

Agenda Item
1.5

Quality Safety and Outcomes Sub-Committee
Chairs Action Report – Welsh Gender Service

Dyddiad y Cyfarfod / Date of Meeting	30/10/2026
Statws Cyhoeddi / Publication Status	Open/ Public
	Not Applicable

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad / Report Purpose	For Approval Ratify and Note
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Engagement (internal/external) undertaken to date (including receipt /consideration at Committee/Group)		
Committee / Group / Individuals	Date	Outcome
Senior Leadership Team	14/10/2026	Endorsed

1. SITUATION/BACKGROUND

This report is presented to share the outcome of a Chair's Action taken following the In Committee meeting of the Quality, Safety and Outcomes Sub-Committee held on 24 August 2026.

An in-Committee meeting is a private part of a formal Committee meeting from which members of the public and press are excluded. It is used only where the business includes information that cannot appropriately be discussed in public, for example personal or confidential information, sensitive clinical or operational matters, legally privileged advice, or information whose premature disclosure could prejudice decision-making or the interests of patients, staff or partner organisations. Holding a discussion in-Committee allows members to receive the necessary information, test the evidence and exercise effective scrutiny while meeting their duties of confidentiality and information governance. It does not remove the matter from the Committee's formal governance arrangements: the discussion, decisions and actions remain part of the official record and are subject to the same standards of accountability. Where possible, the outcome and supporting information may subsequently be reported publicly, with only information that must remain protected being withheld or redacted.

At its in-Committee meeting on 24 August 2026, the Sub-Committee discussed in detail the proposed pause to the surgical pathway for gender affirming surgery, and the implications for patients. Members considered the impact of further delay and uncertainty on people who had already experienced lengthy waits, including those assessed and awaiting surgery, and questioned how patients awaiting referral would be supported. The discussion explored whether progressing the existing wider service review, or relying on surgical providers' assessments as a safeguard, would adequately address the concerns without a pause across the pathway. Concerns about the assurance available from those assessments informed support for an urgent independent clinical review of every patient on the surgical waiting list, alongside the temporary pause to referrals, assessments and surgery. Members emphasised that the wider Welsh Gender Service was not intended to stop; ongoing medical reviews, hormone treatment and psychological support were distinguished from the surgical pathway.

Due to the nature of debate, and to ensure that the Sub-Committee's endorsement reflected the discussion held, a Chair's Action was undertaken to capture the recommendations endorsed.

The Chair's Action went significantly beyond endorsing proposals for a pause to referrals, surgical assessments and surgery. It endorsed a comprehensive package of actions that placed stronger and continuing obligations on the NWJCC

to manage the wider clinical, quality, equality and wellbeing implications of the decision.

This included escalation of the Welsh Gender Service to Escalation Level 3; an urgent independent clinical review of patients on the surgical waiting lists; appropriate support for affected patients; and coordinated communications with patients, staff, Health Boards, GPs, Llais, Welsh Government and the public.

Importantly, the endorsement was subject to explicit consideration of patient and staff wellbeing and required completion of an Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment and a Quality Impact Assessment of the proposed change. It also required appropriate support for Welsh Gender Service staff and other colleagues across the pathway, including at GP level, together with an expedited non-surgical review of the Welsh Gender Service provided by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and revision of that review's Terms of Reference in light of the concerns and information identified. The Chair's Action therefore ensured that the temporary pause was not treated as a standalone operational measure, but as one element of a wider, programme of assurance, impact assessment, support, communication and independent clinical scrutiny.

The documentation accompanying this report includes the completed Chair's Action form, the relevant in-Committee minutes, and a copy of the report shared with the Committee. As noted in the in-Committee minutes, the paper was updated in advance of the meeting to reflect the latest available position, following discussions with service providers and other stakeholders. This ensured that the Sub-Committee's scrutiny of the proposals was informed by the most current and relevant information available at that time.

These documents are provided to ensure that members have a clear record of the matter considered, the rationale for the action taken, and the outcome approved through Chair's Action.

2. ASSESSMENT

In light of the significant public interest in the pause to Welsh Gender Service surgical referrals and procedures, the supporting papers are being made available publicly to provide a full and transparent account of the matters considered, the governance process followed and the basis for the action taken. Publication represents an additional layer of transparency beyond that which would ordinarily apply to matters considered in-Committee, while ensuring that information requiring continued protection remains appropriately redacted.

This approach supports public assurance and accountability by enabling scrutiny of the substantive issues discussed without compromising confidentiality, personal information or other sensitive material.

Following the 24 August 2026 meeting, it was identified that Chair's Action was required to confirm the Committee's position in relation to the matters set out in the accompanying documentation. The Chair's Action process enabled timely consideration and approval, while ensuring that the decision and supporting papers were retained as part of the Committee's formal governance record.

The redacted report is being shared in recognition that elements of the original report were considered in-Committee and are not suitable for full publication. The redacted version enables appropriate transparency while maintaining necessary confidentiality in respect of any restricted or sensitive information.

Appendices:

- **Appendix 1** – Chair's Action form;
- **Appendix 2** – Draft In-Committee minutes for approval;
- **Appendix 3** – Redacted copy of the report shared with the Committee.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The members of Quality, Safety and Outcomes Sub-Committee are asked to:

- **Ratify** the outcome of the Chair's Action taken following the meeting held on 24 August 2026, and
- **Approve** the in-Committee minutes of the 24th August 2026 and
- **Note** the report shared at the In-Committee meeting of the 24th August 2026.