



Fragile Services Update Report

Quality, Safety and Experience Committee

June 2025

Situation



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The purpose of this report is to provide the Quality, Safety and Experience Committee (QSEC) with an update on development of the Fragile Services Framework with reference to the de-escalation criteria within the NHS Wales oversight and escalation framework .

The Quality, Safety & Experience Committee (QSEC) are asked to note amendments to the Framework.

Papers to QSEC June 2023, June 2024 and December 2024:

Purpose:

Develop a definition of what is meant by fragility in the context of services delivered by the Health Board together with a set of criterion/triggers that could be used to enable the organisation to identify and prioritise services that are classified as fragile. Underpinned by the Health Board:

- [Risk matrix.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Quality Management System \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [A Framework for Safe, Reliable, and Effective Care | Institute for Healthcare Improvement \(ihi.org\)](#).
- To identify and prioritise services classified as fragile the methodology presented to QSEC built on:
 - The traditional risk management (5x5 risk matrix: likelihood x impact) approach.
 - A set of criterion/triggers developed and subsequently adapted in June 2024 following a thorough review of the existing risks and available literature.
- The purpose of the triggers/criterion, in addition to the risk score, was to facilitate prioritisation of service fragility, to enable teams to develop a shared vision of the risks that exist, and to inform the controls/mitigating actions thus building on traditional risk management approaches

