 <p> GIG CYMRU NHS WALES </p> <p> Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales </p>	<p>Name of Meeting Audit and Corporate Governance Committee</p> <p>Date of Meeting 30 September 2025</p> <p>Agenda item: 8.3</p>
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Governance Assurance Biannual Updates				
Executive lead:	Paul Veysey, Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit			
Author:	Liz Blayney, Deputy Board Secretary and Deputy Head of the Board Business Unit			
Approval/Scrutiny route:	Paul Veysey, Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit			
Purpose				
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide assurance to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on four governance compliance areas, which form part of the annual reporting process.</p> <p>The following four areas are combined into one assurance report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarations of Interests (Biannual updates) • Welsh Health Circulars (Biannual updates) • Joint Working Framework - a full report ahead of the commencement of Biannual updates reporting to this Committee from March 2026 • Policy Update (Biannual Updates) 				
Recommendation:				
APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/>	ASSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take assurance on the implementation of the Standards of Behaviour Policy, and note the updated Declarations of Interest Register which will be published on the website following this meeting. • Take assurance on management of the process for ensuring the Organisation’s compliance with Welsh Health Circulars. • Take assurance on management of the process for ensuring the Organisation’s compliance with the Joint Working Framework. • Take assurance on the prioritisation and progress being made to review Corporate policies, procedures and other written control documents within the remit of the Committee. 				

Link to Public Health Wales [Strategic Plan](#)

Public Health Wales has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified seven strategic priorities and well-being objectives.

This report contributes to the following:

Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives
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Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment

A specific Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) is not required to support of this report.

Risk and Assurance

This report provides assurance on the implementation of the relevant:

- Joint Working Agreements,
- Policy and Procedures,
- Compliance with Welsh Health Circulars and
- the Declarations of Interest of Gifts and Hospitality register

Which are all components of the Board Assurance Framework.

Assurance is sought on these matters by the Committee on behalf of the Board.

The Committee will report this to the Board at its next meeting.

Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act

This paper supports the Quality themes.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

People implications

There are no people implications as a result of this report.

1. Purpose / situation

The purpose of this report is to provide assurance to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on governance compliance areas, which form part of the annual reporting process.

The following four areas are combined into one assurance report:

- **Declarations of Interests** (Biannual updates)
- **Welsh Health Circulars** (Biannual updates)
- **Joint Working Framework** - a full report ahead of the commencements of Biannual updates in March 2026
- **Policy Update** (Biannual Updates)

The sections below provide a summary of the current status for the areas listed above.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board Secretary must provide a regular report, detailing the declarations of Interests, Gifts, Hospitality, Honoraria and Sponsorship received and the effectiveness of the arrangements in place, to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee for scrutiny.

The Audit and Corporate Governance Committee will review and report to the Board upon the adequacy of these arrangements. The last report was received by the Committee in September 2024.

In line with the Standards of Behaviour Policy and supporting Procedure the following individuals must complete a Declaration of Interest Form:

- Non-Executive Directors
- Directors
- Members of staff considered to be Tier 3 or above
- Members of staff who are level 1 or level 2 budget holders or who have responsibility for obtaining quotations, tendering or contracting for goods and services.

In line with the Standards of Behaviour Policy, the Board Secretary has established and maintains a register of interests declared by staff and Non-Executive Directors. This register:

- Details of directorships, pecuniary (financial) and non-pecuniary interests in organisations that may have dealings with the NHS and membership of professional committees and third sector bodies.
- Where relevant it also includes details of interests of spouses, civil partners or close family members.
- The Board and Executive level interested are published to the website for public information.
- Maintains interest for a minimum of 12 months after the Board Secretary has been informed that the interest has expired. A record of historic interests is retained by the organisation for a minimum of 6 years following the date it expired.

Appendix 1 is the Board and Executive Register of Interests 2025/26 as at 11 September 2025.

Appendix 2 is the Staff Register of Interests 2025/26 as at 11 September 2025 (received at the Private Session).

