Annual Quality Statement 2013/14

This document is from the Welsh Ambulance Service to our patients, carers and the public demonstrating the quality of the services we provide

“Improving care for patients”
## Contents

| Words from the Chairman, Chief Executive & Chair of Quality Delivery Committee | 3 |
| Introduction | 8 |

1 **Meeting Standards** | 12 |
- Clinical Indicators |
- National Guidelines & Clinical Audits |
- Standards for Health |
- Developing Staff |
- Quality Improvements |

2 **What did we do well?** | 16 |
- Performance of Services |
- Improving Service User Experience |
- Reaching People |
- Supporting Self Care |
- Preventing Infections |
- Learning from Patients |
- Safeguarding Patients |
- Clinical Care |
- Service Improvements |
- Alternative Care Pathways |
- Improving Patient Outcomes |
- Research and Innovation |

3 **What do we need to improve?** | 31 |

4 **Priorities for 2014-15** | 34 |
Words from the Chair – Mick Giannasi

Welcome to the second Annual Quality Statement produced by the Board of the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust. It sets out in plain language what we did during 2013/14 to improve the quality of service and care which we provided for the people of Wales and what we intend to do during 2014/15 to improve further.

The past twelve months have been a particularly challenging time for the Welsh Ambulance Service as we have worked hard to manage increasing demand for our services and with relatively fewer resources. There have also been significant changes in the way in which the service is managed at the national level and we have begun to transform our services to make them more effective and more responsive to the needs of patients.

Against that background, our front line staff and those behind the scenes who support them, have continued to work with professionalism, skill and dedication to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible standards of service and care within the most appropriate timescales - in other words, that we provide the right care in the right place at the right time. We may not always have succeeded in meeting the high standards that we aspire to but that is certainly not for the want of trying.

The delivery plan which supports the Annual Quality Statement sets out five core priorities for 2014/15 ranging from improving our standards of clinical care to improving outcomes and the experience of our patients. There is one golden thread that runs through them all - that we will put those who use our services at the heart of everything we do.

Words from the Chief Executive Officer – Elwyn Price Morris

As you may be aware all NHS organisations in Wales have to produce an Annual Quality Statement. The purpose of this document is to report to you on the quality of the services and the care that we provided during a twelve month period. We are accountable to our patients and this report is just one example of how we answer to that accountability. Therefore this statement is written for our patients and the public.

We will report on the improvements that the trust has made since last year’s Annual Quality Statement and we will look at how we have performed against the targets and standards.
Improving Care for Patients

that have been set by the Welsh Government. We will also look at how we have managed concerns and incidents and what we have learned from them, and about the quality of clinical care that we provided. We think that by doing this it will provide you with a more complete picture of the quality of our services.

2013-14 was one of our most challenging years with demand for our service remaining high. During the year the Minister for Health and Social services announced a number of improvements that were to be made to the Welsh Ambulance Service. Since April, we have been working with our Welsh Government and health board colleagues to achieve those actions identified to help us provide high quality ambulance services to the people of Wales.

We are working with a new Strategic Transformation Board to make these changes happen. There was some uncertainty over the future name of the Trust during a public consultation. However, the name remains the same for now and the new joint Emergency Ambulance Committee will work with us to inform the Minister for Health and Social Services of any new possible names for the future of the Ambulance service.

We continue to strengthen our planning arrangements with all health boards across Wales as well as modernising our non-emergency patient transport service. This work along with the transfer of Health Courier Services to NHS Wales will be led by the Trust through its Strategic Transformation work.

The work is challenging however the continued commitment and dedication shown by our staff and partners will allow us to focus on delivering high quality, clinically robust services for all our patients who require urgent and emergency access to care.

Words from the Chair of the Quality Delivery Committee – Emrys Davies

The Quality Delivery Committee (QDC) advises the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust Board on all quality and safety issues. The purpose of the QDC is to provide evidence that the Trust is:

- meeting its governance responsibility for the quality and safety of the care it provides to patients
- providing assurances that we are safeguarding and improving the healthcare we provide
- monitoring the delivery and performance of the Trust

The QDC replaced the previous Quality Safety and Governance Committee in March 2014. QDC has new committee members who bring a lot of experience and expertise that will ensure we are delivering safe, quality and timely services to our patients.
Developing the Annual Quality Statement

This Annual Quality Statement tells you how we have delivered our services; what has gone well and what we need to improve. We have engaged with our patients, carers, members of the public and staff to get a picture of how we are performing; how we are delivering our services and what patients tell us about what it is like to be a user of the ambulance service.

The way that we deliver high quality services to our patients is set out in our Trust strategy ‘Working Together for Success’. This strategy sets out the improvements we want to make and the benefits these improvements will have. Within this Annual Quality statement we want to show how our commitment to ‘quality’ is benefiting patients as well as setting out what we want to improve.

We are working hard to deliver ‘high quality, emergency, urgent and unscheduled care’ wherever it is needed to our patients. This means making sure that all our patients can access our services whenever and wherever they need to.

We are working with NHS colleagues to improve our response times to make sure we get to those who really need us. We are also educating the public on the range of other healthcare services available for less urgent need.

By developing our workforce to increase their skills to treat and care for patients, we are treating more patients in their own home giving them good patient information as well as referring them into other appropriate healthcare and social services.
Improving Care for Patients

DEVELOPMENT

There have been important ‘drivers’ for making sure we improve and monitor the services we deliver and by listening to patients on their experiences of using our services we are able to get a good picture. An aging population living with one or more chronic condition/illness means that they may rely on our services more. The rural landscape of Wales presents challenges in accessing healthcare, issues around social exclusion and for people trying to navigate an often complex healthcare system can mean that we experience increases in demand.

