



31st March 2014

Mr David Rees AM
Chair – Health and Social Care Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Sir

Health and Social Care Committee: Inquiry into progress – Welsh Government's Cancer Delivery Plan

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the inquiry into progress made to date on implementing the Welsh Government's Cancer Delivery Plan, this letter outlines how the NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) aims to support the informatics needs of the service through the development of the Cancer Network Information System Cymru (Canisc) and the requirement for a long-term reporting solution for cancer data across NHS Wales.

Background

The patient's cancer journey has evolved over recent times to become a specialist treatment and care domain. While treatment for cancer is increasingly successful it is also becoming much more complex. Although treatment of cancer is largely a specialist activity, the pathways traverse primary, secondary, tertiary, community and social care. Thus the availability of information at the point of care is key to managing the increasing complexity of cancer care delivery and pathways, and an integrated view of the health record is becoming critical.

The system developed to date to support the information requirement within the Cancer Services in Wales is the Cancer Network Information System Cymru (Canisc).

Information is entered into Canisc through a variety of sources, and it has evolved considerably since its first iteration in the 1990s. It was originally developed locally as a

system to support the Velindre Cancer Centre, and was launched as one of NWIS' national applications in 2009. It is now recognised as supporting direct patient care in:

- South East Wales Cancer Centre
- South West Wales Cancer Centre
- All Wales Specialist Palliative Care Service
- Cervical Screening Wales
- Health Board Cancer Multi-Disciplinary Meetings (where the cancer services are provided on a local, regional or national basis)
- And a number of significant secondary users rely on its data/information such as the Cancer Information Framework, the Wales Cancer Bank together with the Welsh Cancer and Intelligence Surveillance Unit.

The use of Canisc across Wales has been endorsed by the Welsh Government in a number of areas:

- To support the information requirements associated with the implementation of the Calman/Hine report *A Policy Framework for Commissioning Cancer Services (1995)* and the Cameron Report *Cancer Services in Wales (1996)*.
- collection and reporting of the Cancer Waiting Times (WHC (2005) 027)
- monitoring of key information requirements of the National Cancer Standards (WHC (2005) 051e)
- to support the availability of data and information at both intra and inter-organisational level as per WHC (2008) 054; *the Introduction of an All-Wales Core Cancer Data Set*

The Welsh Government's *Together For Health – Cancer Delivery Plan (CDP)* sets out the vision up to 2016 for NHS Wales and its partners. The document emphasises the priority to support the NHS with access to high quality clinical information and specifically:

- *Develop Canisc to keep pace with clinical information needs and technology*
- *Develop links between different national databases to create an all Wales cancer data warehouse*
- *Develop processes to ensure high data quality and analysis tools to interrogate collected data*

- *Develop a system for transferring decisions made by multi-disciplinary teams to primary and secondary care, the third sector and patients*

The actions set by the Cancer Delivery Plan include:

- **For Velindre NHS Trust ‘to provide an effective cancer clinical information infrastructure by developing Canisc’**
- **and for all LHBs and Trusts: ‘record and use clinical information for all cancer patients using Canisc’.**

Development of Canisc

Canisc has undergone a number of significant advances since it was first developed, and now further steps are being taken to optimize its functionality and support for patient care.

The NHS Wales Informatics Service is committed to ensuring it supports an integrated view of the health record and integrated care pathways, which supports the complexity of cancer care.

The vision for a 21st century Canisc has been developed following extensive consultation with stakeholders, including:

- Cancer Centre Clinicians;
- Canisc users from NHS Wales LHBs (including non-statutory organisations);
- the Canisc Service Management Board;
- Screening Services;
- And those already dependent on the Canisc data for business intelligence and secondary uses, for example the Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit,

This ‘blueprint’ describes how the application can support complex cancer pathways, and through integration with other national systems, provide key clinical information to clinicians at the point of care.

Current Status

A business case for a new Canisc is now in progress. In parallel, the NHS Wales informatics Service has prioritised and is taking forward a number of immediate software upgrades, identified and approved by the stakeholders, during the preparation of the Programme Brief. The work streams already in progress include:

- Improving the information flow: Canisc will allow clinicians to view **all** pathology results for their patients regardless of organisational boundaries facilitating clinical management. This is being achieved through integration between Canisc and the new Welsh Government funded laboratory information management system which is modernising pathology services across Wales. As each laboratory implements the new system, clinicians will be able to see their patient's pathology results regardless of where in Wales they had their tests done. The tests are viewed through Canisc. This will be available from May 2014.
- A small pilot is ongoing to evaluate the benefits of giving General Practitioners access to Canisc to view key information about diagnoses, treatment and the ongoing patient management plan in the GP/patient consultation.
- The Canisc system is being updated to a new platform to support the latest technology and in the summer of 2014 will be moved into the national NHS Data Centre, where it will sit alongside other national products.
- NHS Wales Informatics Service are developing a new cancer staging module in Canisc. This will allow clinicians to record a patient's stage at the time of diagnosis, which is one of the performance measures in the Cancer Delivery Plan. The user requirements have been gathered and the software development will begin shortly.
- Canisc will be linked to the national master patient index. This will ensure the patient's record has the most up-to-date demographics and GP details. This will be available in May 2014.

Future Plans

The Business Justification Case has been approved by the National Informatics Programme Board, and recruitment is underway to resource the work streams in the Programme Brief. These include a number of projects which will significantly improve the information flow to support a patient's integrated care pathway.

Canisc will be linked with the technology that enables the electronic transfer of documents to a patient's GP, for example to share decisions made by the multi-disciplinary team. The same technology may also be used to send e-referrals from secondary to tertiary care, allowing real-time referrals.

Canisc is the national patient oncology record, and is used by most multi-disciplinary teams in Wales. However most clinicians already or will use the Welsh Clinical Portal as their main clinical system on a day-to-day basis, and to date have had to access Canisc separately. The vision describes how the key clinical information and documents stored in Canisc will be made available within the Welsh Clinical Portal, and ultimately it is envisaged that users will be able to move between the two systems seamlessly.

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Canisc is also one of the main sources of data for secondary uses, for example the cancer registry, the Wales Cancer Bank, Cancer Research U.K., and national cancer audits. Alongside the technological refresh of Canisc, options will be explored to identify a reporting tool kit which will provide business intelligence and facilitate clinical reporting requirements.

Finally, the Cancer Delivery Plan stresses the need for 'alerts' within national systems to identify Acute Oncology patients, Canisc currently has the facility to alert its users of various patient situations, and these will be explored to identify ways to provide other clinical applications with alerts specific to cancer care.

I trust the above is a helpful summary and provides you with the necessary information to aid your inquiry.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Andrew Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Andrew Griffiths
Director, NHS Wales Informatics Service