

Cyfarfod Bwrdd/Board Meeting

Briff Cyfarfod/Meeting Brief

Mawrth 2021 / March 2021

This Board meeting and development session took place via MS Teams

Board meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting and progress on agreed actions

The Board agreed the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record, and noted the progress on agreed actions.

The Chair advised members that following the recent presentation by Welsh Government on the White Paper: rebalancing care and support, an open invitation has been extended to the Board for representation on a number of technical groups, subject to the outcome of the White Paper consultation.

Members agreed that should Welsh Government make a formal offer, they would be happy to accept.

Finance report

The Board noted that due to a larger underspend than originally anticipated, two further priority funding areas have been identified:



- To create a safe virtual and physical environment for staff and visitors at the Board office

As well as meeting our health and safety responsibilities, this funding would enable all Board and other meetings to take place in the newly created boardroom either physically (and in a way that meets social distancing requirements) or using the video conferencing facilities.

It would also enable a reconfiguration of current office space to better meet staff social distancing requirements.

- Purchase marketing materials suitable for a return to face to face engagement, and extend the availability of accessible promotion materials

It is proposed that any further available funding should be used to purchase marketing materials suitable for use upon return to face to face engagement activities, and to extend the availability of accessible promotion material. This could include, e.g., animated accessible videos demonstrating CHC roles such as complaints advocacy and service change.

The Board **agreed** the additional funding priorities identified.

It was agreed to explore the possibility of providing broadband services for any members who may be otherwise digitally excluded. This will be added to the equality impact assessment.



Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust: response to the pandemic and looking forward

The Chair welcomed Martin Woodford, Chair of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) to the meeting. Martin provided the Board with an overview of the history of the Trust.

He explained the three strands of the service and the challenges it has faced during the last 12 months.

- Emergency medical service – 999
- Non-emergency transport service
- NHS direct service – 111

The Board heard that during the first 6 months of the pandemic, there was a massive increase in emergency call demand. During the period September to December the service was under enormous strain with an increase in demand due to the addition of winter pressures. At the current time, demand has eased and the demand is almost back to 'normal' level.

At the start of the pandemic, the 111 service was inundated with calls but this has improved due to additional call handling capability. It is hoped to expand the service even further during the coming year.

There was much work done on staff safety and how to cope during the pandemic. Many staff were encouraged to work from home during this time and for those unable to do so, social distancing arrangements were introduced in the workplace.



The service received support from the military, St John ambulance and the fire service to ensure the sustainability of the service overall.

More frontline staff have been recruited, with an additional 136 full time posts created. It is hoped to recruit a further 127 posts in April.

An important development for the Trust has been the approval of a new digital strategy and the installation of a new electronic patient care record system.

To enable a more digitally focussed service, staff have been given additional IT equipment in the form of iPads and laptops.

Other developments include a new ambulance centre in Cardiff. WAST has also been involved in the wider development of NHS services in Wales, including the South Wales major trauma network and the new Grange Hospital in Cwmbran.

Members heard about the Trust's strategic ambitions, including a shift to a more outcome focused performance framework. Members queried whether thought had been given to using the Trust's enhanced IT outcomes capability to further develop/ implement its accountability framework.

Martin thanked the Board for this suggestion, commenting that such an approach would be a quantum leap in the Trust's thinking.



Martin responded to a range of additional questions and queries from members. This included performance in relation to care for people with suspected stroke, and the 'see and treat at home' service.

A final question from the Board was around WAST's biggest area of learning in the last 12 months. In response, Martin reflected on the impact on people over the past 12 months – the many patients who had not received the service they needed because of the pandemic, and the impact on staff wellbeing of the pressures over the past 12 months.

The acute pressures during November and December had been traumatic for everyone. The importance of looking after the staff so they can continue to look after people is vital.

Board members thanked Martin for the interesting and useful discussion, and expressed their gratitude to the service for its tremendous effort during this challenging time.

Everyone agreed the importance of continuing our dialogue with the Trust moving forward.



