Structured Assessment 2020 – **Public Health Wales NHS Trust**

Contents

Summary report

About this report

1   This report sets out the findings from the Auditor General's 2020 structured assessment work at Public Health Wales NHS Trust (the Trust). The work has been undertaken to help discharge the Auditor General's statutory requirement, under section 61 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2014, to be satisfied that NHS bodies have made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources.

2   This year's Structured Assessment work took place at a time when NHS bodies were responding to the unprecedented and ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. On 13 March 2020, the Minister for Health and Social Services issued a framework of actions to help prepare the system for the expected surge in COVID-19 cases. The framework included the cessation of non-urgent planned activity and the relaxation of targets and monitoring arrangements across the health and care system. Emergency funding arrangements were also introduced to facilitate the wide range of actions needed to respond urgently to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3   Shorter planning cycles were agreed for 2020-21 and supported by quarterly guidance setting out key considerations for the planning of the next phase of the pandemic, for maintaining delivery of essential services, and a movement towards the gradual reinstatement of routine services.

4   Our work[1] was designed in the context of the ongoing response to the pandemic to ensure a suitably pragmatic approach to help the Auditor General discharge his statutory responsibilities whilst minimising the impact on NHS bodies as they continue to respond to the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. The key focus of the work is on the corporate arrangements for ensuring that resources are used efficiently, effectively and economically. Auditors also paid attention to progress made to address previous recommendations where these related to important aspects of organisational governance and financial management especially in the current circumstances.

5   The report groups our findings under three themes:

- governance arrangements;
- managing financial resources; and
- operational planning: to support the continued response to the pandemic balanced against the provision of other essential services.

[1] The conduct of our work was co-ordinated with Internal Audit's rapid governance review which includes further testing of key controls noted in this this report.

Key messages

6   Overall, we found that the Trust has continued to operate effectively throughout COVID-19. It has a strong culture of good governance based on transparency, collaboration and constructive challenge which grew even stronger during the pandemic. The Trust adapted its governance, quality, safety and risk management arrangements quickly and continues to identify opportunities to improve. The Trust is working to improve the links between its recovery planning and plans to deliver its part of Test, Trace and Protect, particularly its overall workforce requirements[2].

7   The Trust and its Board have worked well under pressure to adapt governance arrangements. Business is shared effectively between the Board, Audit and Corporate Governance Committee (ACGC) and Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee (QSIC). Board business is transparent and well-communicated. Information flows effectively from the Trust's Executive team to the Board and the Board is clearly central to decision making. Board members provide good scrutiny and there is mutual respect between Executive and non-Executive Directors. The Trust continues to review and refine its governance and corporate arrangements and look for ways to improve. The Trust has good arrangements to ensure safe, quality services and to manage risk. It continues to provide good information to assure the Board and its Committees of the quality and safety of its services.

8   The Trust's arrangements for managing financial resources are working well. It met its financial duties to break even over the three -year rolling period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The Trust continues to forecast breakeven in 2020-21 although achieving financial balance assumes additional funding will be made available to cover the ongoing costs of responding to COVID-19. It has strong financial controls and provides clear information on financial performance and risk for Board scrutiny.

9   The Trust has quickly developed effective plans to implement its Test, Trace and Protect work. It has identified the resources it needs to deliver the plans and identified the risks of not getting this right. The Board has been very involved with developing the plans and there are good arrangements to monitor progress. The Trust engaged internal and external stakeholders to develop and implement its plans and intends to engage further to review its impact in the autumn. The Trust is developing its approach to organisational recovery including how its plans to implement Test, Trace and Protect link to wider business objectives and restarting services. The Trust is assessing the risk to its workforce and making changes to support its staff. It has improved internal communication and introduced new ways to support staff wellbeing. It is also improving data on workforce availability to help it understand where gaps in staffing may affect delivery.

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[2] This report refers to the Trust's plans to implement its part of the Welsh Government's national Test, Trace, Protect programme. Our structured assessment looks at the Trust's arrangements to develop and monitor progress against its plan. We did not review how well the Trust has implemented Test, Trace, Protect.

10   We have not made any new recommendations based on our 2020 work but have noted improvement opportunities throughout this report.

Detailed report

Governance arrangements

11   Our structured assessment work considered the Trust's ability to maintain sound governance arrangements while having to respond rapidly to the unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic.

