

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF THE WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES
UNIVERSITY NHS TRUST, TRUST BOARD ON THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2025
HELD IN THE CARDIFF MAKE READY DEPOT AND VIA TEAMS**

Meeting started at 09:30

PRESENT:

Colin Dennis	Chair of the Trust Board
Emma Wood	Chief Executive Officer
Rhiannon Beaumont-Wood	Non-Executive Director
Jayne Beeslee	Non-Executive Director
Peter Curran	Non-Executive Director
Bethan Evans	Non-Executive Director (Virtual)
Estelle Hitchon	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
Professor Hayley Hutchings	Non-Executive Director
Angela Lewis	Director of Culture Change
Rachel Marsh	Executive Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary
Ed Roberts	Acting Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Jonny Sammut	Director of Digital Services
Andy Swinburn	Executive Director of Paramedicine
Hugh Parry	Trade Union Partner
Damon Turner	Trade Union Partner
Liam Williams	Executive Director of Quality and Nursing

ATTENDEES:

Meshack Ezeadim	Aspiring Board Member
Sarah Harland	Corporate Governance Officer
Angela Mutlow	Director of Operations, Llais (Virtual)

APOLOGIES:

Lee Brooks	Executive Director of Operations
Ceri Jackson	Vice Chair and Non-Executive Director
Carl Kneeshaw	Director of People
Hannah Rowan	Non-Executive Director
Chris Turley	Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received as above. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 No declarations of interest were made in addition to those already recorded on the Trust's Register of Interests.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 25 SEPTEMBER 2025

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September and 23 October 2025 were received and approved.

4. ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Members noted that all four actions have now been completed.

5. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 The Chair presented the report which is uploaded to Ibabs and to the [Trust's website](#). The contents are therefore not repeated here.

5.2 The Chair expressed deep sadness at the recent passing of three valued colleagues: Paul Hollard, former Non-Executive Director; Richard Durkan from the Urgent and Emergency Care Service; and Natasha Harper, a dedicated Community First Responder.

5.3 The Chair and Angela Lewis recognised Paul Hollard's eight years of service as a Non-Executive Director, his lifelong commitment to the Welsh NHS, and his unwavering support for colleagues, particularly new members. Paul's passion for people, culture, and staff wellbeing was evident in his continued engagement and determination to make the organisation the best possible place for both patients and staff. The Board observed a moment of silence in memory of Paul and the other colleagues who have sadly passed away.

5.4 The Chair also acknowledged the retirement of Steve Owen, Corporate Governance Officer, thanking him for his exemplary service and wishing him a long and happy retirement.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

6.1 The Chief Executive's report is uploaded to Ibabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here.

6.2 Emma Wood thanked board members, stakeholders and colleagues for their support during her first seven weeks. Emma discussed ongoing work with Commissioners on the Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP) and Strategic Priorities, including a draft submission to the Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) and the potential for the new Monthly Integrated Quality and Performance Report (MIQPR) data set to streamline performance management. Emma also noted capital projects, specifically the need to

review flood defences at Monmouth station following recent floods, expressing her gratitude to staff involved in the emergency response.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

7.1 One question was received that was operational in nature and has been responded to. Otherwise, no public questions were received for this meeting.

8. STAFF EXPERIENCE – RUSNA BEGHUM, GRADUATE MANAGEMENT TRAINEE

- 8.1 Rusna Begum, Graduate Management Trainee, shared her journey from working as a dental nurse in London to joining the NHS graduate programme in Wales at age 47. Rusna described the challenges of transitioning from an operational to a strategic environment, especially adapting to WAST acronyms and the scale of the organisation. Rusna emphasised the importance of combining practical experience with her MSc in Applied Health Leadership, particularly in developing compassionate leadership and change management skills.
- 8.2 Rusna highlighted the value of staff networks such as Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BEAM), which provide a sense of belonging and help address the lack of diversity within the ambulance service. Rusna's multiple voluntary roles, including Magistrate and board member, have broadened her perspective and strengthened her work. Passionate about equality, inclusion, and empowering women from diverse backgrounds, Rusna illustrated the importance of cultural understanding in decision making.
- 8.3 Board members described Rusna's presentation as both inspirational and insightful, commending her research into diversity within the ambulance sector and her active role in the BEAM network. Rusna praised the welcoming culture for trainees but emphasised the ongoing need for greater diversity and outreach to under-represented communities. Discussions highlighted the challenges of improving diversity in emergency services; the benefits of sharing good practice across sectors; and the importance of engaging communities in service design and digital inclusion. Rusna added that BEAM network members want to feel valued and included, and that leadership support for network events has boosted morale and belonging.
- 8.4 The Board committed to support the BEAM network by involving it in co-creating policy responses, ensuring senior leadership engagement at events, providing resources to boost morale and belonging, and integrating its perspectives into broader engagement and diversity initiatives to shape organisational change. The Chair and Board members thanked Rusna for her openness and contribution, emphasising the value of listening to staff experiences to inform improvement.

