Medical and Clinical Services Directorate

Clinical Strategy
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**Please Note:** This document is available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.
Foreword

In 2011 the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust launched its 5 year strategy “Working Together for Success 2011-2016” (WTFS) which sets out our overall service strategy, a clear vision of where we want to be in the future and what we need to do to get there. This Clinical Strategy builds on that excellent work by describing the clinical journey that the organisation must undertake to realise WTFS.

Across the NHS in Wales significant challenges exist. Wales faces an obesity epidemic and rates of smoking, drinking and substance misuse continue to cause concern. The economic crisis has affected Wales badly and is likely to generate greater demands on the NHS. The population is getting older. Within two decades it is estimated almost one in three people in Wales will be aged 60 or over. By 2031, the number of people aged 75 or over will have increased by 76 per cent. Older people are more likely to have at least one chronic condition - illnesses such as diabetes, dementia or arthritis - and have more as their age increases.

People’s expectations of the Health Service are continually rising and sometimes exceed the abilities of the service to deliver. The way some services are delivered cannot be sustained as difficulties in recruiting medical staff continue, and clinical evidence is driving the health system to a model based on centralised specialised care. The mix of rural and urban environments in Wales makes this all the more challenging. Against this background of increasing demand, rising expectations and clinical constraints the Welsh NHS faces a tough financial future. The challenge faced by the Health Service is to deliver more whilst constraining spending, and at the same time maintaining and improving quality.

We believe that as an ambulance service providing high-quality pre-hospital emergency care and treatment across Wales we can play a major part in transforming how healthcare is delivered as set out in the Together for Health. Pre-hospital care, telemedicine and improved transport links can lessen the impact of travelling longer distances to specialist care.

Historically, care by ambulance services has not been thought of as being part of the continuum of care for the critically ill patient. It is now becoming clear that the quality of care delivered by ambulance personnel and pre-hospital doctors is the first vital link in the chain of quality care from point of illness/injury to the emergency department, coronary care unit, stroke unit, trauma unit and beyond. There is huge potential for pre-hospital care, and the coordination of that care to contribute more fully to integrated healthcare provision.

The challenges facing emergency care will undoubtedly increase. Public expectation will continue to grow. Healthcare is a basic human right and should be centred on patients’ needs. As clinicians in the Welsh Ambulance Service we are ready for the challenge and are confident that our clinical strategy will not only improve the quality of care today, but deliver a resilient innovative service that will meet the needs of our patients into the future. We will strive to deliver sustainable high quality care that is comparable with the best. Our focus will be quality. For us quality in healthcare can be defined by patient outcomes, patient experience, patient safety and clinical effectiveness.
Some fundamental principles underpin this strategy; these include:

- Strong clinical leadership is necessary and patient safety is central to all that we do
- We strive continually for clinical excellence
- Recognising that sometimes things go wrong, we require robust quality, safety and risk management processes to be in place, so that we may avoid harm, and learn from mistakes in order to improve
- As clinicians we are responsible for contributing to a culture of professionalism across the Trust
- We must recruit the best and develop and educate all within the organisation to achieve their potential
- We must be cognisant of all national quality standards and improvement initiatives and fully embed them into everyday working
- Patient engagement is essential in order to deliver a service that is responsive to need
- Clinical Audit and patient focused outcome targets are essential in order to facilitate change with sound quality governance

We must also acknowledge that in order to transform the way we work we require systems to support this; hence we need action across all aspects of the service, working in partnership both internally and externally with stakeholders across the health sector, social care and the third-sector. I am confident that by maintaining a patient focus, shared goals become clear, and together we can make significant improvements for our patients.

This strategy will be supported by a comprehensive clinical road map, setting out the actions needed to deliver it. The words in the strategy will be backed up by actions; we begin a period of engagement with all relevant stakeholders, internal and external, to realise our clinical vision.

Paul Hughes
MEDICAL DIRECTOR
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Introduction

The Trust’s five year strategy, Working Together for Success (WTFS), sets out the vision for the future of ambulance services in Wales. The Clinical Strategy supports the development of both services and culture to underpin the objectives of WTFS which will enable the Trust to transform from being perceived as simply a transport based organisation into being a high quality provider of clinical services. This will achieve the aspirations of the Welsh Government strategy “Together for Health” in delivering outcomes comparable with the best. It is the intention of this Clinical Strategy to provide a strategic vision for which a detailed implementation plan will be developed which is risk assessed and aligned to the Trust’s annual delivery plan.