12   We found that **the Trust quickly adapted its governance, risk management and assurance arrangements to respond effectively to COVID-19. Governance arrangements are excellent and have improved further during the pandemic.**

Conducting business effectively

13   **The Trust adapted its governance arrangements quickly and effectively to respond to the challenges of COVID-19.**

14   The Trust changed its governance arrangements in March and April 2020. Changes included suspending live streamed board meetings and extending the Chief Executive's ability to commit financial resources on COVID-19-related spending to £1 million[3]. The Audit and Corporate Governance (ACGC) and Quality, Safety and Improvement Committees (QSIC) have met every eight weeks from April 2020[4], while the Board has met monthly since February 2020. The Trust clearly communicated the changes to board members and in board papers published on its website. The Chair and Vice-Chair also describe broader governance changes and summarise Board meetings in regular blogs on the Trust's intranet. The Knowledge, Research and Information Committee and People and Organisational Development Committee have been suspended since April with functions remitted to ACGC and QSIC. Essential business from the suspended committees is being delegated effectively.

15   Board and committee agendas have been streamlined to allow the Trust to focus on essential business. The Board also remitted some items to the committees to focus on urgent COVID-19 issues. Assurance from committees to the Board works well through committee chair reports at every Board meeting. We observed good scrutiny of remitted items at committee meetings. The Board plans to review its current governance arrangements in August 2020, including whether to reinstate committees suspended during the pandemic.

16   The quality and timeliness of information to the Board are excellent. Board members get weekly briefings, including situation reports on weekly progress against operational plans (see section 3 of this report). Members receive other information in between weekly briefings to keep up to date with developments and help the Trust make rapid decisions. The Trust keeps logs of Welsh Government

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[3] In reality, all significant COVID-19 spending at the Trust has been approved by the Welsh Government.

[4] In the past, the committees have met quarterly.

and other relevant guidance. During COVID-19 it has kept a log of information requests to the Trust and its responses. The Trust continues to improve the accessibility of information to the Board and its committees, including interactive dashboards showing data on workforce and COVID-19 surveillance. It has also adapted its integrated performance report to clearly separate COVID-19 and business as usual activity. The reports are clear, with enough information to monitor the Trust's response to the pandemic. The Trust has suspended much of the work to deliver its long-term strategy and Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP).

17 **Board and committees have adapted well to maintain transparency in virtual meetings.**

18 Technical issues prevented the Trust live streaming Board meetings from February 2020 onwards but it resumed live streaming in July 2020. It took steps to improve transparency in other ways, such as using more verbal presentations to reduce the number of papers for members to digest, and recording more detail in minutes. The Trust has recently updated its Board etiquette to include virtual meetings and committee chairs routinely remind members of virtual meeting etiquette at the start of each meeting. Verbal presentations that we observed have been excellent, with clear summaries of what is often complex information, drawing attention to key issues and areas of concern. Presentations are often supported by clear and detailed papers. However, some papers are lengthy and the Trust plans to add summaries of content in cover sheets in response to an Internal Audit of Board and Committee Functions in April 2020[5].

19 **The Trust demonstrates a positive culture of board member collaboration and constructive challenge which has grown stronger during the pandemic.**

20 The Trust's Executive and non-Executive directors clearly value each other's contribution and are proud of the way the Trust responded to COVID-19. Executives actively seek opportunities to involve the non-Executive Directors and have maintained an open, transparent relationship throughout the pandemic. Non-Executive Directors have been flexible in their approach and willingly attended more frequent meetings. The Board met nine times during April to discuss testing capacity issues and has been very involved in decisions the Trust makes (see section 3). The Trust continues to engage well with stakeholders including a weekly email bulletin to third-sector organisations and weekly meetings of the local partnership forum[6]. A representative from the forum attends Board and some committee meetings.

21 **The Trust has good arrangements to ensure business continuity and resilience during the pandemic.**

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[5] The report gave substantial assurance on the effectiveness of the system of internal control in place to manage the risks associated with Board and Committee functions.

[6] The forum includes UNITE, UNISON and the Joint Medical and Dental Committee. The Trust meets with the Joint Medical and Dental Committee separately.

