

**ALL WALES AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIRS (AWACC) MEETING
NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA
MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2025 @1PM**

Please note, this is not intended to serve as a formal minute of the meeting. It is a Copilot-generated summary designed to support those who were unable to attend and to inform the actions and decisions log.

It was agreed at the meeting held on 30 September that formal minutes would not be taken or presented in a public format. This decision reflects the nature of the All Wales Audit Chairs Committee, which is not a decision-making forum but rather a valuable peer support group. This note will be added in the consent agenda section of the next meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Peter Curran	Chair, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS University Trust
Anne Beegan	Audit Wales
Simon Cookson	NWSSP Internal Audit
Stephen Elliot	Powys Teaching Health Board, Independent Member
Rhodri Evans	Hywel Dda University Health Board, Independent Member
Urtha Felda	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Independent Member
Sarah Harland	Secretariat, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS University Trust
Iwan Jones	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Independent Member
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS University Trust
Carl Window	Counter Fraud Manager, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS University Trust
Nuria Zolle	Swansea Bay University Health Board, Independent Member
Nicholas Raynor	Audit Wales

APOLOGIES:

Pippa Britton	Chair of the Board, Public Health Wales
Graham Dainty	Head of NHS Counter Fraud Services (Wales)
Andrew Doughton	Audit Wales
Dave Edwards	Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Independent Member
Gareth Jones	Velindre NHS Trust, Independent Member
Helen Jones	Audit Wales
Ceri Mcgaugie	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Corporate Office
Patsy Roseblade	Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Independent Member
Jayne Sadgrove	Health Education and Improvement Wales, Independent Member
Dave Thomas	Audit Wales
Anthony Veale	Audit Wales

1. **Committee Structure and Future Planning:** Peter led a discussion with the group on the future structure of the committee, covering meeting frequency, action logs, and the adoption of concise action logs instead of full minutes, as well as proposals for deep dives and annual in-person events.
 - a. **Action Log Adoption:** Peter proposed the adoption of a concise action log instead of full minutes for committee meetings, citing the peer group nature of the committee and the time-saving benefits for the secretariat. The group agreed to this approach, aligning with advice from the Directors of Corporate Governance Peer Group.
 - b. **Meeting Frequency Decision:** The group debated the frequency of meetings, considering attendance issues and competing priorities. After discussion, the consensus was to hold four meetings per year, with flexibility for one longer in-person event and consideration of timing to improve attendance.
 - c. **Deep Dive Topics and Safe Space Format:** Peter summarised feedback from a questionnaire, identifying key areas for deep dives. Seven priority themes were identified for deep dives: Board Assurance Framework, Risk Management & Appetite, Counter Fraud issues, Audit Committee role in partnership working, challenges faced by chairs (including conflicts), Clinical Audits, Financial sustainability/Digital.
 - d. The group agreed to divide future meetings into Part A (all members) and Part B (chairs only) to create a space for open discussion.
 - e. **Membership and Chair Turnover:** Anne highlighted the importance of tracking chair turnover and interim arrangements, suggesting the creation and circulation of a list of current chairs and their terms. Trish and Sarah took an action to liaise with Directors of Corporate Governance to maintain this information.
 - f. **Annual In-Person Event Proposal:** Peter proposed an annual in-person event for networking and sharing best practice, open to all Audit Committee members and possibly vice chairs and prospective public appointees. Anne noted the need to manage time commitments for members who chair multiple committees.

2. **Audit Wales and Internal Audit Updates:** Anne and Nicholas provided updates on Audit Wales activities, including national studies, the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), and links to governance work, while Simon presented internal audit findings, highlighting assurance levels, key risk areas, and the use of AI in audit processes.
 - a. **National Studies and Shared Learning:** Anne outlined ongoing national studies such as urgent and emergency care, rebalancing care, and additional learning needs, emphasising the importance of shared learning from structure assessments and the development of sessions on board walkarounds, measuring impact, and report writing for directors of corporate governance.

- b. **National Fraud Initiative Assessment:** Nicholas explained the NFI as a UK-wide counter fraud exercise, detailing the current assessment of governance arrangements, data matching, and reporting outcomes. He described the low fraud outcomes in Welsh health bodies, attributing this to strong shared services and consistent processes, and discussed plans to share best practice across sectors.
- c. **Internal Audit Findings and AI Adoption:** Simon reported on internal audit outcomes, noting that most audits achieved reasonable or substantial assurance, with limited assurance concentrated in areas like clinical governance and workforce. He described the increasing use of AI for report writing and analysis, and the need for robust governance protocols around its use.
- d. **Contract Management and Training:** Simon and Stephen discussed findings from contract management reviews, identifying training as a key area for improvement. Simon confirmed ongoing collaboration with finance and procurement teams to address these issues, and regular liaison with HIW to align audit and inspection programmes.
- e. **Cybersecurity Audit Insights:** Peter raised concerns about cybersecurity, prompting Simon to share that several audits had been completed, some with limited assurance, and that findings would be summarised and shared with the group once all reviews were finalised.

