



NHS WALES SHARED SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

Duty of Quality Annual Report

2025 - 2026

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Introduction from Chair and Managing Director of NWSSP

We are pleased to present the third NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership's Duty of Quality Report, prepared in line with the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

Although NWSSP does not directly provide frontline clinical care, the services we deliver nationally have an indirect impact on patient safety and the effective running of NHS Wales. From Laundry, Pharmacy Technical Services, Workforce support to Procurement & Supply Chain and Primary Care Administration services, our role is to enable high-quality, safe and sustainable healthcare across Wales.

For NWSSP, quality means more than compliance. It means ensuring that our systems, advice and services consistently support better patient outcomes, strong governance and value for public money. Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our quality and assurance arrangements, embed learning and improvement across our directorates, and maintain a clear focus on safety and regulatory standards. As a national shared service operating within a partnership model, we recognise the importance of collaboration, transparency and accountability. We work closely with Health Boards, Trusts, Special Health Authorities and Welsh Government to ensure that our services support improvement across the wider NHS in Wales. This report outlines the progress we have made, the challenges we continue to address, and provides a deeper insight into the work we do and how we continue to embed quality every day. We would like to thank colleagues across NWSSP for their continued professionalism and commitment to delivering high-quality services for the people of Wales.



Neil Frow,
Managing Director



Tracy Myhill,
Chair



Medical Director's Introduction

This year we have set ourselves the challenge of considering what a high-quality Shared Service organisation looks like in the context of each division.

Armed with this vision we have reconsidered:

- » Do our KPIs and other reporting metrics tell the story of quality?
- » Does our 'always-on' reporting demonstrate the quality story in an accessible manner?
- » How do we demonstrate that we have quality at the core of our planning and decision-making processes?
- » How do we link this into an overarching quality management system?
- » How do we capture, report and share quality improvement across divisions?
- » How do we draw together our organisation-wide quality management system?
- » How do we work together with other non-clinical organisations to share learning?

We agreed, as a Senior Leadership Group, that we would ensure that the 12 Health and Care Quality Standards would be more visible in the quarterly divisional holding to account meetings. This ensures that quality is demonstrably considered alongside performance and finance in our regular reporting rhythms which encompass quality control and quality assurance.

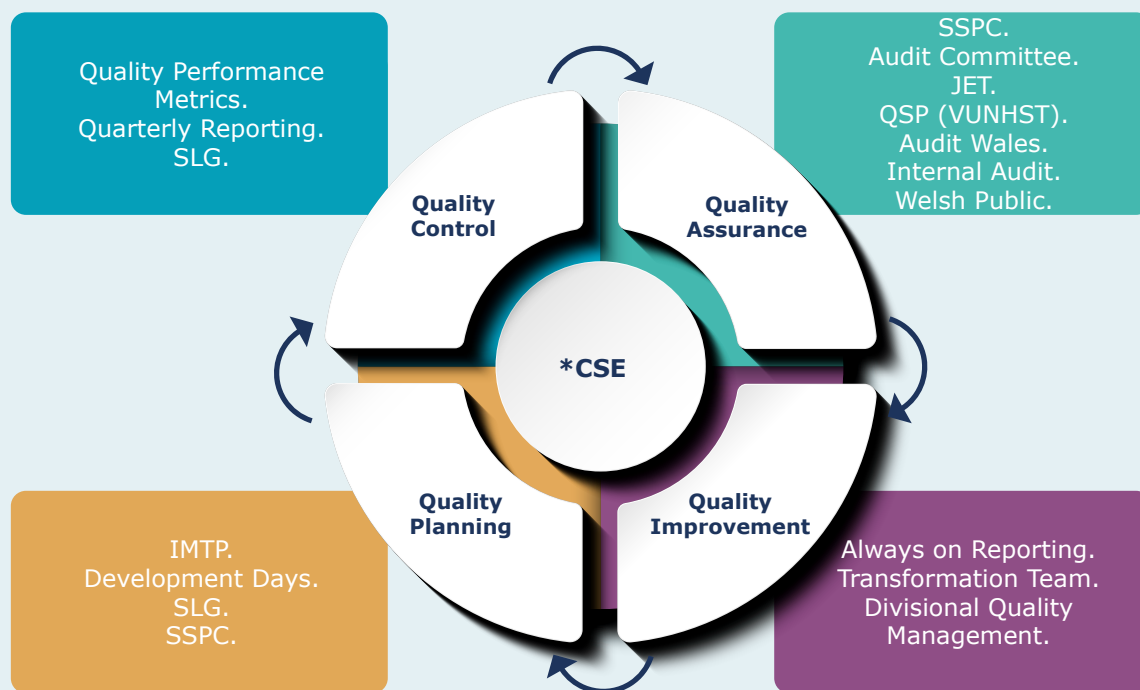
Our always on Vlogs and Blogs continue to be used, and feedback from the Quality, Safety and Performance meetings where they are linked into our assurance reports are positive.

Quality Impact Assessments are now embedded into our strategic papers for reporting and considering proposals.

We continue to meet as a cross divisional quality team to share good practice and highlight areas of mutual learning. An example of this is the use of Quality Impact Assessment Logs which were introduced last year.

We have drafted an overarching Quality Management System which will continue to develop and evolve over the next year. It demonstrates our commitment to quality with examples of our many external accreditations which provide quality assurance, and we will touch on this later in this report.





***CSE** = *Customer Service Excellence*

Diagram: NWSSP Overarching QMS

The progress we have made has assured me, as I step down from my role as Medical Director for NWSSP, that quality has always been at the heart of this organisation and that the Duty of Quality and its associated reporting systems have shone a light on this. It has been a useful vehicle for demonstrating standards across divisions and externally.

I hope you will be able to appreciate this as you review our third annual report.



Dr. Ruth Alcolado,
Medical Director



Key Achievements 2025-26

Our second annual duty of quality report was submitted in July 2025 and was received positively by partner organisations in Wales through approval by the Shared Services Partnership Committee. We have also, following this, engaged with other non-clinical organisations within the NHS to further develop our approach and look at how best to support evidencing compliance. We remain cognisant of the fact that we are measured in terms of compliance in exactly the same way as our clinically focussed colleagues.



Quality Planning and Decision Making

The IMTP and the Duty continue to be integrated into our working practices. There are ongoing challenges in terms of service improvement and financial constraints, however, we have ensured that, by using the duty of quality and the quality wheel to guide decision making, the quality of the services we provide has been maintained and driven forward to ensure service improvement.

This is evidenced using the domains and enablers in the quarterly review process which measures the progress of each division against their IMTP objectives. We have explained this in more detail later in this report.

Quality Management Systems

In 2021, Welsh Government published a Quality and Safety Framework: Learning and Improving. This, taken together with the Duty of Quality, states that “organisations at every level should function as a quality management system to ensure that care meets the six domains of quality”. Recent work done by Improvement Cymru has reinforced this through the Safe Care Partnership, to support the adoption of Quality Management Systems within NHS organisations in Wales. Within NWSSP it would be challenging to operate a single QMS given the wide range of services which we provide. However, we have proposed the development of an overarching QMS which will be underpinned by the current systems in place.

