

Reporting Committee	Welsh Kidney Network (WKN)
Chaired by	Chair, Welsh Kidney Network (WKN)
Lead Executive Director	Melanie Wilkey, Director of Specialised Commissioning Services
Date of last meeting	12 December 2024

Summary of key matters considered by the Committee and any related decisions made.

This report provides assurance to the Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) in accordance with the Welsh Kidney Network (WKN) Terms of Reference (ToR), which states that the Chair of the WKN will provide reports to the Committee following WKN meetings outlining the activities of the Network and bringing attention to any significant matters under consideration by the Network. Board minutes are available on request from the WKN Coordinator, Jonathan.Matthews@wales.nhs.uk.

1. STRATEGIC NETWORK ISSUES

WKN Terms of Reference:

As part of the annual/routine review of the WKN Terms of Reference (ToR), minor changes have been made to reference the changes from WHSSC to NWJCC and addition of new Clinical Leads. It was acknowledged with the impending Governance review during 2025, the outcome may further influence the content of the ToR. The WKN are awaiting details of the scope of the Governance review and associated scope and timescales.

Prevention work stream:

As a key strategic area agreed by the WKN Board, there were a number of updates relating to Prevention, highlighting short term deliverables and the longer-term strategy.

The WKN's Clinical Lead for Prevention delivered a presentation on the developments to date, which provided encouraging signs of influencing how early identification of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) can reduce the number of patients with CKD stages 1 & 2 and avoid growth in the cohort of patients with CKD stage 3, therefore reducing the number of people within Wales requiring kidney replacement therapy (CKD stage 5) and slowing the progression of the disease.

Working in conjunction with the clinical leads for AKI, Pharmacy and Innovation there have been to following key achievements:

- Community Health Pathways, the digital platform for Primary Care in Wales that is under development, now include standardised advice on CKD

screening, diagnosis, optimisation and referral. This also included an educational package (Continued Professional Development (CPD) approved) for health care workers.

- The National Prescribing Indicators (NPI) 2025-2028 now include SGLT-2 inhibitors for patients with type 2 diabetes and chronic kidney disease. This medication reduces the risk of CKD progression, mortality and risk of cardiovascular events in patients with CKD with and without type 2 diabetes. This is a key preventative measure.
- There are pharmacy led optimisation projects within the South West and South East Wales areas, further work is required in North Wales, the WKN's Pharmacy Clinical Leads will continue to support and influence progress
- Preventative measures have been introduced to the financially incentivised Quality Improvement Projects (QIP) GP Contract for 2025. This will result in QIP targets being linked to National Prescribing Indicators for SGLT2i, Health Pathways CKD page for advice and guidance and AWTTTC/HEIW supported education materials for CPD.
 - Integration with key stakeholders continues, to include the following:
 - National Strategic Clinical Network for diabetes
 - Public Health
 - Industry partners

Dialysis Unit Expansion – South West Wales:

The Dialysis unit in Bridgend was opened to patients on 9th December 2024, this provides much needed additional capacity within the South West Wales area. Unfortunately, the decision on the site in Neath Port Talbot (NPT) has been further delayed. The Neath Port Talbot Council Planning Committee meeting was postponed until January 2025. The impact of this delay will be worked through and plans revised following the outcome of the January meeting.

WKN Risk Register

There have been some key changes made to the WKN risk register in order to align process with the NWJCC. appetite. As a consequence, 4 of the previous 6 risks have been transferred to the WKN Issue log. which will include an existing risk on the JCC Commissioning Risk Assurance Framework (CRAF), therefore the following risk will be removed:

- WKN 15 Lack of Interventional Radiology in Swansea Bay UHB (16).

Two risks with scores above 15 and remain on the JCC Commissioning Risk Assurance Framework (CRAF):

1. WKN 18 Renal Capacity across Wales (16).
2. WKN (Team) 01 Workforce and Capacity (16), this is incorporated within the overall NWJCC workforce risk

Financial Plan:

There continues to be a potential shortfall of £500,000 at the end of the financial year.

The main cost pressures are consumer price index (CPI) inflation uplifts each year within contracts and growth in dialysis, which is currently between 3.2% and 3.7% across Wales.

These cost pressures have been included within the WKN's Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) submission for 2025-2026 covers dialysis growth (home and unit) and CPI.