Appendix 3 is the Register of Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship: Financial Year 2025/26 as at 11 September 2025.

In line with the Policy all relevant members of staff and Non-Executive Directors have a personal responsibility to volunteer information regarding offers of gifts, hospitality and sponsorship, including those offers which have been refused.

3. Welsh Health Circulars

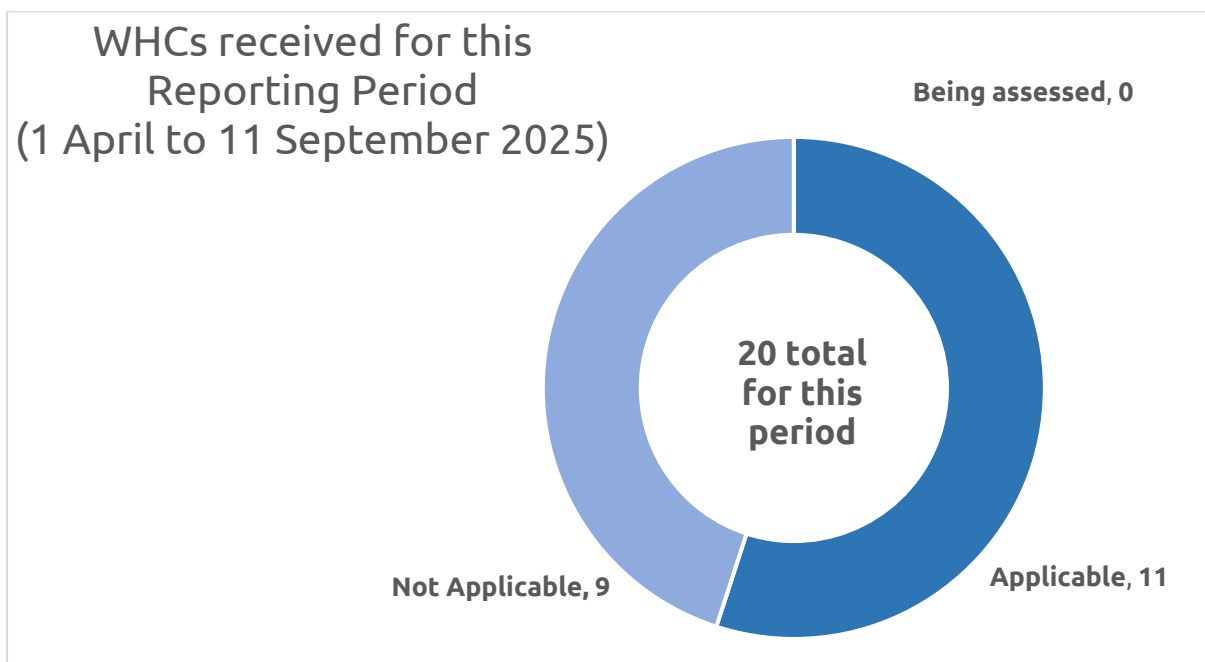
The Board Business Unit maintains a tracker for monitoring and recording the Welsh Health Circulars (WHCs) that are received by the Trust. The WHCs are sent to the relevant Executive Lead for action, and the completion of actions are recorded within a central record log.

This report provides an update to the Committee on the current compliance with Welsh Health Circulars issued by the Welsh Government.

The last report to the Committee was in March 2025.

Total number of WHCs Received since 1 April 2025:

The graph below provides a summary of the total number of WHCs received this year and for this reporting period:



Current Reporting Period – 1 April 2025 – 11 September 2025

For the period **1 April 2025 – 11 September 2025** a total of 20 Welsh Health Circulars were received.

