

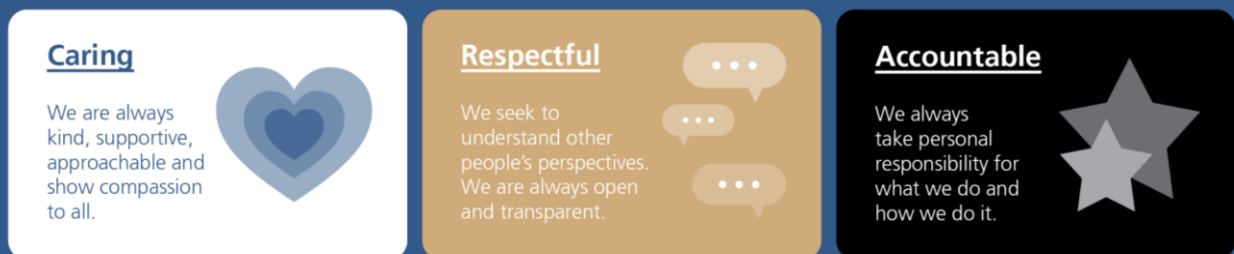
Velindre University NHS Trust
Welsh Language Manager

Welsh Language Annual Report

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025



Velindre University NHS Trust is responsible for the delivery of a wide range of specialist NHS Wales services including the Velindre Cancer Service and the Welsh Blood Service and we host Health Technology Wales, and NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership.



The Velindre Cancer Service is a specialist treatment, teaching, research and development service for non-surgical tertiary oncology services to patients from across south-east Wales and further afield.

The Welsh Blood Service provides essential and highly specialised national services including the collection and production of blood and blood components, specialist diagnostic services and antenatal screening, as well as supporting transplant services for solid organs and stem cells across Wales and internationally.

Health Technology Wales assesses non-medicine health and care technologies and produces national guidance on their use in Wales.

NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership delivers a wide range of professional, technical and administrative services to NHS Wales.

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Foreword

Our annual report supports a strong cultural and Governmental aim to provide opportunity for current Welsh speakers but to also increase the number of Welsh speakers through the aims of the 2050 strategy.

As a Trust we have been charged with delivering the Welsh Language Standards since 2018 and we have increased our compliance with these requirements. The report outlines not only our regulatory compliance, but our aims to promote the Welsh Language across the Trust and facilitate a bilingual environment for our staff.

We have developed a new set of organisational values, ensuring that the Welsh Language and Culture are at the heart of these values. We have embedded these values and provided training through a new induction programme 'Croeso', giving staff opportunity to feel a stronger connection with the services we provide. This has been a huge success, opening up discussion forums aimed at engaging staff with Welsh culture. We will continue to strengthen this as we move through 2025/26.

Our Divisional Welsh Language groups go from strength to strength providing guidance to staff and supporting key changes that are needed to move this agenda forward in a positive way. Welsh Blood and the Cancer Service are working with staff to embed a positive culture change. As part of this culture change, the Active Offer concept has been strongly embedded and will continue to be a focus for us.

2024-25 at a glance...

96% of staff have recorded their Welsh language skills

15 WBS Bespoke training sessions for Reception

5 Welsh Language Steering Group meetings

1+million Words translated

2 Chair and Chief Executive Welsh language training meetings

12 Welsh Language Divisional Group

Chief Executive welcome

I fully support the work of the Trust in engaging with and using the Welsh language and have been attempting to learn some Cymraeg myself since I started in my role in December. I have also been impressed with our use of translation during our public board meetings and the contribution our Independent Members make to holding us to account in Welsh. As we know the Welsh language (Wales) measures 2011 provides a legal framework for the language and ensures that as a public organisation we continue to strive for a truly bilingual service.

It is my first Annual Report as Chief Executive and I am encouraged by the importance we place on our bilingual provision.

We recognise our responsibility to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language internally in everything we do. Our staff have access to bilingual support, as it should be, and we are always looking at ways to improve their abilities to support our services.

Our commitment goes beyond our statutory duties, it is about the respect we offer to the rights of Welsh speakers, whether it's through our services, our workforce initiatives or our communications, we aim to provide an environment that is visible and accessible.

