

Chief Executive

CONNECTS



 @CAV_LenRichards

2 September 2020

Dear colleague,

I am delighted to report that in collaboration with Cardiff University we are progressing our plans to open an integrated research support service, ensuring that in an increasingly competitive environment we continue to attract government and industry investment to Cardiff and Wales.

The [Joint Research Office](#) (JRO) is of significant strategic importance, the rationale and impetus for creating a single research facility is founded upon the opportunities and advantages presented by combining our services and reducing bureaucracy. The shared office will be based in 'Lakeside' on the UHW site, where staff will be able to integrate their activities in an appropriately managed space.

Modern research involving patients is a major component of our current portfolio and delivering outstanding patient care is at the centre of everything we do as a clinical academic health partnership. To help us to drive this partnership forward and realise our ambition, we are in the process of recruiting a Director of the Joint Research Office, an individual with experience in research in both Higher Education and the NHS.

The Director, helping us to maximise our potential in the delivery of world leading research and impact for patients, will reinforce this ambition by bringing together people, processes, and systems to establish a unified service and strategy for the benefit of the clinical and academic community.

The Director will also lead the development of a strategy for clinically-focussed research that positively influences clinical treatment and practice. Working closely with Dr Stuart Walker, our Executive Medical Director, and the University Pro Vice-Chancellor for Biomedical and Life Sciences, the Director will oversee the implementation of the new service, setting out a transformative vision and bringing

together multiple stakeholders within and beyond the two organisations to deliver on this challenging and exciting agenda.

We are not able to stand still, we need to adapt the way we work in order to attract investment and retain good staff, improve the opportunities for patients and the people of Wales to access the best treatments and health advice. It is a competitive and financially challenging environment, maximising our shared resources and expertise will help us to remain competitive.

Research colleagues contribute to important findings

Research is playing an incredibly important role in global efforts to understand, treat and prevent the spread of COVID-19, and I'm incredibly proud of the contribution that research staff here at Cardiff and Vale have been making throughout the pandemic.

We've seen numerous examples of our research staff contributing to significant findings related to the virus. On Friday, it was revealed that our Children and Young Adult's Research Unit (CYARU) have contributed to a study that has found that gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting were the most common symptoms of COVID-19 in children, ahead of cough or changes in their sense of smell or taste.

COVID-19 remains a relatively new virus to us, and it is important that through valuable research studies like this we continue to increase our understanding of it, so that we're able to ask questions such as whether the testing criteria for children should be refined.

I'd like to congratulate all of the Cardiff and Vale staff involved in this great piece of work. [You can read more about the study here.](#)

During these unprecedented times, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has been at the forefront of research to determine how to prevent and treat symptoms of COVID-19. Last week, the board and I were grateful to receive a presentation from Dr Matt Morgan, Dr Matt Wise, Dr Jonathon Underwood, and Prof. Chris Fegan around Cardiff and Vale UHB's achievements in this field of research.

Throughout the pandemic, the Health Board has used its clinical research resources to lead high priority COVID-19 studies. There is still currently no cure for COVID-19, but our research is making potential treatments and new developments available to our patients now to help save lives. The Health Board has been part of national and international research studies to rapidly develop new treatments and to build and share knowledge of COVID-19. The multidisciplinary nature of our teams have been key to the success of research at Cardiff and Vale UHB as clinicians have worked together to recruit patients into various trials.

The importance of research has been clear throughout COVID-19 and I hope that the embedding of research and evidenced-based practice at Cardiff and Vale UHB continues long into the future beyond COVID-19.

If you'd like to know more about the research undertaken at Cardiff and Vale UHB, [watch this video](#) or you can [listen to this podcast interview](#) with Professor Chris Fegan.

Listening to our Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic colleagues

Recently each member of the executive team has been named as a sponsor for one of the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act. I am the exec sponsor for the protected characteristic of race and over the last few weeks have taken time to meet with black, Asian or minority ethnic colleagues and listen to their experiences of working in Cardiff and Vale UHB.

I have found these interviews to be extremely invaluable, moving and powerful, shining a light on the participants' experiences by hearing first-hand how they are treated in their roles.

