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Together for Health

A Five Year Vision for
the NHS in Wales



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Introduction

Sustainability lies at the heart of our agenda and good health is vital to the creation of a prosperous, successful, sustainable Wales. It will require action on many fronts not just in the traditional health sector. We must improve the health of everyone in Wales. We must pay particular attention to the young and we must reduce inequalities. We must also create a modern NHS delivering high quality care – able to meet the challenges ahead with ambition and confidence.

The NHS commands huge respect however I believe it now faces its toughest ever challenges. In its recent report, the Bevan Commission, established to provide independent expert advice to the Welsh Government, stated the NHS in Wales is, in many ways, in a good place. However, the report also set out the serious challenges it faces - a rising elderly population, enduring inequalities in health, increasing numbers of patients with chronic conditions, rising obesity rates and a challenging financial climate.

In recent years rising demands and expectations were largely matched by increased budgets, but those days are over. Clinical practice is changing, and in some areas we are facing acute difficulties in recruiting specialist staff. There has been good progress with redesigning services and improving quality, but not enough. There remain sharp differences between the best and worst health in Wales, and our performance lags behind similar countries in some important aspects.

Therefore, the status quo is not an option. We all now face a choice. We could continue as we are, trying to deal with every issue as it comes along, achieving at best slow, incremental change in the face of increasing pressure. However, that would be risky and ultimately unrewarding.

The alternative is to seize the initiative and drive hard for a better future. That is the road that opportunity and our ambition point us towards. That is the option this vision proposes. It means we must promote and protect positive health, see the NHS become more engaged in the wider Government agenda and act quickly to create sustainable, reliable services within an NHS easy to access whatever the problem and quick to offer a personalised and effective response.

This will not be easy, but can be done. I know the NHS, Local Government, the Third Sector and other agencies have already expressed a passionate commitment to improving people's quality of life. The people of Wales themselves will need to take more responsibility for their own health and for that of their family and community. We will give them all the support we can to do this. I believe that, despite the challenges, the Welsh model is capable

of world-class performance. I invite the people of Wales to join with us in creating a Wales where health really does match the best anywhere.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Health and Social Services

About this document

This vision reflects a continuing sense of pride in the principles and values which are embodied in the National Health Service. It builds on these values and principles, on recent policy and experience and on the Welsh Government's manifesto commitments to present a new statement of intent. It has been developed with the assistance of the NHS and its closest partners, Local Government and the Trade Unions.

The Vision for the NHS in 2016

The Bevan Commission, in a recent report, supported the ambition of world-class health and social services for Wales. It defined these as '*services best suited to Wales but comparable with the best anywhere*'. The Welsh Government and National Assembly for Wales accepted the report and its recommendations, which are in line with the actions set out in the Programme for Government.

Our collective aim must now be **delivery**. We believe we can now make significant improvements over the next five years:

Health will be better for everyone –

- more children will have a good start in life
- the health of the most and least deprived will be more similar
- obesity, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse will level off or fall
- people will be enjoying more years of high quality life.

Access and patient experience will be better -

- access to primary care services will be easier
- more services will be provided through local pharmacies
- more services will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- a greater range of local services will mean less need to travel
- more information on services and on health issues will be available by telephone and on-line.

Better service safety and quality will improve health outcomes -

- we will guarantee dignity and respect for patients
- systems for assuring high quality care will match the best in the world
- people will benefit more from healthcare - health 'outcomes' will improve
- every service will have been put on a solid basis for the long term, with access as local as possible
- specialist hospital care in centres of excellence will match the best
- the NHS will work with relevant agencies to ensure people's transport needs to hospitals are addressed
- the best possible communication links will give clinical staff fast, safe and secure access anywhere in Wales to the information needed to help patients
- the NHS will publish information on the performance of major services in terms of safety, care outcomes and patients' views.

The foundations are in place

Huge strides have been made in recent years. Life expectancy is rising overall and more people have been seen and treated faster than ever before. The need for change has already been recognised and a long term programme of ambitious reform has been initiated.

In the first phase of reform, NHS structures were simplified, with just seven Local Health Boards responsible for the health of their local residents. Working with our NHS Trusts, they are now organising all their local services including GPs, pharmacists, the hospitals, district nurses to work better together and with social services as part of a single 'integrated' system, where all the elements work together like clockwork.

