

# Chief Executive CONNECTS



Dear Colleague,

22/09/2021

This is my final issue of Chief Executive Connects and I would like to start by simply thanking you for taking the time to read it. Thank you also for the time you have given me when reading these newsletters over the last four years; I hope you have found them a useful method of communication, relevant to you and the excellent work you do, and a source of interesting news and vital updates about our Health Board. Thank you also to my colleagues in the Communications Team, who have assisted me in producing and distributing Chief Executive Connects, week in, week out, for the duration of my tenure at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

News of my departure has been common knowledge for the last six months or so but, nevertheless, now that the time has actually arrived, the speed with which it did still surprised me. Looking back over the last few years, I'm reminded that it has been the privilege of my career to lead Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and I am filled with immense pride at what we have accomplished together across all aspects of our system through some of the most challenging periods the NHS has ever faced.

The past four years have given me so many opportunities but as always the work has been done with a great team of people and staff around me in the Health Board, and across the partnerships that support health and wellbeing. I believe Cardiff and Vale holds a unique place in Wales in the provision of health services to its population and we have seen this come to the fore in the past 14 months with the unprecedented response to Covid-19 from

research and development to frontline responses to innovation and the way in which all of our teams - clinical and non-clinical - have adapted to the challenges that faced them.

Some of my personal highlights of my time here have included supporting some new service developments, including the Major Trauma Centre, the Welsh Gender Service, the Heart Failure Supportive Care Service, and the forthcoming South East Regional Vascular Service to name but a few. Being involved in setting up new services is always so exciting as you cannot help but be taken in by the enthusiasm of the staff members who drive them and imagine the potential they have in benefitting the lives of countless number of people years into the future.

Early on in my time as Chief Executive, I was incredibly fortunate to be able to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the NHS with you. These celebrations cemented for me the indescribable value of the NHS as a service we could never do without, and the truly humbling honour we share in providing care for the people of Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, and the wider region when they need it. These celebrations also opened my eyes to the extent to which our Health Board goes above and beyond in providing healthcare, serving people's emotional, and creative, needs as well as their physical ones. The exhibition in the Hearth Gallery for the 70th Anniversary was truly special and it has been heartening to see our arts programme go from strength to strength since then.

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Who could forget that my Offa's Dyke Challenge also coincided with these celebrations? Certainly not me nor my poor feet for that matter! Joking aside, I was very proud of what the team and I achieved on that challenge, with people from all over Wales taking part and starting a conversation about the benefits of physical activity while raising money for our Health Charity. I have been delighted with the fervour our Public Health team has championed physical activity, among other healthy lifestyle choices, including securing the first bicycle rental on prescription pilot, which was even reported in the New York Times!

As a leader, I have always tried to work from a position of high trust with minimal bureaucracy. Giving staff the permission (alongside time and resource where possible) to be bold, innovate and improve services where they believe it necessary has seen some incredible projects and programmes of work in order to benefit the lives and experiences of the people we serve. Cardiff and Vale UHB has had dozens of Bevan Exemplars during the last four years, each of which has had the potential to change how we do things forever.

I am incredibly proud of the track record we have at the forefront of clinical research and development, and cutting-edge medicine. During my time at Cardiff and Vale UHB, the Health Board has been involved in countless trials including a world-first clinical trial to help prevent and manage type 1 diabetes, the world's largest ICU Oxygen trial and had a major role in the RECOVERY Trial during COVID-19 as we searched for treatments for the novel virus for our most unwell patients. The Health Board has also been at the forefront of robotic surgery and pioneered transplants with kidneys from donors infected with Hepatitis C in a UK-first and a huge breakthrough in the field of organ transplantation. This week, the Joint Research Office, a collaboration between the UHB and Cardiff University, will open its doors: this partnership is a fitting next step in our research journey and more details will be announced soon!

I have always viewed my role as one which is responsible for creating the conditions in which innovation can flourish and have always

tried to approach it with a can-do attitude, rather than putting up additional barriers to change. In 2019, our Amplify 2025 programme began to sow the seeds of change in the organisation, and that can-do attitude was obviously present at all levels of the UHB throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also in 2019, I was delighted to have a hand in bringing the Spread and Scale Academy, a leadership programme unlike any other in the country, to Wales. Improving and innovating in one location is good but these projects' real power and potential are most evident when they are able to be spread across systems and their benefits realised by as many people as possible. The success stories from previous academies have been well documented and with the next programme starting in just a couple of weeks, I will be sure to check in on the progress of this year's cohort in the near future.