**OUR VISION**
The vision of the Clinical Strategy is to innovate, inspire and influence and by doing so support the Trust in achieving the transformational change necessary. WAST has a unique position in NHS Wales being a national service and this strategy aims to maximise the benefits of this position.

**CLINICAL STRATEGY**
This strategy builds on the existing paramedic and nursing strategies which were developed in consultation. Under the leadership of the Trust’s Medical Director, the Heads of Service within the Medical and Clinical Services Directorate and senior clinical leaders will work collaboratively as a team and with other directorates to ensure that quality and clinical leadership provide the foundations for everything we do. This clinical strategy sets out the aims and vision by which we will deliver clinical excellence across all of our services. Our aspirations will deliver a clinically focused and responsive service. Through focus and determination we will achieve improvement in both patient outcomes and satisfaction.

We will improve the quality and governance of our healthcare provision by introducing new evidence-based models of care supported by the application of new technology. Through the introduction of key performance targets for the Directorate we will demonstrate high performance, attaining and exceeding international standards of excellence, evidenced through benchmarking our service against world leaders in pre-hospital care.
Transformation is: Better systems with improved outcomes and new innovative ways of working

This strategy recognises the financial benefits of improving quality and getting it right first time. More than ever there is a need to ensure financial control and cost improvement. We will be relentless in our drive to improve quality, measure clinical outcomes and improve value for money in order to deliver healthcare that is comparable with the best.

The strategy builds on the Trust’s achievements since the launch of WTFS. It provides the Trust and the people of Wales with a road map detailing the clinical developments required to achieve the WTFS vision for ambulance services in 2016.

The objectives outlined in WFTS are:

**Objective 1**
To achieve all of the national quality standards and clinical requirements.

**Objective 2**
To provide the right service with the right care, in the right place, at the right time with the right skills.

**Objective 3**
To provide high quality planned services which are valued by users.

The Clinical Strategy outlines the activities, changes in culture, new ways of working and changes to the clinical environment required to achieve these objectives.

The following sections identify the necessary changes and developments required to achieve the objectives of WTFS:

**RIGHT SERVICE**

- We will develop our clinical model in the Clinical Contact Centres and ensure we have the right skills and competencies in this crucial area of the Trust.

- We will increase engagement with the public to ensure clear understanding of needs and minimise unnecessary steps.

- We will further enhance the response model by changing the clock start in negotiation with the Welsh Government.

- We will increase the numbers benefitting from telephone advice by implementing the final phase of the Clinical Response Model.

- We will work with Welsh Government and NHS colleagues to implement a three digit single point of access for Wales.

- We will further develop and promote clinical leadership and supervision in all areas of the Trust.

- We will work with the Health Boards and Wales Air Ambulance to develop a critical care retrieval and transfer service, utilising clinicians and developing the role of the Critical Care Paramedic to ensure access to specialist care is available for all critically ill or injured patients in Wales as quickly as possible regardless of location.

- We will undertake a critical review of the clinical capacity (skill mix) of our workforce in order to build our capability to ensure the consistent delivery of high quality evidence based care.
We will safely direct patients to access the right/appropriate level of care for their clinical needs, and give patients a choice.

We will ensure that quality and safety are fundamental to all of our services.

We will develop standardised practice in the form of care bundles and screening tools, underpinned by evidence based clinical guidelines e.g. Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee (JRCALC) and National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

We will work closely with the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine (PHEM) when developing our clinical standards.

We will influence the development of modern, effective, up-to-date clinical and ICT equipment to enhance care delivery.

We will develop a new five year research strategy that aims to embed a research culture throughout the Trust. Through this we ensure that the best evidenced based clinical care is provided for each individual’s needs.

We will ensure that care is delivered which meets required professional standards.

We will enhance the initial telephone triage and first clinical assessment through the introduction of a common triage tool.

We will work with Service Delivery colleagues across the Trust to ensure the most appropriate response is sent to callers.

We will measure success through audit of clinical information.

Our drive will be to increase out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival.

We will support all staff introducing quality improvements.