During this process, the NHS has been developing strong partnership with staff and their representatives. They have been actively and creatively involved in redesigning services for the future. This engagement has been critical to success, creating a sense of common purpose and a determination to succeed.

The reforms have also created a new leadership and future direction. All the NHS bodies and the Government together agreed a five-year Framework, focused on better outcomes, performance and financial stability. The next phase must build on these foundations.

There remain some tough challenges

1. Health has improved but not for everyone and our population is ageing

Improvements in health have not been shared equally. Life expectancy for the most deprived fifth of the population has risen more slowly than for any other group. For example, people in Cyncoed and Butetown in Cardiff, just a few miles apart, face a 10-year difference in average length of life.

Many of the causes of poor health are deep-rooted and they are often difficult to tackle. Along with other countries, Wales faces an obesity epidemic and rates of smoking, drinking and substance misuse continue to cause concern. The economic crisis has affected Wales badly and is likely to generate greater demands on the NHS.

Within two decades it is estimated almost one in three people in Wales will be aged 60 or over. By 2031, the number of people aged 75 or over will have increased by 76 per cent. Older people are more likely to have at least one chronic condition – an illness such as diabetes, dementia or arthritis - and have more as their age increases.

2. Health care quality has improved but the NHS can do even better

Harmful incidents in hospital are monitored better than ever before and efforts to prevent them more rigorous. The *1000 Lives Plus* initiative has pioneered a method that is proving its value in promoting safer, more effective clinical practice.

Scientific breakthroughs and faster treatment mean once fatal diseases now have improved survival rates. Cancer patients in Wales are now almost all treated within strict timescales.

Yet, some services are still well short of the best. People are still admitted to hospital for causes such as an asthma attack which might have been avoided had local preventive action and support been in place. Audit reports that compare clinical practice and outcomes show that, although performing well in some areas, in others Wales is behind countries that would be considered equals. Even within Wales there are geographical differences and uneven performance.

3. *Expectations are continually rising*

Past successes and continuing improvement mean people's expectations will continue to rise. Although sometimes those run ahead of what the NHS can, as yet, achieve, the Government and NHS welcome high expectations and the active engagement of the public and service users as a spur to continued improvement.

4. *Medical staffing is becoming a real limitation on our services*

Creating a sustainable workforce is a particular challenge in some specialties. Recruitment of medical staff is already proving to be a tough challenge.

To some extent this can be offset by using professional and support staff in a different way and by strong programmes of responsive action, targeting training, recruitment and retention policies to make training and working in Wales attractive. However, despite these initiatives, very serious difficulties continue to exist in recruiting sufficient staff in a number of clinical specialties.

5. *Funding is limited*

Although the Government has maintained funding levels, the Welsh NHS still faces a tougher financial future than for many years. It is, however, showing it can get more from its funding. Of course there is a challenge, but the NHS has already made huge strides in constraining spending while maintaining quality.

*Some services everywhere are already excellent and recent successes have shown that dramatic improvement is possible. This is fuelling a growing sense of ambition - **Wales can be among the best.***

The next phase - breaking through to world class

The foundations are there. The next phase, 2011-2016, is not about just holding steady but seeing a transformation in services. This is essential, not just to ensure patients continue to get what they need despite the challenges, but to help make a crucial breakthrough.

We believe building on our current strengths - strong staff commitment, simpler NHS structures and innovative technology – will create a far better system, one that drives up quality, uses limited resources wisely and engages people more in their own health and in decisions about local services.

We in Wales can grasp the initiative and develop our services to world-class quality on a solid and sustainable long-term basis. This will require a drive for improvement throughout the NHS and beyond, with people across Wales building a new, better health system. This section sets out where the change must happen, why and how, in seven major areas. It concludes by indicating how the NHS must manage the change.

1. Improving health as well as treating sickness

Wales must do more to tackle the poor health that blights so many lives, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities and among our poorest citizens. Much of the health improvement over the last 200 years has resulted from social improvements, such as clean water and decent education. Tackling the newer problems we face will require both environmental action and, much more difficult, efforts to change people's behaviour. The time has come to make a decisive shift from just managing sickness to creating a healthy Wales.

