

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Orders provide that “The Board may and, where directed by the Welsh Government must, appoint Committees of the Health Board either to undertake specific functions on the Board’s behalf or to provide advice and assurance to the Board in the exercise of its functions. The Board’s commitment to openness and transparency in the conduct of all its business extends equally to the work carried out on its behalf by committees”.

In accordance with Standing Orders (and the Health Board scheme of delegation), the Board shall nominate a committee to be known as the Healthcare Professionals Forum. The detailed terms of reference and operating arrangements set by the Board in respect of this Forum are set out below.

CONSTITUTION

The Board hereby resolves to establish a Committee of the Board to be known as the Healthcare Professionals Forum (The Forum). The Forum has no executive powers, other than those specifically delegated in these Terms of Reference.

SCOPE AND DUTIES

The role of the Forum is to provide a balanced, independent, multi disciplinary view of healthcare professional issues to advise the Board on local strategy and delivery. Its role does not include consideration of healthcare professional terms and conditions of service.

The Forum shall facilitate engagement and debate amongst the wide range of clinical interests within the Health Board’s area of activity, with the aim of reaching and presenting a cohesive and balanced healthcare professional perspective to inform the Health Board’s decision making and positively influence plans for patient care.

The Health Board may specifically request advice and feedback from the Forum on any aspect of its business, and the Forum may also offer advice

and feedback even if not specifically requested by the Health Board.

The Forum may provide advice to the Board:

- at Board meetings, through the Forum Chair's participation as an Associate Member
- in written advice, and
- in any other form specified by the Board.

The Board may determine that the Forum shall be supported by a range of sub-fora to assist it in the conduct of its work, e.g. special interest groups, or the Forum may itself determine such arrangements, provided that the Board approves such action.

AUTHORITY

The Forum is authorised by the Board to:

- investigate or have investigated any activity within its Terms of Reference and in performing these duties shall have the right, at all reasonable times, to inspect any books, records or documents of the Health Board. It can seek any information it requires from any employee and all employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Forum;
- obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary, subject to the Board's budgetary and other requirements;
- by giving reasonable notice, require the attendance of any of the officers or employees and auditors of the Board at any meeting of the Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Forum reflects the structure of the seven health Statutory Professional Advisory Committees set up in accordance with Section 190 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006. Membership of the Forum shall therefore comprise the following eleven (11) members, as a minimum:

Welsh Medical Committee

- Primary and Community Care Medical representative
- Mental Health Medical representative
- Specialist and Tertiary Care medical representative

Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Committee

- Community Nursing and Midwifery representative
- Hospital Nursing and Midwifery representative

Welsh Therapies Advisory Committee

- Therapies representative

Welsh Scientific Advisory Committee

- Scientific representative

Welsh Optometric Committee

- Optometry representative

Welsh Dental Committee

- Dental representative

Welsh Pharmaceutical Committee

- Hospital Pharmacists representative
- Community Pharmacists representative

Agreed that nominated deputies would be able to attend.

Where the Board determines it appropriate, membership may be extended to other individuals in order to ensure an appropriate balance in representation amongst healthcare professional groupings and across the range of primary, community and secondary service provision.

The following officers will be in attendance at meetings of the Forum:

- Medical Director
- Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Patient Care
- Director of Therapies & Health Sciences
- Public Health Director
- Director of Governance / Board Secretary

Other Board Members will also be invited to attend meetings of the Forum as appropriate.

The Chair

The Chair is responsible for the effective operation of the Forum and for:

- chairing meetings
- establishing and ensuring adherence to the standards of good governance set for the NHS in Wales, ensuring that all business is conducted in accordance with its agreed operating arrangements
- developing positive and professional relationships amongst the Forum membership and between the Forum and the Health Board, and in particular its Chair, Chief Executive and Clinical Directors.

The Chair shall work in close harmony with the Chairs of the Health Board's other advisory groups, and, supported by the Board Secretary / Corporate Director, shall ensure that key and appropriate issues are discussed by the Forum in a timely manner with all the necessary information and advice being made available to members to inform the debate and ultimate resolutions.

As Chair of the Forum, they will be appointed as an Associate Member of the Health Board. The Chair is accountable for the conduct of their role as an Associate Member on the Board to the Minister for Health and Social Services, through the Health Board Chair. They are also accountable to the Health Board for the conduct of business in accordance with the governance and operating framework set by the LHB.

The Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair shall deputise for the Chair in their absence for any reason, and will do so until either the existing chair resumes their duties or a new chair is appointed, and this deputisation includes acting in the role of Associate Member of the Health Board.

The Vice Chair is accountable through the Forum Chair to the Health Board for their performance as Vice Chair, and to their nominating body or grouping for the way in which they represent their views at the Forum.

Members

The Forum shall function as a coherent advisory group, all members being full and equal members and sharing responsibility for the decisions of the Forum.

All members must:

- be prepared to engage with and contribute fully to the Forum's activities and in a manner that upholds the standards of good governance – including the values and standards of behaviour – set for the NHS in Wales
- comply with their terms and conditions of appointment
- equip themselves to fulfil the breadth of their responsibilities by participating in appropriate personal and organisational development programmes, and
- promote the work of the Forum within the healthcare professional discipline they represent.

Forum members are accountable through the Forum Chair to the Health Board for their performance as group members, and to their nominating body or grouping for the way in which they represent the views of their body or grouping at the Forum.

Appointment and Terms of Office

Appointments to the Forum shall be made by the Board, based upon nominations received from the relevant healthcare professional group, and in accordance with any specific requirements or directions made by the Welsh Ministers. Members shall be appointed for a period specified by the Board, but for no longer than 4 years in any one term. Those members can be reappointed but may not serve a total period of more than 8 years consecutively.

The **Chair** will be nominated from within the membership of the Forum, by its members, in a manner determined by the Board, subject to any specific requirements or directions made by the Welsh Ministers. The nomination will be subject to consideration by the Board, who must submit a recommendation on the nomination to the Minister for Health and Social Services. Their appointment as Chair will be made by the Minister, but it will not be a formal public appointment. The Constitution Regulations provide that the Welsh Ministers may appoint an Associate Member of the Board, and the appointment of the Chair to this role is on the basis of the conditions of appointment for Associate Members set out in the Regulations.

The Chair's term of office will be for a period of up to two (2) years, with the ability to stand as Chair for an additional one (1) year, in line with that individual's term of office as a member of the Forum. That individual may remain in office for the remainder of their term as a member of the Forum after their term of appointment as Chair has ended.

The **Vice Chair** will be nominated from within the membership of the Forum, by its members, in a manner determined by the Board, subject to the condition that they be appointed from a different healthcare discipline to that of the Chair, along with any specific requirements or directions made by the Welsh Ministers. The nomination shall be subject to consideration by the Board, who must submit a recommendation on the nomination to the Minister for Health and Social Services. The appointment as Vice Chair will be made by the Minister, but it will not be a formal public appointment. The Constitution Regulations provide that the Welsh Ministers may appoint an Associate Member of the Board. In the Forum Chair's absence, the Vice Chair will also perform the role of Associate Member on the Health Board. The appointment of the Vice Chair is therefore also on the basis of the conditions of appointment for Associate Members set out in the Regulations.

The Vice Chair's term of office will be for a period of up to two (2) years, with the ability to stand as Vice Chair for an additional one (1) year, in line with that individual's term of office as a member of the Forum. That individual may remain in office for the remainder of their term as a member of the Forum after their term of appointment as Vice Chair has ended.

A member's tenure of appointment will cease in the event that they no longer meet any of the eligibility requirements determined for the position. A member must inform the Forum Chair as soon as is reasonably practicable to do so in respect of any issue which may impact on their eligibility to hold office. The Forum Chair will advise the Board in writing of any such cases immediately.

The Health Board will require Forum members to confirm their continued eligibility on an annual basis.

Resignation, suspension and removal of members

A member of the Forum may resign office at any time during the period of appointment by giving notice in writing to the Forum Chair and the Health Board.

If the Board, having consulted with the Forum Chair and the nominating body or group, considers that:

- it is not in the interests of the health service in the area covered by the Forum that a person should continue to hold office as a member, or
- it is not conducive to the effective operation of the Forum.

The Board shall remove that person from office by giving immediate notice in writing to the person and the relevant nominating body or group.