This will have our Customer Service Excellence framework at the centre, with the four components of the Quality Management System, Quality Assurance, Quality Improvement, Quality Planning and Quality Control building around this. ***This is demonstrated in the diagram above.***

Each of our divisions have their own Quality Management System (QMS) tailored to the very different needs of each division, ranging from a more clinically based QMS which needs to meet the requirements of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for our Pharmacy Services and UKAS for our Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory to the largely non-clinical Procurement and Workforce Divisions.



The diversity of the divisions within NWSSP requires a flexibility of implementation to ensure that service provision is maintained and enhanced across NHS Wales. Sharing of best practice across divisions is a key element of our ongoing quality improvement strategy. This is done through senior leadership meetings, at local divisional meetings and through the Duty of Quality Implementation team meetings. More locally this will be embedded through both face to face and online learning.

We have also begun working on an overarching Quality Management System for NWSSP, which is designed to support the existing Quality Management Systems within areas such as Pharmacy Technical Services and the Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory, both of which are heavily externally regulated and have existing robust Quality Management Systems.

This overarching Quality Management System is in accordance with the Welsh Government focus on the Quality Management process and we are working closely with partner organisations at a national level to ensure our ongoing compliance.

Quality Driven Reporting

We continue to use 'always on' reporting through our quarterly reporting programme, which is being developed to include quality as an equal part with finance and performance. As an organisation we acknowledge that we need to ensure that quality is used as an objective measure of our services and we are using the Health and Care Quality Standards Self-assessment to enable our divisions to demonstrate where they meet the standards and where they are able to identify where additional work is needed.

The use of Equality Impact Assessment and Quality Impact Assessment documentation further underpins the integration of quality into the work of NWSSP.

These demonstrate, when attached to papers for proposals and services developments, that the Duty and quality management are incorporated throughout the organisation and forms part of our 'always on' reporting approach.



Quality Driven reporting into Health Boards and Trusts

NWSSP has a unique position within the NHS in Wales. We are hosted by Velindre University NHS Trust (VUNHST) and report through their Quality, Safety and Performance Committee to the Welsh Government for the annual Duty of Quality Report. Our divisional structure enables the provision of a variety of services across the whole of NHS Wales. Examples include:

- » Development of a water and energy recovery system for Laundry Services supported by external accreditation.
- » Legal and Risk Services have maintained the Law Society service excellence accreditation, which enables them to provide assurance across the NHS in Wales that the advice and support they give is of a high standard.
- » Decarbonisation – as NWSSP is responsible for Specialist Estates Services and procurement within the NHS in Wales, it has a major influence on areas such as transport, travel and buildings. This is outlined in more detail in the [2024-2026 Decarbonisation Action Plan](#).





How do we approve the Annual Duty of Quality Report

NWSSP was established in 2011 to deliver centralised functions on behalf of Health Boards and Trusts in Wales. In 2012, the then Welsh Government established Velindre University NHS Trust (VUNHST) as the host for NWSSP.

NWSSP is part of the Shared Services Partnership Committee (SSPC) which is attended by Senior Executives from all Trusts and Health Boards and sets policy and strategy and the management of shared services across NHS Wales. The Duty of Quality Annual Report is submitted to SSPC following ratification by the internal Formal Senior Leadership Group within NWSSP. This ensures that this report is approved by senior leadership across the NHS in Wales.

As part of the reporting process this report is submitted annually, usually in July, to the Quality, Safety and Performance Committee for VUNHST, to assure our host body that NWSSP is meeting its statutory obligations. The report is then submitted to Welsh Government as a chapter attached to the VUNHST annual quality report.

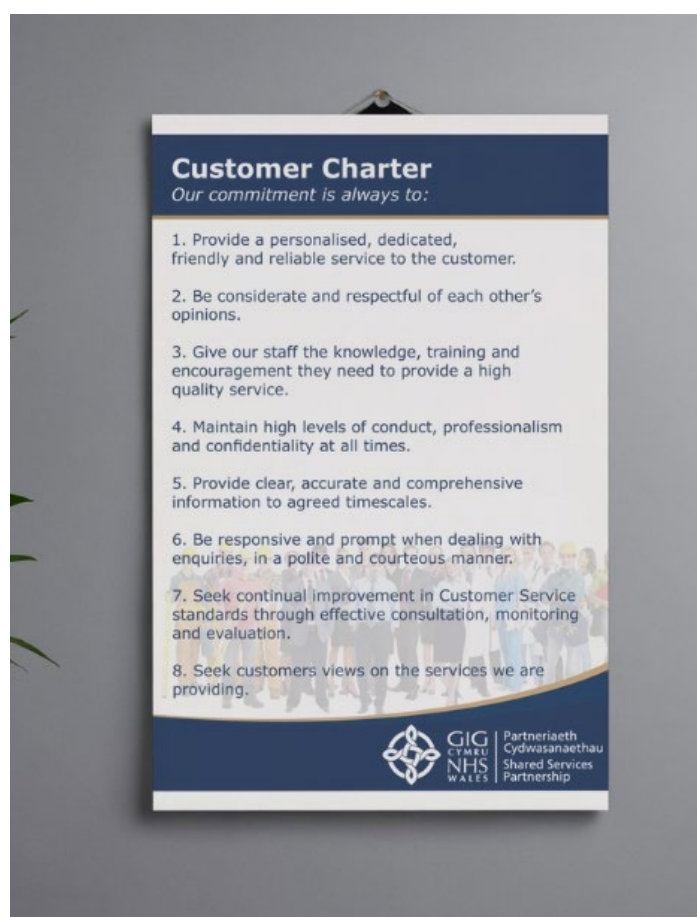
This provides both NWSSP and VUNHST with an established assurance and governance process with evidence that NWSSP is meeting its quality obligations under legislation and aligns with the QMS as described in the Medical Director's introduction above.

NWSSP Customer Charter

We felt that it was important to highlight the relaunch of our Customer Charter in 2025. The charter confirms and reinforces the commitment of NWSSP to providing quality services to all of our customers and colleagues.



The charter can be found here!





Quality Control and using data for quality improvement

As mentioned above, we continue to undertake divisional quarterly reviews. These continue to rely on and use the data we collect to provide assurance to our senior leadership team and thence to the Shared Services Partnership Committee. During these reviews, divisions are held to account for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are based on the safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and person-centred quality domains. KPIs are regularly reviewed with quality measures in mind. With the further addition of Quality as a measure of assurance, the reviews will be enhanced.

We continue to develop performance dashboards to enable real time data driven decision making.

