

# WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Issue Date:** 01 August 2023

**STATUS: ACTION**

**CATEGORY: QUALITY & SAFETY**

**Title:** Withdrawal of WHC 2019/042 re Annual Quality Statements

**Date of Expiry / Review** 31 March 2024

**For Action by:**

Local health boards and NHS trusts, special health authorities, primary care providers.

**Action required by:** 01 August 2023

**Sender:**

Professor Chris Jones, National Clinical Director, NHS Wales and Deputy Chief Medical Officer  
Sue Tranka, Chief Nursing Officer, Nurse Director NHS Wales

**HSSG Welsh Government Contact(s) :**

Aashna Patel, Quality and Safety, Quality and Nursing Directorate. Email: [QualityAndNursing@gov.wales](mailto:QualityAndNursing@gov.wales)

**Enclosure(s):** None



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Welsh Government

Yr Athro/Professor Chris Jones  
Cyfarwyddwr Clinigol Cenedlaethol, GIG Cymru  
a Dirprwy Brif Swyddog Meddygol  
National Clinical Director, NHS Wales and Deputy Chief  
Medical Officer

Gillian Knight  
Prif Swyddog Nyrsio  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Cyfarwyddwr Nyrsio GIG Cymru  
Nurse Director NHS Wales

01 August 2023

Dear Colleagues

The duty of quality came into force in April 2023, as part of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020. The duty intends to bring about strengthened system-wide decision-making, action and improvement in order to achieve improved outcomes for our population.

An important requirement of the duty of quality relates to reporting mechanisms. Section 9 of the [duty of quality statutory guidance](#) describes the quality reporting requirements that are now in place.

Consequently, there is no longer a requirement for NHS organisations to prepare an Annual Quality Statement as described in WHC 2019/042, which is being withdrawn with immediate effect.

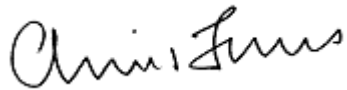
With regards to the new duty of quality reporting requirements, NHS bodies should note the following summary of key messages from the statutory guidance.

- Welsh Ministers and NHS bodies must publish an annual quality report that sets out the steps they have taken to secure improved quality of health services.
- The annual quality report must include an assessment of the extent of any improvement in outcomes achieved.
- Annual quality reports must be a transparent reflection of progress and challenges on the quality journey. Forthcoming quality priorities and how they will be monitored should be set out.
- The annual quality report must assess any improvement in outcomes.
- It should demonstrate how the duty of quality has informed strategic decision-making.
- It should outline action taken as a result of learning and describe how that has been shared.

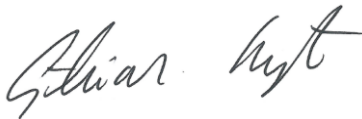
- The annual quality report should be prepared as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year to coincide with the Annual Report and Accounts process.
- In addition to annual quality reporting, NHS bodies are encouraged to develop an 'always on' reporting process where they collate, monitor and share quality information with their population at regular intervals during the year.
- 'Always on' reporting promotes routine use of information to inform decision-making and quality improvement. It supports recognition and sharing of good practice as well as allowing early escalation and intervention when action is necessary.
- It is recognised that data to support the quality reporting process is a developing area and it will take time for a suite of outcome measures to be in place. Therefore, an agile approach to use of indicators and measures will be required.
- It is of crucial importance that NHS bodies actively engage with their population to ensure their voice is heard and to promote working in partnership to achieve the aims of the duty of quality.

The national Quality and Safety Programme are continuing to work with national partners on the development of Quality-focused indicators and measures and provide support to NHS bodies regarding quality reporting through the Quality Implementation Group.

Yours sincerely,



**YR ATHRO/PROFESSOR CHRIS JONES**



**CHIEF NURSING OFFICER  
NURSE DIRECTOR NHS WALES  
PRIF SWYDDOG NYRSIO  
CYFARWYDDWR NYRSIO GIG CYMRU**