Drivers

PUBLIC DEMAND
- Rise in demand of 999 calls to the Ambulance service
- Increasing patient expectations
- Complex health needs of patients
- Financial constraints

WELSH GOVERNMENT REVIEWS/CONSULTATIONS
- Strategic Review of Welsh Ambulance Services - (McClelland Review 2013)
- Public consultation on legislative changes affecting ambulance services in Wales (2013)

NHS WALES STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS
- Delivering bilingual services to the people of Wales
- Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure everyone is treated fairly

THE FUTURE

We face big changes over the next year. We have a Strategic Transformation Board that is overseeing the clinical transformation of the Trust; it is looking at how we use our resources and how we develop our staff to make sure they have the right skills to deliver services that is fit for all our patients. Local Health Boards are working with us to ensure that our ambulances reach those patients in emergencies and get them the right care and treatment they need quickly. There will be much closer working with all our NHS colleagues in Wales to share the responsibility for ensuring patients have the best quality service and care they deserve.
Improving Care for Patients

Introduction

In our first Annual Quality Statement we told you a lot about our structure and what we do. We continue to provide all of the services including NHS Direct Wales, for hospital appointments and emergency ambulances for life threatening calls. If you haven’t read the first statement you can find it [here](#).

A summary version of this document is available [here](#).

This year we thought we would use this statement to focus on what is important to you, in other words what you have told us about our services and how we could work to improve them. A lot of information has been released from the Welsh Government in relation to Health and Social Care over the past couple of years. Some of this information is really important for the Ambulance service as it helps us plan for the future.

When the performance and reputation of the Welsh Ambulance Service makes media headlines in Wales it often portrays our service in a poor light. These headlines tend to focus on failing to meet the 8 minute response target categorised as ‘life threatening’ (Category A), these are now known as Red1 and 2 calls. These stories impact on the views of the public, our frontline staff and partners who are working hard to modernise the emergency and unscheduled care system in Wales.

When we have engaged with service users they have recognised the level of negative media coverage about the Ambulance Service. However from all the engagement and survey work carried out the feedback we received has primarily been on those positive experiences of engaging with our staff, high levels of satisfaction with little evidence of our staff doing adverse harm to patients whilst in our care.

Our response to a small proportion of calls fails to meet the expectation and level of care people want from their ambulance service. These concerns/incidents are investigated. However they remain a small number of poor experiences compared with those who
Improving Care for Patients

experience good quality services. We have implemented new ways of working to capture, view and assess the experiences of those who are accessing our services to ensure we strive to meet their needs.

Health and social care services have recognised the need to work together with us, patients, carers and the wider public to improve the health and well being of the people of Wales. In the Welsh Ambulance Service we always want to know what you expect from our services. We want to understand what it’s like being a patient, worried and afraid when your health needs become an emergency and you need our help.

We are also working hard to learn more about communicating with patients who have a range of needs for example, patients with sensory loss; patients whose first language is not English and also those with existing chronic illnesses and have a disability. We are finding out if you were treated with dignity, compassion and kindness and if we responded to your needs in a timely manner.

We haven’t always got things right and we accept that. A report on the Welsh Ambulance Service in 2011 showed the need for our service to transform. We know that for most people we do get it right and that we need to build on the excellent quality that we deliver to patients most of the time so that it delivers high quality safe compassionate care all of the time.

The Annual Quality Statement is intended to provide assurances to you that as an Emergency and Clinical responsive service we are committed to delivering high quality services. We have worked openly and honestly to show how we have performed and made efforts to improve the experiences of all our patients.

Listening to patients and learning from their experiences has been an important part of our work. Experiences of patients have been captured in various ways for example:

- Complaints
- Compliments
- Adverse incidents
- Experience questionnaires and feedback

Patients have also shared their own personal stories at our Trust Board Meetings and Quality Delivery Committees. Listening to patient’s voices has been driving our model of delivering patient centred services.
Improving Care for Patients

From peoples feedback we have been able to improve our services. Feedback has been shared with staff so they can be:

- involved in the process of improving patient safety and;
- reduce the number of adverse incidents

This provides them with learning opportunities to help drive a quality service.

There is room for further improvement and we continue to work with patients, staff and others to identify where improvement is needed.

**Quality – What does this mean?** Our Patients and service users’ responses have made it clear to us what quality means to them.

In all our documents, strategies and policies we state that we see quality as:

- Improving patient outcomes
- Improving their experiences of using our services
- Keeping them safe whilst in our care and;
- Making sure we provide the right care, at the right time, in the right place

Our patients and service users have defined ‘Quality’ as:

- “Confidence to receive a prompt response”
- “Providing a prompt response appropriate to the needs of the patient”
- “Being able to get medical help as soon as possible and not wait”
- “To arrive in good time, administer appropriate treatment”
- “Being informed every step of the way, treated with courtesy and professional expertise”
Improving Care for Patients

- “Help when you need it and the ability to make a patient feel safe when they are at their most vulnerable i.e. when they are ill”
- “Meeting the patients needs”
- “Assurance that treatment/help will not be compromised”
- “Good Communication with patient/family”

It is encouraging that as a Trust we are reflecting our patients’ expectations in the way we define our work. Patients and service users have provided valuable suggestions on what they felt should be addressed when considering ‘quality’.

Suggestions to us have included:
- “How to deal with the bad press which undermines the service”
- “Listening to the concerns of the patient”
- “Improving delays in ambulances reaching the most serious cases”
- “Ensuring that patients receive the necessary clinical care as quickly as possible”
- “Be stronger, more vocal & forceful on changes you disagree with and feel will endanger lives”

In making this Annual Quality Statement reflect what people want to see we engaged with local service user forums to learn:

- what information would be useful to include and;
- what was important to know

There were clear themes from the feedback which identified ‘quality’ as an important aspect to be assured on in relation to delivering services. Suggestions were also given to include:

- Monthly active call figures
- The number of people who ‘waste’ service time
- Not use charts especially pie and bar charts
- Include patient stories (and the learning, good and bad)
- How are we improving the skills of staff

Our Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy explains the focus and drive in developing our workforce and includes the focus on engagement and empowerment of staff. Using interviews, questionnaires and group discussions staff have had the opportunities to be involved in strategic and operational decisions.

