

**DRAFT**

**WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES NHS TRUST**

**MINUTES OF THE CLOSED MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF THE  
WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICES NHS TRUST HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3  
JULY 2013 AT VANTAGE POINT HOUSE, CWMBRAN AND A VIDEO  
CONFERENCE LINK FROM TRUST HEADQUARTERS, ST ASAPH AND  
CONWAY HOUSE, SWANSEA AND ALSO VIA SKYPE**

**PRESENT :**

Mr S Castledine	Non Executive Director and Chair
Dr K Fitzpatrick	Non Executive Director
Mr J Morgan	Non Executive Director

**IN ATTENDANCE :**

Mrs J Gill	Financial Accountant
Mrs L Haddow	Local Counter Fraud Specialist
Mr D Harries	Internal Audit
Mr J Huxley	Assistant Corporate Secretary
Mr J Jones	Corporate Accountant
Mrs M Jose	Staff side Representative (UNISON)
Mr O Lotfy	Principal Auditor
Mrs P Roseblade	Director of Finance and ICT
Mrs D Sharp	Corporate Secretary
Mr D Turner	Staff side Representative (UNISON)

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr D Evans	Non Executive Director
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Prior to the formal business of the Committee the Corporate Secretary and the Director of Finance and ICT advised the Committee that they did not consider SKYPE to be appropriate for the closed session of the meeting. This advice was predicated on information received from NWIS that SKYPE is not currently considered a secure form of communication by that body. Both the Corporate Secretary and the Director of Finance and ICT felt use of the WHVN, either by video link or telephone, offered a secure form of linking into the meeting if a member/attendee could not attend in person.

The Director of Finance and ICT also expressed concern that only the 'host' location could hear the contribution from a SKYPE connection and other locations attending via WHVN could not hear. In response to the advice, the Chairman gave members the opportunity to consider whether it was advisable to continue to use Skype for the closed session of the meeting, after assessing the level of the risk in doing so

in the context of the sensitivity of the matters being discussed, the potential for “hacking” to occur and the increase in security that would be obtained if remote attendees made an external land line voice connection into the WHVN.

During the discussion it became apparent that neither NWIS nor Welsh Government had issued a directive stating that SKYPE should not be used for meetings such as the closed session of the Audit Committee. A query was raised about the ability to hack into external telephone lines used for voice dial into WHVN. It was perceived by one member that this form of hacking would be easier than gaining access to an encrypted computer to computer SKYPE connection. No advice had been sought from NWIS about this aspect of ensuring a secure conversation would take place.

The Chairman advised that a vote would be taken on this matter; following a vote, it was unanimously agreed by Committee members to continue to use Skype for the remainder of the meeting.

The Committee also asked the Director of Finance and ICT to request a full report from NWIS setting out its reasons and technical considerations for currently considering SKYPE not to be secure, the security aspects of using external telephone lines to dial into WHVN and recommendations for cost effective alternatives for establishing a method which allowed members to make a video link into the WHVN from non NHS Wales sites, including locations outside of the UK.

#### **14/13 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**RESOLVED: That**

**(1) it be noted that no declarations of interest were made during this part of the meeting;**

**(2) the declaration of interests schedule listing interests associated with members of the Trust Board be received and approval be given for this information to be published on the Trust’s website; and**

**(3) the schedule of payments received by members of the Trust Board during 2012/13 be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 17 September 2013.**

#### **15/13 TENDER UPDATE REPORT AND SINGLE TENDER WAIVER REQUESTS**

**RESOLVED: That**

**(1) it be noted that one new tender was awarded, one new tender had been issued and five requests to waive Standing Financial Instructions (SFI’s) were accepted during the period; and**

**(2) the explanation from the Director of Finance and ICT relating to a tender waiver application from the Medical Director be noted on the basis that the cost involved was under the threshold of £5,000.**

#### **16/13 INTERNAL AUDIT – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee was provided with a progress report as at July 2013 which set out any significant issues arising from the work undertaken by Internal Audit and provided a summarised analysis of the Internal Audit progress against the annual plan as agreed with the Director of Finance and ICT and the Audit Committee.

Reference was made to an audit of the controls over the use of pool cars and members wanted to receive assurance that since the audit had been undertaken, strong action had been taken to improve the position. In response, the Director of Finance and ICT confirmed that action on the issues arising from the audit had been taken within two days of the report being released and that internal audit colleagues had been asked to undertake a follow up audit.

The Committee also referred to the audit report into the use of hotel accommodation on a long term basis. Members recognised the opportunities that had been missed to review the specific situation but also appreciated that the cost per year that gave rise to the audit was not excessive when balancing this against the needs of the service and expertise of the personnel who had been required to provide support in the South East. However, it was important that controls were in place in the future to ensure that secondment arrangements did not follow a similar pattern and it was recognised that the new All Wales Secondment Policy would provide some additional security in this regard.

The Committee were advised about what future action was to be taken in relation to the audit reports.

**RESOLVED: That**

**(1) the Internal Audit progress report as at July 2013 be received;**

**(2) the action taken with regard to the audit reports on the use of pool cars and hotel accommodation, be received.**

#### **17/13 COUNTER FRAUD – ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13 AND PROGRESS REPORT**

**RESOLVED: That**

**(1) the Counter Fraud Progress Report be received;**

**(2) the Counter Fraud Annual Report for 2012/13 be approved and consideration be given in the future to the target audience and geographical location of training opportunities to ensure that training is available to all staff across Wales; and**

**(3) the ongoing work being undertaken by the Director of Finance and ICT to strengthen the capacity of the Trust's Counter Fraud arrangements be noted.**