

Agenda Item

2.4

Joint Commissioning Committee

Director of Commissioning Ambulance Services and 111 Report
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Dyddiad y Cyfarfod / Date of Meeting	20/05/2025
Statws Cyhoeddi / Publication Status	Open/ Public
	Not Applicable
Awdur yr Adroddiad / Report Author	Ross Whitehead, Director of Commissioning for Ambulance Services and 111
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Noddwr yr Adroddiad / Report Sponsor	Huw George, Interim Chief Commissioner

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad / Report Purpose	For Noting Choose an item.
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Engagement (internal/external) undertaken to date (including receipt/consideration at Committee/Group)		
Committee / Group / Individuals	Date	Outcome
JCC Senior Leadership Team Formal Meeting	07/05/2025	Noted

Acronyms / Glossary of Terms	
CCLG	Collaborative Commissioning Leadership Group
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
EMRTS	Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service
HBs	Health Boards
JCC	NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee
NEPTS	Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service
NWJCC	NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee

Acronyms / Glossary of Terms	
PHW	Public Health Wales
SaLC	Save a Life Cymru
SBUHB	Swansea Bay University Health Board
WAST	Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

1. SITUATION/BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to update Members of the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC) on the specific areas related to the work of the Director of Commissioning for Ambulance and 111 Services and the team on issues across the commissioning portfolio.

Specifically, this report will update Members on the specific matters for consideration (including progress against strategic programmes from the NWJCC's Foundation Plan, high scoring and emerging risks and emerging and future developments) for each commissioned service including:

- Emergency Ambulance Services,
- Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS),
- NHS 111 Wales,
- Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service Review (EMRTS); and
- Adult Critical Care Transfer Services (ACCTS).

2. SPECIFIC MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

2.1 Emergency Ambulance Services

2.1.1 New Emergency Ambulance Performance Framework

During a statement to the Senedd on 11 March 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care announced the outcome of the ambulance response target review.

Following the establishment of a national task group, the review concluded that the current 'red' target is too broad and no longer appropriate and that there is a need to focus on clinical outcomes and to move away from time-based targets as part of **a new Emergency Ambulance Performance Framework**.

The recommendation included a 'bundle' approach which split the existing red category in two and enabled a greater focus on the opportunities to focus on clinical outcomes. The new approach brings Wales in line with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland in moving away from the 8-minute target and publishing median response time data.

Correspondence was received by the NWJCC from Welsh Government on 20 March 2025 in relation to the approved framework:

- The framework will be implemented from 1 July 2025 for an initial 12-month period,

- Clear definitions for new performance metrics will be developed by the end of May 2025 to accurately measure and report performance against the new framework and to identify areas for continuous improvement; and
- The team will continue to work with Welsh Government colleagues to ensure the successful implementation of the new framework and to agree monitoring arrangements ahead of the implementation date.

The Director of Commissioning for Ambulance Service and 111 has been working with the ambulance service on the development of data definitions and readiness assurance.

The WAST Board has also held an extraordinary Board meeting where it considered and assured itself that the organisational preparedness meets with the appropriate requirements to implement the changes safely and effectively.

2.1.2 Save a life Cymru

The correspondence also confirmed **the transfer of the NHS Wales Save a Life Cymru (SaLC) programme** from Public Health Wales (PHW) to the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust (WAST) to enable a more integrated approach to cardiac arrest survival.

The commissioning implications of this change are currently being worked through with Welsh Government and the NHS Executive, but given the size of the programme there is not currently any anticipated issue with the absorption of this into the existing ambulance service and 111 commissioning portfolio.

Work has also commenced on the rapid collaborative review of the opportunities and key actions that can be taken to improve survival rates from out of hospital cardiac arrest.

The review will focus on key areas and will look to make a positive impact including how to further raise awareness and increase community involvement through CPR training and accessibility of defibrillators. A joint report with recommendations will be submitted to Welsh Government by the end of June 2025.

Funding was also confirmed to secure 500 automated external defibrillators in 2024-25 for deployment across Wales.

