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A new era for health in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan

October 1st sees the beginning of an exciting new era in health service delivery in Cardiff and the Vale with the official start of a brand new organisation, working with the community to improve the health needs of the people of Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond. The new Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board brings together Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, Cardiff Local Health Board and the Vale of Glamorgan Local Health Board, into one organisation.

By creating a single, new body, health services for people in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan will be more streamlined, meaning more money can be spent on frontline patient care.

David Francis, Chairman of the uLHB, is confident that the change will bring about significant improvements in care for patients. "Over the years the health service has had more than its fair share of re-organisations. But I sincerely believe that this time we have an excellent opportunity to marshal our resources and services more intelligently, with a sharper focus on our patients' needs.

"By requiring all parts of the health service to better integrate the way they work, the public can expect to see primary and secondary care sectors working much closer together.

"This will make it easier for patients to access services closer to home, and will help us streamline services, cutting out waste and delay, which means we can put more back into the care system.

"To achieve this ambition, it's essential that we get closer to patients, listen to them, and understand their concerns and needs. One way of doing this will be *Patient Safety Fridays*. Every Friday, Board members and senior managers will visit front line teams in clinics, hospitals and surgeries, to see what is happening on the ground and to talk to patients and staff.

"We will also be taking Board meetings out into the community, for example, in schools and leisure centres. This will all be about listening and working with the public in shaping services and getting the best value for their money.

“We hear lots about the effect of the economic downturn. Yes, this will hit the health service, just as it will hit other public services, and, yes, it is essential that we change the way we do things. But we simply can’t allow ourselves to use this as an excuse for lowering our sights. Our staff are amongst the best in the world and are up for the challenge.

“In taking up the challenge, we all need to get smarter about using our precious resources, not just the health service, but also the public. But, by being smarter, and by our involving the public more when making change, I am convinced we can continue to improve services whilst making savings. That’s what we intend to do!”

Jan Williams, Chief Executive of the new organisation, said she and the Chair are united in their ambition to see the University Local Health Board, or uLHB, become a flagship – an international centre of clinical excellence, with patient safety and quality at its heart, together with ‘best in class’ research, education, learning and development, patient experience and operational management.

“In my conversations with staff, I have been struck by the talent, creativity and innovation that so many people demonstrate every day. I’ve been impressed by their ideas and their determination to improve services and provide the best possible care for patients.

“With their skill and dedication, there is every reason to believe we can build an international reputation for excellence and innovation and become world-renowned for the quality of our care.”

Mrs Williams also acknowledged the need to work closely with partners and the public in shaping the future of healthcare in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

“I am passionate about engaging effectively with the communities we serve and working closely with partner organisations, so that we all work together on the health and wellbeing challenges we face.

“The uLHB has a great opportunity to build on the many successes of its predecessor organisations, to deliver ever better health services for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff.

“I am confident that the reputation of the uLHB will go from strength to strength and that patients, staff, partners and communities will take great pride in the excellence of their local health services.”

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Notes for Editors

- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board is one of the largest in the UK, providing health services for over 500,000 people living in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- We also serve a wider population of 2.5 million people across South and Mid Wales for specialties such as paediatric intensive care, specialist children's services, renal services, cardiac services, neurology, bone marrow transplantation and medical genetics.
- We provide healthcare in people's own homes, community clinics, and hospitals, for outpatient, inpatient and emergency care. We manage nine hospitals and seventeen health centres, and also provide services in health centres run by our NHS partner organisations both within Cardiff and the Vale and beyond, in Caerphilly and Merthyr for example.
- We are also responsible for the delivery of NHS primary care services in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, including general practitioners, community pharmacists, dentists and optometrists.
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board's nine hospitals are; Barry Hospital, Cardiff Royal Infirmary West Wing, Children's Hospital for Wales, University Hospital Llandough, Rookwood Hospital, St. David's Hospital, University Dental Hospital, University Hospital of Wales, and Whitchurch Hospital.
- We are a teaching health board with close links to Cardiff University. The University boasts a high profile teaching, research and development role within the UK and abroad. Together we are training the next generation of medical professionals.
- In 2009 - 2010 the Trust's total income was £653 million and we employed over 14,000 staff. The new University Health Board's income will be approximately £940 million.
- For more information, visit our website www.cardiffandvale.wales.nhs.uk