

January 2019

Dear Minister

Letter of assurance concerning Bridgend Boundary Change

I am writing on behalf of Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABM UHB) to provide assurance to you on the readiness of our organisation to transfer responsibility for providing healthcare services for the people in the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) area to Cwm Taf University Health Board (CT UHB) with effect from 1 April 2019.

The Board agreed this letter of assurance on 31 January 2019, at its Health Board meeting along with consideration of a summary of the key aspects of the transfer in the report enclosed with this letter.

As agreed by both Health Boards, a Joint Transition Board (JTB) was established as a sub-committee of each Health Board, meeting monthly to oversee the programme of work required to implement the boundary change. The JTB has provided advice and assurance on the readiness to transfer responsibility for commissioning and providing services. This letter and enclosed report have therefore, also been considered by the JTB which includes representation from BCBC, Wales Audit Office (WAO) as an observer and critical friend and representatives from the Welsh Government.

We have managed the planning of the transfer through a partnership approach guided by a set of key principles agreed at the beginning of the programme of work in June 2018. These principles have formed the basis by which ABM UHB and CT UHB have, and will continue to, hold ourselves to account for the delivery of the required changes. They are set in the context of a shared commitment to maximise the opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of the entire population served by both organisations. This commitment and partnership approach will extend beyond the date of the boundary change on 1 April 2019.

It is important to acknowledge that our staff are a vital asset in everything we do for our populations. Inevitably this boundary change has created an unsettling time for staff, which we have aimed to manage in an open, transparent and timely manner. We would want to note our appreciation for their patience, professionalism and dedication to working with us to carry out the work required for the transfer whilst continuing to provide quality care to our patients. Equally our trade union partners have worked in partnership with us to provide support, advice and guidance to our staff. Their involvement at the JTB, and within individual work streams of the programme has been essential and valued.

The transfer of responsibility for commissioning and providing healthcare services, whilst referred to as an administrative change, is nonetheless

inherently complex, and has required substantial work to disaggregate assets, liabilities, operating and reporting systems, existing staff teams and management structures. It will also require still, the introduction of new ways of working for all our staff and further joint partnership working beyond 1 April 2019.

We have been clear that this boundary change should not directly impact on patient flows. Our engagement with and communication to local populations has been clear that patients will continue to access services from the hospital or community-based resources that they currently do. That is not to say that services will remain unchanged in the future, as changes to the way in which we deliver services may be necessary to safeguard patient safety and improve quality, but in that event, we or CT UHB would engage with local populations and our community health councils to discuss and shape proposals together, in the usual way.

The remaining aspects of work to be undertaken before 1 April 2019 will continue to report through to the JTB during February and March 2019. As part of the transfer of responsibility a final handover statement will be prepared and signed off by the JTB. That statement will record all work completed as part of the programme and set out a plan of action to manage residual risks and further work required beyond 1 April 2019. The key areas to note where further work will be required in future years includes:

- Provision of clinical services

Both organisations have agreed a schedule of clinical services to transfer included in the enclosed report. In some circumstances it has been agreed that the service will remain provided by ABM UHB and commissioned by CT UHB through a service level agreement (SLA). In most instances this decision has been taken where it has been advised by our clinicians and service managers, that it is not possible due to time constraints, to safely disaggregate the services by 1 April 2019. For other services it has been agreed that further joint planning work is required to test out options for future service provision.

An action plan, with a revised timeline for transfers to still take place after 1 April 2019 will be developed and agreed as part of remaining work in February and March.

- ICT systems

It has been agreed that there will be an SLA agreement in place between both Health Boards from 1 April 2019 to ensure a safe transition of all ICT systems and supporting infrastructure. In practice this means that ABM UHB will continue to provide ICT services to Bridgend sites from 1 April 2019.

A longer-term change over and disaggregation plan is required to support further work, beyond April 2019. Work has already begun on this, and key milestones and an assessment of additional resources including revenue and capital funding requirements form part of this process. NWIS and the Welsh Government are engaged in the development of this plan.

Both Health Boards have, and will continue to work together and with the Welsh Government to ensure that neither population nor organisation is disadvantaged by the operational or financial consequences of the changes.

Welsh Government officials have committed to supporting both organisations to achieve this aim; to ensure that clinical, non-clinical and corporate services can continue to be provided without detriment to patient safety, quality or performance. The potential quantum and period of time over which any transitional financial support may be required has been discussed with members of the Health Board and continues to be discussed with the Welsh Government. Work will continue to confirm the position through to the end of the financial year end and to the confirmation of financial balances in the audited annual accounts for 2018-19. Final agreement of transitional support will need to be confirmed alongside the Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) for 2019-20 and future years.

We have worked positively with Welsh Government officials to provide the required information to support the Boundary Change Order and I welcome their support in planning this change and will continue to work closely with the Welsh Government officials in the preparation of the Transfer Order.

<insert personal sign off>

Andrew Davies

Chair, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board