It is morally unacceptable that some individuals have health which is significantly worse than average, when that could be avoided by better-targeted, better managed services. NHS bodies will work closely with all their partners to tackle the roots of poor health, such as inadequate housing or poor educational attainment. Welsh Government departments will increasingly focus on how health can be improved through an alignment of our policies.

The scale of that challenge means that all of us, the Welsh Government, public services, communities and citizens, must get behind the task together. Better health for all is not just about what the NHS does, but about work, the environment, leisure and family life. Sometimes it is suggested improvement will take a generation. Some things will, but we must also focus on real, substantial changes within five years.

The recent strategy documents *Our Healthy Future* and *Fairer Health Outcomes for All* set out how to achieve this. The Welsh Government will do more to support children's health and, through annual health

campaigns, tackle the biggest public health priorities - alcohol, obesity, smoking, teenage pregnancies, and drug abuse.

The NHS will play its full part in supporting a good start in life, the vital basis for lifelong good health, from action before birth through to supporting the healthy schools and school nurse initiatives. The new Welsh Maternity Strategy highlights good health during pregnancy and the NHS will give strong support to the expanded *Flying Start* initiative.

Actions

Every Local Health Board will set clear targets for action and deliver against them, explaining each year how health is improving and health inequalities are narrowing.

The Government will press forward its early years programmes which will offer particular support for those facing the greatest challenges in life.

2. One system for health

The integrated NHS bodies will accelerate the development of new simplified, integrated services. Confusing, disconnected services fail people and do not make best use of scarce resources. The NHS must work well with its local partners, including the public, to design services around people, not organisations. It must work closely with the whole public sector to secure the best possible services and best use of available resources.

Local Government is vital to health and wellbeing, through for example, its education, housing and environmental services and, of course, through social care. The Third Sector - community and voluntary organisations – also has a huge role to play, for example, providing services, supporting carers, helping people to live more independently, and speaking up for those in need. The NHS will involve it better in planning services and draw on its flexibility and creativity to extend the range, quality and effectiveness of services available locally.

The NHS itself has to work as one and do more to help people, particularly the most vulnerable, look after themselves and stay independent. Care will be more personal, with all health professionals working better together, supported by state-of-the-art information systems. Many more services will be available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. We will review and improve pathways of care across the NHS to improve both the patient experience and the effectiveness of services.

The Local Health Boards will also improve links across primary, community, acute care and social care, in line with the strategy document *Setting the Direction* and the Government's commitments on the future of social services. Even more will be done to help older people and others who need longer term support.

Local Health Boards will make sure that planned care services, such as surgical operations, are available promptly. They will also test their current unplanned care arrangements, such as ambulance services, accident departments and emergency hospital care, against the latest thinking and good practice.

Over the next five years, there will be a new comprehensive approach to mental health care. This will include a range of approaches from promoting good mental health through reducing stigma and promoting recovery to better support for dementia. There will be more community-based teams and more staff working in primary care.

Other specific planned improvements relate to services for cancer, cardiac problems and stroke. Action will be taken to facilitate an increase in organ donations and to create a coherent national service for end of life care.

Actions

Within 12 months we will issues delivery plans for major services such as cancer, cardiac care, stroke care and mental health, specifying the next steps in service improvement.

We will also introduce personal care plans for people with cancer, mental health issues and chronic health problems.

3. Hospitals for the 21st century as part of a well designed, fully integrated network of care.

The case for change in the NHS is powerful. It is a case defined, to an extent, by a number of challenges – rising demand, increasing patient expectations, financial constraint, recruitment difficulties – but it is also rooted in opportunities.

Care can move closer to home. New technology allows more patients to be treated in or closer to where they live. It also gives clinical staff anywhere in Wales the information they need to provide better, safer, more integrated care. GP teams, grouped in ‘localities’ and sharing specialist support, will do more, as will pharmacists. ‘Clinical networks’, combining staff from different units, will enable people over a wide area to benefit from the best blend of skills and equipment.

There is also compelling evidence that quality and clinical outcomes will improve if we develop centres of excellence for specialist care. These centres will ensure the very best skills and equipment are on hand for patients who, for example, need stroke services. They will provide ‘round the clock’ access to specialist diagnostic and treatment capabilities.