I am positive that we can achieve our aims and ambitions and as decisions are made, the Welsh language will be considered right alongside all of our other access needs.

Moving forward we will be focusing on our clinical plans and our ability to communicate with patients and each other in the Welsh language and I am positive that we can create a more equitable service for our patients and donors.



David Donegan
Chief Executive
Velindre University NHS Trust



We said and we did....

Since our last annual report our main concerns have been addressed... we have developed a more focussed in-patient plan, a more targeted Clinical consultation plan and we continue to challenge our internal understanding of the needs for bilingual assessments as part of the recruitment process.

In-patients

Our plan provides focus for in-patients, being clear on what they have the right to receive whilst spending time at Velindre Cancer Service. In its simplicity it provides a pathway for patients giving them the support they need should they require bilingual information or communication. Our digital systems enable us to record their needs, and this is then translated into action should a patient require to use the Welsh language.

Clinical Consultations

Working with the Welsh Language Commissioner and attending the open discussion events has enabled us to focus our plan (standard 110).

We have worked closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner and her aims for co-working and we are encouraged by the support and open approach to this aim. It is clear to see how co-regulatory working can improve understanding and performance, translating into greater support for our patients' and donors' bilingual needs. Focussing on what we can achieve and delivering on these aims whilst holding open discussions on areas of difficulty promotes a healthy relationship with the Commissioner's office.

We will now consult with the teams and relevant members of responsible staff to ascertain the practicality of such a plan. This will be our focus for 2025/26.

Compliance

The Welsh Language Standards and the More than Just Words Framework continue to drive our compliance work, giving us a focus and a stronger ability to embed our Welsh Language provision. We have seen an increase in awareness of the ‘Active Offer’ due to staff communication and training.

As a Trust we have always been adamant that language support for our patients and donors and our staff is of utmost importance and is complimented by the legal frameworks across Wales. Legislation has proved to raise an awareness of these needs, and we will continue to increase our compliance.

Background

Since 2018 we have been developing our workforce and services to deliver the Welsh Language Standards. We are fully aware that some of the Standards are challenging and will continue to prove difficult for us in light of the workforce struggles faced by the NHS, however we are committed to ensure all that we do considers the implications faced by the Welsh Language workforce in order to increase our ability to provide a strong bilingual presence.

We continue to work with Local Health Boards and are an active member of the All-Wales group that has a focus on sharing best practice on a national level. We also participate in the Welsh Government group looking at delivering positive outcomes on the ‘More than Just Words’ framework. All of this work feeds positively into our initiatives in support of the Welsh Language Standards. **Situation**

In this section we have quantified our current position of compliance against the Standards.

Since November 2018 the Trust has received two formal Investigations against our ability to comply with the Welsh Language Standards. One was closed almost immediately and the other has been officially received and we are awaiting a response. The work undertaken against the Investigation is reflected in the colour coding of our achievements.

Service Delivery Standards

Green – High level of assurance

Yellow – Medium to high

Orange – low to medium level of assurance

Standards	Assurance rating	
	23/24	24/25
Correspondence (1,4,5,6,7)	Green	Green
Telephone services main numbers (8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16)	Yellow	Yellow
Telephone services direct numbers (16,17,18, 19)	Yellow	Yellow
Telephone automated systems (20)	Yellow	Yellow
Meetings (21,22, 22A, 22CH)	Green	Green

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In-Patients (23-25)	Green	Green
Public Meetings (26,27,28,29)	Green	Green
Displaying written material at public meetings (30)	Green	Green
Public Event (31,32,33,34)	Green	Green
Forms to be completed by individuals (36)	Green	Green
Documents available to individuals (37)	Green	Green
Documents and Forms (38)	Green	Green
Websites (39, 40,41,42,43)	Green	Green
Apps (used on electronic devices) (44)	Green	Green
Social media (45,46)	Green	Green
Signage in publicly accessible areas (47,48,49)	Green	Green
Reception services (50, 52, 53)	Orange	Orange
Applications and documents for grants (54,55,56)	Yellow	Orange
Invitations to Tender (57,58,59)	Green	Green
Promote Welsh language services (60-61)	Green	Green
Corporate Identity (62)	Green	Green
Public Address Systems (64)	Yellow	Orange

The Trust is fully committed to continued professional development and this year we have completed a number of bespoke training sessions for front line staff responsible for reception services. This was in direct response to a formal investigation, and it has given us an opportunity to promote and further educate staff in the needs and expectations of Welsh Speaking Patients and Donors.