We believe that it is really important that our patients, the public and our staff are involved in developing the report and identifying and setting the priorities for improvement for the coming year.
Meeting Standards

CLINICAL INDICATORS

The Trust has a number of condition specific Clinical Indicators (CIs) that we are committed to report on. Reports are seen by managers and our station-based Clinical Team Leaders (CTLs). CTLs have the opportunity to discuss with members of their teams the importance of CIs as a tool to give a good sign of the quality of care provided and the opportunity to optimise patient care.

The CIs are evidenced based and are developed in line with Welsh Government priorities. These are also available via the Welsh Ambulance Website (www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk).

NATIONAL GUIDELINES AND CLINICAL AUDITS

In making sure that our patients are treated and managed properly we adhere to National Guidelines, such as the UK Ambulance Clinical Practice Guidelines (2013) and those published by bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and other professional advisory groups like the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Nursing. In order to ensure we are working towards meeting these standards, our clinical performance is reviewed through our annual Clinical Audit and Effectiveness Programme.

Clinical Audit

Clinical Audit is a quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through a regular review of care against clear criteria and the implementation of change. Aspects of the processes and outcomes are selected and thoroughly evaluated. Where indicated, changes are implemented at an individual, team, or national level and further monitoring is used to confirm improvement in healthcare delivery”. This approach is often referred to as the Clinical Audit Cycle.
Improving Care for Patients

The aim of the Trust is to use Clinical Audit as a process to embed and continually improve clinical quality at all levels creating a culture that is committed to learning and continuous organisational development. The Trust has an annual Clinical Audit and Effectiveness Programme which facilitates the monitoring of clinical performance and improvements made for a range of topics.

The clinical audit and effectiveness topics reflect National, Health Board and Trust priorities taking into account the patient pathway from receipt of a call, the delivery of care and final disposition to include changes in practice and safeguarding. It is a rolling programme produced on a quarterly basis which identifies audits that are either planned, currently underway or have been completed.

The programme, completed clinical audits and action plans are approved and monitored at relevant Trust committees prior to posting on the Trust’s staff Intranet.

When expected results are not achieved, actions are taken which can be in the form of information being communicated to staff making them aware of the expected levels of care required, further training resulting from inclusion on annual Continuous Professional Development courses or changes to systems affecting service delivery. Re-audits are then undertaken to measure the affect of the recommended changes.

Staff are supported to audit their own clinical performance through the use of a specifically designed self audit tool. This encourages good reflective learning and promotes the continuous improvement of staff, ensuring individuals take on a shared responsibility for improvement and service quality. Click here to view Annual clinical audit report/programme which forms part of the Quality Delivery Committee, April & July 2014.

Completed audits and outcomes this year include:

- Audit of a National Early Warning Score and Pre-hospital Sepsis Screening Tool
- Audit of Patient Demographics
- Clinical Audit of Safeguarding Children Referral Forms
- Audit of Priority One Calls at Call handling Stage
- The re-audit of the Routine Enquiry into Domestic Abuse
- Quick Calls Repeat Audit
- Audit of Category ‘C’ calls
- Re-audit of Downgraded Calls

STANDARDS FOR HEALTH SERVICES

This is a national programme that sets out the requirements of what is expected of all health services. During the year we completed a full self assessment against all the 26 standards. The assessment is due to be reviewed by a scrutiny panel consisting of senior staff later this year.
Improving Care for Patients

DEVELOPING STAFF

Through engaging with staff and partnership working we knew the level of support from staff to support change in the Trust. We have been able to align learning and development to individual/group needs. We have also recorded an increase in the number of staff feeling more involved in decisions and feeling supported to do their best.

A key focus over the last year has been to develop, with support from NHS Wales Workforce, Education & Development Services, a new ‘competency matrix’ and framework. The Competency Frameworks established are for all clinical staff and are being used to design and plan how the needs of patients can be delivered as services. This is being done as locally as possible and with partners wherever it is possible to do so.

The development of the workforce includes everyone who is involved in responding and caring for patients and making sure they have the appropriate skills to maximise best possible patient outcome and experience.

In developing the skills of the workforce we were able to treat more people over the phone and at scene reducing the number of patients taken to Emergency Departments whilst keeping the patient safe. To do this we worked closely with Health Boards and Social Care partners to develop integrated systems.

A key role in delivering care has been the Advanced Paramedic Practitioner (APP). The APP provides clinical leadership to improve patient care delivery. APPs increase opportunities to initiate safer community based assessment, treatment and discharge within the home and referral to alternative care pathways. Feedback from patients on APPs has demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the care provided. Comments have included:

- A high level of professionalism
- The Paramedic who responded was very caring happy to listen and very confident in his manner which in turn gave us confidence
- He took away all the anxiety I was feeling before he came to see me

- >2,500 staff employed
- 79% (of staff) supported the need for change
- 63% more actively involved in making decisions about new services
- 74% felt supported to do their best
Improving Care for Patients

As part of our Workforce and Organisational Development (OD) strategy we have achieved the following:

- A Wellbeing service delivering important changes in supporting staff at work
- A Competency framework used for planning
- Behavioural recruitment for all staff and
- Over 500 colleagues chose to be supported with accredited learning

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

‘Improving Quality Together’ (IQT) is the framework of core improvement skills for NHS Wales staff. The framework provides a common and consistent approach to improving the quality of service in NHS organisations across Wales.

There are 3 main levels to the IQT framework; Bronze, Silver and Gold, complemented by a Board level. The levels and training are relevant to an individual’s role within the Trust.

Staff have started accessing the bronze level training available online and via a paper based workbook; an introduction to IQT is provided for all staff attending mandatory training.

The percentage of staff trained in quality improvement by March 2014 was 8%; the target set was 25%. The Trust faces unique challenges in ensuring training is accessible to its operational workforce.

The 1000 Lives Plus programme are supporting the first group of people doing silver training. Those who have already completed other Quality improvement courses will have the opportunity to fast-track to Silver level on submission of a case study. Board level training is scheduled to take place and a network of Gold level coaches is under development.

