



**GIG**  
CYMRU  
**NHS**  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Bae Abertawe  
Swansea Bay University  
Health Board



<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> July 2022</b>		<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Board Assurance Framework (BAF)</b>			
<b>Report Author</b>	Len Cozens, Head of Compliance			
<b>Report Sponsor</b>	Hazel Lloyd, Acting Director of Corporate Governance			
<b>Presented by</b>	Hazel Lloyd, Acting Director of Corporate Governance			
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Open			
<b>Purpose of the Report</b>	The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of work being undertaken to develop the Board Assurance Framework (BAF) document.			
<b>Key Issues</b>	<p>A review of the Board Assurance Framework was included as part of a review undertaken by NWSSP Audit &amp; Assurance Services. The final report on this review derived a Reasonable assurance rating.</p> <p>The format, structure and content of the BAF has been reviewed in light of the findings of that audit, and to align with the 2022/23 – 2024/25 R&amp;S plan.</p> <p>The revised BAF was shared with Independent Members during a meeting in June 2022. Positive feedback was received.</p> <p>It was also presented to Management Board on 15<sup>th</sup> June. As a result of comments received, the Head of Compliance and Acting Director of Corporate Governance are in the process of meeting with Executive Directors individually to further develop the document and it is anticipated that this work will be completed in September 2022.</p>			
<b>Specific Action Required</b> <i>(please choose one only)</i>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Approval</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NOTE</b> and <b>DISCUSS</b> the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), acknowledging that it is an iterative document which will continue to be reviewed, updated and developed.</li> </ul>			

# **BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF)**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that the Board review and discuss the Health Board's updated Board Assurance Framework (BAF) document.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1 The process of gaining assurance is fundamentally about taking all of the relevant evidence together and arriving at informed conclusions. With this in mind, the BAF is intended to enable the Board to:
- Identify and understand the principle risks to achieving its objectives
  - Establish the sources of assurance (both positive and negative) in respect of the adequacy, suitability, completeness and operation of the controls in place to manage those risks.
  - Receive assurance that, where gaps in control or assurance are identified or the need for improvement has been highlighted, appropriate action is being taken.
  - Provide an overall assessment of the risk to achieving the objectives based on the strength (or otherwise) of the controls and assurance in place.
- 2.2 In summary, the BAF provides a framework for identifying which of the Health Board's objectives are at risk because of inadequacies in controls or insufficient assurance about them. At the same time it provides structured assurance about risks which are being managed effectively, and objectives that are being delivered.
- 2.3 The most objective assurance comes from independent external review sources. These are supplemented by internal sources such as clinical audit, internal management, performance management and self-assessment reports.

## **3. STATUS UPDATE**

- 3.1 The Board Assurance Framework was last presented to the Health Board at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- 3.2 NWSSP Audit & Assurance colleagues have completed a review of Risk Management and the Board Assurance Framework (report **SB-2122-001** refers), which attained a 'Reasonable' assurance rating.
- 3.3 The foregoing notwithstanding, the report highlighted the fact that there was a substantial level of detail contained within the BAF, leading to a lengthy document (41 pages at the time of that report). The report recommended that there may be scope to consolidate some elements of the BAF, thus simplifying the document and sharpening its focus.
- 3.4 This coincided with ongoing discussions within the Health Board around the overall structure of the BAF, during which it was agreed that it be realigned under

objectives contained within the Health Board's 2022/23 – 2024/25 Recovery & Sustainability plan (as opposed to the Enabling Objectives used previously).

- 3.5 Initial work was undertaken to explore potential revised objectives, and draft proposals were subsequently shared with Executive Directors at an Executive Team meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- 3.6 Further more detailed work was then undertaken in order to restructure the Board Assurance Framework along the above agreed lines. The main changes are summarised as follows:
  - The document now reports under four main objectives, directly aligned to the Health Board Recovery & Sustainability plan, this will evolve following further discussions in August.
  - Each objective is fully cross-referenced to the principle strategic/corporate risk(s) to achievement, as detailed in the Health Board Risk Register, including the most up-to-date risk score. The Head of Compliance will continue to work with the Deputy Head of Risk & Assurance to ensure that this key link is maintained and updated on an ongoing basis.
  - The front page for each objective also sets out the visions and outcomes for each objective, as detailed in the Recovery and Sustainability plan. This is to assist Executive Directors and their teams in providing focus and context for completing the detail/content within the BAF.
  - The section detailing the key controls in place to assist in delivery against each objective has been brought more to the front of each section in order to create greater emphasis.
  - Much of the duplication of content with the Health Board Risk Register has been removed.
- 3.7 The revised BAF was shared with Independent Members at a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022, and positive feedback was received in terms of the changes which have been made. It was also agreed that the BAF would be presented to meetings of the Committee Chairs on a regular basis in order to inform their respective agenda planning processes.
- 3.8 The BAF was also presented to the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022 meeting of the Management Board. As a result of feedback received at that meeting, the Acting Director of Corporate Governance and Head of Compliance are currently in the process of meeting each Executive Director individually in order to develop the document further.
- 3.9 Responsibility for populating the content of the BAF, including an assessment of trend/direction of travel and level of assurance, rests with each Executive Director and his/her team. Relevant extracts were circulated to Executive Directors during May and June 2022, with a request that they review and populate each section of the document in the context of the Recovery & Sustainability plan. In addition, comments made by the Chief Executive Officer following his review of the document were also included. All responses received at the time of reporting have been included in the version of the BAF at Appendix 1.

- 3.10 In addition to the revision of the document itself, the Head of Compliance has also drafted a timetable for the ongoing review and update of the BAF by the Executive Directors and their teams. The timetable is based on a quarterly review process, with key dates linked to the Management Board, Audit Committee and Health Board reporting cycles.
- 3.11 The Board Assurance Framework is an evolving and iterative document, subject to an ongoing programme of review and update. As a result of feedback received during the meetings with Executive Directors referred to at 3.8 above, entries under the 'Demonstrably Improved Safety, Quality and Reduced Harm' objective will be further reviewed and refined in order to better mirror the various Executive Director portfolios covered there. Work has also commenced to look into making assurance around Estates and Finance matters more visible within the document. In addition, the Head of Compliance will be undertaking a detailed review of other Board Assurance Frameworks in place across health bodies in England and Wales in order to identify any examples relevant best practice.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Members are asked to:
- **NOTE** and **DISCUSS** the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), acknowledging that it is an iterative document which will continue to be reviewed, updated and developed.

Governance and Assurance		
Link to Enabling Objectives (please choose)	Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Care Standards		
(please choose)	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience		
Ensuring that the Board and its Sub-Committees make fully informed decisions is dependent on the quality and accuracy of the information presented and considered by those making the decisions. Informed decisions are most likely to impact favourably on the quality, safety and experience of patients and staff.		
Financial Implications		
There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper		
Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)		
Ensuring that the organisation has an effective and evolving Board Assurance Framework (BAF) that supports the Board in delivering its plans and achieving its objectives, is an essential component of the Health Board's governance arrangements going forward.		
Staffing Implications		
The further development and embedding of the BAF will require a significant amount of work on the part of Executive colleagues and their teams.		
Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)		
The development of the BAF will assist the Board in assessing risk and gathering assurance across all corporate objectives, which span the five ways of working, and the wellbeing goals identified in the Act.		
Report History	N/A	
Appendices	Appendix 1 Board Assurance Framework (BAF)	