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WALES

# NHS Wales

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# Planning Framework

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## 2022 – 2025

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## Foreword from the Minister for Health and Social Services

Taking responsibility for health and social services is a privilege at any time, but under the current situation it is both an enormous challenge and a real honour. It is important to me that we work together to make health and social care more resilient and more equitable so that everyone can feel confident they will receive the care and treatment they need, when they need it and in the right place.

We know that the impact of Covid means balancing the risk of different harms. We also know there are significant numbers of people who are waiting for diagnosis and treatment for a range of conditions. While we have been able to ease the lockdown restrictions, the winter ahead will be challenging for all, and we must seek to manage both Covid and non Covid pathways and demand. I expect health boards to work together to deliver regional solutions to meet this demand.

My priorities recognise that as a country we must continue to respond to the immediate challenges of Covid, whilst also turning our attention to longer-term sustainability and improving population health. We must invest in recovery, tackle health inequalities, improve mental health provision by giving parity between physical and mental health conditions, and focus on prevention. I am deeply committed to supporting our health and care workers who have been and remain at the forefront of our efforts.

I want to ensure that we can improve accessibility to our services through the use of new technologies and innovative ways of working which will increase resilience.

We must also recognise that NHS Wales is the largest public organisation in Wales and, as such, has a unique opportunity to use its spending and employment practices to promote wider government policy goals. I am keen that working together we take every opportunity to support local economic growth, regeneration, and community resilience; helping to address inequalities and the socio-economic determinants of health.

Within my priorities there will be some areas of particular interest that I will be discussing with NHS Chairs to ensure progress is driven forward. These will demonstrate our commitment to achieving the vision and ambitions set out in "A Healthier Wales". Focusing improvement in these areas will provide the gains that are necessary to underpin longer term sustainability, transformational change and improvement.

We are facing a tremendously difficult winter and the focus will undoubtedly be on the immediate challenges over the coming months. It is important that we also look ahead to how we reset our services to improve health and wellbeing outcomes in the longer term. The NHS must have robust plans that support the people of Wales keep well and safe, and they will shape the next chapter to deliver the outcomes that are important to the people of Wales. Diolch yn fawr iawn.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. E. Morgan".

Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services

## Message - outgoing Director General, Health and Social Services and Chief Executive of NHS Wales

I said in 2020 that I have never been more proud of my title of Chief Executive of NHS Wales and now as I prepare to take on a new challenge, I look back not only with pride but with an even greater respect for every person and part of the health and care system that continues to manage relentless pressures on a day to day basis.

This unprecedented period in the history of the NHS will tell its own story of compassion, resilience, care and often bravery in the face of the Covid pandemic, but I want to add my own tribute to the NHS and all it has done to care for patients throughout the most difficult of circumstances.

We have also seen over the last 18 months how important it is for organisations to work together to pool resources and ambition to ensure that Wales can develop services for patients across organisational boundaries. I know this work will continue to evolve and strengthen over the coming years.

Last winter was difficult and this winter is likely to be just as challenging. Everyone across the NHS and social care showed dedication and commitment, with many going above and beyond. We know that the health and wellbeing of some has suffered as a result so as we look to see how we move forward, the wellbeing for and support of staff is paramount and I know that all organisations will have this at the forefront of their thinking.

It has been a privilege and an honour to be the Chief Executive of the National Health Service at a time when it could not have been more tested. It is an amazing institution with exceptional people at its heart dedicated to improving the lives of the citizens of Wales. Thank you again for all your hard work- Diolch yn fawr iawn



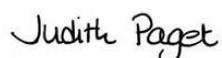
**Andrew Goodall CBE**

## Message - Director General, Health and Social Services and Chief Executive of NHS Wales

I am pleased to endorse the NHS Planning Framework for 2022-2025. Having experienced the valuable direction it provides for NHS planning, I now welcome the opportunity to help the NHS in Wales deliver the further progress needed across the system, particularly as we move towards recovery from the pandemic.

This Framework provides the clarity that organisations need in order to put in place the building blocks to harness the learning and innovation from the pandemic and to develop sustainable services for the future. The Framework also supports the wider Welsh Government ambitions for the NHS as part of the Foundation Economy.

I look forward to working with partners across health and social care to deliver the Ministerial priorities, driven by the ambition and passion that is at the core of NHS Wales.



**Judith Paget**

# 1. Introduction

This is the first NHS Planning Framework of the new Government term and it is published at a time of extreme pressure on the health and care system and ahead of a most challenging winter. We recognise that during the forthcoming winter period the health and care system in Wales will continue to prioritise and balance services to provide the best care under difficult circumstances. The Covid pandemic continues to dominate and influence what we are able to do and remains at the forefront of our contingencies.