8.1 PATIENT EXPERIENCE FOLLOW UP

8.1.1 Following Taylor's story received at the September 2025 meeting, Liam Williams advised that the driver diagram for improvements is done and ongoing work continues.

9. ACTIONS TO MITIGATE AVOIDABLE PATIENT HARM IN THE CONTEXT OF EXTREME AND SUSTAINED PRESSURE ACROSS URGENT AND EMERGENCY CARE

- 9.1 Rachel Marsh presented this report which is uploaded to Ibabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here.
- 9.2 Members noted that while improvements such as fewer patient cancellations, increased safe remote call closures, and better conveyance for high-risk cases have been achieved through the new Clinical Model Transformation (CMT), significant risks remain due to persistent handover delays. Additional winter measures are in place.
- 9.3 Bethan Evans questioned the organisation's preparedness for Phase Two of the CMT. Emma Wood confirmed readiness and ongoing checkpoints, and Liam Williams highlighted post-launch incident monitoring. Damon Turner sought assurance on staff training and support, Rachel Marsh confirmed is in place, as well as leadership presence during and after go-live.
- 9.4 Board members acknowledged positive trends but stressed that harm levels remain unacceptable, urging transparency, public communication in readiness for Phase Two of the Ambulance Performance Framework.

The Board noted:

- 1. That the Trust's Clinical Model Transformation is beginning to take effect;**
- 2. There has been a material reduction in hospital handover lost hours, but levels are rising in November and are much higher than a pan-Wales application of the Wait 45 initiative;**
- 3. That whilst these are positives, the continued level of avoidable patient harm in the 999-emergency care pathway it too high;**
- 4. The strategic imperative remains for health boards to further reduce hospital handover lost hours and for the Trust to support Health Boards by evolving its clinical model; and**
- 5. The Trust has strong tactical planning arrangements in place for Winter.**

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK AND RISK APPETITE STATEMENTS

- 10.1 Trish Mills presented this report which is uploaded to Ibabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here.
- 10.2 Peter Curran queried progress on distinguishing controllable factors for key risks 223 and 224, with Trish confirming work continues for this and whilst risk scores may decrease there is still an intention to delineate between what WAST can manage and what we must monitor, the latter related to external factors. Rhiannon suggested the risk appetite statement for SO2 should include stronger wording on culture and anti-racism. Emma Wood welcomed risk appetite statements, stressing their use in major decisions and proposing more frequent reviews.

10.3 Damon Turner sought timelines for mitigating Risk 558 [*Deterioration of staff health and wellbeing in as a consequence of both internal and external system pressures*]; Angie Lewis clarified each action has its own timeframe and will share details with Damon. Jonny Sammut highlighted balancing upfront costs for innovation with long term efficiencies, and Ed Roberts agreed, noting a more open appetite for commercial innovation to enable risk taking while maintaining financial balance.

