

## ASSURANCE REPORT

### NHS WALES SHARED SERVICES PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Reporting Committee	Shared Service Partnership Committee
<b>Chaired by</b>	Tracy Myhill, Chair
<b>Lead Executive</b>	Neil Frow, Managing Director, NWSSP
<b>Author and contact details.</b>	Peter Stephenson, Head of Finance and Business Development
<b>Date of meeting</b>	20 January 2022

#### **Summary of key matters including achievements and progress considered by the Committee and any related decisions made.**

##### **Support to Vaccination Booster Campaign**

A presentation was received from Health Courier Services (HCS) on their role in supporting the booster campaign across Wales. Since Mid-December, almost 1m vaccines have been delivered to 155 separate sites with no delayed or failed deliveries. Over 8,500 journeys have been made to support the vaccination roll-out and 2.3 million miles driven by HCS staff to help NHS Wales to respond to the pandemic. The Committee were very appreciative of the presentation and the work to support their organisations and were keen to understand how they could assist in making the service even more effective through eliminating any unnecessary activities.

##### **Procurement National Operating Model**

The Committee also received a presentation on the new national operating model for Procurement Services which is currently out to staff consultation. This will facilitate a more regionalised approach and will enhance the relationship between national sourcing and frontline teams. It should also lead to a greater focus on strategic relationships with key suppliers and support the efforts to promote the Foundational Economy. The Committee were supportive of the proposed changes, and it was agreed that a summary information document would be produced for NHS bodies once the staff consultation period closes.

##### **Chair's Report**

This was the first meeting chaired by Tracy Myhill since her appointment to NWSSP on 1 December. Tracy outlined her delight in being appointed, the induction activities that she had undertaken to date, and her intention to meet regularly with key stakeholders across NHS Wales.

## **Managing Director Update**

The Managing Director presented his report, which included the following updates on key issues:

- In response to COVID and the Omicron variant, the NWSSP Planning and Response Group had been stepped up again. Thus far, no major issues have been noted and whilst there was an initial jump in sickness absence, figures have returned to the previous low levels. Where necessary, business continuity plans were implemented for drivers in Health Courier Services to ensure that services to the rest of NHS Wales were maintained;
- A Joint Executive Team meeting with Welsh Government was held on 14 January which generated a lot of positive feedback for NWSSP and during which NWSSP were requested to assist with the establishment of the Citizens Voice Body which will come into being from April 2023;
- The Medical Examiner Service, which is not devolved, is likely to become a statutory service from September 2022; and
- The NWSSP financial position is forecast to achieve a break-even position with all capital monies spent. The business case for the purchase of the Matrix House building in Swansea, has been signed off by the Minister.

## **Items Requiring SSPC Approval/Endorsement**

### **IMTP**

The Committee received the NWSSP IMTP for approval. The Director of Planning, Performance, and Informatics had met individually with SSPC members over recent weeks to inform the plan and has incorporated their comments and feedback into the final version. While, for now, there are no major changes to the overall goals and objectives, there is a greater focus on the Welsh Language, Equality and Diversity and outcome-based measures.

The IMTP is based on a solid foundation where NWSSP has continued to deliver all services despite the pandemic, and where we have a balanced financial plan. New services such as the Temporary Medicines Unit, Laundry Services, and more recently International Nurse Recruitment, have been introduced. The plan reflects ministerial priorities and positions NWSSP at the forefront of many national initiatives, particularly around climate change and the foundational economy.

In respect of the financial plan an additional savings target had been applied across directorates to generate a reserve to invest in IMTP priorities, but the plan will be challenging as it contains significant cost pressures including the hike in the price of energy and the O365 licences. The risk sharing agreement for clinical negligence claims is currently £16.5m but is forecast to rise to £28m in three years' time. The IMTP requires significant capital investment over the next five years particularly in respect of the laundry and TRAMs projects. The recently announced 24% cut in the discretionary budget will cause significant challenges for NWSSP in future years.

The Committee were supportive of the plan and highlighted NWSSP's role as an economic driver for change through the increased use of business intelligence to inform Health Boards and Trusts in both clinical and non-clinical settings. It also stressed the need for the various assurance processes (Internal Audit, Local Counter Fraud, National Counter Fraud, PPV) to be effectively co-ordinated to support delivery of the IMTP, and the Committee recommended that the current arrangements should be reviewed.

The Committee **APPROVED** the IMTP with the proviso that it may need to be revisited if there were any subsequent and significant changes to Health Board plans that impacted NWSSP.

## **Items For Noting**

### **International Recruitment**

The Committee received a paper relating to the recruitment of 436 nurses from overseas prior to financial year-end, to help fill vacancies within Health Boards and support the Covid recovery programme. Welsh Government have approved the funding for this initiative and contracts have been placed. Interviews are now being undertaken and although the deadline is challenging, there is confidence that this will be achieved. Invoices to the recruitment agencies will be paid at the offer acceptance stage, and if for any reason the recruitment is not followed through, the agencies have to find an acceptable replacement nurse or repay the amount. Nurses are only being recruited from countries with surplus staff and who are included on the Home Office Approved List.

The Committee **NOTED** and **ENDORSED** the paper.

## **Finance, Workforce, Programme and Governance Updates**

**Project Management Office Update** – The Committee reviewed and noted the programme and projects monthly summary report, which highlighted the team's current progress and position on the schemes being managed. It was agreed that the consequences of any slippage in project timelines would be more meaningfully described in the report.

**Finance Report** – The Committee reviewed the finance report and noted the position at the end of Quarter 3. The outturn position is still forecast to be break-even and there is a plan in place to utilise any additional savings generated in the year. The paper also highlighted the significant sums spent on PPE, and the further donations of PPE to both India and Namibia. The Welsh Risk Pool position is still in line with the IMTP. Capital spend is on schedule, but a large proportion of the funding has only recently been confirmed and/or received. Stock values, which in a normal year would be approximately £3m are currently around £80m due to the need to maintain 16-weeks' stock of PPE. However, this value is reducing and was in excess of £100m last summer.

**People & OD Update** – sickness absence rates, after an initial spike due to the impact of the Omicron variant, have now returned back to the lower levels seen over recent months and currently stands at 2.93% for the last quarter. Headcount continues to grow due mainly to the additional staff recruited as part of the Single Lead Employer Scheme. PADR rates were generally good although there were a few directorates where performance needed to be improved. The ESR database has now been modified such that the majority of the facilities it provides can be accessed and delivered in Welsh.

**Corporate Risk Register** – there is one red risk relating to the pressures currently being noted within the Employment Services Directorate, and particularly in Recruitment and Payroll Services.

**Papers for Information**

The following items were provided for information only:

- Annual Review 2020/21; and
- Finance Monitoring Returns (Months 8 & 9).

**AOB**

N/a

**Matters requiring Board/Committee level consideration and/or approval**

- The Board is asked to **NOTE** the work of the SSPC and ensure where appropriate that Officers support the related work streams.

**Matters referred to other Committees**

N/A

**Date of next meeting**

24 March 2022