There were 11 WHCs which were applicable Public Health Wales and these have been completed:

Ref	Title	Purpose	Status
WHC 2025 008	Part 4 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017: Introduction of a National Mandatory Licensing Scheme for Special Procedures in Wales	For Action and Information	Complete
WHC 2025 011	Introduction of The NHS Wales Digital Health Identity Standard for Primary Care (NHS Login) Date of Review: September 2025	For Information	Complete
WHC 2025 012	Interim Amendments to the Model Standing Financial Instructions Chapter 11 for Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts in Wales, and Chapter 12 for Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW)	For Compliance	Complete
WHC 2025 013	2025/26 NHS Wales Financial Monitoring Return Guidance	For Compliance	Complete
WHC 2025 019	Changes to the routine childhood vaccination schedule and to the selective hepatitis B vaccination programme from 01 July 2025	For Action	Complete
WHC 2025 021	Introduction of routine vaccination programmes for the prevention of mpox and gonorrhoea	For Action	Complete
WHC 2025 023	PPE stockpile volumes in Wales	For Information	Complete
WHC 2025 027	Changes to supply of Gluten Free Foods in Wales; All-Wales Gluten Free Subsidy Card Scheme	For Action	Complete
WHC 2025 028	Expansion of the shingles immunisation programme for severely immunosuppressed individuals aged 18-49	For Action	Complete

There are currently 2 WHCs in progress which have not yet been completed:

WHC 2025 020	The National Influenza Immunisation Programme 2025-26	For Compliance and Action	In progress
WHC 2025 022	The national COVID-19 vaccination programme autumn 2025	For Compliance and Action	In progress

Both these WHCs are in the process of being enacted and will be completed at the time their respective programmes launches. The delivery of enabling materials and appropriate surveillance produced by Public Health Wales to support the LHBs in their delivery of these programmes has been incorporated into the work planning and they are on course for delivery prior to the start of each of the respective campaigns.

Not Applicable to PHW

Following the reviews of each WHC when received, 9 of the 11 received were found to be not applicable to Public Health Wales, these were:

Ref	Title	Purpose
WHC 2025 004	NHS Wales National Clinical Audit and Outcome Review Plan Annual Rolling Programme for 2025/26	For Action, Information
WHC 2025 006	Recording of Mental Health Outcome Measures	For Action
WHC 2025 010	Arrangements for the prescribing of antiviral and neutralising monoclonal antibody treatments for COVID-19	For Action
WHC 2025 016	Update on NHS Wales vaccination programme against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)	For Action
WHC 2025 017	Tranexamic Acid use: Recommendation 7a of the Infected Blood Inquiry (IBI)	For Action
WHC 2025 018	Tirzepatide (Monjour®) for the management of obesity and overweight	For Action
WHC 2025 025	Overseas Visitors' Eligibility to Receive Free Primary Care	For Compliance, Action and Information
WHC 2025 029	Introduction of Nirsevimab passive immunisation against Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in at risk infants for upcoming 2025/26 RSV Season	For Action

Appendix 4 is the full WHC log covering the period 1 April 2025 to 11 September 2025

4. Joint Working Framework

The Board Business Unit maintains a Register which records the Joint Working Agreements which are in place across the Organisation.

This list has been updated reactively since COVID-19, with any new MoUs/SLAs which have been through Business Executive Team/Board being added to the list.

From September 2025, we will report this Register through this Committee on a Biannual basis.

A revised Joint Working Framework is in preparation, the current JWF is available on the website (<https://phw.nhs.wales/about-us/policies-and-procedures/policies-and-procedures-documents/corporate-governance-communications-and-finance-policies/joint-working-framework/>).

The JWF contains the summary of all types of agreements which are included:

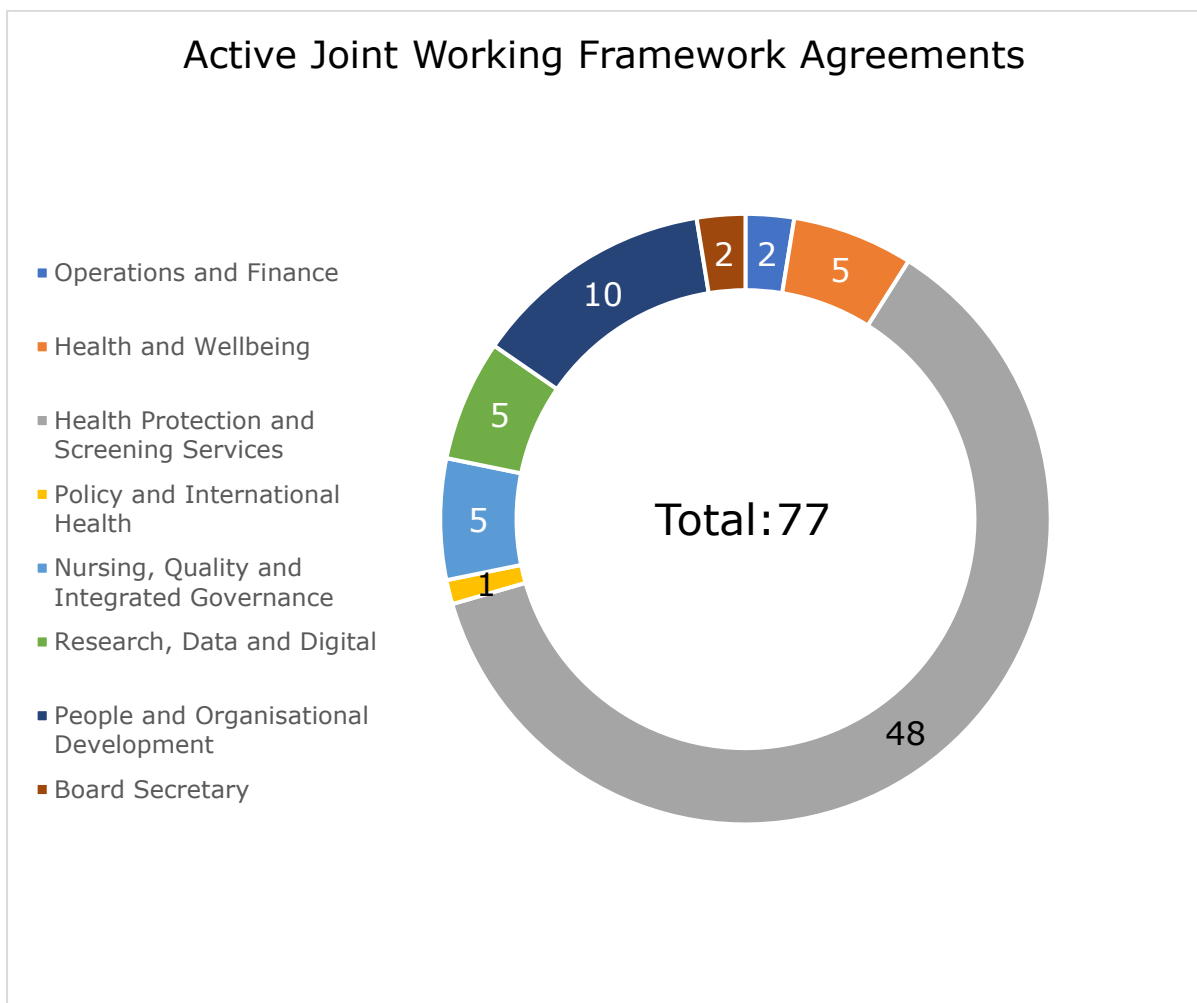
- **MoUs** - A Memorandum of Understanding is a formal agreement between two or more parties to establish an official joint working arrangement. MoUs are not legally binding, but they carry a degree of seriousness and mutual respect.
- **SLAs** - A Service Level Agreement is an agreement between a service provider (either internal or external) and the end user which defines the level of service expected from the service provider. SLAs are output-based in that their purpose is specifically to define what the “customer” will receive penalty clauses for non-delivery *e.g.* funds withheld until the SLA is delivered or agreement on slippage.
- **PLAs** - A Programme Level Agreement is similar to an SLA, although narrower in scope as it relates to a specific programme. Such an agreement includes milestones and outcomes.
- **Covenants** - A Covenant is an agreement or written promise between organisations that constitutes a pledge to do or refrain from doing something. Covenants are typically based on a broad set of principles/commitments rather than detailing working arrangements.
- **Membership Pledge** - Two or more organisations may agree to collaborate where they have common interests or objectives. They may deem that organisations should be “members” and make a “Membership Pledge”. The Membership Pledge is a commitment to work within the spirit of the groups common interests and objectives, aims and objectives. The Pledge does not constitute a legal commitment. Where the organisations commit to provide resources to achieve their common interests and objectives it may be necessary to enter into a specific agreement for that purpose, *e.g.* an MoU, SLA etc.
- **International Health Partnership** - An International Health Partnership, for the purposes of Public Health Wales, is one which is based in Wales in conjunction with partners based outside of Welsh borders. The partnership could include work which is taking or took place over a specific period of time or where there is no specified end date. It may be with a community, institution or organisation, it could involve but is not limited to work with research, information