3. Counter Fraud Updates and Initiatives: Carl, as a member of the Counter Fraud Liaison Group, provided a comprehensive update on counter fraud activities, including mandatory training, job description standardisation, reporting improvements, and collaboration with national authorities, with further discussion on resource levels and prosecution outcomes.

- a. **Mandatory Training and Legislation:** Carl reported on the push for mandatory counter fraud e-learning in response to the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, noting that only five health boards currently require it and highlighting its role in due diligence and compliance.
- b. **Job Description and Reporting Standardisation:** The liaison group streamlined counter fraud job descriptions and reporting requirements, creating templates and a standardised quarterly submission platform to ensure consistent and accurate data for Welsh Government and stakeholders.
- c. **Fraud Recovery and Prevention Figures:** Carl described recent training on calculating recovery and prevention figures, leading to the adoption of an approved methodology for consistent reporting across Wales, addressing previous disparities in reported outcomes.
- d. **Resource Levels and Investment Discussion:** Iwan and Carl discussed the limited resources available for counter fraud work, with only 27 staff across Wales, and agreed that increased investment would likely yield

greater returns in fraud prevention and detection, though the optimal level of investment remains undetermined.

- e. **Prosecution and Sanction Outcomes:** Carl explained the range of sanctions applied in fraud cases, including civil recovery, cautions, and disciplinary actions, noting that criminal prosecutions are infrequent but supported by a robust challenge process with the CPS when necessary.
- f. **AI and Data Analytics in Fraud Detection:** Nuria queried the use of AI and data analytics in counter fraud, with Carl confirming that while interest is high, tangible outcomes are yet to emerge, and compliance with new legislation is largely aligned with existing anti-fraud and bribery provisions.

4. Corporate Governance and Board Development: Trish updated the group on corporate governance initiatives, including:

- a. **Community of Practice Launch:** Trish described the launch of a corporate governance community of practice, aimed at promoting governance careers, supporting staff development, and sharing best practice across health boards through masterclasses, mentoring, and collaborative platforms.
- b. **Board Development and Leadership Offerings:** Academi Wales is refreshing its board and leadership development programmes, consulting on themes relevant to NHS boards, and continuing to offer sessions such as 'Healthy Boards' and 'High Performing Organisations', with updates to be shared as available.
- c. **Public Accountability Meetings:** Trish outlined the format and scheduling of upcoming public accountability meetings, which will be held at Welsh Government premises, involve advance evidence packs, and be accessible to the public via live stream or recording, with lessons learned to refine the process. Urtha suggested including experiences from public accountability meetings on the January agenda to facilitate group learning and provide feedback to Welsh Government, a proposal supported by Peter and noted for future planning.
- d. **Corporate Governance Conference:** The first corporate governance conference is scheduled for 24 October at DHCW premises, featuring keynote speakers, roundtable discussions, and presentations from internal and external audit, with recordings and materials to be shared with the wider group.

5. Consent Items and Meeting Closure: Peter briefly addressed consent items, including the Welsh risk pool and the Counter Fraud Steering Group highlight report, before closing the meeting and confirming next steps and future meeting dates.

- a. **Welsh Risk Pool Update:** Peter noted the increase in the Welsh risk pool and referenced the information provided in the meeting pack, indicating that finance committees are monitoring the situation.
- b. **Counter Fraud Steering Group Report:** Peter mentioned his attendance at the Counter Fraud Steering Group and the inclusion of its highlight report in the meeting materials, available for review by members.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Distribution of Deep Dive Topics:** Send the list of proposed deep dive topics to all members for review and additional suggestions. (Sarah)
- **Audit Committee Chair List Update:** Compile and circulate an up-to-date list of current Audit Committee chairs, including their tenure and any known upcoming changes, with input from directors of corporate governance. (Trish, Sarah)
- **Agenda Planning Collaboration:** Coordinate with directors of corporate governance to align agendas and key themes between this group and the directors' group, ensuring relevant topics are addressed jointly. (Trish)
- **Public Accountability Meeting Feedback:** Include an agenda item for the January meeting to discuss experiences and learning from the new public accountability meetings, with the aim of providing group feedback to Welsh Government. (Peter)

The next meeting is scheduled for the 26 January 2026 @10am.