22 The Trust implemented its Emergency Plan and command structure[7] in February 2020. Officials we interviewed felt arrangements were working well. The Trust continues to review and adapt the structure to improve effectiveness and resilience. It removed the silver group from its structure to avoid duplication with Gold group meetings. The frequency of gold command meetings also changed in June 2020 from twice weekly to weekly. The Trust increased the number of strategic directors leading the COVID-19 response from one to three to improve resilience and drive key areas of work forward.

23 The Trust's resilience arrangements also include regular information sharing. The Chief Executive and Chair are in daily contact, the Chair and Vice-Chair communicate most days, and the Chair meets virtually with all non-Executive Directors weekly. The committee chairs also meet fortnightly rather than quarterly. The Trust has recently appointed three new non-Executive Directors[8].

24 **The Board continues to demonstrate a genuine commitment to learning and continuous improvement.**

25 The Trust has suspended some team building and development opportunities due to COVID-19 but Board members have quickly learnt new technical and topic-specific skills. Board and committee meetings include opportunities to reflect and feed back on how the meeting went. Individual non-Executive Directors continue to reflect individually on areas for improvement. The Trust is considering which parts of its COVID-19 governance arrangements to keep in the longer term and will review arrangements collectively in August. Section 3 gives more information on the Trust's approach to learning from its response to COVID-19.

Managing risk

26 **The Trust has good risk management arrangements which adapted quickly to identify risks and mitigating actions related to COVID-19**

27 The Board scrutinises the Trust's risk management through its corporate and strategic risk registers. From April, it began scrutinising the Trust's progress on addressing risks in its registers monthly rather than every six months. ACGC and QSIC scrutinise risks relevant to their areas of work in detail. The Trust has more detailed risk registers to support its response to COVID-19 and restart its services (see **paragraph 26**). In April 2020, the Trust added 10 new risks associated with COVID-19 to its corporate risk register. The corporate risk register clearly describes COVID and non-COVID risks including any risks that have been escalated or de-escalated. In May 2020, the Trust added a new COVID-19-related risk to its strategic risk register: 'that Public Health Wales will fail to effectively discharge its statutory responsibilities in protecting the public during the COVID-19

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[7] Trust's Annual Governance Statement sets out the command structure including the role of the Trust's Gold and Silver groups.

[8] One full-time and one part-time job share vacancy.

pandemic and also ensure the organisation has an effective plan for recovery as the pandemic recedes'. The new risk took into account information in the Trust's PESTLE[9] analysis of the potential impact of the pandemic on the population and findings from its weekly population surveys. On 10 July 2020, the Board had a development session on risk where it reviewed the Trust's overall risk appetite in the light of the new COVID-19 risk and decided not to change it.

28   The Board received an update on progress addressing the non-COVID risks in the strategic risk register in April 2020. The update explained that the Trust had suspended much of its work to deliver its strategic priorities to focus on responding to the pandemic. As a result, many activities to control risk associated with the strategic priorities were also suspended. The Trust recognises that COVID-19 is having numerous and complex impacts on the health and wellbeing of the population. As a result, it plans to review its strategic priorities as part of its Stage 2 Implementation Plan (see section 3). The Trust may need to revise its strategic risk register as a result of any changes to its strategic priorities.

29   The Trust is finalising its risk management arrangements to deliver its part of the Welsh Government's Test, Trace and Protect Strategy. The Trust has published stage 1 and stage 2 plans to deliver its Test, Trace and Protect work[10]. Both plans give a clear description of risks associated with each area of work (or workstream). The stage 2 plan says how the Trust will mitigate the risks to delivery and sets out priorities to improve quality, safety and user experience and engagement. There are detailed risk registers for each workstream which the Trust uses to write situation reports for each workstream. The situation reports inform a weekly Delivery Confidence Assessment. The Assessment is based on risks that may impact on delivery to time, cost and quality. The Trust's Gold group uses the assessment to see how confident it can be that the work will be delivered to plan and what needs to be done to keep delivery on track. The situation reports and Delivery Confidence Assessments are shared with the Board every week. The stage 1 and 2 plans include useful summaries of the Delivery Confidence Assessments for public scrutiny.

30   To help the workstreams to deliver quality, safe programmes that minimise and mitigate risk, the plans include a supporting workstream on quality, safety, information governance and risk management (QSIGRM). For instance, the QSIGRM workstream is working with the Board and gold group to make sure the specific risks associated with delivering its Test, Trace and Protect work are reflected in the corporate and strategic risk registers. So far, plans to develop and support the Trust's workforce and to reactivate some screening services have linked well to the Trust's corporate and strategic risk registers.