The result will be a spectrum of hospitals, fully integrated with strong local primary and community services, available to everyone, whether they live

in cities, towns or the countryside. All District General Hospitals across Wales will retain an essential role but this will change as we respond to the challenges and opportunities outlined above. All will, in their own ways, develop as 'centres of excellence'. Fewer people will need to go into hospitals. Wales's first truly 21st Century hospital in Ystrad Mynach has only half the inpatient beds of the traditional 20th Century hospital but twice the outpatient facilities.

By 2016, a more tailored set of institutions will be emerging. Patients with very complex, life threatening conditions will initially be treated in very specialist acute facilities before being transferred to local settings – District General Hospitals or Community Hospitals to continue their recovery. There will be well defined referral and transfer arrangements and a secure system for sharing information. As new opportunities for service improvements are identified, the NHS will explain the background and engage fully with local communities on the implications.

Actions

Every Local Health Board will, within a year, set out its plan for creating sustainable services for all communities.

Stroke services will be progressively improved including, for example, 24-hour access to thrombolysis so that by 2015 every Local Health Board will be fully compliant with the national standards and targets for stroke

4. Aiming at Excellence Everywhere

The test of NHS performance will be better health and a good patient experience. Building on the successful *1,000 Lives Plus* campaign, a 'zero tolerance' approach is now taken to pressure sores and healthcare acquired infections across Wales. This will also be applied to other areas. NHS bodies will be relentlessly concerned about high quality and enthusiastic participants in national and international audits.

It is simply unacceptable however rarely it occurs that people are not treated with dignity whilst in the care of the NHS. Throughout the NHS, from board members to the front line, there must be an unflinching commitment to prevent this happening. The NHS will also aim to ensure high quality care in residential and nursing homes and work with partners to improve services for the most vulnerable groups.

Managers must offer staff freedom to tackle poor practice and waste. Control over their working environment, contributing to practical improvements and the satisfaction of seeing clearer benefits for patients can boost staff motivation.

Nationally and locally, clinical leadership and empowerment will be strengthened, and more use made of proven methods to improve practice, such as collaboratives and benchmarking. Clinical staff will be expected

constantly to compare their performance with others' both inside and outside Wales.

The vital contribution of the NHS to research and development will be supported. Here Wales already can offer examples of world-class performance with the NHS and universities working at the cutting edge in many fields. Besides their potential for saving and improving lives, research and development have additional value in terms of creating economic development and in attracting the best expertise into the Welsh health service.

Actions

By March 2012 a Quality Delivery Plan will set out how the new quality assurance and improvement arrangements will operate.

Within a year, the NHS will be able to demonstrate that every major service, such as cancer, is constantly monitored for quality and tested against the latest evidence.

5. Absolute transparency on performance

Accountability means honesty around performance. The NHS must be transparent in order people can see precisely how it is performing. The Government and the NHS will make a step change in the availability of information. This will include information on service availability, service quality and an individual's own care circumstances and on overall health, clinical outcomes and patient safety. Wales will agree a national way of measuring patient satisfaction.

There will be better information on each major service and for each of these there must be clear advances over the five years, in line with or faster than that in countries and regions similar to Wales. An annual report will be published on each major service area.

Actions

Within 6 months, the Welsh Government will have published an Information Strategy, indicating how it will dramatically improve information for the public.

Within 6 months, the Welsh Government will have in place new clinically-focused targets, focused on key priorities such as cancer, cardiac care and stroke services, against which Local Health Boards will be required to publish their performance.

6. A new partnership with the public

Involving communities in assessing and designing services improves those services. Involving individuals in treatment decisions and self

management improves outcomes. Over the next five years, there will be a sea-change in the relationship between the Welsh Government, the NHS and the people of Wales, based around a 'compact'. The NHS will work closely with the whole public sector to achieve this.

The Welsh Government and NHS will provide better information on health and health care services. More will be done to help people understand health issues and manage their own care, including those who may need special support. The Welsh Government will continue to strengthen support for carers, who are so important in so many lives.

The NHS will undertake full and continuous engagement with local communities around service redesign, working with Community Health Councils, local media and elected representatives. It will also demonstrate how in practical ways engagement is strengthening its accountability to patients and the public. It will enthusiastically implement the new Welsh language strategy for the NHS.

In return, the Welsh Government and the NHS will look to the people of Wales to use that information and those services well and appropriately, and to take more responsibility for themselves and those around them.

Actions

Within 9 months the Welsh Government will issue a draft compact with the public for consultation.