With a large mobile workforce working 24/7 it is difficult for some staff to access training, online training resources have been developed as part of the solution but work continues to ensure all staff have the opportunity and access relevant training for their roles.
Improving Care for Patients

What did we do well?

PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES

There was 514,909 emergency calls received to the 999 Emergency Service; 199,515 calls were dealt with as immediately life threatening Red (1 & 2) calls. These calls needed an emergency blue light ambulance.

The number of calls that were not life threatening was 315,394. These are called low acuity (Green) calls, 35,964 were transferred to our nurses who carried out detailed assessments and dealt with the callers need.

There was a 1.1% increase in the number of non-urgent transport requests from healthcare professionals (like GPs and Nursing Homes); this was a total of 86,856.

Our staff delivering the NHS Direct Wales health information and advice service received 317,415 calls via the 0845 4647 telephone number. This was 8.7% less than last year.

The NHS Direct Wales web site providing online self care information received 3,515,196 visits from the public, an increase of 74.1% from last year. Click here to view statistical information on the Welsh Ambulance Service and NHS Direct Wales.

IMPROVING SERVICE USER EXPERIENCE

One of the key actions for the year was to give the public a bigger voice in the design and delivery of the ambulance service. This was partly achieved by the development of a national approach to measuring service user experiences. We have been able to fully implement the National Service User Experience Framework and accompanying experience survey into our engagement work and have received over 1,000 surveys completed from those who have used our services.

We also listened to over 4,000 service users who shared their personal experiences of what it was like to be a user of our ambulance services. This was achieved through our ‘Have your Say’ engagement model which includes face to face events; online feedback and engagement with patient/community groups.

These experiences have ranged from examples of good practice and compliments, to those where things have not met expectations and learning can be identified and acted upon. The
most common theme from feedback as been the length of time patients wait for an ambulance to arrive, the length of time waiting in an ambulance outside A&E departments and length of time waiting for a nurse to call them back. The following cases are just two examples demonstrating organisational learning. Click here to view Annual Service User Experience report 2013/14

**Occupational Therapist, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Feedback via telephone**

An issue was brought to our attention from an Occupational Therapist regarding a patient who had been conveyed to A&E by an emergency ambulance. The patient was a wheelchair user and her chair had been left at her home. This had happened previously resulting in the patient experiencing a delay in being discharged from hospital. Concerns were raised that this would happen again.

Following discussions and identifying the learning with locality manager, Head of Service and local social services team; when the patient was readmitted as an emergency to hospital the experience was very different and her chair was taken with her.

**A Patient, Newport Face to Face Feedback**

A carer who was Deaf relayed her experience of using the ambulance service when her husband, who was also Deaf, collapsed at home. Her feedback highlighted how isolated she felt as his carer because no one from the Ambulance service or local hospital where her husband was admitted attempted to communicate with her. She was left not knowing what was happening.

In response the learning that has taken place has involved all NHS Trusts and Health Boards to look at a process for arranging BSL interpreters for patients being conveyed to hospital by ambulance. The launch of the Pre Hospital Communication Guide has also enabled staff to communicate with individuals who are Deaf or has another communication barrier.

Their feedback has meant that we have made improvements to service delivery and service development across all Trust services ensuring that the Trust is able to meet the needs of patients.
Improving Care for Patients

REACHING PEOPLE

By meeting patients and members of the public they have the opportunity to tell us what it is like to use our services, how they are affected by the changes we make and what they feel we should be doing to deliver good care and services.

We recognise that Wales is a diverse country that has different communities with various health and social care needs. As part of continuous engagement work we have tried to reach as many groups, communities and patient forums as possible. We have been able to gather feedback and have a clear picture on what barriers people face in accessing services.

By making our services accessible to one group of people (i.e. patients with a sensory loss) we make our services accessible to other groups. By listening, understanding and acting on the issues that we are told about we are able to foster positive long term partnerships with different groups and communities. In this way we are able to educate people on accessing and using our services well. Together we are able to continuously address issues as they arise to ensure that our services are responsive to people’s needs. The following are some examples of our engagement work during the year.

Children & Young People – We visited over 50 different schools, further education colleges and attended open days for the Police and Fire Service. Talks our staff provided to primary schools were based on what paramedics do and how to be safe on the road when ambulances are going past on blue lights. For older children our talks focused on the consequences of being in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of drink and drugs. We also supported Careers Wales at sessions in schools talking about careers in the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust. We hosted young people on work experience and group visits to the ambulance station.

A National Welsh Ambulance Service

- Covers nearly 8,000 square miles
- Serves more than 3 million people
- Large diverse area
Improving Care for Patients

Carers - As part of the Trusts Carers Strategy, we engaged with Carers across Wales through partnership working and by holding carers health fairs in different locations across Wales. In these events we have educated carers on first aid and basic life saving skills.

Older People - A large proportion of our patients are older people so we have made efforts to meet and talk to older people across Wales in particular to hear about their experiences, what has worked and not so well. A key piece of work was to capture their definitions of dignity and respect so that we can incorporate them within our survey work.

Supporting Self Care

We have worked to connect the Trusts delivery objectives to a programme of self care that links to wider work on improving quality, patient experience and co-production.

Supporting patients to self care has meant that our staff are able to respond to those patients who need more urgent clinical care. Nurses and Health Information Advisers have been delivering advice and information through NHS Direct Wales and; Front line paramedics in communities have been providing a range of materials to support self care. All our staff have been able to support and encourage self care behaviour through their contact with patients. For example:

- nurses have provided self care advice following a telephone assessment to patients experiencing a range of symptoms like diarrhoea, vomiting and rashes
- health information advisers have provided information on a range of health conditions and services like Diabetes, Asthma and Local support services;
- paramedics have provided effective patient information resources like ‘Atrial Fibrillation/High Blood Pressure’, ‘You’ve had a Fall’ and ‘Need further help or advice’

Service users and patients have been actively signposted to the NHS Direct Wales website to access a wide range of self care tools and information. Ranging from online self assessment symptom checkers (such as Cough; Lower Back Pain; Rectal Bleeding etc) to interactive choose well quizzes the website has proved a popular choice with users resulting in over 3 million visits recorded for the year.
Improving Care for Patients

The success of the website has been largely due to what users are asking and looking for and the types of calls our nurses are responding to in the clinical contact centres.

