

Welsh Ambulance Service Trust “fitness for purpose” review by Weir

The Welsh Government (WG) set the Trust ambitious targets which led development of a new strategy, placing quality, safety, patient experience and clinical outcomes at the heart of service design and delivery. This strategy, and a backdrop of increasing demand for all services, had a significant impact on the Trust’s requirement for vehicles and carrying-equipment across Wales.

In December 2012, WAST commissioned Weir to review the current state of the Fleet Services operation, to assess its “fitness for purpose”, and its capability of supporting the Trust’s future strategy for development. The review was completed within 8 weeks, including consideration of all relevant WAST strategy documents and assessment of all operational sites, systems and management processes. All 63 recommendations from the review were unanimously accepted by the WAST Strategic Planning Committee.

The review’s key findings included:

- Lack of investment in Fleet infrastructure, which was increasingly unfit for purpose.
- High levels of commitment from staff to deliver a good service to the Trust’s Operations teams, despite the age and condition of some of the facilities and systems.
- Inconsistent and overly complex processes, with significant regional variation and numerous potential “single points of failure”.
- Poor integration of systems, causing significant administrative burden and duplication of effort through lack of alignment of systems to processes.
- No coherent strategic plan to develop the Fleet organisation or to address the issues highlighted above, although a number of useful short-term projects were underway to address specific issues.

The review outlined a comprehensive programme of change, with clear outcomes from the large number of actions and projects required. The programme was designed to deliver the following benefits to the Trust:

- Revised spans of control to ensure integrated delivery of fully operational vehicles to front-line crews, against clear Service Level Agreements (numbers of vehicles, locations and response times).
- A clear, detailed plan for all Logistics requirements, to inform future implementation of the Estates Strategy.
- Greater control of processes and performance through standardisation and operation of a single National Logistics network (instead of Regional sub-networks).
- Improved control and visibility of costs, through systems integration and clear authorisation processes.
- Systems which directly support the WAST Fleet Management process and reduce administrative burden.
- Increased staff capability and organisational resilience through targeted training and succession planning.
- Consistent reporting against a small number of KPIs, to monitor progress and drive improvement.

Importantly the programme of change identified immediate priorities, to set the direction and create momentum. Drawn from the detailed recommendations contained in the report, specific actions were prioritised to be launched within the first 4 weeks. Each action was designed to deliver demonstrable performance improvement, as well as providing clear evidence of the commitment to change and setting expectations for the pace of change.

About WAST

The Welsh Ambulance Services Trust (WAST) operates 736 vehicles including front-line Emergency Ambulances and Rapid Response Vehicles, as well as non-emergency patient transport vehicles and a range of specialist vehicles. The fleet travels more than 20 million miles per year, and responds to over 350,000 urgent calls.
www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk



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