Within 12 months each Local Health Board will have in place its own process for annual patient audits, and, following discussion at board level, these and agreed actions in response will be published.

7. Making every penny count

Investment in the NHS in Wales has more than doubled since 1999. However, given the pressures on the public sector purse across the United Kingdom and the reductions in the Welsh Government budget, there will be slower funding growth in the future. This means the NHS must use every penny even more carefully than now and will demand careful housekeeping, constant innovation and sometimes significant service change.

Spending on the NHS is not a cost but an investment in quality of life. Some spending will not have an immediate return. The payback from training and research and development will seep into the service as benefits over many years. The NHS has made significant use of Invest-to-Save pump-priming funding to tighten its efficiency and transform ways of working. This has helped lever improvements during a very challenging period.

There must be a relentless quest for value for money and a hunger to improve outcomes and root out any poor practice and avoidable practice variations that cause harm and waste. This must be the everyday business of every manager and clinician. A focus on efficiency and effectiveness is not a distraction from the core purposes of the NHS. High quality and effective use of resources are opposite sides of the same coin.

Actions

A new financial regime will be put in place within the next year that will improve planning and utilisation of financial resources in line with clinical priorities.

Over the next year every Local Health Board will develop a budgeting system which includes greater clinical involvement in financial decision-making.

... and always with our staff

NHS success depends from first to last on those who work for it, whether directly employed or contracted in primary care. They all have a vital role in creating safe and effective care for those who rely on its services.

Most staff are aware change is necessary. They want to see how change will bring value and benefits to the people they care for. They also need to see how they can contribute to the changes, how their voice will be heard and, importantly, how they will be enabled to work differently in a way they know will bring about better, more quality-focused services to their patients and clients. Staff representatives have an important role to play in leading the change.

Effective leadership to bring about this culture change is vital. Staff need to be inspired through knowing they will have a part to play in shaping the change and will be able to see early improvements based upon their contribution.

Actions

A strategic workforce and organisation development framework that secures the right staff and fully supports and engages them in delivering excellent care will be issued by spring 2012.

To help deliver this, current partnership arrangements linking the Welsh Government, the NHS and trade unions will be strengthened to support the creation of an NHS people will be proud to work for.

Making it happen

Words are fine, but action is needed. Though the challenges are real and pressing, the potential gains, in quality of life for people across Wales, in

staff satisfaction, in national reputation are equally great. It will require a driven, focused effort. Everyone has a role. The people of Wales, as citizens, have a right to the best services, but also a responsibility to look after themselves and to respect the services there to help them and others.

The Welsh Government will give a strong lead. Its Programme for Government sets out clearly how its manifesto commitments will be delivered and the benefits that will result for to the people of Wales. Progress will be monitored and reports published regularly. This vision clarifies further the expectations on the NHS and will remain its guiding document for the five years, reinforced through the planning system and annual requirements set for the NHS.

Each NHS body needs to prepare a response to this paper, showing how it will work with its community and partners and setting out –

- clearly defined targets for local delivery
- its plans to develop and improve services to enable sustainable quality
- clearly defined outcome data that will be monitored and published
- a process for building its own capability to assure and improve quality.

NHS bodies will also use their enormous power as employers, property owners, and purchasers of goods and services to help create safe, confident, prosperous and sustainable communities and tackle poverty, working through Local Service Boards and initiatives like *Communities First*, in the knowledge that in some instances small changes in health provision can also assist other public services in achieving their goals.

A performance improvement system will be in place for the NHS. Where failure is pinpointed, corrective action will be required. Poor performance will have consequences.

So, the NHS must demonstrate clarity of purpose, honest engagement with partners, consistent clear communication, and relentless ambition. Boards must make sure that their staff and their communities understand what they intend and why, and have a genuine opportunity to help mould the future. Staff are the best ambassadors the NHS has.

A continuing challenge

Over the next five years, Wales will see a further sustained and concerted effort to improve health and improve health services. Building on recent reforms and the strong commitment to high quality care shown by NHS staff, the aim will be steady, balanced progress, quality assured and demonstrated through transparent reporting. At the end of the five years, there should be significant improvements in health across all areas of Wales and all groups within Wales. Everyone should have easier access to a wide range of safe, effective, well-run, fully integrated services, sustainable over the longer term, services Wales can be proud of.