Using feedback from the Trusts ‘Readers Panel’ and others, all new materials produced have been co-produced by service users. This enhances the level of information and understanding on health and health needs as well as improving the overall patient experience.

PREVENTING INFECTIONS

As a Trust we are strongly committed to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) that extends to our patients, their relatives, members of the public and our own staff.

There have been some key achievements this year. We implemented an In-House Flu Vaccination Programme to protect our staff and patients against Flu. As a result of the drive to vaccinate staff the Trust was recognised for its Flu Vaccination Programme and won an award for ‘Most Improved Flu Fighter Campaign’ Public Health 2013/14.

Our vehicles and ambulance stations were audited in all 7 Health Board areas. It was noted that compliance with audit standards had greatly improved, going from 87% up to 95%. These standards are monitored by Health Inspectorate Wales and the Community Health Council. New clinical waste bins were purchased for each ambulance station; all Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Patient Care Services (PCS) were provided with their own IPC Education Booklet that includes relevant clinical information for their role and we delivered IPC Education to our Volunteer Car Drivers.

Further improvement work was carried out as part of our involvement in 1000 Lives STOP Campaign to help reduce risk of infections with Invasive Devices.

An important piece of work to improve infection control and safety has been the rationalisation of the cleaning products list. This has ensured that all cleaning products are fit for purpose and used across office and clinical settings. Click here to view Infection Prevention Control report that was part of the Quality Delivery Committee, April 2014.
Improving Care for Patients

LEARNING FROM PATIENTS

The management of complaints is led by the Chief Executive. They are considered at Chief Executive Level in recognition of their importance; it is acknowledged how the effective and timely management and handling of concerns is in fostering good relationships between the Trust and the public. Concerns, accolades and patient experiences are valued by the Organisation and tell us clearly the quality of services we are providing.

The Putting Things Right team (PTR) continued to review and consider opportunities to improve the arrangements already in place and support our staff in being open and transparent when something has gone wrong, by developing further the skills and experience of Trust staff that handle and investigate concerns. When dealing with concerns, incidents, near misses, and claims we make sure that they:

- are reported, acted upon and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner;
- are handled and investigated openly, effectively and by those appropriately skilled to do so;
- offer patients, service users and their carers support including advocacy and where appropriate redress;
- provide appropriate support to staff;
- learn and share lessons from local and National reviews to improve services.

We saw an increase in the number of people raising a concern with the Trust in regard to the care, treatment or services that we provided. This year the Trust has rolled out training to Trust Managers for dealing with ‘on the spot’ concerns to make it easier for patients and the public to speak directly with a Trust Manager and discuss their concerns or provide thanks. As a result we have experienced an increase in people having their concern dealt with by speaking directly to a Trust Manager.

‘On the spot’ concerns relate to relatively easy to address issues; the person who raised the concern must be satisfied with the immediate actions agreed in order to remedy the concern raised. Where a concern has been satisfactorily dealt with as an “on the spot”, arrangements have been put into place to allow staff to easily access and record

1133 complaints received
- 506 formal complaints
- 627 verbal ‘on the spot’ concerns
  - 340 Emergency Medical Service (EMS)
  - 407 Patient Care Service (PCS)
  - 191 EMS Control
  - 115 PCS Control
  - 68 NHS Direct Wales
  - 12 Other
Improving Care for Patients

information in a timely manner. This information is captured to ensure themes and lessons can be drawn from this process to facilitate shared learning.

Where the concern has been more complex patients and their families have been invited to meet with our PTR team and other staff to see how our services are managed to facilitate an improved understanding of our services and systems.

In March the Trust approved the Putting Things Right Policy. The policy sets out the principles for the Trusts’ management of Concerns and provides clear guidance and direction for Trust staff. The Trust also established a ‘Significant Clinical Incident Forum’. The forum is a multi-professional forum that convenes when a serious adverse incident is received by the Trust. Clear actions are identified during the forum and members assist those responsible for ensuring any actions are carried out. The aim of the Significant Clinical Incident Forum is to promote learning, reduce risk and foster an open culture towards the incident.

Following feedback from patients we developed a ‘Redress’ leaflet to provide further understanding to what may be considered a complex subject. The leaflet has been developed in collaboration with the Trust’s ‘Readers Panel’ made up of patients and members of the public who reviewed our information leaflet. Feedback received tended to focus on the language within the leaflet such as:

- “Some terms too complicated. Need simplifying”
- “Would be better if the leaflet was in everyday speak”
- “Not sure that phrases like qualifying liability in tort is quite appropriate in a leaflet such as this”. “Explanation of 'tort' needed, general public not aware what tort means”
- “Redress is not easily understood”
- “Simple plain language is important”

Following their review of the leaflet it was rewritten to reflect the language recommended and included a glossary of terms/meanings. Click here to view Concerns Report and Annual Update which forms part of the Quality Delivery Committee, June 2014

SAFEGUARDING PATIENTS

There is a Safeguarding Operational Group responsible for monitoring work and ensuring that we meet all aspects of Safeguarding requirements within Trust including the rights of vulnerable adults and children and young people. The group makes sure the new policies, procedures, guidance, legislation and recommendations from national enquiries and serious case reviews are built into our work. The group assists in monitoring the implementation of action plans generated by Child Practice Reviews/Serious Case Reviews from Local safeguarding children boards and Adult safeguarding Boards/Area Protection Committees.
Improving Care for Patients

Our Safeguarding Team have worked in collaboration with external agencies including third sector organisations to improve the way we look after vulnerable groups within the community.

A good example of this collaborative working is the domestic abuse pilot. This has been carried out in the Swansea area. This pilot has involved paramedics and emergency medical technicians working together with Welsh women’s Aid and the All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline. This pilot is now being rolled out across the rest of Wales over the coming months to provide support and help for victims of domestic abuse.