This Framework looks ahead to the next three years to deliver sustainable services for patients in Wales as we learn to live with Covid. The requirement is for organisations to produce a three year Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) covering the period 2022-2025.

The partnership and collaboration across the system in Wales over the last 21 months has been exceptional and we must harness this approach to deliver the innovation and improvements that we need, including for the long waiting lists that have grown significantly during the pandemic.

## 2. Context

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act underpins the Programme for Government and A Healthier Wales, all of which continue to shape how we work and what we do to deliver the values and commitments of the Welsh Government.

Key policy documents provide the context within which the NHS must plan and where possible accelerate the opportunities available while driving quality and improving care and services for patients.

The National Clinical Framework (NCF) supports NHS planning and the delivery of clinical services in the context of the strategic approaches set out by Welsh Government. It supports recovery and service transformation with a focus on prudent and value based healthcare. Grounded in a population health approach to planning, it requires NHS organisations to work collaboratively with their partners to improve the physical and mental health of their local populations, focussing on wellbeing and reducing inequalities in outcomes. To support this, national clinical pathways are being developed, linked to the leading causes of disease burden.

Alongside the NCF, the Quality and Safety Framework demonstrates the importance of systemic local use of the quality assurance cycle. A number of Quality Statements focus on the development of national pathways to support local improvement in the quality of services and address unwarranted variations in care. Value based healthcare remains instrumental in this work. Our overarching focus must be on safety, equality of access and improving outcomes.

The Foundational Economy in Health and Social Care Strategy was developed in March 2021. Organisations need to demonstrate their understanding of the foundational economy and expectation of progress towards strengthening the role health plays within the wider economy. The IMTPs should provide examples of specific projects already focussing on 'reducing health inequalities' and demonstrate how organisations are contributing to cross cutting policies such as the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan.

The recently published Coronavirus Control Plan and the Health and Social Care Winter Plan both provide further context within which integrated planning needs to operate.

The need for strong leadership and accountability has never been greater and Boards must continue to take the local, regional and national actions needed to deliver sustainable change and improved population health. Health boards must work together, across organisational boundaries, to plan and deliver on a regional basis.

### 3. Ministerial priorities

The Ministerial priorities were confirmed in July 2021 and will be familiar to NHS organisations:

- A Healthier Wales - as the overarching policy context
- Population health
- Covid - response
- NHS recovery
- Mental Health and emotional wellbeing
- Supporting the health and care workforce
- NHS Finance and managing within resources
- Working alongside Social Care

A Healthier Wales remains the overarching policy context for health and social care and drives our commitments to deliver seamless care. Integrated plans must focus on improving population health as the mechanism to deliver health equity, learning from the pandemic and address the impact of issues such as obesity and smoking on people's outcomes.

While the Covid response necessarily remains integral to NHS planning, the next three years will need a renewed focus on recovery. This must be a whole system approach and build on the learning and experiences across health and care. Digital technology and innovation has been instrumental in maintaining and evolving care and services during the pandemic. The changes must be accelerated and embedded wherever possible to revolutionise delivery of appropriate aspects of services.

Ensuring access to care closer to home where ever possible and ensuring the implementation of the urgent and emergency care six goals will support both access to care and flow in our hospitals. Planned care waiting lists have seen exponential growth during the pandemic and reversing this trend must be an ongoing focus for health boards and trusts. The impact on conditions such as cancer and equitable delivery of services across Wales means that organisations must work across health board boundaries to deliver services for patients.

Similarly there has been a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many people across Wales as a result of Covid. It is essential that services and resources are focussed on key areas, including children and young people, not just to help those that need it now, but to prevent further problems in the future.

In order to optimise the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness across health care settings, prudent health care principles and value based healthcare will be the basis on which services are planned and delivered. This must be supported by rigorous infection and protection control measures in hospitals and the community which keep staff and patients safe and maintain capacity.

The health and care workforce has been at the forefront of adapting to technology but also changing how they work. The partnerships and cooperation has been a strong feature of how health and social care have worked together across traditional boundaries and this has been critical to patients throughout the last 20 months. NHS organisations must continue to build on this exemplary approach and look for opportunities to work in partnership to deliver seamless care and tackle fragilities across the system.

Across all services, workforce capacity and resilience are a recurring concern. Agile workforce planning will be required to address periods of peak demand and surge alongside robust workforce planning for ongoing sustainable delivery of services across the whole system.

