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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Bae Abertawe  
Swansea Bay University  
Health Board



# Quality and Safety Committee Terms of Reference

## 1. Introduction

Swansea Bay University Health Board's standing orders provide that *"The board may and, where directed by the Welsh Government must, appoint committees of the health board either to undertake specific functions on the board's behalf or to provide advice and assurance to the board in the exercise of its functions. The board's commitment to openness and transparency in the conduct of all its business extends equally to the work carried out on its behalf by committees"*.

In line with standing orders (and the health board's scheme of delegation), the board shall annually nominate a committee to be known as the Quality and Safety Committee. This committee's focus is on all aspects aimed at ensuring the quality and safety of healthcare, including activities traditionally referred to as "clinical governance". The detailed terms of reference and operating arrangements set by the board in respect of this committee are set out below.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Quality and Safety Committee is to provide:

- evidence based and timely advice to the board to assist it in discharging its functions and meeting its responsibilities with regard to the quality and safety of healthcare; and
- assurance to the board in relation to the health board's arrangements for safeguarding and improving the quality and safety of patient centred healthcare in accordance with its stated objectives and the requirements and standards determined for the NHS in Wales.

## 3. Delegated Powers and Authority

The committee will, in respect of its provision of advice to the board:

- oversee the initial development of the health board's strategies and plans for the development and delivery of high quality and safe services, consistent with the board's overall strategic direction and any requirements and standards set for NHS bodies in Wales;
- consider the implications for quality and safety arising from the development of the health board's corporate strategies and plans or those of its stakeholders and partners, including those arising from any joint (sub) committees of the board; and
- consider the implications for the health board's quality and safety arrangements from review/investigation reports and actions arising from the work of external regulators.

The committee will, in respect of its assurance role, seek assurances that governance (including risk management) arrangements are appropriately designed and operating effectively to ensure the provision of high quality, safe healthcare and services across the whole of the health board's activities.

To achieve this, the committee's programme of work will be designed to ensure that, in relation to all aspects of quality and safety:

- there is clear, consistent strategic direction, strong leadership and transparent

- lines of accountability;
- the organisation, at all levels (locality/directorate/clinical team) has a citizen centred approach, putting patients, patient safety and safeguarding above all other considerations;
  - the care planned or provided across the breadth of the organisation's functions (including locality/directorate/ clinical team and those provided by the independent or third sector) is consistently applied, based on sound evidence, clinically effective and meeting agreed standards;
  - the organisation, at all levels (locality/directorate/clinical team), has the right systems and processes in place to deliver, from a patient's perspective - efficient, effective, timely and safe services;
  - the workforce is appropriately selected, trained, supported and responsive to the needs of the service, ensuring that professional standards and registration/revalidation requirements are maintained;
  - there is an ethos of continual quality improvement and regular methods of updating the workforce in the skills needed to demonstrate quality improvement throughout the organisation;
  - there is good team working, collaboration and partnership working to provide the best possible outcomes for its citizens;
  - risks are actively identified and robustly managed at all levels of the organisation;
  - decisions are based upon valid, accurate, complete and timely data and information;
  - there is continuous improvement in the standard of quality and safety across the whole organisation – continuously monitored through the Health and Care Standards for Wales;
  - all reasonable steps are taken to prevent, detect and rectify irregularities or deficiencies in the quality and safety of care provided, and in particular that:
    - sources of internal assurance are reliable, e.g., internal audit and clinical audit teams have the capacity and capability to deliver;
    - recommendations made by internal and external reviewers are considered and acted upon on a timely basis; and
    - lessons are learned from patient safety incidents, complaints and claims.

The committee will advise the board on the adoption of a set of key indicators of quality of care against which the health board's performance will be regularly assessed and reported on through annual reports.

#### **4. Authority**

The committee is authorised by the board to investigate or have investigated any activity within its terms of reference. In doing so, the committee shall have the right to inspect any books, records or documents of the health board relevant to the committee's remit and ensuring patient/client and staff confidentiality, as appropriate. It may seek any relevant information from any:

- employee (and all employees are directed to cooperate with any reasonable request made by the committee); and
- other committee, sub-committee or group set up by the board to assist it in the

delivery of its functions.

The committee is authorised by the board to obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers it necessary, in accordance with the board's procurement, budgetary and other requirements.

## 5. Access

The head of internal audit shall have unrestricted and confidential access to the chair of the Quality and Safety Committee.

