

# Chief Executive CONNECTS



Dear Colleague,

20/10/2021

On Friday morning, it was announced that I will be leaving the organisation in February to take up a new position as Medical Director at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust. Professor Meriel Jenney will remain Interim Executive Medical Director ahead of a permanent appointment into the role in due course.

Whilst I am looking forward to starting my new role closer to my family home, I will always look fondly on my time at Cardiff and Vale UHB. It has been a privilege to be Executive Medical Director and, for a short time, Interim Chief Executive here.

Despite the obvious challenges that we have experienced since March 2020, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with fantastic clinical and non-clinical colleagues right across the organisation, who have all shown commitment, compassion, adaptability and ingenuity to continue delivering services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is an exciting time here for the Health Board, with the ambitious Recovery and Redesign programme underway to restore and improve access to services impacted by COVID-19, the ongoing delivery of the Shaping our Future Wellbeing strategy towards its culmination in 2025, and of course the new Chief Executive, Suzanne Rankin, joining the organisation in the New Year.

During the remainder of my time at the Health Board, my focus will be on working hard alongside my great colleagues in the Executive Team to manage what we anticipate will be one of the most challenging winters in our history.

Thankfully, I'm sure the talented workforce right across our organisation will undoubtedly continue delivering the best possible patient care, whatever this winter throws at us.

**Prof Stuart Walker**  
**Interim Chief Executive**

## Recovery and Redesign

Earlier in this blog, I referenced our Recovery and Redesign Programmes of work, which aims to restore and improve access to services impacted by the Covid-19 global pandemic, transform clinical pathways and in so doing, enhance services for patients.

The Recovery and Redesign portfolio spans the following five key programmes, which each contain a number of specific projects:

- Planned Care
- Unscheduled Care
- Primary Care
- Diagnostics
- Mental Health

An initial tranche of recovery funding from Welsh Government in May has enabled us to progress a number of projects to support temporary increases in capacity to begin to deal with the backlog of patients waiting for assessment, diagnosis and treatment as a consequence of the pandemic. We're closely monitoring our progress towards restoring services to pre-pandemic activity, and at the end of September elective surgery was at 80 per cent of pre-Covid levels.

Over the summer, we initiated supporting additional projects, primarily aligned to unscheduled care and winter plans, designed to transform our services to improve access and sustainability.

Some of the key projects funded have included redesigning Surgical Same Day Emergency Care, making improvements to our Assessment and Emergency units, multi-disciplinary team cluster work, and a project focusing on getting patients into the 'Right Bed, First Time'.

At the end of September, we were successful in securing further Welsh Government funding, which will be used to support initiatives in primary care, diagnostics, mental health and planned care with a focus on transformation and sustainability.

The Recovery and Redesign programme and portfolio teams are overseeing good progress with these projects. I'll be sharing further details about specific projects in the coming weeks and months.

## Employee Wellbeing

The resilience, skill and commitment of our clinical and non-clinical staff throughout our organisation have been pivotal to our ability to continue functioning and providing services through the COVID-19 pandemic, but this has put a significant strain on our workforce.

As we enter what we expect will be another exceptionally difficult winter, I am acutely aware of the further burden that these challenges will place on our workforce over the coming months, and the impact that this will have in terms of wellbeing.

Our staff do an incredible job of directly and indirectly caring for our patients every day, but it's equally important that we all take care of ourselves so that we remain fit, well and able to continue with our lives, both in and out of work.

I would encourage staff to access our Staff Havens at UHL, and in the Lakeside Wing at UHW. The havens are calm and tranquil spaces available for all staff, providing an environment to rest and reflect to protect their emotional and mental health wellbeing.

They have facilities to enjoy a hot drink, areas to sit and reflect, shower facilities, and quiet spaces with plants and nature-themed artwork to for staff to unwind.

For further information about what the Staff Havens have to offer, [read the article shared by Cardiff & Vale Health Charity from when the Staff Haven at Lakeside Wing opened in January.](#)

With a tough winter ahead, I would urge any member of staff who does experience issues with their wellbeing to reach out to our Employee Wellbeing Service, which can provide support through counselling, guided self-help and signposting to other resources or services.

Keep an eye out for their monthly newsletter featuring a range of wellbeing workshops, tips and advice for managing wellbeing, and information about services such as the confidential [Access to Work one-to-one wellbeing sessions provided by Remploy.](#) [which you can find out more about here,](#) or access by calling 0300 456 8114 or emailing [a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk](mailto:a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk).