Our Training and education packages have been updated and are being delivered to all staff. These tailor-made packages have been developed and are matched to staff roles and responsibilities.

We are now working to improve the way we share information with our partner agencies using technology to produce a strong and seamless process.

CLINICAL CARE

There has been a lot of activity carried out on the clinical modernisation of the ambulance service over the year. Significant improvements have been made during the year with updating, replacing and standardising clinical equipment.

Work has been taken forward to deliver an agreed list for EMS/PCS, Advanced Practice and cleaning products. The lists have delivered benefits such as:

- Reduced cost of items and reduced stock levels. Saving around £100k recurring across all lists
- Standardisation of equipment on vehicles across Trust
- Increased use of Welsh Health Supplies catalogue items and a reduction in the use of non stock requisitions by adopting the All Wales Procurement Frameworks

Improved Clinical Records

How an ambulance service performs in its treatment of cardiac arrest can be considered a good measure for the success of that service. Benchmarking of performance both between and within services can be a useful tool to help drive up the quality of care. The introduction in 2011 of a Cardiac Arrest Report Form (CARF) allowed for the capture of clearly defined cardiac arrest data that could be compared against agreed standards.
Improving Care for Patients

During 2013 the CARF was redesigned to capture more robust data and now incorporates updated Recognition of Life Extinct (ROLE) details on the same form. This simplifies the operational process and further improves compliance to completion and data capture for cardiac arrest.

The primary record for recording clinical information is the Patient Clinical Record (PCR) which is used to inform ongoing care at handover at hospital and to capture clinical data. A redesign of the PCR has been undertaken which makes it easier for our staff to clearly document their practice and takes into account changes to clinical practice, the Trust’s clinical response model and legislative requirements. The redesigned PCR, supporting information to assist staff in its accurate completion and a User Guide was launched on 1st April 2014.

- ROLE – process for identifying patients where there is no chance of survival
- PCR – a document for staff to record all pertinent medical details about a patient and the care that has been given
Frequent Callers

We spent more than 3,660 hours providing care and assistance to the top ten frequent ambulance 999 callers from each of the seven Local Health Boards in Wales. Many of these frequent callers had genuine clinical needs; the vast majority suffered with long term medical or social problems.

Many of the frequent callers had needs which were not best met by the attending 999 ambulances or paramedic. This issue was identified and our Clinical Support Officers engaged with partners within the local health boards to resolve the needs of these patients in partnership.

This collaboration resulted in many patients being sign posted to the right agency, which has resulted in them having their clinical needs met. For example this could be arranging an inpatient admission for a patient who had become alcohol dependent or specialist clinical opinion being sought and brought forward by 4 months for a patient dialling 999 with immunology or urology related calls.

Another example of partnership working that resulted in a successful outcome was for a patient who had rung 999 in excess of 60 times complaining of feeling suicidal. In partnership with mental health services, the issue of the patient not liking his key worker resulted in no 999 calls to WAST after a change in personnel.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Demand for our services has continued to increase and combined with hand over delays at hospitals across Wales has resulted in our average performance for responses and life threatening calls within 8 minutes often falling below the national target of 65%. We are working with Health Boards, NHS Trust and Welsh Government colleagues to improve this as part of the transformation of the ambulance service.
Improving Care for Patients

New Measures
The Minister for Health and Social Services announced a number of improvements that would be made to the Trust starting from April 2014. The vision set out is for “...a nationally delivered, clinically focused, patient centred service for Wales delivering high quality emergency and urgent health care wherever and whenever it is needed.”

We have worked with colleagues on the introduction of a new set of patient outcome measures designed to improve clinical outcomes for patients. Measures for the ambulance service will focus on the clinical results patients receive from treatment, and will move away from measuring performance solely by time. Emergency pathways have and continue to be created for patients needing treatment for conditions like heart attack, stroke or a fractured hip.

Alternative Care Pathways
Non-Injury Falls, Resolved Epileptic and Resolved Hypoglycaemic Episodes
The Alternative Care Pathways are supporting Paramedics in assessing patients with an eye to referring those that are suitable to appropriate alternative care pathways. This is avoiding the need to take patients to hospital wherever possible. For patients who were safely kept at home after a non-injury fall they are referred by our staff to their local falls referral team for further support and assessment.

For patients who have experienced a resolved epileptic episode or resolved hypoglycaemic episode we informed their GP Surgery. This assists GPs to maintain an accurate picture of how well their patients are managing their condition. In the last year over 2,500 non-injury falls referrals (by paramedic and nurse), 300 resolved epilepsy episodes and over 500 resolved hypoglycaemic episode referrals were made through these Alternative Care Pathways. These care pathways are currently being successfully used within 5 out of the 7 Health Board areas within Wales.

The Falls Pathway that the Paramedics are able to access is also available to NHS Direct Wales Nurses following a comprehensive telephone assessment. This allows NHS Direct Wales nurses to refer appropriate patients for follow up from the falls team, when previously they may have had to call an ambulance for the patient to ensure the patient receives a referral.
Improving Care for Patients

The majority of patients who had been through the Care Pathway over the last year commented that they had been treated with dignity and respect by Paramedics and were happy with the quality of service provided. Some examples of the positive comments received were:

- “All necessary procedures were followed and the crew were caring and put me at ease at every stage. Procedures were carried out in a friendly manner”
- “The paramedic was very good. Kept informed of every procedure he was carrying out”.
- “The staffs in attendance were excellent and were very respectful. A+ to them all”

However, not all patients felt the service met their needs and some negative feedback was provided. From the feedback obtained, it was clear that:

- Not all non injury related fallers were advised of when to expect contact by their local Community Resource Team
- Not all patients were provided with a copy of their Patient Care Record

In response to this feedback all of these issues were addressed with front line staff and have been improved.

Based on feedback from patients and in-house audit further improvement work is planned around the areas of providing refresher communications to operational staff on the use of these pathways, reviewing how the team identify and act upon multiple / repeat referrals for the same individual and continuing to ensure that the patient leaflet developed to support these pathways is widely available to Paramedics to leave with the patients at the time the referral is made.