The committee will meet with internal and external audit (and, as appropriate, nominated representatives of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales) without the presence of officials on at least one occasion each year.

The chair of the Quality and Safety Committee shall have reasonable access to executive directors and other relevant senior staff.

## 6. Sub-Committees

The committee may, subject to the approval of the health board, establish sub-committees or task and finish groups to carry out on its behalf specific aspects of committee business. The following sub-committees have been established:

- Quality and Safety [Governance Group Forum](#)
- [Clinical Ethics Group](#)

## 7. Membership

The committee shall comprise ~~four~~three non-officer members of the board. It may also co-opt additional independent "external" members from outside the organisation to provide specialist skills, knowledge and expertise.

Executive directors with responsibility for quality and safety should be in attendance at the committee, as well as the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Strategy and the chief executive and other executive directors should attend from time to time as required by the committee chair

The committee chair may extend invitations to attend committee meetings as required to the following:

- leads from localities/directorates/clinical teams;
- representatives of partnership organisations;
- public and patient involvement representatives; and
- Trade union representatives

As well as others from within or outside the organisation who the committee considers should attend, taking account of the matters under consideration at each meeting.

The membership of the committee shall be determined by the board, based on the recommendation of the health board chair - taking account of the balance of skills

and expertise necessary to deliver the committee's remit and subject to any specific requirements or directions made by the Welsh Government.

Members' terms of office will be reviewed annually by the board chair. A member may resign or be removed by the board.

Terms and conditions of appointment, (including any remuneration and reimbursement) in respect of co-opted independent external members are determined by the board, based upon the recommendation of the health board Chair and, where appropriate on the basis of advice from the health board's Workforce and Organisational Development Committee.

## **8. Committee Meetings**

Meetings shall be held ~~no less than bi-monthly~~ monthly and otherwise as the chair of the committee deems necessary – consistent with the health board's annual plan of board business.

At least two members must be present to ensure the quorum of the committee, including either the committee chair or vice-chair.

The committee may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters.

The director of corporate governance/board secretary, on behalf of the committee chair, shall:

- arrange the provision of advice and support to committee members on any aspect related to the conduct of their role; and
- ensure the provision of a programme of organisational development for committee members as part of the health board's overall organisational development programme developed by the Director of Workforce and Organisational Development.

The committee secretary is determined by the director of corporate governance/board secretary.

## **9. Relationships and Accountabilities with the Board and its Committees/Groups**

Although the board has delegated authority to the committee for the exercise of certain functions as set out within these terms of reference, it retains overall responsibility and accountability for ensuring the quality and safety of healthcare for its citizens. The committee is directly accountable to the board for its performance in exercising the functions set out in these terms of reference.

The committee, through its chair and members, shall work closely with the board's other committees, including joint (sub) committees and groups to provide advice and assurance to the board through the:

- joint planning and co-ordination of board and committee business; and
- sharing of information.

In doing so, contributing to the integration of good governance across the organisation, ensuring that all sources of assurance are incorporated into the board's overall risk and assurance framework. This will be achieved primarily through the Audit Committee.

The committee shall embed the health board's corporate standards, priorities and requirements, e.g., equality and human rights through the conduct of its business.

## **10. Reporting and Assurance Arrangements**

The committee chair shall:

- report formally, regularly and on a timely basis to the board on the committee's activities. This includes verbal updates on activity, the submission of committee minutes and written reports, as well as the presentation of an annual report;
- bring to the board's specific attention any significant matters under consideration by the committee;
- ensure appropriate escalation arrangements are in place to alert the health board chair, chief executive or chairs of other relevant committees of any urgent/critical matters that may compromise patient care and affect the operation and/or reputation of the health board.

The board may also require the committee chair to report upon the committee's activities at public meetings or to community partners and other stakeholders, where this is considered appropriate, for example where the committee's assurance role relates to a joint or shared responsibility.

The director of corporate governance/board secretary, on behalf of the board, shall oversee a process of regular and rigorous self assessment and evaluation of the committee's performance and operation including that of any sub committees established. In doing so, account will be taken of the requirements set out in the NHS Wales Quality and Safety Committee handbook.

## **11. Applicability of Standing Orders to Committee Business**

The requirements for the conduct of business as set out in the health board's standing orders are equally applicable to the operation of the committee, except in the following areas:

- quorum
- notice of meetings
- notifying the public of meetings
- admission of the public, the press and other observers
- paper circulation.

## **12. Review**

These terms of reference and operating arrangements shall be reviewed annually by the committee with reference to the board.