[9] The analysis looked at the potential Political, Economic, Social, Legal and Environmental impact of the pandemic.

[10] The Stage 1 Plan covers the period from 4 May to 7 June 2020. The Stage 2 Plan runs from 8 June to 31 August 2020.

31   In April 2020, internal audit[11] gave the Trust's risk management arrangements reasonable assurance. The audit focussed on the Policy, Research and International Development and Health and Wellbeing Directorates. It found areas of good practice which show that the Trust's overall approach to risk management is working well. However, it made recommendations to address issues in the two directorates, which the Trust is working to resolve.

32   Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Board approved work on a new strategic risk framework to replace the Board Assurance Framework. The new framework will help the Board assess how reliable sources of assurance are. The Trust made good progress developing the framework and has mapped sources of assurance for four of the risks on its strategic risk register. The assurance mapping work has been suspended during the pandemic but work so far has given the Board an extra layer of assurance. The work demonstrates the Trust's mature approach to risk management and commitment to continuously improving its processes.

Systems of assurance

33   **The Trust is working well to maintain quality and safety standards during the pandemic and provides strong assurance to the Board and QSIC.**

34   Since March, important quality and safety issues have been discussed at Board to ensure a strong focus on quality and safety in strategic decisions. The Board continues to challenge officers to design services around service user experience and transform services quickly. One Board member said the Trust could learn lessons to help rapid transformation by looking at how its services overcame challenges to digital innovation during the pandemic. The Board has discussed workforce wellbeing and support, health and safety, and staff risk assessments (see section 3). It has also considered harm to the population through the PESTLE analysis and more specifically, the suspension and reactivation of screening services. The Trust's Screening Division assessed the risks associated with delivering screening programmes in March 2020 and agreed with the Welsh Government to almost immediately suspend all invitations and cancel screening clinics for:

- Diabetic Eye Screening Wales;
- Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme;
- Breast Test Wales;
- Bowel Screening Wales; and
- Cervical Screening Wales.

35   The Trust continued Antenatal Screening Wales, New-born Bloodspot Screening and New-born Hearing screening programmes because the clinical risks of suspending them outweighed the risks of keeping them going during the pandemic.

[11] The audit covered January to March 2020.

The Board received information about the risks to delivering safe quality services and was a key part of the decision to suspend some programmes. In April, the Board had an update on the current position of each screening programme including how the Trust is managing the risks associated with COVID-19 on suspended and ongoing programmes. In June, the Board discussed the Trust's plan to restart screening services. The plan prioritises programmes and patients based on risk. The Trust has clear timescales for restarting screening and getting services back to normal operating levels. Its plans are based on estimates of daily activity taking into account the potential impact of social distancing on the number of people who can safely attend screening clinics.

36   Over 60% of the Trust's staff have been given equipment to work from home. The Trust has done health and safety assessments of its buildings and put in social distancing arrangements where possible. Social distancing is difficult in some parts of its microbiology laboratories, so the Trust has put in arrangements to reduce the risk of infection. The Trust is using information from the assessments to develop an action plan to ensure the health and safety of its workforce. The plan will be monitored through its health and safety group. The Trust has also commissioned an external assessment to ensure it is complying with health and safety regulations in relation to COVID-19.

37   In June, the Trust asked all staff to complete a personal risk assessment. The COVID-19 risk assessment tool was developed by a working group commissioned by the Welsh Government. The Trust has acted on the information so far by making changes to minimise staff risk including supporting staff to work from home. From 24 July, information on whether the risk assessments have been completed has been included on the Trust's Electronic Staff Record (ESR). The Trust will use the information to ensure the assessments are being done, and to work out the implications for workforce planning. Prior to implementing the all-Wales staff risk-assessment, the Trust had already risk assessed staff who could be more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 based on information on its ESR.