It is my intention to have open and honest conversations about this issue and I truly hope that those who have met with me to date feel as though they have been listened to. Together, we can systematically tackle injustices, inequality and any discriminatory experiences that members of staff from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities have faced.

We know that we may not be able to change everything overnight, but this is our starting point. Organisationally, this is about becoming more aware and inclusive, understanding how members of staff self-identify and respecting that with appropriate language and behaviour.

Everybody has an ethnicity so it is important that we all discuss ethnicity in a way that is appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to how ethnic groups identify themselves, recognising how ethnicity can affect other parts of a person's life. Since these first interviews, I have been engaging in a lot of self-reflection on this and the privilege that has been afforded to me as a white person.

A better understanding of ethnicity and privilege represents a huge benefit to Cardiff and Vale UHB and every single person who makes up the organisation. It will allow us to be vigilant and respectful about the way we treat each other, and help make the Health Board a genuinely great place to work and learn, one which is anti-racist and standing for equality and kindness.

I will continue to report findings from my conversations with colleagues, and will continue inform you of the actions the Health Board will be taking soon.

If you would like to participate in this programme of work, please email keithley.wilkinson@wales.nhs.uk or call 02921 836434

#DoingOurBit

Last week, our Employee Health and Wellbeing Service announced that it had signed the health board up to #DoingOurBit, an online platform exclusively for NHS staff featuring a range of fitness workouts that Cardiff and Vale staff can now access **free of charge**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the biggest challenges that the NHS has faced in its history, and has certainly been an extremely challenging time for our staff. As NHS employees, it's more important than ever that we take the time to focus on our own wellbeing as we begin to look forward, so that we remain fit, well and able to continue looking after those in our care.

Being active is an important way of taking care of ourselves, and free access to the #DoingOurBit platform from the comfort of our own homes makes it simple to move more. Sessions available on the platform, which is being provided collaboratively between leading fitness providers, the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and the Clinical Research Network West Midlands, have been recorded by a group of personal trainers who want to give back to the NHS.

The workouts have been personalised to the NHS with sessions suitable for beginners and those who already regularly exercise, and have passed rigorous quality control processes to ensure they are both safe and effective for participants. You can [access the #DoingOurBit platform here](#), and register for free using your NHS email address. If you do not have access to an NHS email address but would like to be able to use the platform, please raise this with your line manager so that arrangements can be made.

The introduction of #DoingOurBit feeds into the wider Move More Eat Well programme, which encourages people across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to make positive lifestyle changes and improve their health and wellbeing. Find out more about how you can [Move More Eat Well](#) and enjoy the benefits of leading a healthier lifestyle.

NHS Virtual Pride Week

It was great to see some really positive updates come out of NHS Wales Virtual Pride last week among the programme of online events, including [Lisa Cordery](#), [Sophie Quinney](#) and our Health Charity Patrons [Wyburn and Wayne making the Pinc List](#), our [Arts team unveiling a commission of Welsh rugby legend, Gareth Thomas](#), and a [special Pride edition of our How Healthcare Happens podcast](#).

I'm glad that despite the absence of the annual Pride Cymru Parade this year, we were able to come together with NHS organisations across Wales to once again mark Pride in support of LGBTQ+ colleagues, patients and the wider community.

Of course, it's important that this support extends well beyond Pride, and I would ask you all to engage with the various activities and awareness raising initiatives that take place throughout the year. Keep an eye on my blog for more updates on what else we have planned.

COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plan for Cardiff and the Vale agreed

A regional plan for preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and responding to any outbreaks of the virus for Cardiff and the Vale has been agreed ahead of an anticipated rise in cases during autumn and winter.

The plan details how Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council will continue to work together to prevent the spread of the virus, how any rise in local cases and clusters will be identified, the nature of the local response, and how decisions will be agreed and action taken in the event of an outbreak.