It should be noted that, following the work of the Clinical Lead for Pharmacy, patients have been switched from eculizumab to biosimilars in Wales, which is contributing to approximately £1.3m full year effect savings. This is however not contributing to the WKN financial saving target as the budget for these drugs sits within the NWJCC Medicines Management budget.

Welsh Government update:

The Welsh Government reported that the Cabinet Secretary has recently published a refresh of the actions from 'A Healthier Wales', the overarching strategy for NHS Wales. There is a particular focus on prevention, person centred care, sustainability and equitable care. The Board noted that the WKN's agreed Strategic Plan is closely aligned with these aims.

During August, the Welsh Government held an Integrated Quality, Planning and Delivery Arrangements meeting within which there was a focus on kidney disease. The meeting was an opportunity to seek assurance from Health Boards about performance in areas where there were concerns. Welsh Government are currently finalising the cycle for the meetings during 2025/26. Kidney disease has been put forward again as an area of focus within the course of these meetings (likely to be summer 2025).

The Cabinet Secretary will be visiting the Bridgend unit on the 6th February 2025, this will be an opportunity to highlight the incredible work to get the unit up and running. He will be able to meet staff and patients on the day.

A new/revised Homelessness Bill is under development. Board members anticipate that the Housing Code, which will be updated as part of the development of the new Bill, will address barriers that patients with kidney disease have experienced in getting their homes suitably adapted to provide dialysis at home.

ISSUES REPORTED FROM REGIONS

2.1 South East Wales Region:

- Progress has been made within the Nephrology and Transplant Directorate on acquiring additional theatre capacity for vascular access, which will commence in January 2025.
- Operational challenges were reported as a result of implementing the Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) measures recommended for patients confirmed as having the multi-resistant Carbapenemase-Producing Organisms (CPO). Further discussions will be held with Public Health Wales supported by the WKN.

2.2 South West Wales Region:

- An update was provided on the dialysis unit expansion programme as outlined above.
- Recruitment into Interventional Radiology (IR) is having a positive impact on waiting times. In addition, the Renal Team have submitted a business case to however to date there has been no response SBUHB for IR, a response is awaited.
- Morriston Renal Services celebrate their 40th Anniversary in the New Year, details of the event have been published.

2.3 North Wales Region:

- The proposal from JCC on moving from a block contract to a cost and volume contract is currently with the Interim Executive Director of Finance at BCUHB for approval. Proposed start dates have been delayed whilst awaiting a response.
- The Welshpool unit will be moving to a 6 day service from the 7th January 2025, which will produce much needed additional capacity
- The Board praised the actions of the renal team who have recently enacted Business Continuity measures with the aftermath of Storm Darragh impacting on the dialysis unit in Alltwen. Part of the roof was lost requiring all patients to be moved to Bangor. Patients from Welshpool also had to be moved to Wrexham due to a 2 day power outage.

National recognition and awards

- The Board congratulated 2 of our charity partners on being recognised nationally for their outstanding work. Popham Kidney Support has been awarded the prestigious Kings Award for Voluntary Services in recognition of their ground-breaking work on developing, training and supporting Peer Mentors for newly diagnosed kidney patients.
- Kidney Care UK were also finalists in the Utility Week Awards. Working with Wales & West Utilities, Welsh Kidney Network and Auriga Service, the collaborative Kidney Support and Welfare Wales Project was recognised in the Cost of Living category.

Highlight Reports:

The following highlight reports and/or updates were received at the Network Board meeting:

- WKN Central Team report including Lead Nurse
- South West Wales (SBUHB) Highlight Report
- North Wales (BCUHB) Highlight Report
- South East Wales (CVUHB) Highlight Report
- New Cross Party Kidney Group
- Popham Support
- Kidney Care UK Highlight Report
- Kidney Wales Highlight Report
- Medicines Management Highlight Report
- Pharmacy/Innovation Highlight Report
- Transplant and Vascular Access Clinical Lead Highlight Report
- Transplant and Vascular Access Clinical Data Highlight Report
- AKI Highlight Report
- Health and Wellbeing Professionals Highlight Report
- Home Dialysis Highlight Report
- Welsh Government update

Matters requiring Committee level consideration and/or approval

None

Matters referred to other Committees

None

Date of next meeting

06 February 2025