38   QSIC used the gap between its February and May 2020 meetings to review its role in relation to the Board and other committees. It developed a work programme that balances assurance that quality governance processes are being maintained with strategic discussions on what key areas of quality governance mean during the pandemic. For instance, the July committee considered a paper on how the Trust has adapted its approach to service user engagement to meet the challenges associated with COVID-19. It also considered a paper on learning from the Trust's work with closed settings[12] to inform its wider approach to the pandemic. The Committee continues to scrutinise Putting Things Right reports on complaints, compliments and incidents. The reports clearly set out trends and potential areas of concern and the Trust is developing a Quality Management Assurance Dashboard to support the report.

[12] Such as care homes and prisons.

39   Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak the Trust was developing a new Quality and Improvement Strategy. The Strategy will include emphasis on real-time measurement of quality and improvement rather than retrospective evaluation. Work on the Strategy has been suspended. However, the Trust plans to use the real-time approach to monitor delivery of its Stage 2 plan. It is developing quality indicators and measures for each workstream and ways to present the information. It has made good progress in some areas, particularly for the sampling and testing workstream. The workstream has an impressive performance monitoring dashboard which allows the user to interrogate the information to give detail on local variation.

40   The Trust has effective arrangements to track its progress addressing audit and review findings which continued throughout the pandemic. ACGC reviews its internal and external audit logs at most meetings. The log includes findings from internal, external, and clinical audits. We observed good scrutiny of audit findings by the Committee with clear decisions on what to include in the log and when to review progress. In January 2020, Internal Audit[13] gave the Trust limited assurance on its management of alerts, safety notices and other communications. Internal Audit made seven recommendations which have now all been addressed.

Managing financial resources

41   Our work considered the Trust's financial performance, changes to financial controls during the pandemic and arrangements for monitoring and reporting financial performance.

42   We found that **the Trust's arrangements for managing financial resources are working well**.

Achieving key financial objectives

43   **The Trust continues to meet its financial duties but achieving financial balance in 2020-21 assumes additional funding will be made available to cover the ongoing cost of responding to COVID-19**.

44   The Trust has consistently achieved financial balance, delivering small surpluses each year. The Trust met financial duties to break even over a rolling three-year period (2017-18 and 2019-20) and to have an approved integrated medium-term plan (IMTP) for the period 2019-20 to 2021-22. In 2019-20 it delivered planned savings totalling nearly £1.777 million, retained a small surplus (£42,000) and remained within its capital expenditure limit. The year-end position included £0.9 million of costs directly related to the Trust's response to COVID-19, of which just over half (54%) were managed within the Trust's year-end position. The Welsh Government provided the remaining funding to ensure break-even.

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[13] The audit was undertaken in September and October 2019.

45   To achieve financial balance in 2020-21, the Trust identified the need to deliver savings totalling £1.35 million to offset cost pressures and to create an investment fund to support the changes required by its long-term strategy. Detailed directorate savings plans had yet to be finalised and risk assessed in terms of achievability and service impact at the time the Trust developed its financial plan. The Trust considers only £1.165 million (86%) of identified savings achievable. Plans for the remaining £185,000 are still to be finalised, affecting the Trust's ability to pursue investment activities in line with its long-term strategy. It is also forecasting underachievement of savings related to procurement efficiencies and salary sacrifice schemes totalling £145,000 as a result of COVID-19.

46   At the end of June, the Trust's capital funding for 2020-21 totalled £4.826 million – including £1.687 million of discretionary capital of which £154,000 has been allocated to support COVID-19. The remaining £3.139 million is strategic capital in respect of COVID-19. Capital expenditure was in line with that planned, although a large proportion (88%) of the discretionary capital had yet to be allocated.

47   As part of its financial plan for 2020-21, the Trust has agreed that pay underspends, several non-pay budgets, and the internal investment fund will be held centrally to contribute to the additional costs incurred as a result of COVID-19. Total spend on COVID-19 to the end of June, was £6.298 million of which £1.265 million has been met from within the Trust's centrally held budgets and the remainder from the Welsh Government.

48   The Board maintains responsibility for oversight and scrutiny of financial performance, receiving information on the financial position and COVID-19 related expenditure at each board meeting. These reports clearly indicate that there is a continuing risk that the operational costs of responding to and recovering from the pandemic may not be contained within available funding. The Trust acknowledges that it must manage through slippage, not progressing investments, suspending programmes of work and not filling vacancies at the rate anticipated but remains confident that additional funding will be made available. It continues to forecast a balanced financial position for 2020-21 in anticipation of receiving additional income from the Welsh Government to cover the COVID-19 costs and assumed outstanding allocations.