You can find out about how the Employee Wellbeing Service can support you on our website, or contact them on 02921 844465 or [by emailing employee.wellbeing@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:employee.wellbeing@wales.nhs.uk).

## PCR Lab Testing Update

On Friday, it was announced that due to technical issues at a laboratory in England, some people in South Wales may have been incorrectly been given negative PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October.

Anyone who had a test from 4 October and received a result from the affected laboratory will have by now been contacted by NHS Test and Trace via text message and / or e-mail and advised, if it was negative, to book an appointment to be re-tested, whilst close contacts who are symptomatic are also advised to book a test.

Those who had a test processed at the laboratory between 8 September and 4 October have also been contacted and advised to get a test if they have symptoms.

Any Health Board staff that are affected by this lab issue and have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace, are advised to [book a PCR test via the staff testing pathway](#) via the staff intranet as soon as possible, which will then be processed in an NHS Wales laboratory.

We currently have increased testing capacity at our Whitchurch Community Testing Unit to ensure anyone affected by this issue can be re-tested as quickly as possible.

It's important for staff to get self-isolate and immediately book a PCR test through the staff testing pathway if they are experiencing a high temperature; a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to sense of taste or smell.

We must also recognise that some people do not get these cardinal symptoms, and therefore ask staff who have any viral or respiratory-type symptoms e.g. sore throat/runny nose/sneezing/ headache or any cold /winter flu symptoms to also book a PCR test.

Further guidance on the testing requirements, including additional measures for staff working with patients and service users, including those who are immunosuppressed, [is available on the staff intranet here.](#)

Remember that Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) are **ONLY** for asymptomatic screening and should not be taken if you have any respiratory symptoms.

## New Oculoplastic Ophthalmology Clinic Launched

We are delighted to announce that the first Oculoplastics Ophthalmology Clinic took place on the 13th October, at the NHS Wales University Eye Care Centre at Cardiff University Optometry Building.

Thank you to all team members involved in establishing this excellent service in this modern Cardiff University facility for patient benefit which will have enormous potential for teaching of eye care practitioners.

This new clinic builds on the glaucoma clinic that opened on 7th September 2021, whereby UHW glaucoma patients are being assessed and managed in the same University facility.

To the right is an image of Mr Tom Betts, Consultant Ophthalmologist from University Hospital of Wales with Mr Liam Moody who was assessed in the clinic.



## Moving more in Cardiff Clusters

The Move More Eat Well partnership plan was launched in July 2020 in collaboration with the Cardiff and Vale Public Services Boards and the RPB to enable people who live and work in Cardiff and Vale to lead healthier, more active lives.

Now over a year into the three-year plan, the progress report is now live, documenting the successes and showcasing the innovative approaches that have been undertaken by individuals, organisations and partners in line with the Move More Eat Well agenda.

[Read more about this here.](#)

Continuing to progress the plan, partners, organisations and individuals across Cardiff and Vale have been doing their bit to support the Move More Eat Well agenda and to encourage even more individuals to do the same. One initiative in particular that I want to draw reference to is the Trelai Parkrun.

Started through work with our Health Board as part of our accelerated cluster work, GP surgeries within the South West Cluster have been encouraging the local community to participate in the Trelai Parkrun, either as walkers/runners or volunteers.

## Moving more in Cardiff Clusters

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This Saturday (23rd October) at 8.30am, the GP surgeries within this cluster are promoting and celebrating the Trelai Parkrun by sharing their successes and working to encourage other clusters across Cardiff and Vale to do the same and sign up as Parkrun practices.

With several VIPs in attendance, both volunteering and running, there will also be a meeting held following the run to discuss these successes even further.

Some of the VIPs who will be attending this weekend are:

### **MPs**

- Mark Drakeford, Nick Smith, Nick Thomas Symonds and Jo Stevens

### **Cardiff Council**

- Huw Thomas and Keith Jones

### **AMs**

- John Griffiths

The Welsh Chief Medical Officer, Frank Atherton, and representatives from Welsh Athletics and the Royal College of General Practitioners will also be attending.

Good luck to all the runners for this weekend!

## CAV Eisteddfod Winners

Implemented by the Health Board's Welsh Language team and Employee Health and Wellbeing Service in partnership with Cardiff & Vale Health Charity, the inaugural CAV Eisteddfod competition invited Health Board employees to submit artwork represent 'A Place of Happiness'.

Submissions were received across a variety of media depicting physical locations across Wales and in people's neighbourhoods, as well as mental spaces used to support wellbeing.

Four CAV Eisteddfod winners were chosen last week, [find out more in this news piece.](#)