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Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
University NHS Trust

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF THE WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES UNIVERSITY NHS TRUST BOARD, HELD on FRIDAY 12 JULY 2024
MEETING HELD VIA TEAMS**

Meeting started at 09:30

PRESENT:

Colin Dennis	Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Board
Jason Killens	Chief Executive
Peter Curran	Non-Executive Director
Alexander Crawford	Assistant Director of Planning and Transformation
Bethan Evans	Non-Executive Director
Ceri Jackson	Non-Executive Director and Vice Chair of the Board
Angela Lewis	Director of People and Culture
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary
Hugh Parry	Trade Union Partner
Jonny Sammut	Director of Digital Services
Joga Singh	Non-Executive Director
Andy Swinburn	Executive Director of Paramedicine
Chris Turley	Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Damon Turner	Trade Union Partner
Liam Williams	Executive Director of Quality and Nursing

Attendees:

Jill Gill	Head of Financial Accounting
Steve Owen	Corporate Governance Officer
Alex Payne	Corporate Governance Manager

Apologies:

Lee Brooks	Executive Director of Operations
Professor Kevin Davies	Non-Executive Director
Estelle Hitchon	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
Rachel Marsh	Executive Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance
Hannah Rowan	Non-Executive Director

58/24 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Welcome and apologies.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, and noted apologies were received from Lee Brooks, Professor Kevin Davies, Estelle Hitchon, Rachel Marsh, and Hannah Rowan.

Declarations of interest.

The Board noted that all declarations of interest were formally recorded on the Trust's Register of Interests.

RESOLVED: That the declarations of interest on the register were formally recorded and the apologies from Lee Brooks, Professor Kevin Davies, Estelle Hitchon, Rachel Marsh, and Hannah Rowan were formally recorded.

59/24 FINAL 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR TRUST BOARD AND SUBMISSION

2023-24 Annual Accounts

Chris Turley gave a presentation on the 2023/24 Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust final accounts advising Members that the accounts had been fully endorsed for approval at the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting on 10 July 2024.

In terms of Audit Wales (AW) colleagues, Chris Turley pointed out that they were not in attendance at this meeting as they were present at the ARAC meeting on 10 July 2024 and raised no further points for the Board's attention. Chris Turley advised the Board of the main points from the accounts which included:

1. Draft accounts were submitted by the Trust on 03 May 2024, in line with the timescales for 2023-24. Adjustments between draft and final accounts were largely presentational in nature or impacted only on a small number of the disclosures or notes to the accounts and did not result in any change to the in-year income or expenditure, the retained surplus position, or the net assets of the Trust; all of which remain as per the draft accounts.
2. There was a retained surplus of £0.085m for the 2023/24 financial year which was comprised of total Income of £306.835m, and net Expenditure of £306.750m. There was a total increase of income from last year of £8.8m. The increase from last year of total net expenditure was c£10.4m.

3. The Trust had met its financial duty to break even over the three years 2021/2022 to 2023/2024.
4. Expended Capital Investment funds of £25.301m (including IFRS16 leases funding), thereby utilising 100% of the Trust's Welsh Government set Capital Expenditure Limit.
5. The Trust had achieved the Public Sector Payments Policy (PSPP) of 96.4% within 30 days against the 95% target.
6. The financial statements were free of material misstatements; there were a number of corrected and a very small number of agreed uncorrected misstatements. The corrected misstatements were reflected in the accounts and all misstatements reported within the auditors ISA 260 report. None of the corrected misstatements affected the disclosed surplus of £0.085m.
7. AW have provided a report indicating that it is the intention of the Auditor General for Wales to issue an unqualified certificate and report on the 2023/24 financial statements, citing that they provided a true and fair view of the Trust's finances in the 2023/24 financial year.

Chris Turley thanked his team for their work in particular Jill Gill, who had been the key linchpin in the production of the accounts.

Comments:

Peter Curran provided reassurance to the Board regarding the contents of the annual accounts for 2024/25, particularly to those who were unable to attend the ARAC on 10 July. It was encouraging to note that Audit Wales had no significant issues from the outset. He had received positive feedback about this process 6-8 weeks ago, and as Chris Turley had mentioned the bottom line surplus remains unchanged.

This stability underscored the quality of the Trust's financial management and reporting. Regarding the specifics, the ARAC thoroughly scrutinised the non-adjusted items and noted there were only two, which were minor in nature. Given their insignificance and lack of maturity, they did not affect the bottom line.

Additionally, Joga Singh provided reassurance that the Finance and Performance Committee consistently monitored the financial performance and management throughout the financial year, as indicated by this Committee's activities. The Trust's financial performance has therefore undergone regular scrutiny, on behalf of the Board.

2023-24 Annual Report

Trish Mills presented the 2023/24 Annual Report for approval. It has been prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government Manual for Accounts 2023/24, and a previous iteration has been circulated to the Board for review throughout its development – prior to receipt by the ARAC for endorsement. Both Audit Wales and the Welsh Government have reviewed the Report and, although they provided a few minor comments, these were swiftly addressed and resolved, allowing the Board to be assured of its accuracy and completeness.

The Head of Internal Audit's opinion, which was in draft form during the last report to the Board from the April Audit Committee meeting, has now been finalised and retained a reasonable assurance rating. This is included within the Annual Governance Statement, in the Accountability Report.

A Task and Finish Group was once again formed to produce the Annual Report, bringing together key Directorates to ensure consistency and reduce duplication between the Report's sections. A special thanks go to Alex Payne for coordinating this effort, as well as to the Strategy Planning and Performance Team, and the Quality Team for their significant contributions.

