



Report Title	Audit Wales WHSSC Committee Governance Arrangements Update	Agenda Item	2.4
Meeting Title	Joint Committee	Meeting Date	18/01/2022
FOI Status	Public		
Author (Job title)	Committee Secretary & Head of Corporate Services		
Executive Lead (Job title)	Committee Secretary & Head of Corporate Services		

Purpose of the Report	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress against the recommendations outlined in the Audit Wales WHSSC Committee Governance Arrangements report.				
Specific Action Required	RATIFY <input type="checkbox"/>	APPROVE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SUPPORT <input type="checkbox"/>	ASSURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	INFORM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- **Note** the progress made against WHSSC management responses to the Audit Wales recommendations outlined in the WHSSC Committee Governance Arrangements report;
- **Note** the progress made against the Welsh Government responses to the Audit Wales recommendations outlined in the WHSSC Committee Governance Arrangements report; and
- **Approve** the updated audit tracker for submission to Audit Wales and to HB Audit Committees for assurance in February/March 2022.

AUDIT WALES WHSSC COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS UPDATE

1.0 SITUATION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress against the recommendations outlined in the Audit Wales WHSSC Committee Governance Arrangements report.

2.0 BACKGROUND

In 2015, the Good Governance Institute (GGI) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) undertook two separate governance reviews for WHSSC which highlighted issues with WHSSC's governance arrangements. The GGI highlighted concerns relating to decision making and conflicts of interest, and identified the need to improve senior level clinical input as well as the need to create a more independent organisation that is free to make strong and sometimes unpopular (to some) decisions in the best interest of the people of Wales. HIW) conducted a review of clinical governance and found that WHSSC was beginning to strengthen its clinical governance arrangements but needed to strengthen its approach for monitoring service quality and also improve clinical engagement.

Since then, considering the increasing service and financial pressures, and the potentially changing landscape of national collaborative commissioning and NHS Executive as set out in Welsh Government's "A Healthier Wales", the Auditor General for Wales felt it was timely to undertake a review WHSSC's governance arrangements.

The Audit Wales review into Committee Governance arrangements at WHSSC was undertaken between March and June 2020, however as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, aspects of the review were paused, and re-commenced in July. A survey was issued to all Health Boards and the fieldwork was concluded in October 2020.

The scope of the work included interviews with officers and independent members at WHSSC, observations from attending Joint Committee and sub-committee meetings, feedback from questionnaires issued to Health Board Chief Executive and Chairs and a review of corporate documents.

The findings were published in May 2021 in the [Audit Wales Committee Governance Arrangements at WHSSC](#) report.

The report outlined 4 recommendations for WHSSC and the 3 recommendations for Welsh Government.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.1 WHSSC Management Response

The report outlined 4 recommendations for WHSSC and progress against the actions outlined within the management response have been monitored through the Integrated Governance Committee (IGC).

The IGC received updates on progress on 12 October and 13 December 2021 and noted the positive progress made and endorsed the tracker for submission to the JC.

The updated tracker document is presented at **Appendix 1** for approval.

The majority of actions have been completed and there are only three areas of partial compliance on:

- **R3b page 12** – relating to the appointment of an AMD for Public Health – despite proactive efforts to recruit, we have been unable to fill the position,
- **R4a page 14 and R4b page 18** – stakeholder engagement exercise to develop a new specialised services strategy – The timetable for this is being revised in response to the system pressures related to the current wave of the pandemic and the letter from the CEO of NHS Wales regarding use of the Options Framework and the necessity to step down non-essential activities.

3.2 Welsh Government Management Response

The report outlined 3 recommendations for Welsh Government (WG) and progress against the WG management responses is monitored through discussions between the Chair, the WHSSC Managing Director and the Director General Health & Social Services/ NHS Wales Chief executive.

An update was received from Welsh Government on the 15 December 2021 advising that the advice on the NHS Executive is still being considered by the Minister, and that the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee had written to the Director General/Chief Executive NHS Wales following her recent appearance before them to ask for an update on the WHSSC Audit Wales Reports recommendations 5, 6 and 7 and a response will be issued in due course. The Chair of WHSSC and the Committee Secretary met with Welsh Government officials on the 21 December 2021 and a further update is awaited on progress in early January 2022.

4.0 QUALITY, GOVERNANCE AND RISK

Audit Wales undertake an annual programme of independent external audits on NHS services, and NHS bodies are required to present a formal management response to the recommendations through a public report.

Once the updated tracker has been considered and approved by the Joint Committee on the 18 January 2022 the tracking report will be shared with the NHS Wales Board Secretaries in HBs for inclusion on HB Audit Committee agendas in February/March 2022 to ensure that all NHS bodies are able to maintain a line of sight on the progress being made, noting WHSSC's status as a Joint Committee of each HB in Wales.

Risk management is a key element of developing WHSSC's services and risk assessments are undertaken as required.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

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- **Note** the progress made against the Welsh Government responses to the Audit Wales recommendations outlined in the WHSSC Committee Governance Arrangements report; and
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Governance and Assurance	
Link to Strategic Objectives	
Link to Integrated Commissioning Plan	-
Health and Care Standards	Governance, Leadership and Accountability Safe Care Effective Care
Principles of Prudent Healthcare	Only do what is needed Reduce Inappropriate Variation
Institute for HealthCare Improvement Quadruple Aim	Improving Patient Experience (including quality and Satisfaction)
Organisational Implications	
Quality, Safety & Patient Experience	The Management responses outline activities to strengthen and develop WHSSC's impact on quality, safety and patient experience.
Finance/Resource Implications	Some improvement actions may require the application of additional resources.
Population Health	There are no specific population health implications related to the activity outlined in this report.
Legal Implications (including equality & diversity, socio economic duty etc)	There are no specific legal implications related to the activity outlined in this report. There are no adverse impacts concerning equality and diversity or the socio economic duty.
Long Term Implications (incl WBFG Act 2015)	The WHSSC management responses take into consideration the long-term impact of decisions, to support better working with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
Report History (Meeting/Date/ Summary of Outcome)	Integrated Governance Committee 13 December 2021 - Supported
Appendices	Appendix 1 - WHSSC Audit Wales Governance Report Tracker – Jan 2022