The events of the COVID-19 pandemic are a huge part of my time leading Cardiff and Vale UHB and I have reflected on them many times in this bulletin, which I believe it is important to do as we must not forget what we have achieved and lost and what we have learned in the day-to-day. The scale of the leadership, the drive, the courage, and the compassion we saw from every level of the organisation still astounds me when I truly think about it. The mobilisation of staff in the initial stages of the pandemic and in the efforts behind the mass vaccination programme are unlike anything I have witnessed previously and I will be forever grateful for these efforts. Some striking examples for me, which were driven and designed by staff include the building and delivery of the Dragon's Heart Hospital, the introduction of our phone-first system for urgent care, CAV 24/7, and the Protected Elective Surgical Units which have allowed us to continue to perform many thousands of surgical procedures while keeping the rates of hospital acquired infections to an absolute minimum.

I am certain the legacy of COVID, these ways of working, and the lessons learnt will remain with the UHB for many years to come. In fact, we have already seen some developments made in the wake of the pandemic, including the establishment of the Dragon's Heart Institute. By delivering leadership development programmes such as the aforementioned Spread and Scale Academy and Climb Wales, allowing us to develop partnerships with industry and innovate in new, agile ways, the Dragon's Heart Institute is a truly exciting achievement and will stand us in good stead for when the next crisis on COVID's scale looms.

However, amongst everything we have done in the last few years, for me what stands out is the human aspect: the impact we have on the personal lives of our patients is truly immeasurable and, given the opportunity, our staff will go above and beyond to meet their needs.

An exemplary moment was the wedding ceremony of Roy and Leslie, arranged by our Critical Care Unit for the lifelong partners just weeks before the groom sadly passed away. There have been countless moments like this one during my time at Cardiff and Vale UHB but I feel that this ward wedding is a perfect distillation and crystallisation of the humanity and heart that runs through our organisation.

There are far too many achievements and highlights for me to mention but to sum up how I'm feeling, when I leave this Friday, I will look back with incredible pride and gratitude that I got to share the last four years with the staff of Cardiff and Vale UHB as my colleagues. Please continue to do your, incredible, world-leading work; the people of Wales are fortunate to have you to care for them.

**Len Richards,**  
**Chief Executive**

## COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Our vaccination programme is still progressing well and we have now delivered 711,750 vaccines with 370,513 first doses and 341,237 second doses to those aged 16 and over. Getting vaccinated is still the best way to protect yourself, your community and your loved ones from the risk of serious illness.

If you have not received your first or second dose of COVID-19 vaccination, you can attend our walk-in clinics at Bayside Mass Vaccination Centre (offering Pfizer and Oxford AstraZeneca) and Holm View in Barry (offering Pfizer only). If you have not received your first dose, or it has been 8 weeks since your first dose and you are due a second, please attend one of the centres between 10.00am and 7.30pm.

Last week we received guidance on the vaccination of all 12-15 year olds in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The vaccination of 12-15 year olds who are immunosuppressed or have certain underlying health conditions has already commenced. We envisage all remaining 12-15 year olds will be invited to the Mass Vaccination Centre for their vaccination from early October. If you are aged 12-15 year olds, you can expect an invitation letter for a vaccination appointment to your home address in due course.

## COVID-19 Booster Update

Following last week's JCVI announcement on the Autumn Booster Programme, our teams have begun delivering the COVID-19 booster vaccination to care homes and front line health and social care staff. Care homes will be contacted directly to arrange our mobile vaccination team to attend and we have now started contacting staff to receive their booster appointment at one of our Mass Vaccination Centres (MVCs) in the order they received their first and second doses.

We are asking that staff please wait to be contacted. We understand that there have been staff receiving fraudulent phone calls, we would like to remind staff that we never ask for any details such as your payroll number over the phone. If you receive a call where you are asked to give any personal details please be advised this is a fraudulent call.

The majority of people aged over 80 will be able to receive their booster vaccination closer to home from a GP led centre or Community Pharmacy in their area. Please note there is no need to contact the GP Practice or the Health Board at this stage as everyone eligible will be contacted directly as we move through the programme.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that when attending your appointment at one of our MVCs you may be required to queue. Please be patient, our vaccination teams are working hard to ensure everyone is vaccinated as safely and quickly as possible.

## Flu Vaccination Update

This year a range of groups are eligible for the flu vaccine. Flu can lead to serious illnesses, which may need treatment in hospital. We may see COVID-19 and flu both circulating at the same time, which means it is very important to get protected by having your flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is one of the best ways to protect against flu, and it will help protect vulnerable members of your community, your family and your colleagues this winter.