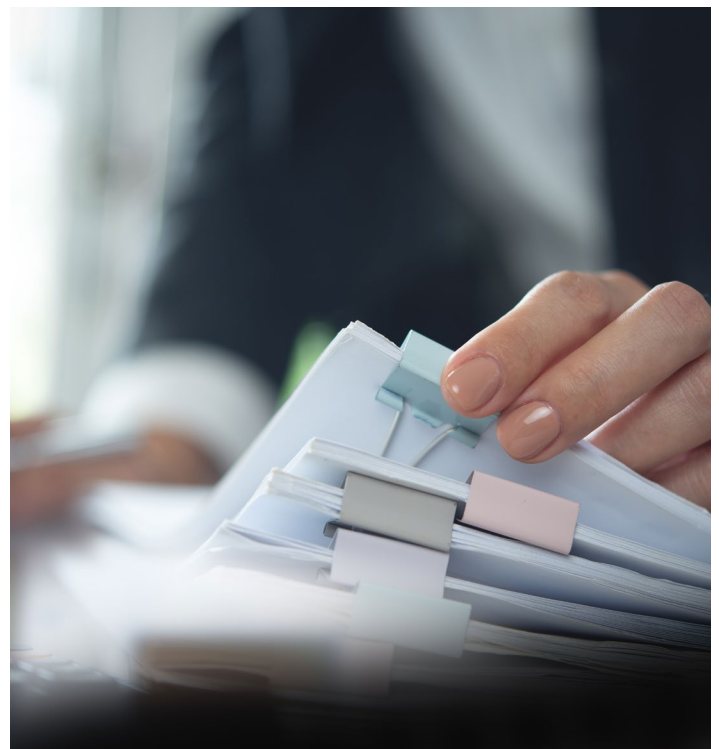
The examples below show how some of our Divisions are using data to impact both performance and quality to improve the services we provide.

Central Team eBusiness Service (CTeS)

The NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) is responsible and accountable for ensuring the NHS Wales Procurement, Supply Chain, and financial systems meet both current and future demands of NHS organisations across Wales. These systems are mission critical - they enable all Health Boards, Trusts, NWSSP, and Special Health Authorities to order, pay for, and report on essential goods and services that directly support patient care. They also underpin statutory financial reporting obligations to the Welsh Government.

Systems were hosted on legacy infrastructure located within the Cardiff and Vale UHB Data Centres. The hardware supporting the platform was rapidly approaching the end of its warranty lifespan, while performance and storage capacity were nearing their limits.

This created a significant risk of system failure and degraded service quality, putting our ability to meet agreed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) under pressure.



- » **Quantitative feedback** showed that system backups and batch processing were exceeding agreed Recovery point targets. Infrastructure usage reports confirmed that both computer and storage utilisation had reached 90%+ capacity, with no ability to scale further. Hardware support costs were rising year on year, while vendor support availability was declining.
- » **Qualitative feedback** further highlighted growing operational concerns. NHS Wales finance teams reported sluggish system performance during peak periods (e.g. month-end close and year-end reporting). Procurement teams experienced intermittent issues with interface stability and data refreshes, affecting ordering and supply visibility. Stakeholders expressed concerns about system reliability and resilience, particularly given increasing reliance on digital services and analytics.

The system was deemed mission critical, maintaining its resilience and future-readiness became a priority. A joint NHS Wales project was initiated well ahead of critical deadlines, enabling structured analysis, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based decision making. The CTeS team assessed options including like-for-like hardware refresh, private cloud hosting, and a full cloud migration, ultimately choosing Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) to align with NHS Wales Cloud First strategy and deliver scalable, secure, and modern hosting. Using the available data evidenced the need to protect NHS Wales operational resilience, compliance, and digital ambitions and it was proactively delivered through evidence-based planning and robust governance.

The work was fully aligned with the Duty of Quality:

Safe: Addressing hardware failure risk and improving DR capability.

Timely: Reducing downtime risk and improving incident response.

Effective: Enabling consistent, high-performing service for all users.

Efficient: Lowering long-term costs by avoiding on-premises investment.

Equitable: Ensuring all 16k users have stable, secure access.

Person-centred: Indirectly supporting clinical services by safeguarding supply chain and financial operations.

Using leadership skills and data to practice, the CTeS team were able to work with colleagues to move the NHS Wales Financial Management Solution (FMS) from on-premises data centres to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI). This transformation not only modernised national financial services but also set a standard for leadership in digital change, resilience planning, and structured testing.



Medical Examiner Service (MES)



The Medical Examiner Service has developed a set of national dashboards which bring together information from every case and present it in a clear and meaningful way. These dashboards show key details such as the number of cases reviewed, the place of death, the care provider involved, the number of referrals made to His Majesty's Coroner, and the time taken between a person's death and the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) being sent to the Registrar.

By looking at this information across different parts of the system, the care provider, the MES and Welsh Government can see how well each sector is performing, compare patterns across Wales, and identify any areas where delays or pressure points are emerging. This allows the service and its partners to make timely improvements and ensure the process works smoothly for families, clinicians and registrars.

Using data in this way supports the Duty of Quality, turning information into meaningful action that improves the service.

It also reflects the national focus on delivering care that is **timely**, by reducing delays at every stage of the process; **efficient**, by ensuring information moves smoothly between teams and avoiding unnecessary steps; **effective**, by using accurate data to support better decisions and drive learning across services; and **equitable**, by providing the same high standard of review and support for every family across Wales. This approach also demonstrates strong leadership, as the Medical Examiner Service uses clear, transparent data to guide improvement, monitor performance, and support good governance. Finally, it strengthens a whole system approach, helping hospitals, community teams, coroners, registrars and Health Boards work together so the process is consistent, joined up and centred around the needs of families. Over the most recent winter period, this approach has helped the MES monitor pressures, maintained performance, and clearly demonstrated progress to partners across Wales.



Procurement Services

Our Procurement team works across NHS Wales to deliver cost effective and efficient services to the NHS and the people of Wales.

Under the newly established Provider Selection Regime, which was introduced in February 2025, NWSSP Procurement Services successfully delivered a wide-scale national procurement to deliver 164,000 first outpatient appointments across 18 specialities and patient pathways. A common national specification for outpatient services for Wales was developed which allowed delivery at prices below the usual national tariff. This involved extensive engagement with framework contractors and clinicians across multiple specialities and necessitated the use of data to identify needs and benefits.

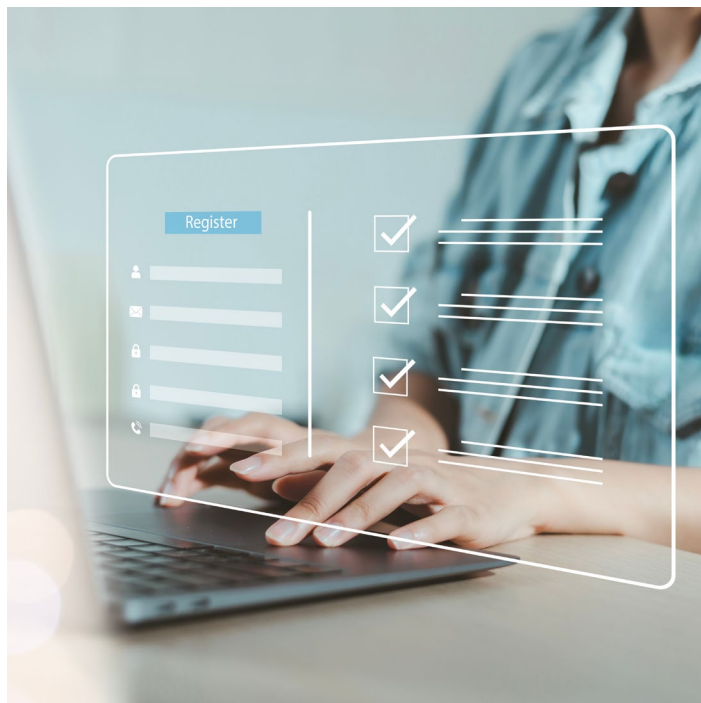
Appointments were provided in key specialities and were scheduled during evenings and weekends to avoid disruption to routine health board activity and to maximise use of existing NHS Wales infrastructure, including estates and equipment.