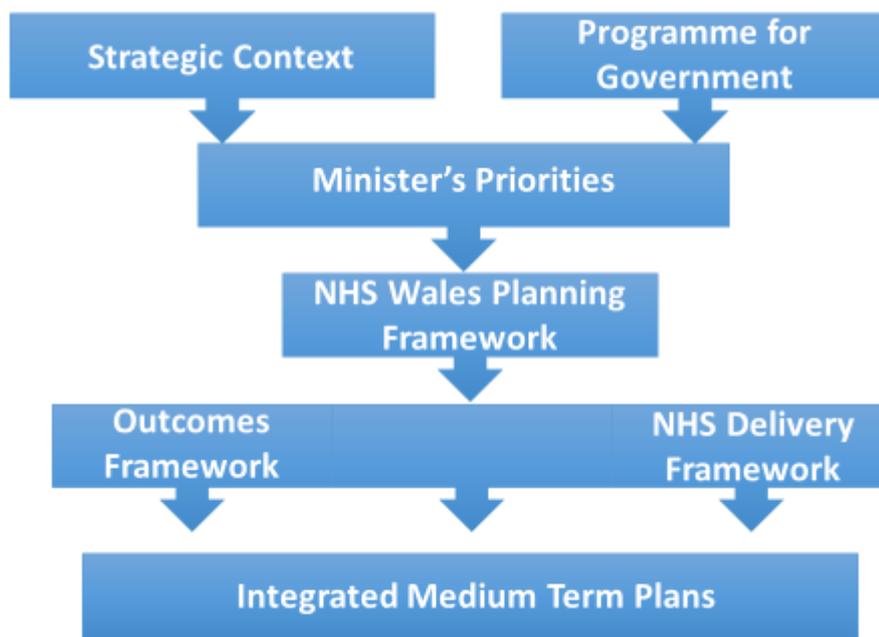
Managing within existing resources and tracking financial performance is important for credibility and sustainability of our health organisations. It is essential that strong financial control is maintained.

Partnership working is crucial and the plans must set out the context of how the organisation works alongside other organisations to ensure that there is collaboration to drive integration, quality of care and improve patient outcomes. University status, which many organisations have secured, is part of this collaborative approach. Plans must be aligned with cluster plans, those of other NHS organisations and those of wider partners.

Health boards must continue to work as key partners with their Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) to ensure an integrated and coherent approach to planning. Linked to the establishment of the new five year health and social care Revenue Investment Fund, there is a requirement for RPBs to produce an annual delivery and investment plan. Guidance will be issued in due course.

Organisations are expected to align existing plans to address these priorities and to bring forward key actions that will ensure these are the focus for the whole organisation. **These areas will form the basis of discussions with NHS Chairs and will be supported by the development of measurable outcomes as part of the development of the new Outcomes Framework for health and social care. The Minister will by the start of the new year be publishing more specific targets for health boards to meet in a limited number of areas. Health Board Chairs will be held to account on the delivery of these specific targets.**

The diagram below shows the relationship between the Minister's priorities, the Outcomes Framework for Health and Social Care (to be published), the NHS Wales Delivery Framework and IMTPs.



## 4. Cluster planning

The Primary Care Model for Wales sets out how primary care will work within the whole system to deliver a place based approach (primary care is defined as primary and community health care services). Cluster working is at the core of this as it brings together local health and care services to ensure care is better co-ordinated to promote the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Primary care cluster planning should continue to be taken forward through the multi-disciplinary, multi-agency cluster planning teams and reflect all partner contributions to improving cluster population health and wellbeing. The cluster should be continuing to focus its resources on delivering the aims and aspirations of the Primary Care Model for Wales.

Delivery of improvements must be embedded in Cluster Annual Plans. These must be integrated with the health board IMTPs and planning arrangements. Cluster plans:

- Should visibly inform (and be informed by) health board IMTPs
- Are typically informed by assessment of population health needs
- Provide an important assurance function
- Are based on the agreed national guidance template for submission to Welsh Government alongside the health board's IMTP and publication on health board websites

The 2022-2023 Cluster Annual Plan documents (including a template to be issued separately) are designed to be:

- Minimalist, noting ongoing pandemic-related pressures on services
- Light touch, noting 2022-2023 will be a period of transition as pan-cluster planning groups (PCPGs) are established in line with accelerated cluster development (ACD) proposals
- Pragmatic, demonstrating accountability for delivery against anticipated results / benefits and highlighting shared challenges
- Aligned to the NHS Wales Planning Framework for 2022-25 and local service priorities

## 5. Governance and Accountability

Welsh Government recognises that not all NHS organisations have the same set of responsibilities. Powys Teaching Health Board, the three NHS Trusts, the two Strategic Health Authorities and the other supporting organisations each have specific portfolios or organisational features which mean that the “standard” Planning Framework will need to be adapted and tailored as appropriate.