A nominating body or group may request the removal of a member appointed to the Forum to represent their interests by writing to the Health Board setting out an explanation and full reasons for removal.

If a member fails to attend any meeting of the Forum for a period of six months or more, the Health Board may remove that person from office unless they are satisfied that:

- i. the absence was due to a reasonable cause
- ii. the person will be able to attend such meetings within such period as the Board considers reasonable.

Before making a decision to remove a person from office, the Board may suspend the tenure of office of that person for a limited period (as determined by the Board) to enable it to carry out a proper investigation of the circumstances leading to the consideration of removal. Where the Board suspends any member, that member shall be advised immediately in writing of the reasons for their suspension. Any such member shall not perform any of the functions of membership during a period of suspension.

SUPPORT TO THE FORUM

The Director of Governance / Board Secretary will ensure that the Forum is properly equipped to carry out its role by:

- co-ordinating and facilitating any appropriate induction and organisational development activity
- ensuring the provision of governance advice and support to the Forum Chair on the conduct of its business and its relationship with the Health Board and others
- ensuring the provision of secretariat support for Forum meetings
- ensuring that the Forum receives the information it needs on a timely basis
- facilitating effective reporting to the Board, and
- enabling the Board to gain assurance that the conduct of business within the Forum accords with the governance and operating framework it has set.

FORUM MEETINGS

Quorum

A quorum for meetings of the Forum shall be the Chair or Vice Chair, at least five professional representatives plus at least one Director in attendance.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings shall be held not less than three times a year. The Forum will arrange meetings to fit in with key statutory requirements during the year consistent with the Health Board's annual plan of Board Business.

Circulation of Papers

Papers will be distributed at least 5 working days prior to each meeting.

REPORTING AND ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Forum Chair shall:

- report formally, regularly and on a timely basis to the Health Board on the Forum's activities. This includes verbal updates on activity, the submission of Forum minutes and written reports, as well as the presentation of an annual report

- bring specific attention to any significant matters under consideration by the Forum via the submission of the minutes as part of the Committee Chairs and Champions Report to the Health Board
- ensure appropriate escalation arrangements are in place to alert the Chair, Chief Executive or Chairs of other relevant committees of any urgent / critical matters that may affect the operation and / or reputation of the Health Board.

The Director of Governance / Board Secretary, on behalf of the Board, shall oversee a process of regular and rigorous self assessment and evaluation of the Forum’s performance and operation.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEES / GROUPS
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The Forum, through the Committee Chair and members, shall maximise cohesion and integration across all aspects of governance and assurance through the:

- joint planning and co-ordination of Board and Committee business
- sharing of information, as appropriate.

The Forum shall embed the Health Board’s corporate standards, priorities and requirements, e.g. equality and human rights through the conduct of its business.

The Forum’s main link with the Board is through the Chair’s membership of the Health Board as an Associate Member.

The Board shall determine the arrangements for any joint meetings between the Health Board and the Forum.

The Board’s Chair shall put in place arrangements to meet with the Forum Chair on a regular basis to discuss the Forum’s activities and operation.

Rights of Access to the Health Board for Professional Groups

The LHB Chair, on the advice of the Chief Executive and/or Board Secretary, may recommend that the Board afford direct right of access to any professional group, in the following, exceptional circumstances:

- i where the Forum recommends that a matter should be presented to the Board by a particular healthcare professional grouping, e.g. due to the specialist nature of the issues concerned, or
- ii where a healthcare professional group has demonstrated

that the Forum has not afforded it due consideration in the determination of its advice to the Board on a particular issue.

The Board may itself determine that it wishes to seek the views of a particular healthcare professional grouping on a specific matter, in accordance with Standing Order 6.5.7.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

The Forum Chair will automatically be a member of the National Professional Advisory Group that is organised and led by the Welsh Government. The Forum Chair will ensure that regular reports are provided following meetings of the national group.

APPLICABILITY OF STANDING ORDERS TO FORUM BUSINESS

The requirements for the conduct of business as set out in the Health Board's Standing Orders are equally applicable to the operation of the Forum, except in relation to the Quorum

REVIEW

These Terms of Reference shall be adopted by the Healthcare Professionals Forum at its first meeting and subject to review at least on an annual basis thereafter.

Reviewed July 2019 (for review July 2020).