Stroke

We support stroke fast-track pathways to 14 District General Hospitals (DGH) across Wales. Patients identified by our clinicians are pre-alerted to the most appropriate DGH to ensure their condition is treated as an emergency and that they receive the most appropriate care.

Evidence from an International Stroke Trial identified patients would benefit from early intervention with thrombolysis even though their symptoms had been present for more than 3 hours. We changed our clinical practice to reflect this.
Improving Care for Patients

We are an active member of the Welsh Stroke Alliance, a multidisciplinary group which leads and advises on stroke management in Wales. We are also represented on the National Stroke Implementation Group; firstly to provide us with the opportunity to engage with colleagues from all disciplines and secondly to learn, share and develop patient centred services for victims of stroke.

An example of this collaboration includes our partnership working with the Stroke Association in Wales, which is aimed at raising the profile of the Face Arm Speech Test among the public (FAST). As a result of this partnership eye-catching FAST focused materials will shortly be displayed prominently on our emergency vehicles, to raise awareness of this simple but effective method for assessing stroke symptoms.

Every patient diagnosed or suspected of stroke/Transient Ischaemic Attack (mini stroke) should receive the pre hospital care bundle of a blood glucose, blood pressure and FAST. Over the last two years compliance to the stroke pre hospital bundle, has increased 52% (May 2012), to 83% (April 2014). We will continue to make efforts to improve this further over the next 12 months.

We have developed a Stroke Delivery Plan, setting out our stroke related priorities until 2016. Under the umbrella of ‘Preventing stroke and improving information’ we have developed a patient information leaflet providing straightforward information to patients we attend with atrial fibrillations and/or high blood pressure. Raising awareness of the significance of these conditions to patients is important because of their strong relationship to increased risk of stroke. We are currently engaged in the early stages of two significant pieces of research which are also linked to Stroke. Click here to view stroke care compliance report.

Examples of Patient’s Experience of Alternative Care Pathway’s

The following are genuine experiences of patients who this year needed access to the ambulance service and quick treatment to make sure they received the right care, in the right place at the right time.
Improving Care for Patients

Maureen
In May Maureen, who is 83 years of age, had a mini stroke while at home. The following is Maureen’s experience and journey from contacting the service with symptoms through to accessing treatment (thrombectomy).

Paul
In January, Paul suffered a heart attack while at home in Brecon. Timescale from call to treatment is 150 minutes. Paul accessed care and treatment in 101 minutes. The following diagram shows his experience from contacting the service to treatment and full recovery. (HCP = Health Care Professional. EA = Emergency Ambulance. RRV = Rapid Response Vehicle)
Improving Care for Patients

IMPROVING PATIENT OUTCOMES

The Trust has continued to commit to the 1000 Lives Plus Programme, a national improvement programme, supporting organisations and individuals, to deliver the highest quality and safest healthcare for the people of Wales. Amongst other patient safety programmes, the Trust is participating in the Patient Flow Programme, which looks at ways to speed up the 'flow' of patients through the NHS system.

Heads of Service for each of the 7 Health Board areas are the Trust’s nominated leads for patient flow and are working closely with colleagues across NHS Wales Trusts and Health Boards to identify blockages and delays and find ways of achieving smoother patient flow.

The Trust actively participated in a Learning Disability (LD) study day in January 2014, to raise awareness of the LD care bundles. The 1000 Lives Plus programme are working with the Trust as well as Health Boards and other NHS Trusts on the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure.

The Trust is continuing to implement the NHS Early Warning Score (NEWS), with the aim of providing frontline staff with a standardised approach to deteriorating patients, meaning life-threatening conditions like sepsis are spotted earlier and stopped more quickly. The NEWS system also includes a trigger for sepsis, a life-threatening condition arising when the body's response to an infection injures its own tissues and organs. Sepsis can lead to shock, multiple organ failure and death, especially if not recognised early.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Our Prehospital Emergency Research Unit (PERU) has supported and developed high quality internal research projects. The unscheduled health care system has come under increasing pressure this year. The Research team has worked in collaboration with Morriston Hospital Emergency Department and Swansea University, who funded evidence collecting secondary research programme.

- PERU offices based in Cardiff
- 4,471 patients recruited to PARAMEDIC study
- PARAMEDIC study – a UK wide study
Improving Care for Patients

This will look at published evidence that may help with improving patients journey from the ambulance service, through the emergency department and on towards secondary care.

The team successfully recruited over 4000 patients to the PARAMEDIC study. This study investigates the use of a mechanical chest compression device measured against normal manual chest compression when treating patients in cardiac arrest. This UK wide study will provide vital evidence that will be used by resuscitation councils worldwide and will have a direct impact on the chance of patients surviving a cardiac arrest. Our successful participation in the PARAMEDIC study has led to our future involvement in an exciting research project (PARAMEDIC-2) that will be looking at the use of adrenaline in patients who have suffered a cardiac arrest. This study is being led by Warwick University.

What do we need to improve?

In 2013 the Minister for Health and Social services announced a number of improvements that will be made in the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. These changes started in April 2014. The vision for the ambulance services is for:

“... a nationally delivered, clinically focused, patient centred service for Wales delivering high quality emergency and urgent health care wherever and whenever it is needed.”

A Strategic Transformation Board has been set up to support the Trust in making these changes. This new Board oversees the work of the Trust in delivering front line services, staff development and best use of its resources.

A public consultation undertaken by the Welsh Government was carried out on the Ambulance Service, to get people’s views on legislative changes and a change of name for the service.

The results of this consultation have meant a new joint Emergency Ambulance Services Committee was set up in April 2014 to manage the Trusts finances and accountability. The Committee is responsible for commissioning and planning emergency ambulance services across Wales.
Improving Care for Patients

A new appointment of a Chief Ambulance Services Commissioner will provide an important relationship between Local Health Boards and the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust. The name of the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust remains for now, the new Committee will inform the Minister for Health and Social Services on any new ideas for a suitable name.