Financial controls

49   **The Trust continues to have strong financial controls and did not need to make significant changes to adapt to COVID-19.**

50   The Trust's financial governance arrangements are largely unchanged except for approved changes to delegated limits. In addition to the temporary increase in the Chief Executive's delegated limit (see **paragraph 13**), the Board approved an increase to the Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director of Finance and

Operation's delegated limit to £500,000[14]. His deputy is able to authorise payments in his absence or when he is acting as the Chief Executive. The requirement to notify the Welsh Government of its intent to enter into a contract valued at more than £500,000 and to seek its agreement for contracts over £1 million remains in place. At the time of writing, the Chief Executive and deputies have not had to use their delegated authority as all COVID-19 related expenditure has been approved by the Welsh Government. The Trust plans to review its governance arrangements in August 2020.

51   The Board also approved suspending the requirement to follow the Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs) procurement thresholds related to goods and services directly linked to the COVID-19 emergency, permissible under current procurement regulations. Additional controls were established to ensure Board oversight and scrutiny of financial transactions using the increased authorisation limits. Supply chain issues and actions are logged and included in the finance reports that go to the private meetings of the Board. Meanwhile, the ACGC continues to receive a detailed procurement report on Single Tender Actions (STAs) and Single Quotation Actions (SQAs) as required in the SFIs. The reasons and circumstances of the procurement are clearly set out. The number of STAs and SQAs from the beginning of March to the end of April 2020 was relatively unchanged from the previous reporting period, although the value had increased significantly to more than £30 million due to COVID-19 requirements.

52   The Internal Audit service reviewed elements of the Trust's core financial processes and procedures related to the general ledger, Public Sector Payment Policy and authorised access to the financial systems in early 2020 prior to COVID. Internal Audit gave the Trust's systems substantial assurance with the Trust acting to strengthen systems further.

53   The Trust set up a separate cost code to capture COVID-19-related expenditure in January 2020. In June, it also created a new COVID directorate for the four work streams set out in the Test, Trace and Protect implementation plan, to capture ongoing costs, particularly for agency staff and overtime. It is currently recoding expenditure in April and May to the four workstreams rather than capturing it in one cost code as previously. Recoding expenditure will help the Trust identify its overall costs of responding to COVID-19. The new directorate (like other directorates) will have budget holders with spending monitored against detailed expenditure forecasts. COVID-19-related expenditure is captured on the monthly monitoring returns to the Welsh Government which are shared with the Board.

54   The Trust has established a range of mechanisms to ensure operational oversight of expenditure during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include the workforce team checking staff rotas before authorising payment for agency staff, line managers approving COVID-19 overtime claims and senior finance staff regularly reviewing

[14] This is the pre-COVID-19 delegated limit for the Chief Executive.

the cash flow due to COVID-19 risks. The finance team also validates spending at the end of each month to ensure COVID-19 spending has been correctly identified.

Operational planning

55   Our work considered the Trust's progress in developing and delivering operational plans to support the ongoing response to COVID-19 and to provide other essential services and functions in line with Welsh Government planning guidance. At the time of our work, the focus was on essential services with the aim of restoring normal and routine activities when it is safe and practicable to do so.

56   We found that **the Trust worked well to develop effective operational plans and robust arrangements to monitor and report progress. As it plans for recovery, the Trust is working out its workforce requirements to continue responding to COVID-19 at the same time as restarting or continuing its services.**

Developing the plan

57   **The Trust continues to work quickly and effectively with its Board and stakeholders to develop operational plans.**

58   The Trust based operational planning on the assumption that its main focus for the rest of 2020 will be responding to the pandemic. To this end, it produced stage 1 and 2 implementation plans to deliver its part of Test, Trace and Protect. At the same time, the Trust is working on its organisational recovery plan. The stage 1 plan served as the Trust's quarter 1 operational plan[15]. The quarter 2 operational plan combines the stage 2 plan and key elements of the Trust's approach to organisational recovery. Board members had several opportunities to comment on and challenge the content of draft plans before they went to the Welsh Government and to Board meetings for final approval.

59   The stage 1 and 2 plans are clear with tight deadlines. The Trust has built in some flexibility to its plans to accommodate potential areas of new work such as a COVID-19 vaccination programme. The plans have been informed by the Trust's detailed modelling and surveillance data.

