

Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol/
Prif Weithredwr GIG Cymru
Grŵp Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Director General Health and Social Services/
NHS Wales Chief Executive
Health and Social Services Group



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Our Ref:

11 February 2020

Dear Mr Ramsay

Digital services in health and care in Wales

Thank you for your letter, and for the PAC's continued interest in the digital, data and technology developments in health and care in Wales. You have asked about My Health Online, Andrew Griffiths' resignation, progress on recruitment of a new Chief Digital Officer for health and care in Wales, and the Chief Clinical Informatics Officer and Chief Technology Standards Officer roles.

My Health Online

With regard to My Health Online, NWIS has identified that between the two current GP systems in use in Wales, there were four possible permutations. The Vision system allows automated transfer of patient data, so if a patient transferred to a GP using Vision from either system then their information could be transferred without the need for a new account. The EMIS system does not have this option in place, and so if the destination practice used EMIS, even if the originator was also EMIS, a new account has to be created.

NWIS is currently working with the Health Boards and GP Practices in Wales to establish new contract(s) with the GP System suppliers and will therefore work with the suppliers to ensure that this disparity is addressed in the future. The long term solution is to separate the registry of NHS patients in Wales from the electronic health and care record system. This is included in the scope of a proposed Patient Portal Authentication Service, which will allow patients to choose the application that works best for them in order to view their records and interact with health and care services. Patient-facing services is one of the five digital investment priorities



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identified in the Minister for Health and Social Services' statement on 30 September 2019. My officials are working with all NHS organisations in Wales to ensure that digital funding for the next financial year deliver the objectives in the five strategic themes.

NWIS Director

Shortly after the Committee hearing, Andrew Griffiths announced that he would be stepping down from his role as Director of NWIS, with effect from the end of December. Given that he had not announced this formally, it was not appropriate to pre-announce this at PAC. Existing mechanisms were used for communicating Andrew's decision to step down with staff and the public, in a regular and proper way.

I have agreed that Helen Thomas will be the interim Director of NWIS until the new Special Health Authority is created and a new CEO appointed by fair and open competition. Helen was previously Director of Information at NWIS, and has my full confidence to lead the organisation through the changes of the coming months.

Chief Digital Officer

You sought clarification on the difference between the Chief Digital Officer role and the Chief Clinical Information Officer and Chief Technology Standards Officer who would report to them.

The Chief Digital Officer (CDO) will have a 'whole system' remit to lead digital change at pace and scale across health and care in Wales. The CDO for Health and Care will define national standards and services, as part of moving to an open digital architecture, across all digital systems. They will shape transformation in clinical services through ensuring that digital change is considered early as a key enabler. The CDO will also proactively advise the Welsh Government and system leaders on future digital strategy, act as a professional lead for the digital, data and technology workforce and be a champion for digital health and care in Wales.

The CDO is a full time role and will be a Director within the proposed NHS Executive Special Health Authority. The CDO will be supported by a governance structure with advisory, assurance and delivery elements and expert delivery teams. The CDO will work closely with other key stakeholders across Wales and the UK, including other CDOs within the wider Welsh public service.

The Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) for Wales will represent the needs and views of all clinical staff groups on digital data and technology strategy and lead engagement with clinicians across Wales. The CCIO will be responsible for advising the CDO on clinical information governance and clinical data needs. This will include chairing the Wales Clinical Informatics Forum, which will provide advice and guidance to the CDO on clinical strategy, and make recommendations on clinical and operational priorities. The CCIO for Wales will work with the CCIOs of health boards and trusts to ensure that clinical information standards are appropriate across all areas, from community care to acute care settings.

The Chief Technology Standards Officer (CTSO) will lead delivery of the recommendations of the digital architecture review, including expert advice to the CDO on technical standards and system architecture. The CTSO will develop engagement and assurance systems to accelerate the adoption of standards and

drive compliance with a national architecture. The CTSO will work closely with CIOs and technical leads across NHS Wales to drive the transition to a national system architecture for the NHS in Wales, based on open platform, open standards and linked, safe data.

I hope this provides the Committee with the clear evidence that the roles do not overlap, but provide a clear and continuous line of decision and implementation.

Officials have developed a full role specification for the CDO. The evaluation of that role description has indicated that appointing the CDO is dependent on the establishment of the proposed NHS Executive Special Health Authority, in which the role will be hosted. As the committee noted it is important that the role attracts a strong field and so there needs to be an appropriate degree of certainty to the hosting arrangements. I have asked my officials to explore alternative options for hosting the CDO in the interim in order to proceed with the recruitment as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Goodall', written in a cursive style.

Dr Andrew Goodall CBE