



WELSH HEALTH SPECIALISED SERVICES COMMITTEE (WHSSC) JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING BRIEFING – 19 MARCH 2024

The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee held its latest public meeting on 19 March 2024. This briefing sets out the key areas of consideration and aims to ensure everyone is kept up to date with what is happening within the Welsh Health Specialised Services.

The papers for the meeting can be accessed using the link below:

[2023/2024 Joint Committee - Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/whsssc/2023/2024-Joint-Committee-Welsh-Health-Specialised-Services-Committee)

1. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on the 30 January 2024 and 27 February 2024 were **approved** as a true and accurate record of the meetings.

2. Action log & matters arising

Members **noted** the progress on the actions outlined on the action log.

3. Integrated Commissioning Plan (ICP)

Members received a report and a presentation presenting the 2024-2025 Integrated Commissioning Plan (ICP) for approval prior to its submission to Welsh Government in line with NHS Wales planning requirements.

Members noted the planning and engagement undertaken to develop the ICP over the last 12 months, and the additional work undertaken since the JC meetings on 30 January 2024 and 27 February 2024 to refine the plan.

Members discussed the plan presented that included an average 4.45% uplift across Health Boards providing an allocation to fund activity demand and unavoidable growth as well as a 3.2% uplift for NHS Wales on non pay contracts. 6 of the 7 Health Boards (HBs) agreed to approve the plan subject to:

- An agile and flexible approach to delivery of the plan over the next 12 months,
- Recognition that they were carrying a degree of risk in the system,
- The need for the JCC team to undertake further interrogative work on medicines management and optimisation,
- A finance working group being set up to ensure HBs were closer to the recurrent spend across the year,

- Work being undertaken in parallel with HBs on policy and looking at sustainability of specialised services across Wales, including consideration of what is feasible for NHS Wales and what needs to be commissioned from NHS England to manage the volatility and instability for the next 12 months; and
- That the new JCC has strategic discussions on the delivery of the Specialised Strategy for Wales.

Members (1) **Noted** the report and presentation; and (2) **Approved** the Integrated Commissioning Plan 2024-2025 prior to its submission to Welsh Government.

4. Chair's Report

Members received the Chair's Report and **noted**:

- **Chair's Action** –a Chair's Action was taken on 12 March 2024 to approve expenditure for Advanced Medicinal Therapeutic Products (ATMPs) through the Blueteq High Cost Drugs (HCD) software programme, and a letter was issued JC members on the 12 March 2024 confirming the action taken,
- **Chair's Appraisal with the Minister** - On the 26 February 2024 the Chair met with the Minister for Health & Social Services for her annual appraisal on the objectives set for the remit of the JC, in line with ministerial priorities, and areas where the Minister expected the JC, and the Chair, to demonstrate leadership and strategic direction. Members noted that the Chairs tenure comes to an end on 31 March 2024,
- **Dr Sian Lewis, Managing Director, WHSSC** - Dr Sian Lewis will be stepping down from her role as Managing Director on 28 March 2024. The Chair advised it had been a privilege and a pleasure working with Sian. Her energy, commitment and openness underpinned a strong and effective JC. On behalf of the JC, the Senior Corporate Team and all staff, the Chair expressed her sincerest gratitude to Sian for everything she has achieved, with and for our staff, patients, their families and carers, and our local communities,
- **Appointment of IPFR Lay Members** - The appointment process for the appointment of lay members on to the WHSSC Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) panel has been delayed and will commence under the new NHS Wales JCC in Quarter 1 2024-2025; and
- **Key Meetings.**

Members (1) **Noted** the report; and (2). **Ratified** the Chairs action taken on 12 March 2024 to approve expenditure for Advanced Medicinal Therapeutic Products (ATMPs) through the Blueteq High Cost Drugs (HCD) software programme.

5. Managing Director's Report

Members received the Managing Director's Report and **noted** the following updates:

- **WHC/2024/005 - Welsh Health Circular - Private Obesity Surgery and the Welsh NHS** - In February 2024, Welsh Government published the Welsh Health Circular (WHC) - Private Obesity Surgery and the Welsh NHS. Currently, reliable estimates of the number of patients who are likely to request a follow-up are not available, however we know that approximately one third of surgical procedures carried out in the Welsh Institute of Metabolic and Obesity Surgery (WIMOS) for patients in South Wales are emergency band removal procedures for patients who have previously undergone treatment in the private sector. Therefore, it is possible that this could have a significant impact on NHS pre-operative and post-operative service capacity,
- **Gender Identity Development Services (GIDS)** - An update on developments in Gender Identity Development Services (GIDS) in NHS England (NHSE), including the approach to the prescribing of Puberty Suppressing Hormones was given,
- **South Wales Major Trauma Network Gateway Review** - The South Wales Trauma Network (SWTN) was launched on 14 September 2020 to care for adults and children across South and West Wales and South Powys who had suffered a major trauma. On 7 March 2024, the Stage Gate Assessment of the South Wales Trauma Network was reported to the SRO for the programme and was given a green assessment rating which is a significant achievement which should not be underestimated for such a young network. The report will be shared at the SWTN Governance Group scheduled in March 2024 for information, with a view to developing an action plan to address the recommendations in readiness for the SWTN Clinical & Operational Board (COB) in April 2024,
- **Cardiac interventions in Wales: A comparison of benefits between NHS Wales' specialties - Published Article (PLOS ONE)** - WHSSC in collaboration with the cardiac network and the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank in Swansea have undertaken a study aimed at assessing if specialised healthcare service interventions in Wales was benefitting the population equitably in work commissioned by the WHSSC. The findings of the study were published on PLOS ONE in February 2024; and
- **NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee Implementation** - Further to the report presented to the Joint Committee on 30 January 2024 concerning the business continuity risks for specialised services commissioning associated with the establishment of the new NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) on 1 April 2024, the recent appointment of an interim Tier 1 Chief Commissioner was a positive step forward, however concern remained regarding the Mental Health portfolio of

the new JCC concerning the ICP and quality issues which will be factored into the risk register.

6. Any Other Business

- **Annual Committee Effectiveness Survey** – members noted that the annual committee effectiveness survey would be issued to all members after the meeting and would focus on the work of the Joint Committee only, and not the sub-committees. The feedback will support developing the new JCC; and
- **Farewell from the Chair of WHSSC** – members noted that it was Kate Eden’s last meeting as Chair of WHSSC and she advised that it had been a privilege to work for WHSSC for the last 4 years, working with experts and dedicated professionals to deliver high quality specialised services for Wales and also gave a thanks to the Independent Members (IMs) for supporting the work of WHSSC.



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