60   The Trust's organisational recovery plan is not one document, but several plans focusing on the following areas of work:

- reactivation of services;
- workforce;
- infrastructure;

[15] On 3 June, the Trust sent a summary of its quarter 1 response to the Welsh Government explaining how it met the requirements of the COVID-19 NHS Operating Framework.

- capturing innovation and lessons learned;
- creating response and recovery dashboards of performance information; and
- reviewing the Trust's longer-term Strategy and Plans.

At the time of writing, the Trust had prepared plans to reactivate screening services and to support and develop its workforce. The Board discussed both plans in June. The Trust plans to finalise its other supporting plans by September 2020. As it develops the recovery plans, the Trust recognises it needs to step back and consider its operational plans as a whole to understand the dependencies between them. In particular, plans need to reflect the impact of restarting screening services on Test, Trace, and Protect work and vice versa if there is a significant increase in COVID-19 cases (see the section on resources below).

61   The scale of the Trust's work to respond to COVID-19 naturally means it has been unable to deliver parts of its IMTP. As a result, it will review its IMTP and long-term strategy as part of its stage 2 implementation plan. The Trust also recognises that the impacts of COVID-19 on both the population, and ways of working are significant. As a result, the review will consider whether its strategic priorities and the actions to deliver them are still the most important things to focus on.

62   For some time, the Trust has actively sought opportunities to collaborate with partners from different sectors and countries. In its preparation for and response to COVID-19, the Trust has adapted quickly to working with new and existing partners. Where relationships have been difficult, the Trust has worked with its Board to understand why and work out ways to improve. The stage 1 plan includes a specific workstream on relationships. It lists relationships that must work effectively to implement Test, Trace and Protect as well as the risks if things do not go to plan. The Trust developed relationship management and operational arrangements during stage 1. Once arrangements were in place, the Trust removed the relationships workstream for stage 2.

63   Communicating health protection messages to the population of Wales is an essential part of the Trust's work. The stage 1 and 2 plans include a specific workstream on communications and engagement. The plans set out how the Trust will communicate with stakeholders, the risks of getting it wrong, and mitigating actions. It is developing a Strategic Communications Plan to build trust with internal and external stakeholders to support the next phase of its Test, Trace and Protect work. The Trust has developed measures to understand the effectiveness of its communication. It plans to evaluate the impact of its communication on public behaviour and trust in Public Health Wales as an organisation.

64   The Trust's ongoing focus on relationships, communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders means its operational planning is evolving in response to feedback, research and evaluation. It now communicates more regularly with staff, and in different ways, including discussions and question and answer sessions on the Trust's private staff Facebook group. Around two-thirds of the Trust's staff are now members of the group. The Trust's approach to recovery

planning is shaped by regular discussion with its partnership forum and from its staff survey in April and May.

Resources to deliver the plan

65 **The Trust has identified the resources it needs to deliver its part of Test, Trace and Protect and is working out the resource implications of restarting services at the same time.**

66 The stage 1 and 2 plans include supporting workstreams to ensure the Trust has the resources to deliver its Test, Trace and Protect work. The plans describe the staff, equipment, knowledge and infrastructure needed to deliver each workstream. Workstream action plans explain what the Trust will do to put resources in place and describe progress so far. The plans also identify risks and mitigating actions associated with acquiring resources, and failing to provide them. The plans include specific supporting workstreams on finance and supply chain, digital requirements, international learning and intelligence, and people. Each workstream clearly sets out what the Trust will do, and when. The Trust has worked out the costs of delivering each workstream. The Trust's approach to financial planning has evolved during the pandemic. It has moved from a focus on identifying and recovering COVID-19 costs to understanding the financial impact of the pandemic on other areas of its business.

67 The Trust is working to understand its workforce requirements and identify gaps to continue, restart and recover other parts of its business. The stage 1 and 2 plans set out what staff it needs to deliver its Test, Trace and Protect work, what it is doing to meet that need, and progress so far. The Trust quickly redeployed over a third of its workforce to respond to COVID-19 and many are still doing new or additional jobs as a result. It developed a workforce mobilisation system to help it manage requests to move staff within the Trust or to other organisations. Organisational recovery is dependent on the Trust having the right staff available to deliver Test, Trace and Protect and restart services. The Trust continues to develop its workforce dashboard to understand staff availability. The information in the dashboard continues to improve but at the time of writing this report, it did not give a clear picture of workforce availability to deliver the stage 1 and 2 plans at the same time as restarting services.