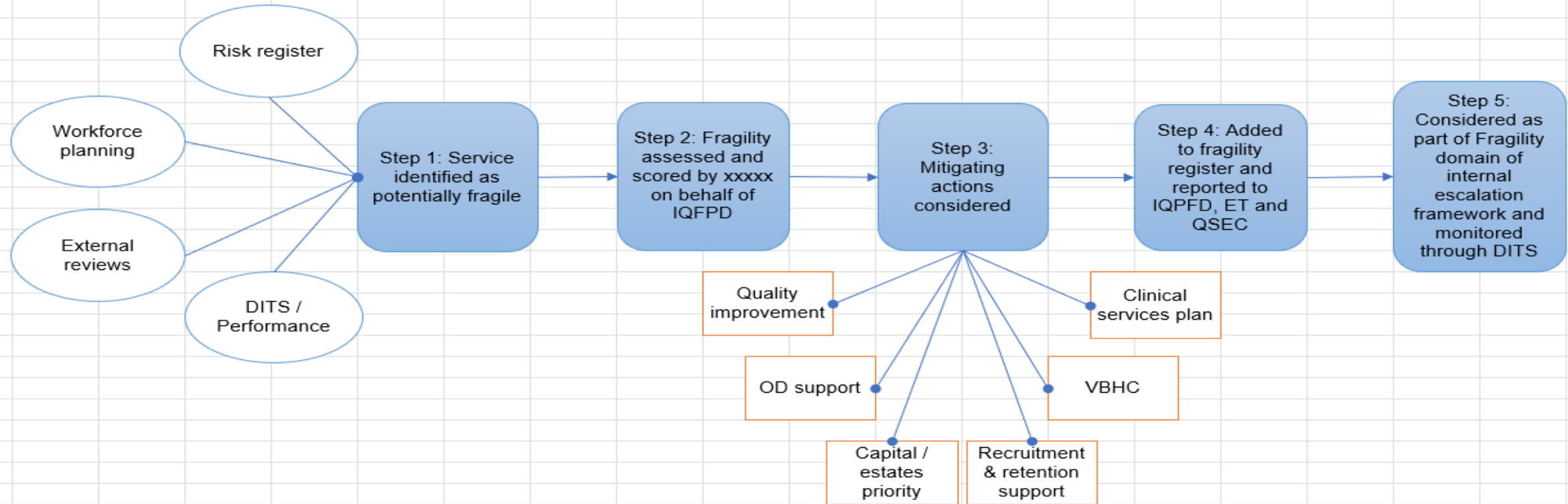


- The NHS Wales oversight and escalation framework, sets out the process by which Welsh Government maintains oversight of NHS bodies and gains assurance across systems. Under the Fragile Services Domain the Health Board is required to have:
 - *“Effective process to recognise and respond to services that are at risk of becoming fragile”*
- The Health Board Fragile Services Framework will:
 - Identify and prioritise services that are classified as fragile
 - Articulate the level of risk each service holds so that the Board is sighted.
 - Assess the degree of fragility, to identify opportunities and inform decisions on appropriate action to aid service sustainability
 - Inform requirement for service change
 - Identify opportunities for consolidation/regionalisation of services
- The Framework was tested against risk:
 - 1609: Risk of avoidable harm due to fragile Medical Diabetes Service at Withybush Hospital: The workforce challenges identified were mitigated by a recruitment exercise reducing the Risk Score to 16 and level of fragility.
 - 1557: Risk of non-adherence to national guidance on ultrasound scanning requirements during pregnancy: The process highlighted demand management opportunities initiating a review of “Grow 2.0 and the pathway for low gestational age” to further mitigate this risk.
- Fragile Services Oversight Group established

Identification and corporate process



Flowchart for Fragile Services



- Criterion 1: Quality and safety** - there is evidence that the outcomes for patients are significantly below comparator providers; or there are significant patient safety concerns; or service does not meet minimum volumes of activity to maintain high standards
- Criterion 2: Patient experience and performance** - there is no viable prospect of the service meeting professional standards, including delivery of timely services
- Criterion 3: Workforce and culture** - the workforce required to safely and sustainably deliver the service is not available because it cannot be recruited, developed, or retained - or can only be delivered by a dependency on agency or locum staff
- Criterion 4: Professional Consensus:** There is professional consensus on the merits of reconfiguring the services to deliver an enhanced or new service model
- Criterion 5: Public support:** There is significant public support or democratic mandate to change a service model

Weighting Criteria:



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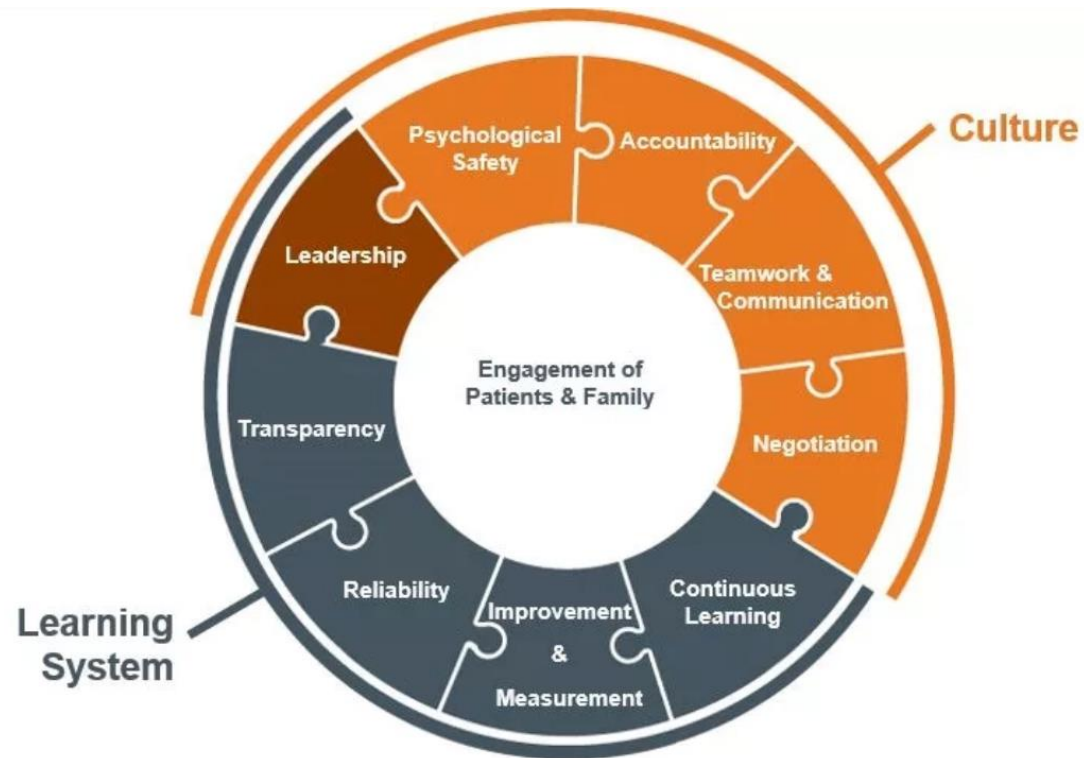
Criteria	Weighting
Criterion 1: Quality and safety - there is evidence that the outcomes for patients are significantly below comparator providers; or there are significant patient safety concerns; or service does not meet minimum volumes of activity to maintain high standards	
Criterion 2: Patient experience and performance - there is no viable prospect of the service meeting professional standards, including delivery of timely services	
Criterion 3: Workforce and culture - the workforce required to safely and sustainably deliver the service is not available because it cannot be recruited, developed, or retained - or can only be delivered by a dependency on agency or locum staff	
Criterion 4: There is professional consensus on the merits of reconfiguring services to deliver an enhanced pathway or a new service model.	
Criterion 5: There is significant public support or democratic mandate to change a service model.	