Website and Social Media

Our Bilingual Social Media platforms grow from strength to strength. It is Trust policy to ensure a bilingual approach to posting videos and content and we actively encourage response from Welsh speakers on our websites.

Activity to the sites over the last twelve months demonstrate a clear connection with the public.

Velindre University NHS Trust - 126,923 views on the English language and 198 views the Welsh language site.

Welsh Blood Services views are 316,771 and of those 2746 in Welsh which is 0.86% of the views.

Operational Standards

Green – High level of assurance

Yellow – Medium to high

Orange – low to medium level of assurance

Standards	Assurance rating
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	23/24	24/25
Welsh Language Policy – Using Welsh internally (79)		
Contract of Employment (80)		
Documents relating to employment of employees (81)		
Policies relating to employment & workplace (82)		
Complaints made by staff & disciplinary matters (83 – 88)		
Computer software for spelling and grammar & interfaces (89)		
Intranet pages (90 – 95)		
Assessing Welsh language skills of employees (96)		
Training for staff in key areas (97 & 98)		
Opportunities to learn Welsh (99 – 103)		
Email signatures, wording and Welsh language logo (104)		
Welsh badges and branding for staff (105)		
Assessing skills, advertising, recruiting (106 – 109)		
Development and Publishing of a Clinical Consultation plan (110)		
Signage & notices (113)		
Recorded announcements (114)		

This year we saw the launch of the Welsh Blood Welsh Language intranet page, giving the division a greater focus on the work that they have been doing to support the Welsh Language, and opportunity for staff to see it from a Welsh Blood perspective. The site is an excellent resource for the division and has its own branding.

The ‘Active Offer’ has been the main focus for the service this year. They have proactively founded a relationship with Menter Rhondda Cynon Taf and now run a Welsh Language discussion group once a week. Staff who are learning or need to raise their confidence in the language can attend and have informal discussions. Lessons are also provided for reception staff with specific topics agreed to suit their areas of work and improve their ability to answer the telephone bilingually.

The divisional working groups continue to promote and provide guidance to staff on the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Velindre Cancer Service’s governance structure has been changed to ensure the Welsh Language priorities feed into the main planning group at the centre. Highlighting the needs of the service to senior managers and ensuring a cohesive approach to embedding the Welsh language in all that we do.



Employee excellence awards



This years awards were held at Coleg y Cymoedd and the Welsh Language award for promotion of and support to the delivery of Welsh Language services went to the Welsh Blood Service Divisional Welsh Language group for their proactive work around the promotion of the Welsh language to services for staff and donors.

Highlights of the current year’s work would be the identification of current IT systems needing development to support the Welsh Language, the promotion of Welsh language annual events, training for staff and making connections with external support agencies to open up partnership working.

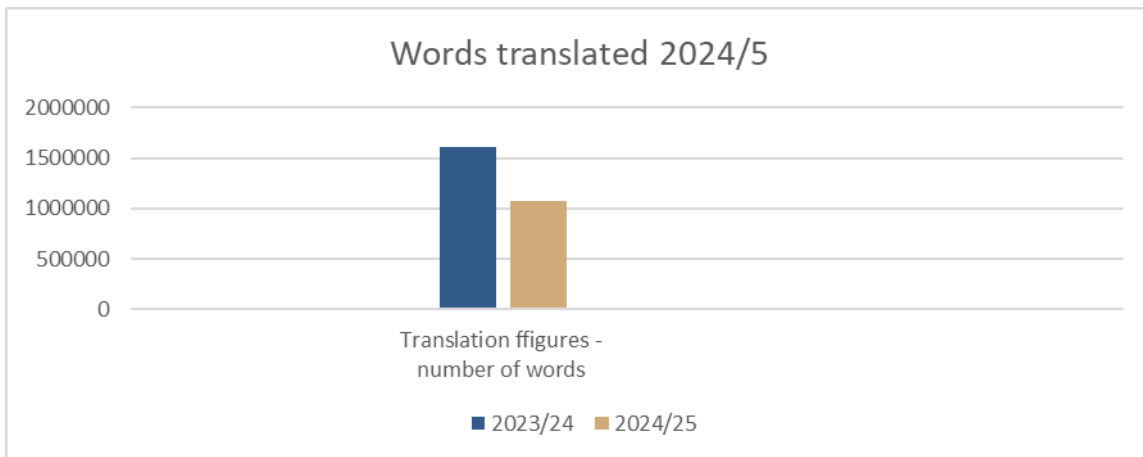
The group are highly visible across the service and has a clear action plan supporting the Welsh Language Standards and Trust wide commitments.