If any of the following apply to you, even if you feel healthy, you are more likely to get complications from flu if you catch it, and you are advised to have a flu vaccine if:

- You are pregnant
- You are aged 50 or over
- You have a long term health condition that puts you at increased risk from flu
- You live in a care home

The following groups are also advised to have a flu vaccine to protect them and the people around them:

- Children aged two and three years old (age on 31 August 2021)
- Children and young people in school years Reception to Year 11
- Carers
- People working directly with patients/clients in health or social care
- Those who live with someone who has a compromised immune system

We will be delivering flu vaccinations from September onwards to our population in various settings including GP Practices, Community Pharmacies and schools across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. GP Practices and Community Pharmacies will be offering the flu vaccination to different groups, so please check you are eligible at your chosen setting before booking your flu appointment. Please note dates are subject to change due to delivery dates and flu vaccine supply.

## Operational Update: Pressures in the system

On Friday, you may have seen members of our EU and ICU teams on the news, discussing the pressures that are being experienced right across our services. It has been an incredibly tough 18 months for staff throughout the Health Board, and over recent weeks we have been experiencing particularly significant operational pressures – not just within the Health Board but across other parts of the system too, including our primary and community care teams and our local authority partners.

To help us manage these pressures it's very important that everyone uses our services appropriately, from using the CAV 24/7 phone first system for urgent care to visiting local pharmacies for self-care wherever appropriate.

Please help us spread this message to friends and family so we can make sure our NHS services care for those who need our services the most, especially as we head into what will be a busy and challenging Winter.

I'd like to thank Chris Gough and Katja Empson for doing a great job of representing us in the media last week. You can see the news stories here:

- [ITV](#)
- [Wales Online](#)

## Nurse & ODP Autumn Recruitment Event: join our team of nursing trailblazers

If you're a registered nurse or ODP looking for a new and exciting opportunity, we'd like to invite you to come along and meet us at our next recruitment event on Thursday. Our nurse & ODP recruitment events are a fantastic opportunity to find out more about our Health Board and the range of opportunities we have available.

Join us 3-7pm, 23rd September 2021, Lakeside Wing at University Hospital of Wales. Online sessions are also available on request.

[Sign up to secure your place now.](#)



## Discuss your organ donation decision today

This week is Organ Donation Week, recognised nationally in an effort to get people talking about their organ donation decision.

When the family of a loved one do not know their decision, fewer than half will agree to donation going ahead. However, when the decision is known, this rises to 9 out of 10 families who say yes to donation. One donor can incredibly save or transform up to nine lives.

Please take this opportunity to discuss your organ donation decision with loved ones today.

## Bi visibility day / international week of happiness at work

This Thursday is Bi Visibility Day, a day for us to come together to support and celebrate all the patients and staff that make up the B in the LGBTQ+ community. It also currently happens to be International Week of Happiness at Work.

I am determined that here at Cardiff and Vale UHB we will increasingly embed an environment within which all of our LGBTQ+ colleagues can feel comfortable and ultimately be happy being their authentic selves at work.

An important part of that is each of us taking a personal responsibility to improve our understanding of the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ colleagues so that they can become better allies, and to this end I would urge all staff to read the materials that the Equality and Inclusion team will be distributing via our internal channels on Thursday.

Don't forget that staff who are members or allies of the LGBTQ+ community are being invited to join the new Staff Network. [View the LGBTQ+ Staff Network recruitment poster here](#) or email [rainbownetwork.cav@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:rainbownetwork.cav@wales.nhs.uk) to find out more.

## World car free day

Wednesday 22 September is World Car Free day, and I hope many of you will be taking / have taken up the option of leaving your car at home and travelling via alternative means. Something that has played a major role in reducing the number of car journeys locally is the introduction of our video consultation service.

We estimate that in less than 18 months since we launched the NHS Wales Video Consultation Service, more than 500,000 miles of travel have been prevented for Cardiff and Vale UHB patients. I'm very pleased to say that here at Cardiff and Vale UHB, we are one of the top users of the service across Wales.

We have been long intending to introduce video consultations as part of our Shaping our Future Wellbeing Strategy to sustainably deliver care closer to people's homes, but the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated their introduction. The service has been one of the real positives to come out of the pandemic having been incredibly popular with our patients, and its positive impact on the environment locally is undeniable.

We know that video consultations don't work for everyone or in every scenario, but they have clearly been a great success since their introduction, and I'm looking forward to seeing further growth of the service and innovative new uses of the technology continuing to come to light into the future.

## European Day of Languages

This Sunday is European Day of Languages, which is an opportune moment to reflect on the many languages spoken by our staff across the organisation, reflecting the rich diversity that we are fortunate to have throughout our organisation, reflecting the wider communities that we provide services to.

Earlier this year, I was encouraging members of staff from the EU to secure their long-term futures here with us through applying for the EU Settlement Scheme. Though the deadline has now passed, the Home Office is continuing to accept applications from people who had reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. I would urge any member of staff who is yet to submit their application to access the guidance for submitting a late application on the [UK Government website](#).