Six principles underpin the plan:

- The primary responsibility is to make the public safe.
- Build on public health expertise and use a systems approach.
- Build consensus between decision-makers to secure trust, confidence and consent.
- Be open with data and insight so everyone can protect themselves and others.
- Follow well-established communicable disease control and emergency management principles.
- Consider equality, economic, social and health-related impacts of decisions.

Central to much of the plan is the role of the regional Test, Trace, Protect service. The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Test, Trace, Protect service, delivered by the same three key partners alongside Shared Regulatory Services and in collaboration with Public Health Wales has been operating successfully since early June.

The plan covers the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board area and draws together the huge amount of work undertaken as a region over the past three months to deliver an effective regional Test, Trace, Protect service.

We know there are many great challenges still to come in responding to COVID-19 but this plan and the arrangements that underpin it demonstrate that we could not be better prepared.

I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the work highlighted in plan, and all staff for the way in which I know they will respond should the more significant measures detailed within it be required.

Internal Career Development Scheme Launched for Band 5 Nurses

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CAVUHB) has launched a brand new scheme which will make it easier for Band 5 Nurses to transfer between departments without having to apply through the usual Recruitment and Selection Procedure. The Clinical Boards have worked closely with Workforce & Organisational Development as part of the Nurse Retention Plan to identify challenges faced by staff - mobility between departments was highlighted as a key obstacle. Feedback from Band 5 Nurses concluded that the existing process was time consuming and lengthy, discouraging staff from instigating internal transfers.

Ruth Walker, CAVUHB Executive Director of Nursing, said: “The new Internal Career Development Scheme will alleviate these challenges and make it easier for staff to make transfers, in addition to helping the Health Board more effectively manage resource and enhance patient care. Staff will be able to better forecast and manage their career path, whilst developing their clinical skills and knowledge.”

“We are incredibly excited to launch the Internal Career Development Scheme for Band 5 Nurses. We anticipate it making a huge difference to the professional development of staff and how we retain our talented Nurses in the Health Board, as well as supporting staff wellbeing,” added Martin Driscoll, CAVUHB Executive Director of Workforce & Organisational Development.

Staff who are interested in participating in the Internal Career Development Scheme are encouraged to discuss potential development opportunities with their line managers. More information is available for Band 5 Nurses and line managers [on the website](#). CAVUHB continues to evaluate measures to aid staff retention and development across the organisation.

Get funding to help you with your challenges – the SBRI Centre of Excellence wants to hear from you

The Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Centre of Excellence is hosted by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and funded by Welsh Government. The Centre works with Public Sector Bodies to identify health challenges where no solution exists and invites businesses to collaborate with them to develop innovative ideas and solutions.

They are looking to run their next health-focussed challenge. Do you have a challenge within health or that is health related but are not sure how to resolve it? Innovation and SBRI may be able to resolve it for you.

Send an email to SBRI.COE@wales.nhs.uk by 9 September 2020 telling them briefly about the challenges you face. They will review all of your challenges and they may ask you to come and talk to us in more detail.

Black Lives Matter in Cardiff and Vale University Health Board - A Callout for Artists

The Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted to us all the issues and barriers faced everyday here and abroad by our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic patients, colleagues and friends. It has also drawn our attention to the many ways in which we need to continue to progress and change to remove these barriers.

We recognise that issues exist here in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, not just elsewhere and we stand in support of our colleagues and against all racism, and prejudice or discriminatory behaviour.

Staff from the Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities play such a fundamental part in, and make a vital contribution to, the NHS in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan across general practice, community, mental health, our hospital services, and across commissioning. We are very proud of their work and commitment as part of the wider NHS team. Without this contribution, we would simply not be able to offer the level of patient care and services which patients in need. We understand the importance of leading by example to embed positive change and retain the confidence and trust of our colleagues.

We want to commission art projects to provide messages of support, respect and to reaffirm our commitment to continue to work with our staff, colleagues and provide support as part of our collective commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for all, not just while this is so prominent in the media, but every day.

If you are interested in producing work please contact Simone Joslyn, Head of Arts on simone.joslyn@wales.nhs.uk with your proposal, including costs.

We actively encourage artists from the Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities to apply.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Len Richards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Len Richards
Chief Executive