This initiative helped to reduce referral bottlenecks, reduced the risk of harm, and accelerated treatment, leading to improved health outcomes for patients across Wales. Next steps will include 'see and treat' appointments for some patients, meaning that they are seen and treated on the first appointment, preventing the need for further appointments and ensuring that the patients are not delayed or placed on waiting lists unnecessarily.



Primary Care Services

Audit Wales engaged with NWSSP and its Primary Care Services Division to undertake a pilot data-matching exercise to look at duplicate patient registrations and where deceased individuals were not removed from active patient lists.



The reasons for the exercise were to identify any errors in the system and to look at how NHS Wales could improve its processes in relation to GP lists.

A report was then published ([accessible here Checking the patients: Results from a pilot data matching exercise on GP patient lists](#)).

Funding for GP services is, in part, dependent on patient numbers and it is therefore important and financially responsible to ensure that payment is made based on accurate patient lists. Findings revealed a small number of errors, and a small number of deceased patients who had not been removed from the lists. Audit Wales acknowledged that NWSSP had already begun to review its approach in terms of checking lists. NWSSP was complimented by the Auditor General for Wales for taking forward learning in relation to data-matching and data analysis.





Using Artificial Intelligence in Radiology in Wales – Specialist Estates Services (SES)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming numerous fields and Radiology is no exception. Radiology, a branch of medicine that uses imaging technology to diagnose and treat diseases, has always been at the forefront of technological advancement. However, the integration of AI marks a new era, where machine learning algorithms and advanced data processing capabilities are poised to take Radiology to unprecedented levels of precision and efficiency. AI algorithms, particularly those based on deep learning, have shown remarkable competence in analysing medical images. These systems can detect abnormalities such as tumours, fractures, bleeds, and lesions with a high degree of accuracy. For instance, AI solutions can assist Radiologists by highlighting areas of concern on scans, facilitating earlier detection of cancers and other conditions. AI systems can gather and analyse vast amounts of data from diverse sources, enabling them to recognise patterns that might be missed by the human eye. This capability significantly enhances diagnostic accuracy. Studies have demonstrated that AI can match the performance of Radiologists in identifying certain conditions, helping to lead to more timely diagnoses.

NWSSP Specialist Estates Services had the idea to create a Welsh AI group, and the 'AI in Radiology Implementation Group' was established to provide a collective understanding for the assessment and impact of AI on NHS Wales organisations. It was important to create a 'Once for Wales' solution, with multi-organisation collaboration.

One of the roles of the SES imaging team is to give expert advice and guidance to all health boards and to facilitate their imaging needs. The team has already created a joined-up approach by implementing a successful national diagnostic programme. As a team, they can enable projects to be rolled out more efficiently, leveraging buying power by using positive relationships that have already been forged with suppliers, utilising national frameworks, and influencing what can be achieved in the longer term in a more controlled way. This SES project really champions the values of NWSSP in delivering value for money across NHS Wales, creating efficiencies and potential cost savings; innovation through investigating new advances in technology; and excellence through partnership, working with groups such as Public Health Wales, Imaging Executive, NIAW, Life Sciences Hub Wales, and Welsh Government. This contributes towards every aspect of the patient journey through Radiology. At the very start, it can be used to speed up scan times. The team has recently successfully secured Welsh Government funding for purchasing AI software upgrades on scanners across Wales. This can help shorten scan times by up to 73%, directly improving patient care and experience, as well as increasing clinical productivity.



This aims to increase throughput by 20% once the AI solutions are fully commissioned, significantly increasing capacity. Using existing mobile MRI units, patient numbers can be increased by around eight per day, which over the course of a year could mean 2,800 more patients could be scanned. It also means that Radiographers have more time per patient, which is invaluable for improving patient care, which is particularly important for claustrophobic, additional needs or paediatric patients and makes the whole imaging journey more comfortable. There is also a saving of energy consumption per patient, accumulating to significant overall energy savings per year. The AI group has successfully evaluated different bone age AI solutions using Welsh data. If there are concerns over a child's growth, then a bone age study is performed, which helps evaluate how fast or slowly a child's skeleton is maturing and indicates their level of biological and structural maturity better than the chronological age. Specialised paediatric Radiologists report an X-Ray of the hand & wrist. But with the decline in the number of these specialists, inevitably there have been reporting delays. They often take 15-20 minutes each to report, and there can be inconsistencies and subjectivity with the reporting. The team has evaluated bone age AI solutions that can aid the bone age diagnosis. So far, the results have been extremely successful, 100% accurate agreeing with the original Radiologist report, and all taking 10 seconds to return a report.

This project aligns wholly with the aims of the Duty. It is evidence-based and designed to support and enhance the patient journey whilst showing savings on time and cost in the long run. It is safe, timely, efficient, equitable, effective and person centred and demonstrates how the Duty works in practice and partnership, across Health Boards and professional boundaries to benefit patients.



Digital and Workforce Productivity

The team has undertaken two key pieces of work this year which demonstrate not only data to practice but also the way in which this can be used to support staff in the workplace.

The team has implemented an Agency Digital Onboarding Platform. The Digital Learning Team has been collaborating with Health Boards to enhance recruitment processes for agency workers through the all-Wales Temporary Staffing Group. They have developed a digital platform to streamline the onboarding of agency workers, moving away from the current manual process, which relies on forms and emails. Built within Learning at Wales, the platform captures 'declarations' from both the Agency Worker and Agencies regarding ID checks, digital ID photos, and competencies. Additionally, 70% of the learning materials required by agency workers is stored in the system, allowing them to address any training gaps immediately. The platform also has appropriate restrictions in place to ensure organizations and agencies can only view their own workers' information. Reporting capabilities are included to support both agencies and organisations in monitoring compliance, conducting audits, and assessing counter-fraud measures as needed.

A pilot with PTHB and two agencies began in June 2025, and following a positive evaluation, NWSSP has engaged with two more Health Boards to initiate implementation. This maps clearly to Workforce, Learning, Improvement and Research and Culture with the domains of Safe, Effective, Timely and Efficient.

The second piece of work is the development of an International Recruitment Pastoral Application.



