

**PWYLLGOR DIWYLLIANT, POBL A DATBLYGU SEFYDLIADOL  
PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

<b>DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:</b>	16 December 2024
<b>TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	Implementation of Welsh Health Circular WHC (2024) 017
<b>CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:</b>	Lisa Gostling, Executive Director of Workforce & Organisational Development
<b>SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Heather Hinkin, Assistant Director of People Management

**Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)**

**Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)**

Er Gwybodaeth/For Information

**ADRODDIAD SCAA**

**SBAR REPORT**

Sefyllfa / Situation

The attached report provides an update on the progress which is being made to implement some of the non-pay elements of the collective agreement for 2022-2024 for Agenda for Change (AfC) staff, as required by Welsh Health Circular WHC (2024) 017.

Cefndir / Background

The Welsh Health Circular (2024) 017 provides a framework for delivery in partnership on progress in a number of key areas.

This report provides an overview of the progress of four workstreams which are co-delivered with Staff Partnership Forum members. Staff Partnership Forum established four workstreams in December 2023 following a scoping exercise of the key issues arising from the non-pay deal in relation to:

- Flexible working – to include flexible rostering practice and rosters.
- Agency reduction – with links to incentivising pay, contracts and general Terms and Conditions.
- Retention – to include retire and return.
- Sickness absence – to include parity between support for mental health and physical Health.

Asesiad / Assessment

A summary of the progress to date in relation to the four Staff Partnership Forum workstreams and the broader non-pay elements is summarised below.

**Flexible working**

The Task and Finish Group continue to meet on a monthly basis, with key actions undertaken since the last update including:

- New session for delivery on the Health Board's LEAP Development Programme, with a focus on fostering a leadership culture which promotes flexible working at team level, will be launched in March 2025 (co-created and delivered with the Senior Workforce Manager (People Effectiveness)).
- Flexible working maturity assessment pilot project will begin in January 2025 by adding an assessment of flexible working maturity into our Organisational Development (OD) Relationship

Managers' exploration phase when working with services/teams. This project is being planned and managed from a quality improvement perspective.

- Digital Workforce and Productivity Solutions Team at NWSSP have developed a new promotional video designed to support the use of flexible working functionality in ESR across NHS Wales: it highlights the transactional process for recording flexible working arrangements in ESR and touches on key elements of the Flexible Working Policy that the system does not fully align with or make explicit.  
[Flexible Working in ESR - YouTube](#)  
[Gweithio'n Hyblyg yn ESR - YouTube](#)
- NHS Wales Flexible Pensions Policy was approved in September (see 'Retention to include Retire and Return' update below for further information).

As this work also aligns with the Health Board's wider retention programme, updates continue to be shared with the specific retention groups as necessary, including Nursing, Medical and AHP and HCS; the latter group is scheduled to begin in December. Additionally, links continue with the Health Board's Rostering Group and a member of the Flexible Working Group is also a member of the Rostering Group.

### Agency Reduction

The Task and Finish group is well established and continues to meet regularly to discuss elements within the National Workplan. The reduction of nursing agency also forms part of the Variable Pay Expenditure Reduction & Efficiency Group which meets weekly. As of November, the priority of this group will move to Medical Efficiency and Stabilisation with Nursing Stabilisation returning to business as normal.

Although the Health Board's agency expenditure showed promising signs of decrease in June 2024, a sustained decrease through to October 2024 has only been seen for nursing. Nursing agency spend decreased significantly from £1.8m in February to £750k in October. However, other categories such as Medical and Allied Health Professionals and Health Scientists have shown fluctuations, with no consistent downward trend.

Agency Spend February 2024	Agency Spend June 2024	Agency Spend August 2024	Agency Spend October 2024
Nursing £1.8m	Nursing £1.1m	Nursing £1.06m	Nursing £750k
Medical £407k	Medical £321k	Medical £485k	Medical £409k
Allied Health Professionals and Health Scientists £54k	Allied Health Professionals and Health Scientists £48k	Allied Health Professionals and Health Scientists £85k	Allied Health Professionals and Health Scientists £51k
Health Care Support Worker £48k	Health Care Support Worker £4k	Health Care Support Worker £15k	Health Care Support worker £1.3k

Due to continued pressures around waiting list initiatives, additional agency usage for Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) has been authorised through the Financial Control Group with an exit plan linked to recruitment. Further work is ongoing to identify these opportunities, with significant lessons being learnt around the ability to hire into this speciality.

Exit plans (supported by quality impact assessments to mitigate any risk of adverse outcomes for patient care) were in place to reduce agency use across all staff groups to zero by the 1st of November. However, the following nursing areas are using agency, but action plans exist to reduce this linked to PIN delays for Newly Qualified Nurses (NQNs), Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs), and recruitment processes. This plan aims to deliver by the end of the year for the remaining areas:

- Planned Care
- WGH – Ward 4/ACDU and ED

- PPH – Ward 1 / Ward 3 / Ward 4 / Ward 9
- GGH – Cardiac Care Unit
- MHL D – HCSW PICU
- Carmarthen Community – Amman Valley

Further updates will be provided on these increased controls through the Value and Sustainability group, along with support from the Variable Pay Reduction and Efficiency group.