Organisational Learning is a vital part of our clinical governance arrangements. A new group set up within the Trust has the responsibility to make sure that we are continuously learning from complaints, patient experiences and incidents. We have made changes to the way we deliver services however we have not always been able to show that the changes made have reduced the number of similar or same incidents from happening.

Although it is still early days, the Organisational Learning group will be monitoring whether the Trust can demonstrate continuous learning from concerns/feedback and improve patient safety and health outcomes. Part of the monitoring will include looking at themes and trends from different parts of the Trust to improve the way we work how we do things and improving the overall patient experience.

We are committed to continuous improvement. We are taking appropriate corrective and preventative action following consideration of concerns, serious adverse incidents, Coroners Rule 43 reports, Public Service Ombudsman for Wales reports, Patient Experience and stories.

Progress reports with actions needed are the responsibility of service managers; they have to provide assurances that actions have been implemented. Click here to view Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report 2013/14

Using data, performance dashboard & datix systems are tools used for learning. We carry out analysis of data provided in numerous reports and discuss at various committees across the Trust. Learning and further actions are identified and considered before appropriate actions are carried out. Assurance on progress and completion of identified actions is reported into the senior management team, committees and Trust Board.

To support Trust Managers in their effective monitoring of concerns the Trust has designed, developed and implemented a range of Datix dashboards across the Trust. Datix is a patient
Improving Care for Patients

safety and risk management software that enables users to spot trends as concerns occur. Dashboards have been built to the requirements of the individual user and this allows each person to effectively manage and meet their goals with the ability to drill down into the detail.

Dashboards are provided to Committees and meetings within the Trust as the information displayed allows members to see the trending of data over a period of time. As the dashboards are developed in real time they provide an accurate assessment of the current data and managers are able to see at any time the performance of the Trust in relation to Concerns.
Improving Care for Patients

Priorities for 2014-2015

We have been experiencing high demand for our services; this is very likely to continue. Emergency and urgent calls for responses to those who are frail and elderly patients are also increasing.

Earlier this year the independent Andrews report - ‘Trusted to Care’ was released. This report reviewed the quality of care for older people at two Welsh hospitals in South Wales. There were many lessons to learn from the report and; as an Emergency Ambulance Service we recognise that there are lessons for us to also consider and learn from. We will be carrying out work to look at the level of care and professionalism of our staff in helping frail older patients. Within the report the ability to meet the needs of patients with dementia was noted. We are looking into appropriate training for our staff on dementia by linking in with local dementia training teams and exploring what online resources are available for our staff to access.

We know that there are unacceptable limitations in services that can lead to delays in getting treatment and care. We will be working closely with our NHS colleagues to make sure this improves. This work is already underway with our staff referring patients into alternative care pathways. Elderly fallers are accounting for 10% of all 999 calls to our Service. Falls pathways developed are improving the treatment of people over 65 years old who have fallen at home and are preventing unnecessary admissions to hospitals.

A great amount of service user experience is captured across all parts of the Trust however, not all of it is measured. We need to be able to measure the experiences we capture so; we will develop a process that will combine all the data captured to better understand and create a picture of the experiences of our service users. Data will be combined from Incidents, Audits, Surveys, patient stories, compliments, and concerns.

Whilst considerable work was progressed across the Trust last year there is scope for improvement. Working with our NHS colleagues we will want to see improvement in:

- the increase in the number of alternative care pathways
- Improved working with Primary Care/GP and out of hours to better manage patients within primary and community care
- Improve the management of calls from Health Care Professionals (Card 35) to improve the flow of patients needing transport to hospital

We know more could be done to educate the public on the appropriate use of 999 and to help patients access the right service at their time of need. This education is a key message of the national Choose Well Campaign and our ‘Take the Choose Well’ Challenge www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/choosewell/
Improving Care for Patients

Frequent callers are often known to multi agencies and we are all working as best as we can to meet the patients needs, often not realising that our colleagues to, are experiencing the same difficulties with the same patients. A priority for next year will be to work closer with our colleagues in these partner agencies.

In delivering clinical care we recognise the need to improve our working relationships with all partner agencies like:
- Police
- Mental Health Services
- Social Services
- Housing and other partners within the Health Board.

It is not just about delivering care and providing treatment. We need to adopt a culture of quality improvement and allow staff to take their improvement ideas forward. We are continuing to promote the Improving Quality Together (IQT) framework and encourage all staff to complete the Bronze level IQT. We also aim to set up a network of Silver and Gold level IQT coaches to support staff across the Trust.

Reflecting on the commitments we made in our last AQS submission to improve concerns management we have delivered in all those areas and as a result we are making a difference to those patients and members of the public who have been affected by our services. This year with the same commitment and focus the Concerns team will further develop the Datix system to ensure it is configured to capture the Trust requirements for Organisational learning. We will continue to consider the development of educational material for the public to provide an understanding and clarity to the services we provide.

Moving forward, we want to deliver more timely responses, raise our profile further to make it easier for people to complain and share more learning from our complaint handling in tackling issues where we have failed individuals. The lessons learned and trends identified through monitoring data collected through complaints plays a key role in improving the quality of care received by patients and is a priority for the Trust.

We strongly believe in treating patients with kindness, respect and involving them, their families and carers in their healthcare and treatment. We will make sure that we continue to listen patients and staff and monitor the experiences of all those who use our services.
Improving Care for Patients

Further contacts and information
A summary version of this document is available here.

Personal Experiences/Stories
To share your experiences/stories of using any of the Welsh Ambulance service you can contact our ‘Partners in Healthcare Team’

01792 311773
PPI.team@wales.nhs.uk

Compliment/Concern
If you wish to raise a compliment or a concern please contact the Putting Things Right Team

0300 321 321
Amb_PuttingThingsRight@wales.nhs.uk

Trust Information Websites

The Welsh Ambulance Services website
www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk
Visit the publications section to read other Trust strategies, plans and Annual Review. To read last years Annual Quality Statement click here.

NHS Direct Wales website www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk
Visit the site for health, information, advice and signposting

This document in also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request.