As detailed within a Welsh Health Circular Standardised Information Provision for Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) (WHC/2024/021), NWSSP led the project and collaborated with an external provider to develop a Pastoral application. This app aims to support international recruits during their initial employment, ensuring their well-being, smooth transition, and retention. Initially crafted for nurse recruitment in 2025, NWSSP (Digital Workforce) received the green light to adapt it for broader healthcare professional international recruitment. We've included key information for medics, such as GMC requirements, and have further enhanced it to support international dental recruitment.

The app serves as a comprehensive resource for individuals relocating to the UK through our international recruitment programs. Each health board has developed a tab to showcase information about their local area, featuring practical guidance on registering with a GP or dentist, local shops and amenities, religious buildings, and other useful details. Additionally, the app contains several testimonials from NHS Wales recruits, offering valuable insights and encouragement to new recruits.

This shows leadership in partnership with benefits for Workforce, Information, Learning, Improvement and Research, and uses all the enablers to achieve this.



Primary Care Services

Primary Care Services use data to support data driven decision making.

The Primary Care Services dashboards provide a vital information resource for key stakeholders, including Welsh Government, HEIW, Optometry Wales and others. These dashboards enable evidence based, informed decisions relating to service delivery, workforce planning, digital transformation and quality improvement across primary care. By ensuring that accurate, standardised and meaningful data is readily accessible, the dashboards actively support the Duty of Quality by enhancing transparency, strengthening governance, and enabling targeted actions that improve patient experience, safety and outcomes.





External Quality Reviews, accreditations and awards

Customer Service Excellence Accreditation (CSE)



As part of the ongoing drive for excellence within NWSSP, we again sought Customer Service Accreditation for the whole organisation. We are very pleased to have earned this accreditation for the second year and are very proud of all the colleagues who have made this possible.

We continue to ensure the ongoing interdependency between CSE and the Duty of Quality, and you can see examples of this in the attached vlogs linked to the Quality Wheel below.

The feedback from CSE assessors will continue to be used to improve our processes and we will continue to use our 'always on' reporting systems to inform this. The CSE report also demonstrates the linkage and collaboration between the various divisions in NWSSP.



Audit Wales Finance Assurance

Audit Wales undertakes assurance processes with each NHS body as part of their statutory functions. Following this stringent external audit of NWSSP accounts, it was concluded that there were no issues identified concerning the services provided by NWSSP. Audit Wales were able to provide positive assurances to NHS external audit teams on the activities of NWSSP for accounts opinion purposes, with no recommendations arising from their work for the year. This aligns with the **Safe, Timely, Effective, and Efficient** domains of the Duty of Quality wheel.



Achievement	Division	Quality Domains	Quality Enablers
CSE	Organisation wide	» Equitable » Person Centred	» Leadership » Culture » Information
ISO/IEC 17025:2017 UKAS audit showed exceptional levels of compliance	Surgical and Materials Testing Laboratory	» Safe » Timely » Effective » Efficient	» Information » Whole System » Learning, Improvement and Research
ISO 9001	Across divisions	» Safe » Timely » Efficient » Effective » Equitable » Person centred	» Information » Leadership » Culture
Law Society Lexcel Accreditation	Legal and Risk Services	» Timely » Effective » Efficient » Equitable » Person centred	» Leadership » Workforce » Culture » Information » Learning, improvement and research » Whole system Approach
ISO2000-1 standard and BACS certification, covering information technology, service management and system requirements	Central Team E-Business Services	» Timely » Effective » Efficient » Equitable » Person-centred	» Leadership » Workforce » Culture » Information » Whole system approach
ISO 9001 ISO 45001 STS Food Safety	Procurement Services	» Efficient » Effective	» Safe » Culture » Workforce » Whole System approach



ISO standard 9001 relates to quality management systems and is held by multiple areas across NWSSP, this links in with the work we are currently undertaking around a whole systems approach to an organisational QMS.

Legal and Risk

Our Legal and Risk team, which provides a service across NHS Wales, was again assessed for Lexcel over a 3-day period. This is a yearly assessment which supplements the 5-day assessment which is held every 3 years. The assessor interviews staff members from all levels, selects a randomised group of legal cases for review and assesses the policies and procedures in place, ensuring a full and objective assessment process.



Whilst these are formal external assessments, these and other divisions within NWSSP also undertake other forms of internal quality assurance. This includes the work undertaken by the People and Organisational Development team who, quantitatively and qualitatively, measure responses to surveys and evaluations including the People and OD survey, the NHS Wales Staff survey, experiential and impact evaluations of courses, action point response times and the quality of external speakers. These assessments provide feedback for the organisation, course and survey participants and staff, allowing for improved service delivery.





Staff Voices

The 12 health and care standards which comprise the 6 measures of quality and the 6 key enablers laid out in the Duty of Quality are shown in the inner ring and outer ring respectively on the wheel below.

The 6 measures/domains of quality are:

Safe: These focuses on avoiding preventable harm, getting processes and care right, and learning from incidents and concerns to prevent repetition.

Timely: This is described as providing high quality care in the right timeframe.

Effective: This reflects utilisation of evidence-based practice including prevention as well as treatment.

Efficient: A values-based approach to improve outcomes for people.

Equitable: Providing equality of opportunity and human rights.

Person-centred: Meeting people's needs.

The 6 enablers are:

Workforce: Ensuring that the workforce is skilled and available to provide care and support to those providing care.

Leadership: Clear vision with governance and accountability embedded in the organisation.

Culture: Quality systems and safety in a supportive way enabling sharing new ideas and learning from mistakes.

Information: Using data and knowledge to inform service quality and development.

Learning and Improvement: quality improvement to deliver quality services and outcomes.

Whole System Approach: Improving quality across the health care system to improve population outcomes.

These can be further explored by clicking on the following link: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2022-10/the-duty-of-quality-statutory-guidance-2023-and-quality-standards-2023.pdf>





Explore the wheel below (by clicking on each section) to hear staff in NWSSP explaining how quality is key to their work on behalf of NHS Wales and what it means to them, or to see links explaining how quality is demonstrated in NWSSP.



Leadership

The importance of the Armed Forces covenant cannot be overemphasised. It is a cultural engagement which shows a two-way commitment to engagement and support which is invaluable to both veterans and NWSSP. It prioritises inclusivity and mentorship. It demonstrates and values leadership and problem solving.

Workforce

We have used the Customer Service Excellence Award presentation for this as it demonstrates a workforce wide commitment to the quality of services we provide in NWSSP.

Information

Information governance relates to the safe handling of identifiable and commercially sensitive information. It means ensuring that we protect identifiable information and only use it for the reason why it was collected.

This is a legal obligation, and the team ensures that the Duty of Quality is considered when handling data.

Culture, Efficient, Equitable

We have grouped these domains and enabler together to demonstrate across a series of video snips, the work that the Wales General Ophthalmic Scheme (WGOS) is doing across Wales to improve eye care for our population. It aligns with the Welsh Government's report "A Healthier Wales" which was published in 2018 and aims to make sure that health services work better together. The WGOS team, led by clinical leads and supported by NWSSP Primary Care Services, has redesigned eye care to focus on the patient. It aims to standardise services, no matter where in Wales the patient lives and accesses health care and change the culture of ophthalmic service delivery to ensure that all parts of the system, optometrists, GP and hospital-based services work together with seamless pathways so that patients are seen by the right person at the right time.