Safe Reliable and Effective care Framework self-assessment. Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)



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Quality Impact Assessment



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A check of the impact of the proposed strategic decision is undertaken.

Each quality standards must be considered also whether the change links to a quality enabler.

The quality standards are Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient, Evidence Based, Timely and Person Centred

The quality enablers are Leadership, Workforce, Culture, Information, Learning improvement and research, and Whole-system perspective

Health & Care Quality Standard	Possible considerations for this standard	Risk Score (current risk before change)			Tick impact			Does this impact link with a Quality Enabler? If yes, which enabler? (Leadership, Workforce, Culture, Information, Learning improvement and research, Whole-system perspective)	Risk Score (after proposed change)			Description of impact
		Likelihood 1-5	Impact 1-5	Overall score	Positive	Neutral	Negative		Likelihood 1-5	Impact 1-5	Overall score	
Safe	Does this decision have a positive, neutral or negative impact on ensuring that: a) our health care system is a high quality, highly reliable and safe system that avoids preventable harm, maximising the things that go right and learning from when things go wrong to prevent them occurring again? b) people's health, safety and welfare are actively promoted and protected? Do the risks that have been identified have a positive, neutral or negative impact on safety?			0						0		
Timely	Does this decision have a positive, neutral or negative impact on ensuring that: a) people have access to the high-quality advice, guidance and care they need quickly and easily, in the right place, first time? b) we care for those with the greatest health need first, and where treatment is identified as necessary, we treat people based on their identified and agreed clinical priority?			0						0		
Effective	Does this decision have a positive, neutral or negative impact on ensuring that: a) care and treatment reflects evidence-based best practice, and b) people receive the right care to achieve the optimal outcomes possible for them and that matter to them?			0						0		



Fragile Services Register



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- Fragile Service Sharepoint

