



Ein cyf/Our ref: DC/JMHSC/02675/25

Kirsty Williams – Chair
Suzanne Rankin – Chief Executive
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

09 December 2025

Dear Kirsty and Suzanne

This letter follows the Public Accountability Meeting held with members of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board on the 13 November 2025. Thank you for both you and your teams' attendance at the meeting, it was an opportunity to highlight the work that you are delivering for the communities you serve. I was grateful for the evidence pack provided in advance of the meeting; this forms an important part of the meeting record. The meeting recording can be found at [Cardiff & Vale UHB Public Accountability meeting](#).

This letter sets out my reflections from the meeting; we will continue to review these themes in our regular review meetings.

These meetings are a vital part of the Welsh Government's commitment to transparently holding NHS organisations to account for delivering against our priorities, specifically focusing on in-year operational delivery, financial stability, quality, safety, and managing key risks.

The meeting acknowledged several areas where progress has been made or where the health board is performing well and I want to thank you and your staff across the organisation, who continue to deliver high-quality care under significant pressure. The health board's efforts in maintaining performance in certain service areas were recognised alongside a number of broader challenges.

Most of the meeting focus was on the serious challenges that led to the health board's escalation status being uplifted to level 4, which are concerns relating to performance, quality, financial pressures, culture, and operational service issues.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I sought assurance from the Board about the financial position as I am concerned that the Board is forecasting a year-end deficit of £56.2m for 2025/26, this is unsupportable from a Welsh Government perspective. You highlighted that the Board have considerable oversight in this area with improved grip and control over operational matters to support an improved position.

You highlighted several reasons for the financial situation including workforce establishment, and a general growth over recent years when compared to other health boards. There are also pressure areas such as the delivery of tertiary services and CHC, where the health board has seen the third highest growth rates in Wales since 19/20 and one of the highest with 12% growth from 24/25 to 25/26.

The financial position requires significant work to reduce the deficit and enhance quality, efficiency, and productivity to meet the target control total. I would expect the health board to work closely with Welsh Government and submit a financial recovery route map that sets out the steps the Board will take in the coming months to recover the financial position, including the planned approach to the agreement of the clinical services plan and the required workforce profile by the end of March 2026.

Acknowledging the impact on patients, the meeting addressed the lower-than expected performance in planned care and diagnostics. The health board is currently working to reduce long waiting times, specifically addressing the backlog in diagnostic tests where the national target is an 8-week maximum wait. The Board expressed a high level of confidence that all diagnostic long waits would be cleared and that apart from a small number of complex spinal patients, all 104 week patients would be seen by the end of March 2026. Performance against key cancer targets was also discussed, with a need for sustained improvement to meet the single cancer 62-day target. The performance of the health board in this area as well as across the urgent and emergency care pathways was recognised. Over the coming months, I expect the health board to accelerate the implementation of the improvement plan for planned care, focusing on reducing long waiting times and the backlog in diagnostic services to meet national targets with strong clinical leadership and engagement.

Recent progress on working across south-east Wales, with your neighbouring health boards, is encouraging and needs continuing focus. This will lead to better care for everyone in this part of Wales.

A considerable proportion of the meeting focused upon the health board commissioned reviews into practices within the UHW operating theatres, cardiology, mental health services and others. It was noted that there are similar themes throughout the reports which include fundamental failings in clinical safety and staff culture and require a return to basic principles for safe staffing. I expect the Board to have oversight of a comprehensive action plan to address the issues raised in these reviews and through open letters from your consultants, with regular and open reporting to Welsh Government.

The health board will need to ensure that robust systems are in place which allow consultants and other clinicians to raise concerns safely and without fear of reprisal. These systems must not only enable staff to speak up but also actively support them

to contribute to solutions. Consultants have clear professional duties under the General Medical Council's Good Medical Practice and related guidance to work within management structures, engage constructively in service improvement, and raise concerns through appropriate channels. The health board must create an environment where these responsibilities can be fulfilled effectively and where clinicians are encouraged and supported to play a proactive role in addressing the issues they identify.

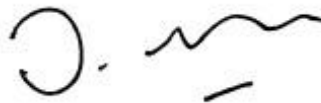
As part of your closing remarks, Board members reflected on the challenges facing the organisation and your commitment to address these issues was evident, we need to ensure that we can support you to do so through the level 4 escalation.

In summary, this was a challenging meeting, I do wish to acknowledge that the Board is making good progress against many areas and that the health board delivers excellent care to thousands of patients each month which we were unable to cover in depth. The meeting focused upon those areas where rapid improvements are needed and where I expect the Board to have enhanced oversight and leadership including operational and financial grip and control to reduce the financial deficit. I expect you to achieve the planned care targets I have set out and to maintain your cancer and urgent and emergency care performance.

There is much for the Board to do on quality governance and creating an environment that supports clinical leadership at all levels and allows staff to feel confident to speak freely, and progress must be seen over the coming months.

Finally, as you plan to the future, I expect a robust clinical plan that drives decision making and aligns to the need to reorganise services across your estate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a stylized flourish.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care