Learning, Improvement and Research

NWSSP was the first organisation in NHS Wales to achieve the Customer Service Excellence Award, a prestigious government standard. This segment looks at the impact which holding and working towards this award has across the organisation and how the continuous improvement cycle leads to learning and improvement.

Whole Systems Approach

The Counter Fraud Specialist (CFS) in NWSSP works across multiple systems including Health Bodies in Wales, Welsh Government, Audit Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service and the NHS Counter Fraud Authority to ensure that economic crime in the NHS is dealt with appropriately. The CFS provides specialist training to staff at all levels to ensure that money in the NHS is used for the purpose for which it is meant – the care of patients.

Safe

Our Health and Safety team has used a variety of methods to support, inform and educate staff across NWSSP including attendance at meetings, newsletters and coffee mornings. This ensures that all staff have an opportunity to learn and understand the importance of Health and Safety across the wide variety of workplaces in NWSSP, including laundry units, laboratories and office settings.

Effective

The NWSSP finance team operate in accordance with professional standards. The team has a responsibility to comply with the International Financial Reporting Standards which set a quality expectation on finance professionals with the focus on global comparability and transparency. The team is compliant with the UK Financial Reporting Council Framework which ensures that their work is effective and accurate. 44% of the team have a professional accountancy qualification.

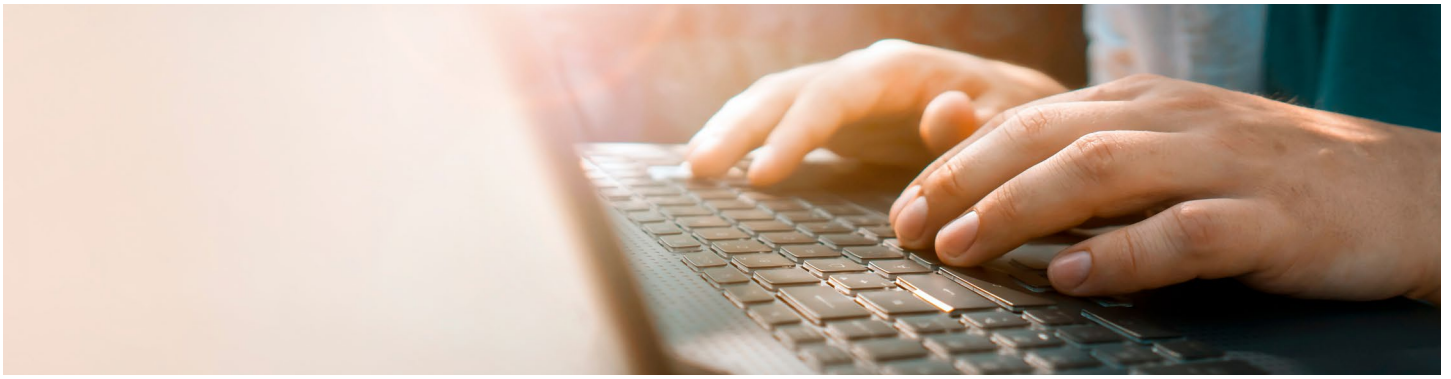
Timely

The finance team within NWSSP supports both internal and external customers by providing financial information. The stakeholders include the Shared Services Partnership Committee, the Welsh Risk Pool Committee, Welsh Government and other Health Boards and Trusts. The financial information must be provided in a timely manner to enable accurate and efficient decision making to maximise value for money. Budget holders have dashboards to enable access to their financial information and the four seasons of the financial year are explained as well as how this impacts on financial management.

Person centred

The NWSSP Armed Forces community is continuing to develop and is strongly person centred, focussing on the value that the armed forces community and their families can bring to the organisation and the wider community. NWSSP works with partner organisations such as Career Transition Partnership and Forces Families Jobs to provide and promote flexible support and employment opportunities.





Medical Directors Summary - *Our Next Steps*

Dr Martin Edwards has summarised the progress of NWSSP and identified the way forward in continuing to embed Quality into the diverse divisions within NWSSP.

As I step into the role of Medical Director for NWSSP on 1 April, I am joining an organisation that has already demonstrated a strong and mature commitment to the Duty of Quality. The work undertaken over the past three years has created a firm foundation: clear governance arrangements, increasingly data driven reporting, strengthened divisional quality systems, and a growing culture of collaboration and learning across our diverse services.

My role now is to build on this progress and help shape the next phase of our organisational approach to quality. NWSSP occupies a unique space in NHS Wales - one where the quality of our services may not always be visible to the public, yet has a profound impact on the safety, timeliness and effectiveness of care across the entire system. Ensuring that our contribution is recognised, understood and continuously improved will be a central focus of my tenure.

In reviewing this Duty of Quality report, it is evident that our divisions are increasingly embedding quality principles into planning, performance, assurance and everyday decision making. Our externally accredited services provide strong assurance; our use of real time data and dashboards is accelerating;

and the growing maturity of our internal quality networks is helping to spread learning at pace. These strengths position us well to meet the evolving expectations of NHS Wales, regulators and our partner organisations.

At the same time, it is important that we continue to challenge ourselves. The scale, diversity and complexity of NWSSP demand a coherent quality narrative - one that not only reflects the excellent work taking place locally but also demonstrates how our collective effort and systems thinking enhance the health and wellbeing of the population we serve. As the new Medical Director, I see real opportunity in developing this narrative further, ensuring that quality is consistently central to our strategy, our transformation programmes and our future operating model.



Martin Edwards,
Medical Director



Our Next Steps

Over the coming year, our priorities will be to deepen and strengthen NWSSP's quality approach through the following actions:

1. Finalise and implement the overarching Quality Management System (QMS)

We will complete and embed our organisational QMS, ensuring it is meaningful, proportionate and aligned with existing divisional systems. This will allow us to present a coherent "once for NWSSP" framework while respecting the specialist requirements of our more regulated services.

2. Strengthen strategic quality planning

Quality considerations must shape our strategic choices - not simply follow them. I will work with colleagues to ensure that Quality Impact Assessments are used not only as assurance tools but as mechanisms to support strategic decision making, prioritisation, and early risk identification.

3. Enhance our quality driven performance and reporting

Building on our existing quarterly review arrangements and 'always on' reporting, we will further strengthen how quality is evidenced alongside finance and performance. Our aim is to ensure that every division can clearly articulate its quality story, supported by robust, real time data and transparent metrics.

4. Broaden shared learning and collaboration

As a non clinical organisation operating across the NHS, NWSSP is uniquely positioned to drive system wide improvement. Over the next year, I will prioritise strengthening our cross divisional quality network, enhancing external collaborations, and developing more structured mechanisms for sharing learning across NHS Wales.