Boards have full responsibility for ensuring that their organisation plans effectively to meet the expectations set out in this Framework. The plan produced and submitted for Ministerial approval must demonstrate clear accountability through specific actions and milestones. The plan must set out the accountability arrangements and how the Board will ensure its delivery.

Organisations must ensure that plans, and the decisions taken to formulate and deliver them, must have appropriate scrutiny and assurance from the full Board in an open and transparent manner. There must be clear read across from the plans and milestones to risk registers, which will highlight the important risks the organisation is facing. Mitigating action to address these risks must be clear in the plans.

An organisation's plan needs to

- meet the statutory requirements to commission and/or provide services to improve population health outcomes and to achieve financial balance
- set out clear actions and milestones that demonstrate how planning intentions will be achieved.
- deliver the key milestones within the Delivery Framework.
- triangulate finance, activity and workforce in the plans

As part of integrated plans, Welsh Government will require NHS organisations to complete a range of templates. These will be made available in due course.

The Minimum Data Set (MDS) provides a data triangulation between workforce, planned service activity and finance. The MDS and the narrative plan must be consistent and aligned. The MDS will be circulated separately.

The Planning Framework sits alongside the NHS Wales Delivery Framework 2021-2022 which was issued in September. Work is also underway (using Results Based Accountability methodology) to develop an Outcomes Framework for Health and Social Care. Alongside this, the Public Health and Social Care Outcome Frameworks are being developed and refreshed to ensure alignment. This offers an opportunity to track progress on outcomes for the population and the delivery of Ministerial priorities. A number of candidate outcome indicators are currently being progressed, including through engagement with stakeholders, to ensure that the most meaningful are used to inform progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes for all people in Wales.

Boards are accountable for the monitoring of their plans, and managing risks associated with them. Organisations will be expected to provide Welsh Government with quarterly updates. Where national measurement is not in place, local systems will be expected to collect data to enable organisation to demonstrate progress. At regular intervals the Minister will want to discuss progress with Chairs/ Vice Chairs, as will officials through executive management mechanisms.

Plans agreed by Boards should be widely available to staff throughout the organisation, and shared openly on the organisation's website to make it easy for individuals to access the plan and understand the organisation's priorities and goals.

Plans must have Board/ Committee approval prior to submission to Welsh Government. Organisations will need to ensure that they have adjusted their board meeting timetable to accommodate this. It is expected that **all Boards will make a formal decision on their organisation's ability to submit an IMTP and confirm to Welsh Government their intention in writing via a Chief Executive Accountability letter by 15 January 2022.**

**Final, Board approved IMTPs should be submitted to Welsh Government by 28 February 2022.**

## 6. Finance

There have been two exceptional years of extra funding due to Covid, and organisations must demonstrate strong financial control and sustainable grip within their organisations. The NHS in Wales has received over £1.1bn non-recurrent funding this year to respond to Covid and to support work to tackle the recovery of activity and capacity across the system. As non-recurrent funding support reduces, it is essential that strong financial control is maintained.

The Welsh Government budget will be confirmed on 20th December and NHS allocations for 2022-23 will be issued by early January. Principles and assumptions to underpin financial plans will be worked through with Directors of Finance.

Organisations are also expected to be able to account for the additional funding that has been allocated and to demonstrate the 'additionality' that this has provided against the activity levels that would have been delivered. Patients that are now waiting significantly longer, as a result of the disruption from Covid, and will need assurance that everything that can be done is being done to treat them promptly and effectively from both core budgets and extra investment.

The infrastructure schemes identified within the planning returns need to be clearly focused around how they deliver against Ministerial priorities. Organisations need to be actively taking opportunities around regional working where these exist. Schemes need to be prioritised with evidence provided of relevant committee and board sign off.