To ensure no avoidable injury or harm to patients from the healthcare they receive from the Trust.

To increase the treatment pathways available to our clinicians.

To increase the scope of our clinicians to deliver treatment on scene.

We will ensure that treating people with dignity and respect is at the forefront of the minds of our staff when providing care to patients, carers and their families.
RIGHT PLACE

• We will support our clinicians in their decision making.

• We will develop our Clinical Contact Centre to improve the coordination of services to lead capacity management across NHS Wales, thus reducing bottlenecks and improving the patient’s journey by ensuring timely access to the most appropriate level of care.

• We will work together with our Health and Social Care colleagues to ensure new models of care and care pathways are developed using evidence and best practice, built on quality and safety principles and ensuring that clinical risk is managed across organisational boundaries.

• Improve access and referral to the most appropriate care.

• To improve the coordination of emergency care and work seamlessly with other agencies to deliver the best outcomes for the patients.

RIGHT TIME

• We will recognise the importance of promoting and improving health, not just reacting when someone is ill or injured. Our workforce is trusted and can play a significant role in becoming part of the collective group of health professionals within NHS Wales, influencing health improvement and assisting the public in accessing health enhancing support.

• We will promote our services within local communities and align ourselves with key public health messages and campaigns from an ambulance service perspective. By doing this we will play our part in the public safety activities of fellow emergency services and partner agencies which, over time, will reduce serious injury and the effects of chronic illness and disability.

• We will review our response model and our MPDS (dispatch) codes ensuring the correct clinical response is made to each caller.


**RIGHT SKILLS**

- We will critically review our clinical and support staff roles and consider any extension of their current scope of practice. This process will be supported by role redesign as part of the Trust’s workforce planning which may include additional duties, tasks, knowledge and procedural competencies aligned with the relevant Career Frameworks.

- Our greatest asset is our staff; we will provide them with the correct skills to meet the clinical needs of the service.

- We will provide the necessary skills so that our staff feel empowered to implement local service improvements.

- We will continue to support staff in developing their skills and understanding of responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children, young people and adults at risk and, additionally, to recognise unmet health and social care needs which require additional assessment and interventions from other service providers.

- We will improve how we recognise, provide and assist those who require access to the right level of support with a focus on Mental Health and vulnerable patients.

- We will ensure that all staff delivering clinical care adhere to their professional codes.

We acknowledge that despite our best efforts things may go wrong. When this happens we will ensure that concerns raised by our patients, their carers, relatives, our staff or other agencies are responded to professionally and with empathy, in a timely manner, and with the aim of improving services for the future, and patient outcomes and satisfaction.

We aim for a complaints handling process that is seen as exemplary by other health care providers.

The central theme of this strategy is about fostering a culture of clinical leadership and excellence through professionalism across the organisation with shared goals and a common vision.

**Shared clinical leadership is achieved when clinicians work together to drive patient safety and quality through innovation and continuous service improvement.**

It is about developing new models of care that require our staff to organise differently and develop new multidisciplinary relationships. The Directorate recognises that individual clinicians and clinical teams will have to work differently in the future.

These changes will be best achieved through strong clinical leadership in all areas of the Trust. It is imperative that when clinical practice changes, clinicians have led the development and can articulate the reason for change.
The Clinical Strategy aims to remove waste, harm and variation:

- Focussing on the right people in the right place at the right time
- Developing clinical pathways that are measured through improved clinically relevant outcomes
- Improving patient safety and reducing the number (and therefore cost) of adverse events that result in harm
- Ensuring that our staff have the necessary education, equipment, skills and training to deliver safe, high quality care.
- To maintain a high quality and cost effective service.

**CONCLUSION**

Through our aim of innovating, inspiring and influencing, this clinical road map will lead the transformation of our service to our desired state of providing the right environment, the right skills and the right treatment for the people of Wales, whether treatment is received over the telephone or face-to-face. Importantly this strategy recognises that prevention and raising public health awareness are vital elements in managing future demand against a background of reducing resources.

The fundamental principles of clinical leadership and delivering clinical excellence at all levels in the organisation will lead this transformation which will undoubtedly save lives and improve outcomes for the people of Wales.

This strategy will be accompanied by a detailed 5 year work plan, in order to make the aspirations of this strategy reality.