5. Develop our quality narrative

To fulfil our statutory responsibilities - and to ensure our contribution is fully recognised - we need to articulate clearly how our work supports safe, effective and equitable care. I will lead the development of a strengthened NWSSP quality narrative, ensuring that our data, accreditations and success stories are consistently and confidently presented.

6. Continue to support a culture of quality and curiosity

A strong culture is the backbone of high quality services. I will work closely with colleagues to ensure that staff feel supported, able to innovate, and confident in raising concerns or learning from experience. Quality improvement capability, strong leadership behaviours and open communication will remain key enablers.





Conclusion

I am proud to join an organisation with such a clear commitment to quality. The progress made to date reflects the dedication of colleagues across all divisions, and I look forward to working with you to build on this momentum. By strengthening our systems, clarifying our narrative and embedding a strategic approach to quality, we will continue to demonstrate the essential contribution NWSSP makes to safe, sustainable and high quality healthcare across Wales.





Appendix A - IMTP Duty of Quality 2026 - 2029



Workforce

Accounts Payable	We will continue to ensure that all staff receive clear and effective "purchase to pay" training. This will include creating robust training frameworks and regularly reviewing and updating induction programs.
All Wales Laundry Service	We plan to support the development of future laundry engineers by offering student work placements through local colleges.
Audit and Assurance	We plan to complete a review of our divisional structure and make necessary changes to optimise resources. This will help improve service delivery through better staff utilisation and a stronger talent pipeline.
Pharmacy Services	We plan to develop a workforce plan to strengthen recruitment, retention, and succession planning.
Procurement and Health Courier Services (HCS)	We plan to conduct a training needs analysis to identify HEIW-funded and commissioned courses for Wales Pharmacy Technical Service. This will ensure staff have access to accredited education and training.
Specialist Estates Services	We plan to build workforce capability and capacity to meet changing organisational needs through improved recruitment, retention, succession planning, and training.
Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory	We plan to ensure continuity by creating a costed recruitment and induction plan to manage senior retirements.





Culture	
Accounts Payable	We will improve staff benefits across NHS Wales by launching a dedicated staff benefits portal.
Digital Workforce Solutions	We continue to lead the delivery of the All-Wales International Recruitment Programme to support workforce sustainability across NHS Wales.
People & OD	We will embed the inclusive culture action plan to create a workplace that is safe, anti-racist, inclusive, and compassionate.
Single Lead Employer	We will support attendance management for Resident Doctors, Dentists, and trainees by providing reasonable adjustments. This will ensure trainees who need specific support can focus on training and delivering patient care.
Single Lead Employer	We will embed speaking up safely within NWSSP to promote openness, effective monitoring, and organisational wellbeing.



Information	
All Wales Laundry Service	We will future-proof laundry operations by introducing automated production dashboards, replacing manual processes, and ensuring a resilient, high-quality service.
Central Team eBusiness Services	We will support the TRAMS project by implementing a new computer based manufacturing system based on Oracle applications, enabling better insights and informed decision making.
Digital Workforce Solutions	We will use Health Roster to support Nurse Workforce Planning across NHS Wales, ensuring workforce plans include temporary staffing and demand forecasting.
Medical Examiner Services	We will improve data quality and accessibility by developing an MES reporting tool with ICD11 coding. This will allow real-time analysis of morality patterns to support public health planning and decision-making.
Pharmacy Services	We will continue to manage the supply chain across Wales, quantifying volumes and building resilience to address medicines shortages. This will require robust data consolidation and analysis.
Primary Care Services	We will continue to support the Primary Care Strategic Workforce Plan by delivering the Primary Care Workforce Intelligence system and supporting services. Shared data sets will help inform workforce planning across Wales.





Learning, Improvement and Research

Accounts Payable	We will explore options to replace OCR software with AI automation, which will deliver a more efficient Accounts Payable service.
All Wales Laundry Service	We will explore options to benchmark Laundry Services against commercial and NHS providers to further improve service delivery and key performance indicators.
Employment Services	We will evaluate workforce sustainability options to create a clear approach for locum management across primary and community care, aligned with national workforce goals. This will improve workforce planning and help maintain service continuity while responding to changing demands.
Legal and Risk & Welsh Risk Pool	We will work with other nations to share knowledge and good practice about the management of clinical negligence claims.
Primary Care Services	We will introduce and embed research and development within Primary Care Services to ensure we remain at the forefront of delivering evidence-based care to patients in Wales, while offering learning opportunities to other regions in the UK.
Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory	We will complete literature searching and synthesis training within the Research & Development team to strengthen evidence-based practices.
Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory	We will review new post-market surveillance rules from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and changes to UK Medical Devices Regulations (MDR) to ensure colleagues are supported with interpretation and compliance.





Whole System Approach

Central Team eBusiness Services	We will expand the use of robotics to support health organisations Financial Management System (FMS) processes, including service desk support and the design of new finance and procurement processes using the Microsoft Power Platform.
Digital Workforce Solutions	We will lead the development of the People Portal Transformation Programme - a flexible, agile workforce system designed to meet NHS Wales' evolving needs, with seamless integration to other NHS Wales e-systems.
Employment Services	We will actively contribute to the Director's Workforce Workplan by providing subject matter expertise, promoting business efficiency, and improving the customer's journey to ensure safe and effective change.
Legal and Risk & Welsh Risk Pool	We will provide guidance and support to NHS organisations with the introduction of revised national guidance for Putting Things Right (PTR), to be renamed Listening to People (LTP)
Pharmacy Services	We will deliver the seasonal vaccination programme through a national model for vaccine delivery.
Pharmacy Services	We will develop three transforming Access to Medicines (TRAMS) Hubs across Wales, increasing NHS Wales' capacity to prepare essential medicines and enabling the use of advanced technology and automation to improve patient safety and free up nurses time for patient care.
Primary Care	We will deliver a consistent, efficient, and equitable national process for providing Gluten-Free Subsidy Cards to eligible patients across Wales, ensuring a centralised and reliable service.





Leadership

Audit and Assurance	We will develop a strategy to establish a commercial arm for Audit & Assurance services to provide support to organisations outside NHS Wales.
Digital Workforce Solutions	We will lead the development of the People Portal Transformation Programme, moving from procurement to planning and mobilisation. This will provide a structured, coordinated, and standardised approach throughout the migration process.
Digital Workforce solutions	We will lead the delivery of the NHS Wales International Recruitment Programme, reducing gaps in the clinical workforce and providing a viable and cost effective method for filling hard to fill vacancies through targeted international recruitment.
Legal and Risk & Welsh Risk Pool	We will introduce Digital Decision Making and Consent across NHS Wales, giving clients access to a platform that digitises the consent process.
Pharmacy Services	We will transform Access to Medicines (TRAMS) by developing an operational model for the Radiopharmacy unit. This will build capacity and contingency to ensure patients receive timely, high-quality services.
Procurement and Health Courier Services (HCS)	We will continue work on the Scan4Safety as part of the Wales modernisation programme (a five-year initiative)
Single Lead Employer	We will expand services and specialities under the Single Lead Employer model, giving trainees a streamlined employment relationship so they can focus on training and patient care.
Specialist Estates Services	We will deliver enhanced services to Welsh Government and NHs organisations to support decarbonisation.