Boards and Committees need to be assured that their plans are deliverable within the financial envelope that is allocated and that services are redesigned to ensure that where ever possible resources/ funding and services are shifted away from secondary care to focus on providing care, services and treatment in communities and closer to people's homes

- Organisations must manage within their budgetary allocations
- Demonstrate a shift of appropriate services, funding and workforce resources from secondary to community and primary care

## 7. Timetable

The timetable for the development of the IMTPs is shown below:

- Planning Framework issued to NHS Wales – November 2021
- NHS Wales to review and plan over winter 2021
- Welsh Government engagement with NHS organisations to discuss draft plans – January 2022
- Confirmation to Welsh Government to submit IMTP – 15 January 2022
- Plans submitted to Welsh Government by 28 February 2022
- Welsh Government review of plans and consideration of risks – March/April 2022
- Progress engagement on development of measures for Outcomes Framework for Health and Social Care to be published in 2022

## 1. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

There are a number of statutory requirements that must be addressed. Some of these are listed below but these are not an exhaustive. Boards will need to seek assurance regarding compliance:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2016 [Wellbeing of Future Generations Act](#) and the [Future Generations Guidance](#)  
Health Boards must contribute to the Public Services Board's local assessment of wellbeing to be published by 5 May 2022 this will inform the IMTPs 2022-2025 as well as supporting the development of the Wellbeing Plans to be published by 5 May 2023.
- Legal duty – Organisations must produce a plan and meet their financial responsibilities for scrutiny by Audit Wales, and if necessary provide additional evidence as required.
- Covid requirements [Covid requirements](#)  
Organisations need to consider and reflect the COVID-19 regulations that have been developed and issued.
- Socio-economic Duty [Socio-economic duty](#)  
This has been in place since March 2021. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.  
Organisations must demonstrate that they have had due regard to the duty and its impact. In August 2021 a toolkit was published (called a progress tracker) to support organisations: [Socio-Economic Progress Tool Tracker](#)
- Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 [Social Services & Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act](#) and the [Social Care Wales hub](#)  
Health Boards must contribute to the Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessments to be published by April 2022 and the Market Stability Reports to be published by June 2022, both of these will inform the IMTPs 2022-2025 as well as supporting the development of the Area Plans to be published by April 2023.
- [The Primary Care Model for Wales](#) sets out how primary care will work within the whole system to deliver a place based approach (primary care is defined as primary and community health care services).
- Nursing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 - statutory guidance [Nurse staffing levels \(Wales\) Act](#)
- Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 [Regulation & Inspection of Social Care in Wales Act](#) and the [Social Care Wales hub - Regulation and Inspection](#)
- The **NHS Quality and Safety Framework** was published on 17 September 2021. [NHS Wales Quality and Safety Framework](#)  
The framework provides guidance and direction for all NHS organisations with a focus on having a strong quality management system in place at all levels, in turn reducing variation in quality. It also serves to provide a stepping stone to the new duties of quality and candour

expected in 2023 as part of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020

- Equality Act 2010 [Equality Act](#)  
[Race Equality Action Plan for Wales](#)

Consultation on the new **Race Equality Action Plan: An Anti Racist Wales** ended in July 2021. The responses are being reviewed and the outcome will be published in due course.

- Welsh Language Standards [Welsh Language Commissioner for Wales - Compliance notices](#).  
The evaluation report on *More than just words* was published on 31 August.  
[Evaluation of More than Just Words](#)

Every effort must be made to respect the importance of providing Welsh language services during these challenging times, especially for the more vulnerable where it is a matter of need not choice.

- Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated legislation  
[Health & Safety at Work etc Act](#)

- **Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill**

The Draft Bill seeks to strengthen and promote consistency in social partnership in Wales, deliver fair outcomes and achieve socially responsible public procurement. Organisations should be mindful of this direction of travel in their longer term planning. Further information and statutory guidance will be provided as it becomes available.

[Written Statement on Social Partnership and Public Procurement Wales](#)

- **NHS Continuing Healthcare Framework**

This was published in July 2021 and will take effect in November. Organisations will need to demonstrate they have taken into account the new framework in their planning and resource allocations.

[National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare](#)

- **Foundational economy**

The Welsh Government is committed to build on its approach to the foundational economy of Wales. Each organisation within NHS Wales is an 'anchor institution' and has significant spending power that can be used to achieve broader policy goals. Organisations are expected to embed foundational economy principles in strategic plans, spending policies and decisions. The Foundational Economy in Health and Social Services 21/22 Programme will be published shortly.

- **University Designated Status**

The 'university' approach is a continual process which advocates continued close working arrangements with stakeholders, other organisations and partners, including Welsh Government.

Organisations will need to take account of the following documents issued in May 2021:

- University Health Board/Trust Designation – Criteria
- University Designation Guidance

Assessment of designated status will be part of the IMTP review process. University organisations will also be required to provide a brief 'mid-year update' on university activity, by the end of September in each year, starting September 2022.