Translation

Our translation team continue to go from strength to strength, streamlining the translation process and providing translations to meet the service demands. We have made significant use of translation memory software giving us a greater insight into translated documents saving time in the process.

Translation figures will drop as the process is now identifying past translations and therefore what needs to be translated is reducing. It is a system we will continue using in 2025/26.

Translation staff have also been able to tap into national translation training, ensuring they are up to date with modern translation methods. This investment is proving to be very positive to the translation process.



We continue to provide simultaneous translation for our Public Board meetings and all our agendas and minutes are available in Welsh and English.

Responses to the Trust social media platforms are provided in Welsh, should that be required, and all our sent posts have bilingual platforms and are translated in time for publication.

Recruitment

Knowing our workforce skills enables us to plan accordingly for vacant posts. The Trust, along with all other Health organisations in Wales, use the Electronic Staff Record to record Welsh language skills. This year we have embedded the need to record these skills and are currently over 95% compliant. This will assist us with identifying areas for recruitment and language needs across the Trust.

This year we have worked closely with the divisions to embed a deeper understanding of language requirements, and we will continue to strengthen this understanding and process, providing guidance and support for recruitment managers and learning from our partners across the NHS.

Working with the recruitment digital systems available we will now embed the language assessment process into these processes. It will mean that assessing language needs will be non-negotiable. Supporting recruitment managers to make these decisions will be crucial to make this a successful process.

2024/25 recruitment statistics Welsh Blood Service 2024-2025

Total number of vacancies advertised as:	
Welsh language skills are essential	0
Welsh Language skills are desirable	110
Welsh Language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post	3
Welsh Language skills are not necessary	2
Total Number of vacancies advertised 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025	115

Velindre Cancer Centre 2024-2025

Total number of vacancies advertised as:	
Welsh language skills are essential	1
Welsh Language skills are desirable	315
Welsh Language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post	0
Welsh Language skills are not necessary	3
Total Number of vacancies advertised 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025	319

Velindre NHS UT 2024-2025

Total number of vacancies advertised as:	
Welsh language skills are essential	2
Welsh Language skills are desirable	172
Welsh Language skills need to be learnt when appointed to the post	0
Welsh Language skills are not necessary	9
Total Number of vacancies advertised 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025	183

The posts advertised as Welsh Language essential were receptionist and support officer. The posts advertised as Willing to Learn were reception staff.

The Trust has also mandated that all reception posts must be advertised as ‘Essential’. Should there be a recruitment issue with this then we will re advertise as ‘Willing to Learn’, demonstrating a real commitment to front line communication posts in support of our Patient and Donor needs.

Current Welsh Language skills

Trust Welsh Language (Listening/Speaking) (31 March 2025)

Welsh Language (Listening Speaking)	Count	Headcount	%
0 - No Skills / Dim Sgiliau	1320	1913	69.00%
1 - Entry/ Mynediad	250	1913	13.07%
2 - Foundation / Sylfaen	79	1913	4.13%
3 - Intermediate / Canolradd	52	1913	2.72%
4 - Higher / Uwch	60	1913	3.14%
5 - Proficiency / Hyfedredd	68	1913	3.55%
Capability Stated	1829	1913	95.61%
Not Stated	84	1913	4.39%

Concerns and Complaints

Concerns regarding our bilingual services continue to be low, however, this year we have received two official complaints from the Welsh Language Commissioner. Following a mystery shopper exercise delivered by the Commissioner’s office it became clear that two elements of our current provision did not fully comply with the Welsh Language Standards and provided a less than equal service to Welsh speakers.