Timely

All Wales Laundry Services	We will implement strategic linen stock holdings to create resilience across the service and ensure sufficient stock to maintain supply if production at a site is disrupted
All Wales Laundry Services	We will examine distribution options for the remaining four laundries based on geographical boundaries to maximise capacity at each site and better meet customer demand.
All Wales Laundry Service	We will develop customer self-service functionality for managing rented stock orders, reducing delays and empowering users.
Central Team eBusiness Services	We will utilise available resources to extend robotics support to health organisations Financial Management System (FMS) processes, including service desk support and the design of new finance and procurement processes using the Microsoft Power Platform. This will free up time for organisations to focus on value-added activities.
Pharmacy Services	We will conduct an All-Wales assessment and management of unlicensed medicines, which will release staff time back to local services.
Pharmacy Services	We will deliver the Transformation Access to Medicines Hubs across Wales to provide sufficient capacity and contingency, ensuring a timely supply of high-quality aseptic products. This will help meet patient treatment demands and reduce waiting times.





Safe	
Central Team eBusiness Services	We will coordinate the annual Financial Management System (FMS) Disaster Recovery (DR) test to ensure readiness in the event of a disaster, providing continuity of service.
Legal and Risk & Welsh Risk Pool	We will advance the design, implementation and evaluation of Safety & Learning programmes, focusing on maternity and neonatal services to mitigate litigation risk by addressing underlying clinical safety issues.
Pharmacy Services	We will maintain the required regulatory and professional licences and registrations (including those from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Home Office licensing, and the General Pharmaceutical Council). This will assure service users that our pharmacy services meet a high standard of quality, evidenced through external review.
Pharmacy Services	We will transform Access to Medicines (TRAMS) by developing an operational model for the Radiopharmacy unit, ensuring patients receive high-quality, timely services.
Pharmacy Services	We will review progress on the strategic implementation of gas testing training and recruitment plans for 2025/26. This will enable pharmacy services across Wales to support gas systems testing and deliver medical gases to patients at their point of need within all Health Boards and Trusts.
Procurement and Health courier Services (HCS)	We will continue implementing Scan4Safety as part of the Wales modernisation programme (a five-year initiative), which will help prevent patient harm.
Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory	We will explore the ability to measure background levels of hydrogen peroxide within decontamination areas, enabling more accurate measurement using gas detector tubes.





Effective

Audit and Assurance	We will review our audit approach to ensure it remains in line with NHS Wales Requirements and the Global IIA Standards in readiness for External Quality Assessment. This will ensure Audit and Assurance provides a high-quality and effective service.
Legal and Risk & Welsh Risk Pool	We will provide guidance and support to NHS organisations with the introduction of revised national guidance for Putting Things Right (PTR). This will support the fair, effective, and efficient management of cases.
Pharmacy Services	We will implement biosimilars with maximum efficiency for NHS Wales, delivering timely savings and ensuring high-quality, cost-effective care.
Pharmacy Services	We will pilot and roll out an electronic Pharmaceutical Quality System to enhance compliance and streamline processes.
Primary Care Services	We will deliver solutions to drive automation and support embedding the Wales Ophthalmic contract to ensure the timely and effective submission and payment of claims.
Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory	We will review the structure of the Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory to ensure effective service delivery and strengthen resilience through a staffing review.





Efficient	
All Wales Laundry Services	We will work closely with our Health Courier Service colleagues to plan the most efficient and carbon-friendly routes for all laundry deliveries across Wales.
All Wales Laundry Services	We will centralise Laundry Services administrative functions to ensure work is distributed efficiently, improving capacity and meeting customer demand.
Audit and Assurance	We will further develop our digital approach to audit delivery and innovation, ensuring a high-quality, cost-effective service.
Central Team eBusiness Services	We will extend robotics support to Financial Management Systems (FMS) processes and leverage the Microsoft Power Platform for automation, reducing manual effort and boosting productivity.
Medical Examiners Service	We will continue digital development to replace paper-based Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) processes, promoting direct referrals via a QR code portal and implementing an improved notification system.
Primary Care Services	We will review solutions to support the digital paper medical record in Wales and reduce physical storage requirements across the NWSSP estate.
Primary Care Services	We will deliver a consistent, efficient, and equitable national process for providing Gluten-Free Subsidy Cards to eligible patients across Wales, creating a simplified and more convenient process.
Procurement and Health Courier Services (HCS)	We will investigate opportunities for AI services to support current transactional activity, reducing errors and creating a more efficient service.





Equitable	
Digital Workforce Solutions	We will lead the development of the People Portal Transformation Programme, moving from procurement to planning and mobilisation. This will provide structure, coordination, and a standardised approach throughout the migration process, resulting in consistent work data across NHS Wales organisations.
People & OD	We will strengthen our Employee Relations (ER) processes and foster a culture of fairness and accountability by establishing a substantive Investigating Officer role. This role will provide specialist, impartial, and high-quality investigations into complex ER cases, ensuring consistent application of policies and procedures, timely progression and closure of cases, reduced risk or procedural error or employee harm, and greater confidence among staff in the fairness of internal investigations.
Pharmacy Services	We will develop a standardised product portfolio for 2026/27, allowing medicines to be manufactured at scale to move medicines closer to patients, improve equity of access, and drive positive service outcomes and patient experiences.
Procurement and Health Courier Services (HCS)	We will support the Foundational Economy workplan by promoting local supplier engagement and fair economic growth.
Procurement and Health Courier Services (HCS)	We will meet the required planning and delivery phases for Pharmacy Logistics, including Year 2 of the Influenza Programme (and other vaccine campaigns), Radio Pharmacy, Home Care Medicines, TrAMS, and other Pharmacy Modernisation Programme. This will ensure a single logistics model that is consistent across all health boards in Wales.
Single Lead Employer	We will support the management of attendance for Resident Doctors, Dentists, and trainees through reasonable adjustments, ensuring those with additional needs receive the support required to focus on their training.





Person Centred

Accounts Payable	We will launch the staff benefits portal across NHS Wales, ensuring improved access to benefits for all staff.
All Wales Laundry Service	We will develop a self-service order management solution for All Wales Laundry Services, empowering customers to manage their own rented stock orders.
All Wales Laundry Service	We will support the development of future laundry service engineers by securing student work experience placements through local colleges.
Digital Workforce Solutions	We will drive the People Portal Transformation Programme from procurement to planning and mobilisation, enhancing user experience and self-service culture.
Pharmacy Services	We will deliver Access to Medicines (TRAMS) hub development across Wales to enable more capacity and contingency, ensuring high-quality, timely service to patients.
Single Lead Employer	We will embed the Speaking up Safely (SUS) arrangements within NWSSP and ensure concerns are managed in accordance with the agreed policy. We will also ensure effective monitoring arrangements to track actions and outcomes under the Speaking up Safely framework.



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Duty of Quality Annual Report 2025-2026

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