Last year, Duolingo reported that Welsh was the fastest growing language in the UK. The continued growth of the Welsh language is something that we're really keen to contribute to, which is why we are continuing to deliver our Meddwl Cymraeg campaign, which encourages staff to 'Think Welsh' as they go about their day to day jobs

## Outpatient Electronic Test Requesting

From Monday 18th October 2021, ETR (Electronic Test Requesting), will be the sole method of requesting Blood Sciences, Microbiology and Virology tests for Outpatient settings in Cardiff and the Vale UHB. This change does not apply to Mental Health settings, or settings which request anonymously (such as Sexual Health).

Paper requests will no longer be accepted unless by pre-agreed exemption or in the event of Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP) downtime; new request forms cater for such eventualities. Paper request forms provided to patients prior to this date will still be accepted. This change follows the successful move to ETR as the sole method of inpatient requesting in August.

Should you feel your area requires support with ETR, such as equipment set-up and provision e.g. printers, including for virtual clinics, then please contact the team by emailing: [WCP.Project.CAV@Wales.nhs.uk](mailto:WCP.Project.CAV@Wales.nhs.uk).

Staff can access online training via the following link: [WCP On Screen Training](#) Further information, including frequently asked questions can be found via: [Electronic Test Requesting SharePoint](#)

Thank you to all users for their ongoing support in the adoption of ETR, which ensures our patients benefit from improved test turnaround times and is helping to alleviate the current vacutainer shortage through a reduction in surplus samples.

## Help our community become #FallsFree this Falls Prevention Week

This week we are marking Falls Prevention Week by sharing resources and advice to help you or a loved one prevent a fall. Falls are not an inevitable part of growing older, and as a Health Board we work in partnership with a number of organisations to help reduce the risk of falls and provide support for individuals who are worried about falling.

Our Patient Safety and Quality team will also be raising awareness about preventing falls amongst staff by sharing information and resources on how to support patients who are risk of falling, including the Health Board's new Falls Policy. You will find more details about this policy and falls resources on the staff intranet. For more information on Falls Prevention [visit our dedicated webpage by clicking here](#).



## New Population Needs Assessment launched

This is your opportunity to share your thoughts on care and support services in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. As professionals working in health and social care, what do you think supports people's health and wellbeing? What services are working well, and which services need improvement? How has COVID-19 changed the services you provide, and what do your service users and patients need in the months and years to come?

The Population Needs Assessment responses will guide the services we provide now, and in the future.

Please fill in the survey here:

Welsh: <https://cvihsc.co.uk/cy/aab/>

English: <https://cvihsc.co.uk/pna/>

Respondents will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 Love2Shop voucher.

Please help by distributing the survey amongst your professional networks.

There is also a survey for the general public, including a dedicated survey for children and young people. Please do pass on the link to your service users, clients, or patients.

The surveys are organised by the City of Cardiff Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the local NHS) and the Third Sector (charities, volunteer organisations and community organisations).

## COG-UK Together: A celebration of endeavour and achievement

We are excited to invite you to join the Pathogen Genomics Unit (PenGU) for a special event to mark the end of routine SARS-COV-2 sequencing by the COVID-19 Genomics UK (COG-UK) consortium and recognise the incredible efforts of consortium members and partners during the past 18 months.

The COG-UK Together: A celebration of endeavour and achievement, is a free virtual event open to staff.

Date and time: Thursday 14th of October 2021 from 9am.

For more information on how to register, email [genomicspartnershipwales@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:genomicspartnershipwales@wales.nhs.uk).

## Shine Bright Appeal

Would you, your business or school like to sponsor a star at the University Hospital of Wales this Christmas?

Cardiff & Vale Health Charity would like to offer you the opportunity to “Be a star this Christmas” and sponsor an LED star at the University Hospital of Wales.

Each sponsor will see their star shine bright at the University Hospital of Wales from the start of December 2021 until January 2022. All stars will be placed on the outer walls around the University Hospital of Wales creating a magical haven for everyone to see.

All money raised will help to provide more equipment, research, treatment and patient care so that the Health Charity can support work and projects over and above what normal NHS funding usually provides.

The Health Charity would like to bring people together this Christmas and create a beacon of light, hope and joy to patients, visitors, staff and the local community after a very uncertain time.

Help to light up the University Hospital of Wales as bright as possible and show your support for our fantastic NHS.

To find out how to get involved in the Shine Bright Appeal and have a personalised star, please email [fundraising.cav@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:fundraising.cav@wales.nhs.uk) or visit [our website](#).

## Other news and events

### Jayne runs the London Marathon

Good luck to Jayne Catherall, who is running the London Marathon to raise funds for the Make it Better fund, which supports projects that don't fit neatly into our dedicated funds – they might help more than one ward, more than one hospital site, or be pilot projects that have the potential to completely revolutionise our services.

[Read more](#)