One focused on our social media presence and one focused on the Trust’s ability to provide bilingual telephony services at the main in Velindre Cancer Centre and the Welsh Blood Service.



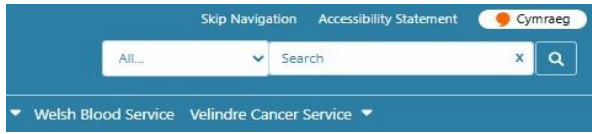
A task and finish group was established to address these issues, driven by the Director of Workforce and following a rigorous process of identifying where the risk to services was greatest, the Welsh Language Steering Group set about developing an action plan to address the issues raised by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

The Communication teams worked diligently to resolve the issues relevant to external information and making the Welsh Language easily visible to users. Visibility and the need to highlight the service is central to many of the Welsh Language Standards.

Processes were changed to support patient and donor need for bilingual information in a clear and accessible format. Going forward, Welsh Language visibility will continue to be a priority for us.

We acknowledged the need to have a clear deep dive into the current telephony systems at the Velindre Cancer Centre and changes were made to messages for patients and inward bound calls. We continue to investigate opportunities to support the language needs of callers, and this will be our focus for the coming financial year as we recognise that there is still some way to go with providing a fully bilingual main line service at the Velindre Cancer Centre.

The Welsh Blood Service have recruited successfully and have trained and continue to train, current staff in providing a Welsh Language telephony service. The investigations have provided a focus for us to concentrate and fully examine our processes for front line telephony services.



We continue to vigorously monitor the concerns and conduct ‘mystery shopper’ exercises, feeding back results to divisions and ensuring an awareness is raised with staff. Being aware that

staff require continued support to ensure compliance in this area assists us with forward planning our workforce Welsh Language skills.

Policy Making

The Trust has updated its Welsh Language Policy this year to reflect the current political climate. We have also established a new policy group aimed at agreeing new and updated policies. This sits alongside the work of the Impact assessment group and Welsh Language has a proactive role to play in assuring policies reflect the needs of Welsh speakers and Welsh culture and reflects the updated RAG rating to Standards 76 and 77.

Policy Making Standards

Green – High level of assurance

Yellow – Medium to high

Orange – low to medium level of assurance

Standards	Assurance rating	
	23/24	24/25
Formulating a new policy – opportunities and threats to the language (69)	Green	Green
New or revised policy – positive effects on the language (70)	Yellow	Green
New or revised policy – opportunities to use the language (71)	Yellow	Green
Publishing a policy or related document (72)	Green	Green
Publishing a consultation document and seeking views on the formulation of a policy (73)	Green	Green
Seeking views on a published consultation document (74)	Green	Green
Undertaking research to assist a policy decision and considering the effects on the Welsh language (75)	Yellow	Yellow
Commissioning of research to assist in a policy decision (76)	Yellow	Green
Commissioning of research to ensure no adverse effects or opportunities for the Welsh language (77)	Yellow	Green

More than just words

The Health and Social Care Framework compliments the Welsh Language Standards, and its actions are in support of all we do at the Trust.

Most relevant themes are:

Theme 2 - Supporting and developing the Welsh Language skills of the current and future workforce

This year we have, as suggested in the Framework, developed an induction process able to accommodate space and time for staff to discuss the aims and objectives of the Active Offer, to challenge any negativity around a bilingual service and to be aware of all the Trust has to support staff in providing a bilingual service.

We are proactively promoting all forms of on-line training and are in discussion with the Welsh Government funded organisation, 'Iaith Gwaith' to attend 'Croeso i'r Gymraeg' training and supporting courses.

Theme 3 -Sharing best practice and an enabling approach

We continue to be an active member of the national Welsh Language Managers group, facilitated by Welsh Government. We are also participating in a cross organisational group looking at Welsh Language, facilitated by Digital Health and Care Wales. Sharing best practice is the aim of both groups.

The Trust has taken advantage of the training offered by the Government funded organisation and will be working in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Coleg Gwent, this coming year, to provide training for staff at three different levels. This will be our focus in 2025/26 and will feed into our response to Welsh Government on the specific areas within the framework.