Microsoft Lists

Ellen Dzebo (Hywel Dda UHB - PA to QIST Team)'s list
Fragile Services

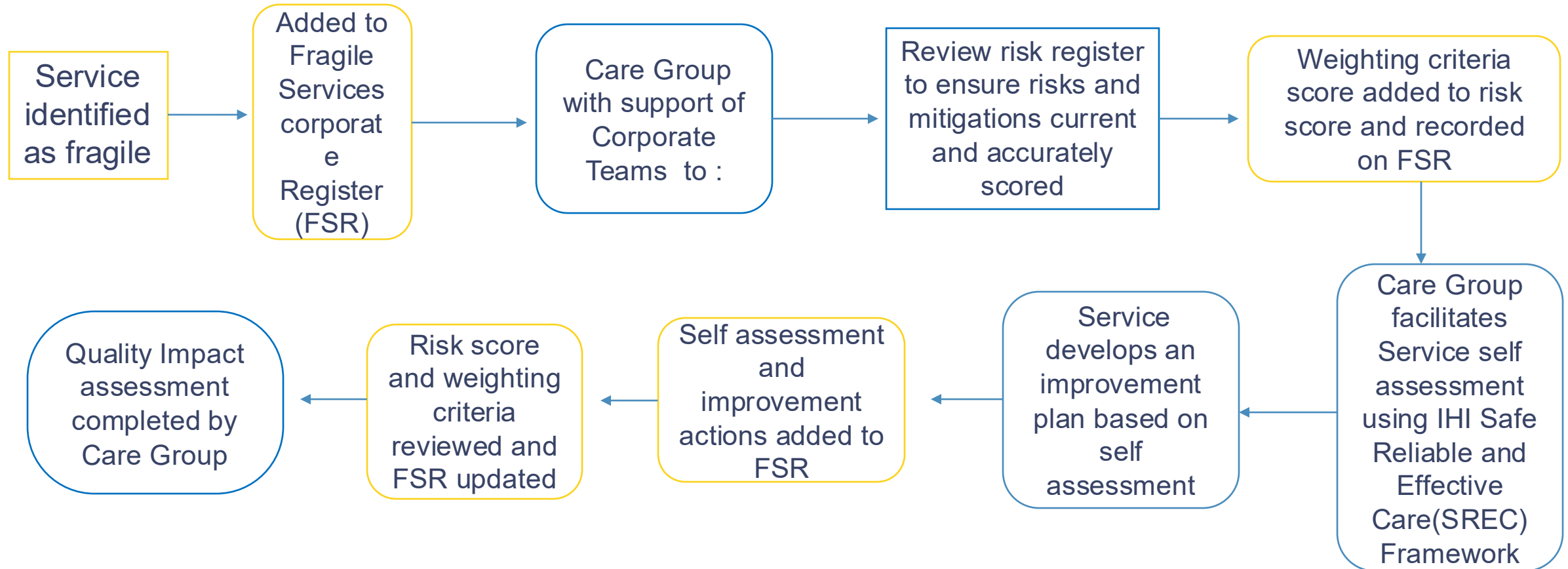
Service Identified as Fragile	Directorate	Source - How/...	Managerial Le...	Clinical Leads ...	Fragile Service...	Discussed at F...	Review of Risk...	Weighting Tool	Initial Weighti...	IHI Safe reliabl...	Completed Sel...	Quality Impac...	Completed QIA	Escalation Ne...	Improvement...
Cellular Pathology	Pathology	DITS						Criteria & Weighting	6	IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Clinical Haematology	Pathology	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Planned Care PPH	Planned Care	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Emergency General Surgery (WGH & GGH)	Planned Care	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Ophthalmology Consultant On-Call	Planned Care	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Rota, Anaesthetics & Medical Workforce	Planned Care	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Trauma Unit at GGH	Planned Care	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Agency Nurses and Medical Locums	BGH	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
ED Department	GGH	DITS	Caryl Bowen (Hywel D)			✓	Yes	Criteria & Weighting	19	IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Respiratory Service	WGH	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Bronglais Paediatrics	Women & Children	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Contract Returns	Primary Care	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Aseptic Facilities	Medicines Management	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Staffing Levels	Finance	DITS						Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Critical Care PPH	Planned Care							Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
MIU PPH	Carmarthenshire USC							Criteria & Weighting		IHI Self Assessment Template		Quality Impact Assessment Template			✓
Medical Staffing Ceredigion	MH&LD	Escalation Meet...				✓	Yes	Criteria & Weighting						✓	✓

Operational Process



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De-escalation Criteria:

Evidence that the Health Board has the appropriate mechanism to understand the drivers behind a fragile service through the triangulation of key data points, including staffing levels, staff and patient feedback, concerns, incidents, stakeholder feedback (HIW, Audit Wales, HMC, Royal Colleges, Llais etc), mortality reviews, duty of quality / candour, infection protection control, performance, clinical and medical leadership.

Action:

The fragile services intervention and focus whilst in level 4 will alter over time in response to workforce and estate challenges.

At this point the focus will be on the nine clinical areas identified in the clinical services plan.



De-escalation Criteria:

Fragile services are supported by strong clinical leadership, have an effective integrated improvement plan, project management structure and effective transformation support.

Progress is being made towards key performance metrics.

Action:

For each service, the health board will be expected to produce a summary document setting out the issues of concern, and action plans with agreed outcomes and access targets.

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Assessment: Targeted Intervention(TI) Criteria



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De-escalation Criteria:

Evidence that all recommendations from the Royal Colleges, HIW and other reviews specific to Hywel Dda UHB are discharged and either verified or delivered or scheduled for delivery within the health board's longer-term improvement plan.

Evidence that the Board is sighted on fragile services and has a robust response to these issues that is being addressed by the health board.

Action:

Focus on identifying issues and creating action plans for fragile services, which would implicitly involve addressing recommendations

Focus on identifying issues and creating action plans for fragile services with Board

Recommendations



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The Quality and Safety and Experience Committee is asked to **NOTE** the addition of the Fragile Services Register, Improvement Plan and Quality Impact Assessment as part of the revised Fragile Services Framework to support achievement of the de-escalation criteria actions.



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The Duty of Candour

Openness and honesty should be at the heart of every relationship between those providing treatment and care and those experiencing it.



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SAFE | SUSTAINABLE | ACCESSIBLE | KIND