The Annual Report was divided into two parts, as usual. Part one - the Performance Report - reviewed the Trust's performance for 2023-24, providing an overview of its long-term strategy and the Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP) for 2023-24. It also covered performance across four quadrants: Our Patients, Our People, Finance and Value, and Partnerships and System Contributions. The second section of the first part offered a more detailed integrated delivery and performance analysis.

Part two of the Annual Report – the Accountability Report - included the Directors' Report, the Statement of Accounting Officers' Responsibilities, and the Governance Statement. Additionally, it contained a remuneration table that had been reviewed by the Remuneration Committee. This report was also audited by Audit Wales and contained the staff report. Key disclosure statements were contained in the Accountability Report, in particular at page 100, which was the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities in respect of the accounts, which were to be signed by order of the Board and will be finalised on Friday after the Board meeting.

As Joga Singh highlighted, Trish Mills added that the Finance and Performance Committee continuously monitored the Trust's financial and organisational performance throughout the year. The next steps involved signing the document, confirming electronic signatures, and completing the Welsh language translation in time for the Annual General Meeting in September.

Comments:

On behalf of the ARAC, Peter Curran reiterated thanks to Trish Mills, Alex Payne, and the wider team. ARAC has thoroughly scrutinised the Annual Report, and the early sight in May was incredibly helpful, allowing ample time for comments and feedback.

The amount of work that goes into producing this report was immense, and the huge team effort involved should be acknowledged. The high standard to which it has been prepared was a testament to the dedication and skill of everyone involved. Peter Curran noted that the ARAC were more than happy to endorse this report for approval by the Board.

RESOLVED: The

(1) 2023/24 Annual accounts and 2023/24 Annual report were adopted and approved.

(2) The letter of representation was approved.

60/24 DUTY OF QUALITY ANNUAL REPORT

Liam Williams presented the report highlighting that it outlined the understanding of quality within the Trust, the quality management system adopted, and the Trust's approach to quality improvement.

Whilst the Duty of Candour will have its own Annual Report which will be aligned with the Putting Things Right Report due for publication in October, the Duty of Quality Report has included some content aligned with this activity as it has helped the Trust to hear the citizen's voice and produced opportunities to learn and drive improvement. Historically, the Trust has been open and transparent with its patients, particularly in cases of serious or catastrophic harm. This past year, the Trust extended this duty to include moderate harm, as required by recent legislation. The Trust has systematised its approach, leading to positive engagement with many families.

These families have not only welcomed the transparency and honesty but have also allowed the Trust to use their experiences to inform learning and improve clinical practices and system working. He expressed his gratitude to these families for their engagement and for helping the Trust understand the circumstances and opportunities for improvement.

Liam Williams further added that within the quality and safety environment, it was important to acknowledge that the Trust operates within an urgent and emergency care system that faces significant challenges. However, over the past year, the Trust has seen increasing collaboration and joint solutions with its partners, enhancing the quality of care provided, reducing episodes of harm where possible, and fostering innovation.

Despite these efforts, the Trust still recognised there have been instances where the quality of care has not met its expectations. The Trust was acutely aware that some patients and their families have experienced care that was not as the Trust would wish it to be. This report addresses the underlying themes behind these instances and, crucially, how the Trust has endeavoured to learn from them.

The paper highlighted the Trust's key service areas within each of the three domains, focusing on Emergency Medical Services, NHS 111 Wales Service, and Ambulance Care Service. It includes numerous patient and staff stories that illustrate the quality of care provided, the learning undertaken, and what it means for our people.

As the Board will recognise, our people were critical to the success of the care delivered. The report outlines the work the Trust has been doing to foster a positive culture, including efforts around psychological safety and the leadership being implemented at the senior level. Importantly, it also details how the Trust was developing its managers and leaders. He personally commended the People and Culture Directorate for their significant contributions in this area.

Liam Williams added that the final section of the Report looks ahead, acknowledging that while the Quality Report for 2023-2024 focuses on the Trust's achievements during this period, there was still a challenging journey ahead. Many of the issues addressed this year were part of a longer-term improvement plan for the Trust and its partners.

Therefore, a section that outlines some of the challenges the Trust will continue to face in the coming financial year and beyond has been included. This section also highlights the ongoing work to ensure sustained improvement and the Trust's collaborative efforts with its partners.

Comments: -

As Chair of the Quality, Patient Experience and Safety Committee, Bethan Evans commended everyone involved in this truly vast and wide-reaching piece of work. This report marks an important milestone for the Trust, especially following the new Act that came into force last year, requiring such a Report. As Liam Williams indicated, the structure of this report was left to individual bodies, and the format

adopted is excellent. It aligns well with the Trust's other reports and was very user-friendly, with a mix of narratives, photos, graphs, and comments from patients and staff that truly bring the report to life and tell a story.

One of the Trust's priorities was to evaluate progress regarding its responsibilities under the Duty of Quality. This report demonstrated progress, celebrates the many achievements and successes despite challenging circumstances, and highlighted the areas the Trust was focusing on moving forward. It also aligned with the Trust's commitment to continuous improvement across all aspects and its operations.

Bethan Evans added for information, that this report will be discussed with the Chairs of the respective health body Quality Committees across Wales in the next couple of months. As the Chair of the Quality, Patient Experience and Safety Committee, she was thrilled to recommend the approval of this report for the Trust Board's consideration.

RESOLVED: The Duty of Quality Annual Report 2023-24 was approved.

Date of next Open meeting: 25 July 2024

Meeting closed at 10:20