The Trust reports annually to Welsh Government on its compliance with the framework.

Our Hosted Organisations

(This is a snapshot of compliance and further information can be found on the hosted organisation's websites)

NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP)

Most of the standards remained the same as the previous year. However, there were some slight variations. Here is a breakdown of the variations for 2024/25 by comparison to 2023/24:

- Telephone services direct numbers (16,17,18, 19)

From secret shopper audits of telephone numbers applicable to these standards, there was an increase in staff awareness of the need to answer telephone calls through the medium of Welsh.

- Websites (39,40,41,42,43)

A comprehensive audit of our website and pages was undertaken in February 2025. We saw a slight fall in compliance on some of our webpages. Whilst pages were available through the medium of Welsh, the following issues were identified on a few pages:

- documents were found on the site that hadn't been assessed to be available in Welsh,
- videos uploaded onto a few pages were only available in English.

- Links to other webpages in NHS Wales or other public organisations were only linking to English language pages, although there were Welsh language pages that could be linked to.

The matter has been communicated to the relevant teams to address and rectify these issues as a piece of work to be undertaken during quarters 1 and 2 of 2025/26.

Social Media

Similar issues were identified on our social media accounts. Mostly where videos were only created in English. The timetable to address this will also be the early part of 2025/26.

protocols are reviewed that are available to all members of staff employed by NWSSP annually to ensure that our protocols and processes are deliverable across all service delivery areas. All protocols are available on the internal Welsh language support page.

NWSSP promotes that they welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh on their websites and in emails and corporate letterheads.

Most meetings are now hosted on virtual platforms, such as Microsoft TEAMS and Zoom. A protocol as to how meetings can be facilitated in both languages and the Welsh Language Unit supports all divisions and service delivery areas to source interpreters as and when required.

Agendas and minutes of the Shared Services Partnership Committee are available in Welsh on the website. Most events are not public facing. However, when an event is organised, there is a protocol and a checklist in place for event organisers to ensure that they consider and accommodate the Welsh language when planning.

All NWSSP Forms and Documents intended for use by individuals are available in Welsh, whether they are hard copies or whether they are digital copies. NWSSP also recognise that it is important to give instruction as to how to use these resources where staff manage the administration and dissemination of documents and forms.

Social media posts are planned ahead, and translation support is available to support our corporate social media accounts, if required in advance of any social media events and activities. NWSSP reply to Welsh language social media posts in Welsh if a reply is required.

One request for Invitations to Tender to be published through the medium of Welsh was received in 2024/25. 5 bids through the medium of Welsh in response to the invitation to tender were also received. Response documents were published in Welsh as required by Standards 57, 58 and 59.

Training for procurement staff was provided, giving advice to Health Boards and Trusts to assess whether an invitation to tender needs to be published through the medium of Welsh.

Investigation to Telephone Services – CS1040 November 2023 to January 2025

The work to remedy the concerns raised in the CS1040 investigation has now concluded. Some work remains to be completed, but NWSSP have started to map out a process to assess new and vacant posts and will pilot this with a small cohort of divisions in NWSSP prior to launch later in 2025/26.

Whenever a post responsible for answering calls on our main telephone number is vacant the role will always be advertised as Welsh Essential at level 4 or 5 in speaking, understanding, reading and writing in Welsh.

Health Technology Wales (HTW)

HTW continues to work diligently following the Welsh Language Standards of the Trust. They have an action log that is revisited regularly to ensure compliance with the relevant Standards within the scope of their organisations.

Outside of the regulatory requirements, this year HTW have five staff members are learning Welsh with LearnWelshCymru at various levels and HTW has welcomed a fluent Welsh speaker to the team, who is joining HTW on Secondment from NWSSP to cover maternity leave.

The Social Wellbeing committee are planning further Welsh language virtual coffee breaks to help to encourage team member to use their Welsh Language skills.

A Welsh Language teams chat has been created to encourage learners to practice their Welsh language skills.

The Future for Velindre University NHS Trust

The Trust's commitment is clear, and we will remain diligent in continuously improving our services and learning from the needs of our patients and donors. It is an exciting time of change for the Trust, and we enter this with positivity and a keen commitment to working with our partners.

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