### **Retention to include Retire and Return**

Since our last update in August 2024, the group have met monthly and some of the key areas of work have been:

- The SharePoint page is now up and running and has had 918 views to date. [Retirement and Flexible Retirement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- A video training resource was created to train leaders to have a coaching conversation regarding retirement and flexible retirement with a member of staff. Several other videos and webinars have been sourced and can be found on the SharePoint page. A poster was created to advertise the SharePoint page, and this has contributed to increased views.
- The People Development team are running a “planning a positive retirement” course over teams via affinity connect.
- The Flexible Pensions Policy was published in the last month, and we continue to advertise it and link it to the SharePoint page.
- Views have been sought from All Wales agile network, to explore what other Health Boards are doing in this area. There were no surprises, and Hywel Dda are experiencing similar barriers. Some of the key barriers to changing hearts and minds on flexible retirement have been identified:
  - lack of knowledge on the part of managers,
  - lack of understanding of what is possible,
  - service pressure – e.g. easier occasionally to accommodate reduction in hours but not offer fixed days.
  - incorrect assumptions that the manager will have to offer flexible approach to all staff that request it i.e. “if I give to one, I have to give to all”.

### **Sickness / Wellbeing**

The Task and Finish Group continue to meet on a monthly basis, with key actions undertaken since the last update including:

- SharePoint page developed to provide a one stop resource for staff who wish to find out more about either retirement or flexible retirement has received 918 views to date (Nov 2024): [Retirement and Flexible Retirement \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Video launched as a training resource for both managers and staff to showcase how a coaching conversation can take place on the subject of flexible retirement and available on the SharePoint page, along with other useful videos and webinars.
- NHS Wales Flexible Pensions Policy was approved in September to provide an overview of the options available to employees who are members of the NHS Pension Scheme to access their pension or part of it and/or plan for retirement through utilising the flexibilities available within the scheme which fit with employees’ aspirations for flexible working and work/life balance.
- People Development running a “Planning a Positive Retirement” course over Teams via affinity connect.
- Views sought from NHS Wales Agile Network to explore what other Health Boards are doing in this area: similar barriers to changing hearts and minds on flexible retirement are being experienced across organisations.

**Action to be carried forward:**

- Continue to meet as a group, with a key focus on promoting and educating, including signposting to the NHS Wales Flexible Pensions Policy and Health Board SharePoint page.
- Plan and deliver a soft launch of the NHS Wales Flexible Pensions Policy in early 2025, including:
  - media coverage and signposting to the SharePoint page and offering staff the opportunity to accept/take questions over Teams.
  - re-survey staff to pulse check their views/knowledge on flexible retirement as an ongoing means of evaluation.

This Group's work is focused on retire and return, however it dovetails with the Health Board's overarching retention work programme and the following criteria set out in the Welsh Health Circular//2024/017, which we regularly provide assurance against:

- Implement and monitoring of the Nurse Retention Plan.
- Implement and monitoring of other professional group retention strategies.

**Argymhelliad / Recommendation**

The Committee is requested to:

- **NOTE** updates provided on the four collaborative workstreams of the non-pay deal.

**Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)****Objectives: (must be completed)**

Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	2.1 To provide assurance to the Board on compliance with legislation, guidance and best practice around the workforce and OD agenda, learning from work undertaken nationally and internationally, ensuring Hywel Dda University Health Board (the Health Board) is recognised as a leader in this field.  2.2 To provide assurance to the Board on the implementation of the UHB's Workforce and OD Strategy, and the all-Wales Health & Social Care Workforce Strategy, ensuring these are consistent with the Board's overall strategic direction and with any requirements and standards set for NHS bodies in Wales.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	N/A
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	Not Applicable
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	2. Culture and valuing people
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	1. Putting people at the heart of everything we do 2. Working together to be the best we can be 4. The best health and wellbeing for our individuals, families and communities
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	1 Workforce Stabilisation

Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: <a href="#">Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022</a>	2. Develop a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS 5. Offer a diverse range of employment opportunities which support people to fulfill their potential
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<b>Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:</b>	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Welsh Health Circular (2024) 017 - Implementation of the Non-pay Elements of the 2022-4 Collective Agreement.
Rhestr Termau: Glossary of Terms:	Not Applicable.
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Pobl a Datblygu Sefydliadol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to People, Organisational Development & Culture Committee:	The contents of the submission to Welsh Government were shared with Trade Union Representatives and signed off by the Chair of Staff partnership Forum.

<b>Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)</b>	
<b>Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:</b>	None arising from this paper.
<b>Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:</b>	None arising from this paper.
<b>Gweithlu: Workforce:</b>	None arising from this paper.
<b>Risg: Risk:</b>	Delivery on the Welsh Health Circular must be reported to Welsh Government at specified intervals. Failure to comply may impact our relationship with Welsh Government and our local and national trade unions.
<b>Cyfreithiol: Legal:</b>	None arising from this paper.
<b>Enw Da: Reputational:</b>	Reputational risks may arise from a failure to implement all aspects of the Welsh Health Circular within our control.
<b>Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:</b>	None arising from this paper.
<b>Cydraddoldeb: Equality:</b>	None arising from this paper.