The Board:

- 1. Approved the suite of seven Risk Appetite Statements;**
- 2. Noted that the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee will oversee the next steps for implementation and monitoring of the Risk Appetite Statements, as part of the 2026/27 work programme;**
- 3. Took assurance from the review and attention to the principal risks, and their review at the Executive Leadership Team and at relevant Committees;**
- 4. Agreed that the reframed Reputational Risks 201a and 201b are overseen by the Board rather than the People & Culture Committee in future; and**
- 5. Noted the ratings, mitigating actions and scoring trends for each principal risk.**

11. MONTHLY INTEGRATED QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT (MIQPR)

11.1 This report is uploaded to lbabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here.

11.2 Rachel Marsh presented the Monthly Integrated Quality and Performance Report (MIQPR), noting that most Emergency Medical Services (EMS) issues, including avoidable harm and performance, had already been addressed in previous agenda items. Rachel focused her report on other service areas, particularly the 111 service, and explained that the longstanding target of keeping abandoned calls below 5% is now unachievable with the current number of commissioned call handlers. This operational constraint means the service cannot consistently meet the target, and as a result, people who do not get through may seek help elsewhere, increasing pressure on other parts of the system. Rachel emphasised the importance of explicitly reporting harm and performance metrics in future MIQPRs, even if a separate harm report is not produced, to maintain transparency and support effective oversight.

11.3 Board members agreed on the need for clear communication about service pressures, comprehensive data, and a commitment to ongoing improvement and accountability across all service areas

The Board: Considered the September/October 2025 MIQPR and actions being taken.

12. INTEGRATED MEDIUM TERM PLAN (IMTP) DELIVERY/ASSURANCE

12.1 This report is uploaded to lbabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here. Rachel Marsh provided an update on IMTP progress, emphasising that the coming year will be a no investment year due to commissioner guidance, with

initial board priorities submitted at the end of November and a need for internal prioritisation amid possible budget reductions. Jayne Beeslee confirmed that the IMTP process and updates had been reviewed by the Finance and Performance Committee, and members were assured by the plans and readiness for Phase Two of the Ambulance Performance Framework.

- 12.2 The Chair enquired about the future direction of IMTPs nationally, given new NHS Wales leadership, and expressed concern about the length and relevance of the planning process. Emma Wood advised that the future of IMTPs is uncertain, especially with the new CEO's background in annual planning. Emma stressed the need for the Trust to focus on consolidation, align services with available funding, and present realistic options, as no new money is expected. Rachel added that planning should primarily clarify internal priorities and resource allocation, advocating for a longer term (three to five years) approach. Rhiannon noted England's shift to five-year planning, welcomed for its long-term focus, with members observing ongoing challenges with integrated financial and strategic planning. Emma concluded that the lack of integration is a barrier, and the Trust will need to moderate commitments, as innovations may not be funded next year.

The Board noted

- 1. Progress for the Quarter 2 IMTP deliverables (CMT & Directorate level reported deliverables); and**
- 2. The IMTP development approach described in the draft IMTP Planning Guidance (subject to further refinement and approval).**

13. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONTH SEVEN 2025/26

- 13.1 Ed Roberts presented this report which is uploaded to Ibabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here. The Board reviewed the current financial performance, noting ongoing pressures and the challenging context for the remainder of the year. Discussions flagged the need for continued close monitoring of expenditure, with an emphasis on maintaining statutory financial duties despite the absence of new investment and the possibility of budget reductions.
- 13.2 The Board acknowledged the importance of aligning financial management with strategic priorities and recognised that future planning would require careful moderation of commitments and realistic expectations, given the constrained funding environment. The AAA from the Finance and Performance Committee which reviewed month six and month seven was noted.

The Board:

- 1. Took assurance in relation to the Month 7 revenue financial position and performance of the Trust as at 31 October 2025;**
- 2. Noted the delivery of the 2025/26 savings plan, and the context of this within the overall financial position of the Trust;**
- 3. Noted the capital programme for 2025/26; and**

4. **Noted the Month 7 Welsh Government monitoring returns submission.**

14. **PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: POSITION STATEMENT, PROPOSITION ON FUTURE APPROACH AND NEXT STEPS**

- 14.1 This report is uploaded to Ibabs and to the Trust's website. The contents are therefore not repeated here.
- 14.2 Estelle Hitchon addressed the Trust's current position on partnerships and stakeholder engagement, outlining the proposed future approach and next steps. Discussions emphasised the need to focus engagement efforts on areas that will deliver the greatest impact, improve community involvement and ensure diverse voices are heard.
- 14.3 The Board supported a more targeted and strategic approach to engagement, aiming to strengthen relationships with key stakeholders and communities, and agreed to further develop and implement these plans as part of ongoing organisational priorities.

