4 November 2026

Dear

ATISN 26-0097 – NHS Workforce Governance

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 23 October 2026 relating to NHS Wales workforce governance. You requested the following:

1. *The current recorded framework identifying which body is responsible for developing, approving, maintaining and distributing All-Wales NHS workforce policies;*
2. *The current recorded assurance requirements used by the Welsh Government to assess whether NHS Wales bodies are implementing and complying with All-Wales workforce policies*
3. *The current recorded standards, assurance requirements or governance frameworks relied upon by the Welsh Government when obtaining assurance that NHS Wales organisations appropriately govern workforce records and employee medical evidence*
4. *The current documents identifying the respective responsibilities of the Welsh Government, NWSSP, Velindre University NHS Trust and the Shared Services Partnership Committee for NWSSP governance, accountability, risk, audit and escalation*
5. *The latest implementation plan or progress report held by the Welsh Government concerning the recommendations made in the independent Review of the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership Accountability and Governance Arrangements*
6. *The latest finalised Welsh Government assurance, review or monitoring document addressing whether the identified NWSSP governance and accountability issues have been resolved.*

Response

1 & 2

The relevant information is published on the Wales Partnership Hub hosted by the NHS Alliance at the following link Welsh Partnership Hub .

The hub is source for maintaining and distributing All-Wales NHS workforce policies as agreed in social partnership between NHS Employers, Welsh Government and relevant health trade unions NHS Wales Employment Policy, Procedures and Protocols

The social partnership bodies responsible for developing and approving all-Wales NHS workforce policies are;

the Wales Partnership Forum (WPF) - membership, role and work programme may be found at this link - Welsh Partnership Forum (WPF)

the WPF Business Committee - membership, role and work programme may be found at this link - Welsh Partnership Forum (WPF)

the Medical and Dental Business Group - membership, role and work programme may be found at this link - Welsh Partnership Forum (WPF)

The process for assurance and compliance issues regarding implementation of all-Wales workforce policies are set out in the Policy Interpretation - Dispute Referral

Mechanism described at this link NHS Wales Employment Policy, Procedures and Protocols

3. Each individual NHS Wales organisation is responsible for managing their employee information in accordance with all relevant statutory requirements.

4. You recently wrote to the Welsh Government requesting information under the Freedom of Information process (ATISN 27579), which sought some of this information. Therefore, we will not be providing it again. The information previously provided related to the documents Welsh Government holds in relation to the accountability arrangements between Welsh Government and NWSSP, and the governance and accountability arrangements between NWSSP and Velindre. The responsibilities of these organisations are set out within the following documents:
    - Interface Agreement
    - Hosting Agreement
    - Memorandum of Cooperation
    - NWSSP Accountability and Oversight (Welsh Government Terms of Reference for Meetings)

    You may also wish to refer to the NHS Wales Accountability and Support Framework for information on escalation arrangements, and the Velindre University NHS Trust and NWSSP Standing Orders.

    With regard to the management of risk and audit within NWSSP and Velindre, these are matters for their respective Board and Committee. Welsh Government does not hold this information.

5. The latest implementation plan for the review recommendations is attached. We have concluded that some of the information requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) – Personal Information of the Freedom of Information Act. An explanation of our application of this exemption is set out at **Annex 1** of this letter.

6. Welsh Government has not yet carried out a review of the implementation of the review recommendations, as not all recommendations have been implemented. Welsh Government intends to seek assurance from both organisations on the implementation of the recommendations during 2027. This will allow sufficient time for the recommendations to be embedded and for their effectiveness to be tested through the organisations' annual governance and assurance processes.

Next Steps

The request you sent me contains personal information about you - for example, your name and address. The Welsh Government will be the data processor for this information and, in

accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, it will be processed in order to fulfil our public task and meet our legal obligations under the Act to provide you with a response.

We will only use this personal information to deal with your request and any matters which arise as a result of it. We will keep your personal information and all other information relating to your request for three years from the date on which your request is finally closed. Your personal information will then be disposed of securely.

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data we hold about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further information about the information which the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:
Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:
Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,

Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process

Yours sincerely,

Annex 1

Section 40(2) – Personal Information of the Freedom of Information Act

Section 40(2) together with the conditions in section 40(3)(a)(i) or 40(3)(b) provides an absolute exemption if disclosure of the personal data would breach any of the data protection principles.

'Personal data' is defined in sections 3(2) and (3) of the Data Protection Act 1998 ('the DPA 2018') and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. An identifiable living individual is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.

We have concluded that, in this instance, the information requested contains third party personal data.

Under Section 40(2) of the FOIA, personal data is exempt from release if disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the GDPR. We consider the principle being most relevant in this instance as being the first. This states that personal data must be:

"Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject"

The lawful basis that is most relevant in relation to a request for information under the FOIA is Article 6(1)(f). This states:

"Processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child".

In considering the application of Article 6(1)(f) in the context of a request for information under FOIA it is necessary to consider the following three-part test: -

- **The Legitimate interest test**: Whether a legitimate interest is being pursued in the request for information.
- **The Necessity test**: Whether disclosure of the information/confirmation or denial that it is held is necessary to meet the legitimate interest in question.
- **The Balancing test**: Whether the above interests override the interests, fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject.

Our consideration of these tests is set out below:

1. Legitimate interests

Your request relates to information about NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership Review, and the Project Plan Gantt document has fallen in to scope of your request.

We have concluded that, in this instance, there is little to be gained from releasing the names of individuals and other personal data which are included within the attached documentation. We believe we have provided sufficient information to satisfy the legitimate

interest, and we do not believe disclosure of the identities of those consultants would allow any greater understanding

2. Is disclosure necessary?

Following the above analysis, we do not believe that disclosure of the personal data is necessary.

3. The balance between legitimate interests and the data subject's interests or fundamental rights and freedoms

As we do not believe disclosure of this personal data is necessary, there is no requirement on us to undertake a test to balance the legitimate interests against the right of individuals, as the fundamental rights and freedoms provided by the DPA are not being challenged.