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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Enhanced Workforce Controls

August 2025



Un Bae Ar y Cyd

One Bay Way

Workforce Controls Communication Plan

Dear Colleagues,

As part of our commitment to achieving the Health Board's financial sustainability targets, immediate action is being taken to strengthen oversight and control of our workforce expenditure.

Welsh Government has limited the Health Board's deficit for 2025-26 to £42.5m or less, requiring urgent and coordinated efforts to deliver a total of £71.6m in savings and mitigations. This does not include some additional cost pressures which the Health Board might have to accommodate. A significant proportion of this challenge relates to our temporary staffing spend, including agency, bank, and overtime, where immediate improvements in efficiency, compliance, and accountability are required.

What's Changing?

Enhanced workforce controls will be implemented across all staff groups and services. These include:

- Strengthened vacancy control measures
- Tighter scrutiny of agency and bank staffing requests
- Approval processes for enhanced and off-framework rates
- Weekly review of temporary staffing spend and activity
- Escalation of exceptions and breaches through formal governance channels

These controls are being introduced to support safe and sustainable staffing, ensure fair and consistent decision-making, and reduce unnecessary spend in a way that protects patient care and service delivery.

What's Next?

This is the first step in establishing a more robust and strategic workforce control governance framework, which will span from Divisions to Health Board level. This framework will include:

- A refreshed Variable Pay Steering Group
- Dedicated Workforce Programme Boards for each major staff group
- Workforce Control Panels at each level within the organisation
- Clear reporting lines and escalation routes
- Standardised processes for vacancy management and temporary staffing approvals

How Will This Be Implemented?

An iterative approach will be taken to implementation. This means:

- Controls will be reviewed and refined over time
- Feedback from staff, managers, and leaders will shape future improvements
- Support and guidance will be provided throughout the transition
- Training and tools will be made available to assist with new processes

Your Role

We ask all staff and managers to:

- Familiarise yourselves with the new controls
- Ensure adherence to approval processes
- Report concerns or risks through the appropriate channels
- Engage with your line manager or workforce lead if you require support or clarification

This is a system-wide effort. By working together, we can improve how we plan, deploy, and manage our workforce, ensuring quality, safety, and value for the communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued commitment and professionalism during this important transition.

Kind regards,
Tina Ricketts



Enhanced Controls: Vacancy Control & Substantive Pay

The below controls relate to vacancy and substantive pay.

Ref	Control	Description	Staffing Group Impacted				Agreed exclusions	Process
			Admin & Clerical	Nursing	Medical	Other Clinical		
A	Non-Clinical Recruitment Freeze	No external recruitment to non-clinical posts. Required posts to be advertised internally only.	✓				Yes	Process & Proforma included slides 7 – 10 for all new requests.
B	Existing Vacancy Review	An exceptional Vacancy Control Panel will be held in August to review all current externally advertised positions and move posts to internal advertisement only where deemed appropriate.	✓	✓		✓	N/A	One-off review occurred early August with Staff Group Executive Directors (or their nominated deputies), and has been communicated to appropriate managers.
C	Investment Case Review	A review of all vacancies linked to approved investment cases will be undertaken in August. Funding will be removed where deemed appropriate.	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	One-off review to be scheduled for early August.
D	Nursing Redeployment	No posts will be advertised externally, with essential roles filled via internal redeployment. Maternity backfill will also be considered as part of this process.		✓			Yes	One-off EDoN chaired VCP to review all nursing and midwifery posts on 4th August.
E	Pay Change Controls	All fixed term contracts, pay increasing changes (e.g. changes to PAs, secondments) or interim roles to be reviewed by the relevant Vacancy Control Panel	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	Process to be agreed and further guidance issued.



Enhanced Controls: Variable Pay

The below controls relate to variable pay.

Ref	Control	Description	Staffing Group Impacted				Agreed exclusions	Process
			Admin & Clerical	Nursing	Medical	Other Clinical		
F	Non-clinical Temporary Staffing Ban	No temporary staffing (bank, agency, overtime etc.) for non-clinical staff.	✓				Yes	Process & Proforma included slides 15 – 17 for new and existing requests for A&C cover. Existing requests for ancillary and estates will be reviewed separately.
G	Pay Rates	Bank shifts should be paid at the <i>rate required of the shift</i> and not the rate that the person filling the shift is on substantively. (E.g. a RN Bank shift should be paid at Band 5, even if it is being filled by an individual who is substantively paid at Band 6). .	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	Monitoring via audit compliance.
H	Enhanced Rates	No enhanced or specialist rates will be permitted, with exceptions requiring advance Exec approval.		✓	✓	✓	Yes	A one-off review of existing arrangements to be scheduled for early August with Staff Group Executive Directors (or their nominated deputies), to confirm areas of exception. Process to then be agreed and further guidance issued.
I	Acuity Approval	No use of Acuity reason codes for temporary shifts with <24 hours lead time.		✓	✓	✓	N/A	Monitoring via compliance audit. No requests should be submitted >24hrs prior to start time, or as outlined in the relevant SOP.
J	Vacancy Cover	No use of Vacancy reason code if there are no funded vacancies.		✓	✓	✓	N/A	Further guidance on 'reason code' utilisation is included on slide 6.
K	Annual Leave / Study Leave	Temporary staffing to cover annual or study leave is banned.	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	Reason code is removed.
L	Sickness / Absence Management	Staff returning from sick leave are not permitted to undertake bank/ overtime/ agency/ additional shifts for 2 weeks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	All staff managers to ensure process followed. Workforce team to set-up system 'violation' triggers for breaches and audit compliance.
M	WLI Consultant Activity	Consultants can only perform WLI activity shifts if on track to deliver annualised Direct Clinical Care sessions.			✓		-	Process to be agreed and further guidance issued.