The stakeholder briefing and correspondence from Welsh Government is attached as **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

2.1.3 Ambulance Patient Handover - National Improvement Approach

As outlined to members at the March meeting, the **clinically-led national ambulance handover improvement delivery group** has been established.

The intention is for a plan to be developed in the first quarter of 2025/26 to assess the potential readiness of NHS Wales to deliver a maximum emergency 45-minute ambulance patient handover time within six months and identify any associated delivery challenges, communications requirements, and risks.

Members will also note the inclusion of the handover improvement as a recommendation within the Ministerial Advisory Group report.

2.1.4 Manchester Arena Inquiry Assessment

Following the Manchester Arena Inquiry recommendations, WAST have submitted a business case to the NWJCC for responding to major emergency incidents. As one of the eight strategic programmes within the NWJCC's Foundation Plan, work is being undertaken to review appropriately and make recommendations for future commissioning.

A series of stakeholder workshops have taken place with Health Board (HB), NHS Executive and WAST colleagues during March and April 2025. These sessions have provided nominated representatives with the opportunity to question and discuss each element of the case with WAST colleagues. During the next phase, HB and NWJCC colleagues will assess and scrutinise each element of the case to develop commissioner recommendations for consideration by the NWJCC.

NWJCC members are asked to support their respective representatives to prioritise this work and to ensure that feedback on this work is appropriately shared within each organisation.

As part of this work, legal advice has been obtained and additionally independent advice on the submission is being explored.

2.2 Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS)

2.2.1 NEPTS Future Vision (2030)

The Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) Future Vision was approved at the Joint Committee meeting in March 2025. Work is underway with WAST to agree the delivery of the key actions against the vision.

2.2.2 Capacity issues

To respond to population needs and to deliver sustainable healthcare services, HBs continue to reconfigure their service models, with an emphasis on regional and national working. Due to these service changes, an increase in complex patient mobilities and patients journey lengths increasing (Discharge and transfer

journeys), the NEPTS service is having to frequently cancel patient journeys. This situation is further compounded by significant increases in NEPTS private provider costs, commissioned via WAST.

The NWJCC Foundation plan for 2025/26 was developed with a focus on creating capacity through productivity and efficiency improvements. The principles of which are present within the NEPTS Future Vision (2030). To deliver productivity and efficiency improvements within the NEPTS service, the NWJCC Ambulance and 111 Team will work with WAST and HBs to collaboratively develop and implement solutions.

The ambulance service is also working through a complex review of NEPTS rosters with the potential to deliver a substantial increase in journey capacity.

Between January and March 2025, working in partnership, the NWJCC, Welsh Government and the Six Goals Programme commissioned additional discharge and transfer resources to support the discharge and transfer of patients from ED and planned care. The additional resources significantly contributed towards maintaining system flow, with very few patient hand backs being reported. Since the additional resources were removed in April 2025, the number of patient hand backs has increased, impacting on patient flow.

2.3 NHS 111 Wales

2.3.1 111 Performance

A deep dive on the performance of the 111 service has been requested, this work has now been completed by the ambulance service and will be considered through the commissioning groups.

2.3.2 NHS 111 Rostering Review

A review of the rosters of the NHS 111 service is currently taking place and due to report in mid-June 2025. The existing rosters arrangements are not optimised to best match available capacity to demand.

NWJCC colleagues are working with WAST on the outcome of this review with the aim to move towards rosters to better align capacity with demand.

2.4 Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service

2.4.1 EMRTS Judicial Review

The outcome of the Judicial review is still awaited. In light of the time that has passed since the review was heard, the risks associated with this work are currently being reviewed.

2.5 Adult Critical Care Transfer Service

2.5.1 Increased Demand

Due to increased demand and changes in HB services, ACCTS faces challenges in delivering core services. The NWJCC is working with the service and HBs to find solutions for enhanced and critical care transfers, efforts will focus on exploring options to expand the Adult Critical Care Transfer Service (ACCTS') capacity to meet HB requirements in 2025-26.