68 The stage 1 and 2 plans explain that the Trust's approach to supporting its workforce focusses on resourcing, sustainability, and staff engagement and wellbeing. The Trust has been agile in its approach to redeploying and supporting its staff. From the outset, it sought sustainable solutions to staffing, using skills within its existing workforce where possible. For instance, staff with experience of managing rotas or call handling worked in the contact centre. It also used agency staff and recruited additional staff where necessary. The Trust worked quickly to provide training to staff in new roles. It also identified future training needs including training on new processes for staff returning to screening roles after being redeployed. The Trust could learn lessons from its flexible approach to

workforce mobilisation during the peak of the pandemic to inform its recovery and future workforce planning. In particular, it may be able to use its existing workforce differently to deliver its strategic priorities in the future. The Trust continues to support staff wellbeing in various ways. In response to COVID-19, it started a listening service and coaching for line managers. The Business Executive Team is looking at overtime levels across the organisation, mostly to identify areas where it needs to look at staff wellbeing in more detail. It is also developing a plan to address key issues from its staff survey. The Trust has a 'How are you doing?' campaign to support staff including recent blogs from senior managers about the challenges of working from home. The Trust is using the blogs to reassure staff that they can work differently to juggle things like care commitments.

Monitoring delivery of the plan

69   **The Trust has strong arrangements to monitor and report progress on delivering its stage 1 and 2 plans. It is developing arrangements to measure progress against its organisational recovery plan.**

70   The stage 1 and 2 plans clearly set out what the Trust will deliver for each workstream. The Trust had to respond so quickly to the pandemic that it had to start implementing its stage 1 plan before it was finalised. Therefore, the plan includes a helpful summary of progress up to the point of publication. Each workstream has a leadership team with an executive lead. Workstreams have individual action plans and monitoring and assurance arrangements. Weekly situation reports on each workstream, and the overall Delivery Confidence Assessment are used by Gold group and the Board to monitor delivery of the plans. Stage 1 also focussed on improving data to help the Trust deliver and monitor its plan. The stage 2 plan includes a clear and detailed assessment of progress during stage 1. It uses simple headings: 'what we said we would do' and 'what we did' to describe progress for each product. The plan highlights areas where progress is behind schedule and the reasons why.

71   The Trust's paper on its approach to organisational recovery includes clear timescales to finalise individual plans and supporting work. Part of the work includes a response and recovery dashboard with information on delivery of the COVID-19 response; critical service delivery (such as the screening programmes); people (including staff sickness and recruitment); and finance (organisational and COVID-19 spending). The Trust has created early versions of the dashboards and continues to refine them. The dashboards are shared with the Board every week and the Board has challenged the Trust to improve the quality of data in the dashboards particularly in relation to workforce. Feedback from non-Executive Directors shows that the quality of dashboard information has continued to improve and continues to be reviewed.

72   The Trust is learning from its approach to COVID-19 to inform its own and the national approach to the pandemic including:

- the weekly population survey which includes understanding the public response to the Trust's messages, and the national response to the pandemic;

- international horizon scanning including working with other organisations to understand the impact of COVID-19 and share learning; and

- COVID-19 Health Impact Assessments to learn from the various impacts of the pandemic to inform policy and recovery planning.

73   The Trust is also evaluating its response to COVID-19 including its contribution to Test, Trace and Protect; generating new knowledge about the impact of COVID-19 on the population; and contributing to international knowledge on COVID-19. The Trust plans to consult internal and external stakeholders as part of the evaluation. Throughout the pandemic, the Trust has undertaken rapid, informal reviews of its processes and structures. Reviews have included the gold command structure, effectiveness of meetings, and effectiveness of the incident management group[16]. The Trust has evaluated its contact tracing and closed setting work and its stage 1 plan. At the time of writing, the Trust was undertaking a mid-term evaluation of stage 2. The Trust is developing an approach to bring all its learning together to inform its approach to organisational recovery and operational and strategic planning.

[16] There are many more which are not listed here. The Trust presented a paper on lessons learnt to its July QSIC meeting (under item 2.6).