The Board:

- 1. Approved the proposal to focus engagement activity on a small number of core 2026-29 IMTP/corporate priorities;**
- 2. Approved the proposal to report that activity through normal IMTP reporting process and/or the MIQPR; and**
- 3. Approved the proposal to receive a report at Board on broader influencing and stakeholder relationships on a six-monthly basis from May 2026.**

15. **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 15.1 Academic Partnership Committee (APC) – 7 October 2025
- 15.1.1 Hayley Hutchings reported that the Academic Partnership Committee agreed to disband and redistribute its responsibilities, ensuring research and collaboration remain visible and scheduled. Hayley highlighted the importance of embedding research in the IMTP and noted the committee's receipt of the Strategic Action Plan, progress in Research and Innovation, and the appointment of a new research lead. The committee was assured by the development of a five-year Strategic Plan and progress against the NHS Research and Development framework. Trish Mills clarified that the decision to stand down the APC is deferred pending an external review, so the committee will continue to meet twice next year to maintain research visibility during the transition
- 15.2 Quality Patient Experience and Safety Committee (QuEST) 4 November 2025
- 15.2.1 Bethan Evans reported that the QuEST Committee welcomed an observer from the Joint Commission Committee. The committee resolved a PTR data reporting error to ensure future accuracy and discussed a patient story which addressed last minute non-emergency transport cancellations, which highlighted issues with demand and communication. Updates were provided on previous patient stories, including progress on easy-read resources and engagement with learning

disability groups. The committee approved the Prevent Policy; discussed revisions to the Clinical Plan; and noted ongoing work on Quality Governance.

15.3 People and Culture Committee – 13 November 2025

15.3.1 Hayley Hutchings reported that the People and Culture Committee endorsed extending the People and Culture plan to 2027. The Committee received a presentation on personalised learning packages and future training initiatives to widen participation and inclusion. Updates were provided on staff survey response rates; diversity and volunteer events; apprenticeship programmes; and operational training investments. Challenges with training abstraction was discussed, as well as ongoing reviews of rosters and care roles, and efforts to reduce overruns. The committee received assurance of staff readiness for Phase Two clinical model go-live with additional support. The Committee noted improvement in people metrics but raised concerns about falling PADR completion rates and violence/aggression figures.

15.3(a) Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Report 2025

15.3a Angie Lewis emphasised that while the Welsh Government recognised the Trust's commitment to Workforce Race Equality, there is no complacency and more progress is needed. Angie highlighted the importance of the BEAM network and praised Meshack Ezeadim's and Rusna Begum's contributions. Angie also shared positive results from a digital recruitment campaign that increased recruitment from Black and minority backgrounds and called for continued focus on diversity and inclusion. Angie reported a strong staff survey response rate and assured the committee of the Trust's ongoing commitment to improvement.

15.4 Finance and Performance Committee – 18 November 2025

15.4.1 Jayne Beeslee's Finance and Performance Committee report highlighted the Trust's ongoing financial pressures and the need for continued focus on financial sustainability. The committee reviewed key performance metrics, discussed areas requiring improvement and examined the impact of current pressures on service delivery. The committee also considered the management of finance and performance risks and discussed ongoing efforts to address resource challenges and support operational effectiveness.

The Board: Noted the Committee Reports.

16. GOVERNANCE REPORT

16.1 The Governance Report was noted.

17. MINUTES OF BOARD AND OTHER COMMITTEES

17.1 The Board noted the following minutes which have been approved by the respective Committees and were for the Boards's attention / formal receipt:

05 August 2025 - Quality, Patient Safety and Experience Committee

12 August 2025 - People and Culture Committee

18. REFLECTIONS AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

18.1 The Chair noted the meeting was comprehensive and highlighted the staff experience as particularly interesting and well aligned with key people initiatives.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19.1 None

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC – 27 NOVEMBER 2025

Members of the Press and Public were invited to leave the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

21. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

21.1 Meeting of the Trust Board is scheduled for the 29 January 2026 at 09:30 at Cardiff MRD.

Meeting closed at: 12:55