2.6 Emerging and Future Developments

2.6.1 Transferring Commissioning Portfolios

The Ambulance Services and 111 Commissioning Team have held introductory meetings with colleagues from the Specialist Services Commissioning Team to facilitate the transfer of the following commissioning portfolios:

- Neonatal Transport including the Cymru Inter-Hospital Acute Neonatal Transport Service (CHANTS),
- Wales and West Acute Transport for Children Service (WATCh),
- South Wales Spinal Network,
- South Wales Trauma Network,
- Mental Health Transport; and
- 111 Press 2

The team will meet with key stakeholders for each of these services to establish commissioning relationships, to agree governance arrangements and to set work programmes. These services will be included as individual commissioned services within the portfolio in future reports by the Director of Ambulance Services and 111.

3. KEY RISKS / MATTERS FOR ESCALATION

3.1 New Emergency Ambulance Performance Framework

Work required with Welsh Government colleagues to ensure the successful implementation of the new framework from 1 July 2025 and to agree monitoring arrangements ahead of the implementation date.

3.2 Ambulance Patient Handover - National Improvement Approach

Utilisation of commissioned ambulance capacity remains the highest risk for the NWJCC, close monitoring of the improvement work and its impact on productivity will be essential to reducing this risk.

3.3 Manchester Arena Inquiry Assessment

There will likely be an expectation from the Inquiry for services to report back on their progress with the recommendation, this is likely to attract both media and political attention.

3.4 NEPTS Future Vision (2030)

Work is required with WAST to agree the delivery of the key actions against the vision.

3.5 NEPTS Capacity Issues

Increased costs and service demand are impacting on WAST's ability to provide sufficient capacity to support planned care, enhanced care and discharge and transfer journeys.

3.6 EMRTS Judicial Review

The decision of the court may have significant consequences for the NWJCC and its providers of pre-hospital critical care.

3.7 ACCTS Increased Demand

Work to continue with the service and HBs to find solutions for enhanced and critical care transfers, efforts will focus on expanding ACCTS' capacity to meet HB requirements in 2025-26 to support the wider system.

3.8 Transferring Commissioning Portfolios

The team will meet with key stakeholders for each of these services to establish commissioning relationships, to agree governance arrangements and to set work programmes. Updates will be provided throughout 2025-26.

4. ASSESSMENT

Objectives / Strategy	
Dolen i Amcan (au) Strategol CBC / Link to JCC Strategic Objectives(s)	Facilitate Integration
	All JCC strategic objectives are applicable.
Dolen i Ddeddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol – Nodau Llesiant / Link to Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – Wellbeing Goals 150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf (futuregenerations.wales)	A Healthier Wales
	If more than one applies please list below: A more equal Wales.
Dolen i Hwyluswyr Ansawdd <i>(Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) /</i> Link to Enablers of Quality	Leadership
	If more than one applies please list below: All enablers of quality are applicable.

(Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))	
Dolen i Feysydd Ansawdd <i>(Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) /</i> Link to Domains of Quality (Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))	Safe
	If more than one applies please list below: All domains of quality are applicable.
Effaith Amgylcheddol/ Cynaliadwyedd (5R) / Environmental /Sustainability Impact (5Rs)	No - Not Applicable
	If more than one applies please list below:

Impact Assessment		
Ansawdd <i>Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Ansawdd? /</i> Quality <i>Have you undertaken a Quality Impact Assessment Screening?</i>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Outcome:	If no, please include rationale below: This is an update from the Director of Commissioning to the Committee.
Cydraddoldeb <i>Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb? /</i> Equality <i>Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment Screening?</i>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Outcome:	If no, please include rationale below: This is an update from the Director of Commissioning to the Committee.
Cyfreithiol / Legal	Yes (Include further detail below)	
	This report aims to update members, but all decisions are subject to legal recourse e.g. the Judicial Review information.	
Enw da / Reputational	Yes (Include further detail below)	
	Ambulance services are regularly in the media and subject to scrutiny and discussion.	
Effaith Adnoddau <i>(Pobl /Ariannol) /</i> Resource Impact <i>(People / Financial)</i>	Yes (Include further detail below)	
	The report identifies areas where resource impacts are likely to be required and therefore further work is required to present at future meetings.	

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Committee is asked to:

- **Note** the report.

6. NEXT STEPS

Ongoing work for each item will progress as described in this report, the NWJCC will be kept updated.