	Investment in resources to increase the skills of clinicians to develop their ability to perform consultation in Welsh.	Measure 5: Increased number of opportunities for staff to access Welsh language training opportunities. Measure 6: The number of staff undertaking Welsh language development training.	Year 2	Welsh Language Services Manager NHS 111 Wales Service Managers

2. Service Process and Digital Innovations

Objective	Aims and Objectives	Measure of success	Completed by Year (1 to 5)	Responsibility
P1. Operational process	Periodic review of operational process to ensure support for the Welsh language offer. Develop plans for adaptive and innovative initiatives when required.	Measure 7: Review success of Welsh language performance metrics in relation to processes.	Year 2	NHS 111 Wales Service Managers
P2. Rostering	Review the Welsh language demand against staffing profile and rosters. Linked to action W2.	Measure 8: Review success of Welsh language performance metrics in relation to capacity / demand.	Year 2	NHS 111 Wales Service Managers
P3. Improvements through digital innovations	Review of requirements to improve Welsh Language offer through innovative and new digital solutions.	Measure 9: Review success of Welsh language performance metrics in relation to introduction of new initiatives and digital enhancement. Measure 10: Development in the C3 CAD system improving Welsh language call answering and performance. Measure 11: Development of the new Symptom Checkers on the NHS 111 Wales website. Measure 12: Review uptake of the new AI function, Albot on the NHS 111 Wales website.	Year2	NHS 111 Wales Service Managers Assistant Clinical Director for Remote Clinical Care ICT Programme Manager (SRO of Digital Front End)

P4. Welsh Language Informatics	To ensure robust Welsh language performance data.	Measure 13: Valid Welsh language Informatics data capture	Year 1	NHS 111 Wales Service Managers
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3. Communication and Engagement

Objective	Aims & Objectives	Measure of success	Completed by Year (1 to 5)	Responsibility
C1. Effective communication of the 5-year Welsh Language plan to key stakeholders.	To ensure all stakeholders are communicated the service 5-year plan.	Measure 14: Review and feedback on the plan by key stakeholders.	Year 1	Welsh Language Services Manager
C2. Public engagement and people's experience	Collaborative development with the People's Experience Team on the requisite initiatives and feedback from people regarding the access and experience to 111 NHS Wales Service through the medium of the Welsh Language.	Measure 15: Review of feedback, complaints, accolades and people stories in relation to Welsh Language in the NHS 111 Wales Service. Strengthen the Patient Voice Network to support meaningful and effective community involvement in the development of planned service changes ensuring an increase in the membership of Welsh language representation to the network.	Year 2	Welsh Language Services Manager

4. Monitor and Evaluate

Objective	Aims & Objectives	Measure of success	Completed by Year (1 to 5)	Responsibility
M1. Regular monitoring of service delivery and performance in relation to the Welsh language.	Assurance that Welsh language performance is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis with defined actions initiated when required to improve performance and service delivery.	Measure 16: Regular Welsh Language Performance review at key meetings.	Year 1	Welsh Language Services Manager NHS 111 Wales Service Managers
M2. Assurance Reporting (Internal/ External) of the plan.	Develop strategies to monitor the progress of the plan. Report progress against the key achievable internally and externally.	Measure 17: Evaluate the progress of the plan in the Trust Annual Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report	Year 1	Welsh Language Services Manager NHS 111 Wales Service Managers