

Accelerated Cluster Development

The role of Professional Collaboratives

January 2022



1. Setting the scene

“A line of sight from Regional Partnership Boards to Professional Collaboratives”

Setting the Direction¹ (the 2010 Primary and Community Services Strategic Delivery Programme) described the issues and challenges faced in delivering local health and care services at that time and the actions required to create a world-class health services in Wales. The Welsh Government response - A Primary Care Plan for Wales (2015-2018)², sought to modernise primary care services with an emphasis on co-production – the recognition that health outcomes are maximised when the contribution of patients as well as practitioners is captured and put to work. Significant progress has been achieved and this work is continued in A Healthier Wales (2018)³ the Government’s plan for health and social care, which aims to:

- Provide joined-up services using a single digital record
- Shift services out of hospital to communities with a greater focus on prevention
- Get better at measuring what really matters to people
- Make Wales a great place to work in health and social care
- Make services work as a single system- with strengthened professional engagement and clinical leadership.

The Strategic Programme for Primary Care (SPPC)⁴ was formed in 2018 and is one of the 3 National programmes alongside Planned Care and Urgent and Emergency Care. The SPPC is an All-Wales Health Board-led programme that works in collaboration with Welsh Government and responds to A Healthier Wales. The programme aims to bring together and develop all previous primary care strategies and reviews at an accelerated pace and scale, whilst addressing emerging priorities.

Recent Programme for Government and Ministerial Priorities have reinforced the commitment to this work, including the delivery of the Primary Care Model for Wales (PCMW)⁵ and a continuing focus on the local footprint for service organisation through Cluster working.

¹ [setting the direction.pdf \(wales.nhs.uk\)](#)

² [our plan for primary care in wales up to march 2018.pdf](#)

³ [A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care | GOV.WALES](#)

⁴ [Strategic Programme - Primary Care One \(nhs.wales\)](#)

⁵ [Primary Care Model for Wales written description - April 2019 \(Eng\).pdf](#)



The National Clinical Framework (2021)⁶ emphasises that planning for the population's needs must take priority over organisational interests and reach beyond the constraints of organisational boundaries. The Framework sets out a health system that is co-ordinated nationally and delivered locally through collaborations between health organisations and partners.

2. Strategic Leadership

Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) were established as part of the **Social Services and Well Being Act**⁷. The Partnership Arrangements (Wales) Regulations 2015, require local authorities and local health boards to establish Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) to manage and develop services to secure strategic planning and partnership working. RPBs also need to ensure effective services, and care and support is in place to best meet the needs of their respective population. The objectives of the Regional Partnership Boards are to ensure the partnership bodies work effectively together to:

- Respond to the population assessment carried out in accordance with section 14 of the Act
- Develop, publish and implement the Area Plans for each region covered as required under section 14A of the Act
- Ensure the partnership bodies provide sufficient resources for the partnership arrangements, in accordance with their powers under section 167 of the Act
- Promote the establishment of pooled funds where appropriate.

Regional Partnership Boards will also need to prioritise the integration of services in relation to:

- Older people with complex needs and long term conditions, including dementia.
- People with learning disabilities.
- Carers, including young carers.
- Integrated Family Support Services.
- Children with complex needs due to disability or illness.

3. Population Needs Assessment

The PNA identifies the health, care and support needs of the population and is the foundation on which RPB planning and commissioning is built. The PNA should inform regional planning and decision-making through a reliable, clear and specific evidence base of needs and mapping of current service provision. This must be informed by the experience of service users and professionals who have experience of the challenges of navigating local systems.

PNA is a critical driver for this public service planning and delivery. A clear understanding of need identifies health inequalities and should guide actions to achieve more equitable and

⁶ [National clinical framework: a learning health and care system | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/national-clinical-framework-a-learning-health-and-care-system)

⁷ [social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-the-essentials.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-the-essentials.pdf)



effective service provision. Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) bring together strategic partners (Health Boards, Local Authorities and the Third Sector) to meet the care and support needs of people in their area. There must be a clear 'line of sight' between the RPB and frontline service delivery, with a shared understanding of need informed by high quality data sources and analysis at each level of geographical operation (regional, health board , county and cluster) and for thematic issues

RPBs operate across a wide partnership landscape and they retain flexibility over how they organise themselves and their work, including the interface with other partnership structures such as Public Service Boards and Primary Care Clusters. RPBs should clarify and agree areas of responsibility and where possible join up and avoid duplicating work.

4. Local Structures for planning and delivery

Cluster arrangements were introduced in 2010 to provide the local footprint for public service planning and delivery, ensuring that the experience of the public, service users and professionals in these areas is recognised and informs service development to improve the health and wellbeing of the population and the delivery of health and care services. From 2022 there will be a strengthened planning function (through Pan Cluster Planning Groups) supported by organised professional advisory structures.

The Accelerated Cluster Development (ACD) programme proposes the development of Professional Collaborative networks for each of the independent contractor groups. These will compliment continuing work to engage the knowledge and expertise of the Nursing and AHP workforce and mental health care services in the community. RPBs should gain detailed local intelligence through these structures (from public, service user and professional feedback). Professional Collaborative networks should also be encouraged to propose solutions that will be effective in the local context.

RPBs should ensure that the Regional PNA is developed to inform analysis at local authority and cluster levels. RPBs should also establish arrangements to capture local intelligence to inform and influence the regional plan.

5. The role of Professional Collaboratives

5.1 Improve Population Health & Wellbeing

- Provide professional analysis of the PNA relevant to the collaborative area
- Share relevant data to inform local population service assessment and improvement
- Through proactive engagement ensure that public, patient and professional experience informs the PNA
- Ensure that local population needs assessments articulate the needs of vulnerable groups and for those with special needs



5.2 Improve Value

- Receive and consider National Strategy in the context of local experience and priorities
- Provide advice on local implementation, including identification of opportunities and risks
- Identify where collaboration is required between professional groups to achieve the best assessment and /or delivery for the population
- Provide clinical leadership for the development and delivery of local clinical pathways
- Collaborate with other professional groups to improve services for the most vulnerable/those with specific needs
- ensure the effective use of resources within delegated budget and financial frameworks.

5.3 Improve Quality and Safety

Support regular review of quality indicators for local services

- Collaborate across services to ensure best outcomes for needs that require multi-service/professional input
- Support escalation arrangements to maintain service continuity and safety.

5.4 Engage and develop the local workforce

- Identify workforce needs and priorities based on population needs assessment
- Advise on local solutions to address workforce needs
- Work with extrinsic agencies to develop approaches to improve recruitment and retention of staff (HB, LA, 3rd sector, HEIW, CICs)
- Advise on the continuing professional development of the workforce
- Support well-being of workforce.

6. Statutory engagement

These arrangements in no way alter or replace the role of the statutory negotiating committees and the duty for Health Boards to consult with those bodies.