The Register does not include Grants and contracts.

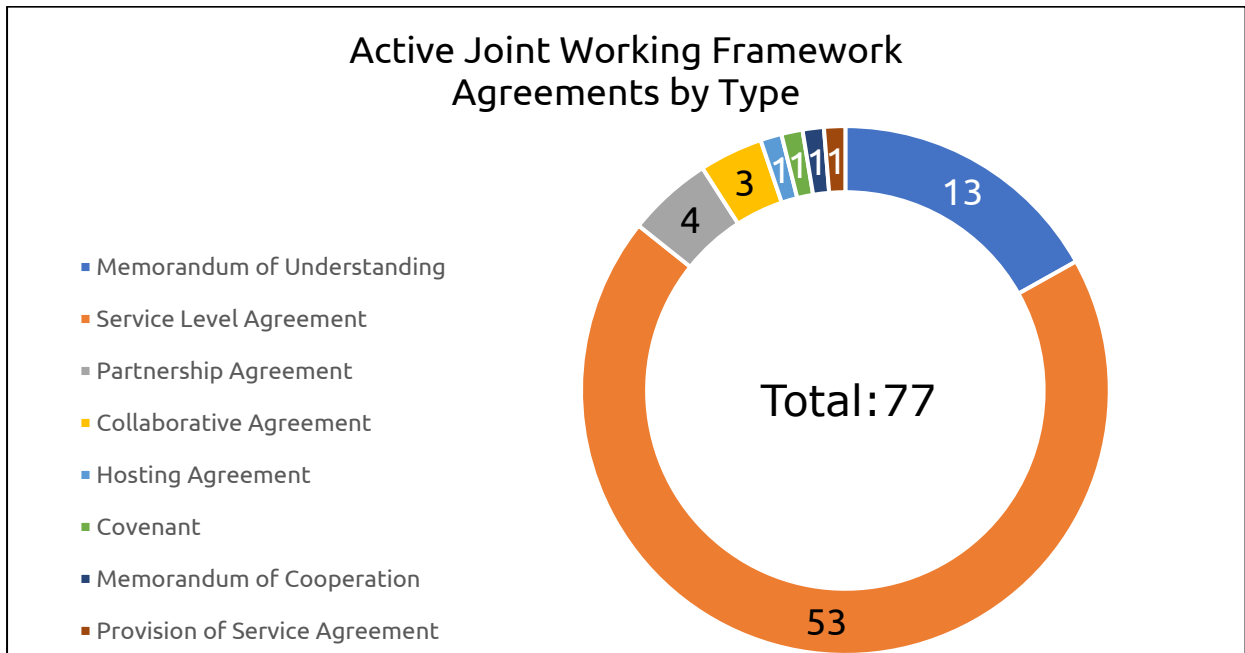
This report represents a baseline to the Committee. The Register will be updated proactively going forward and an update of the Register will be provided to the Committee Biannually.

All Directorates have been informed of the importance of the Joint Working Framework and asked to notify the Board Business Unit when planning and developing and new joint working arrangements.

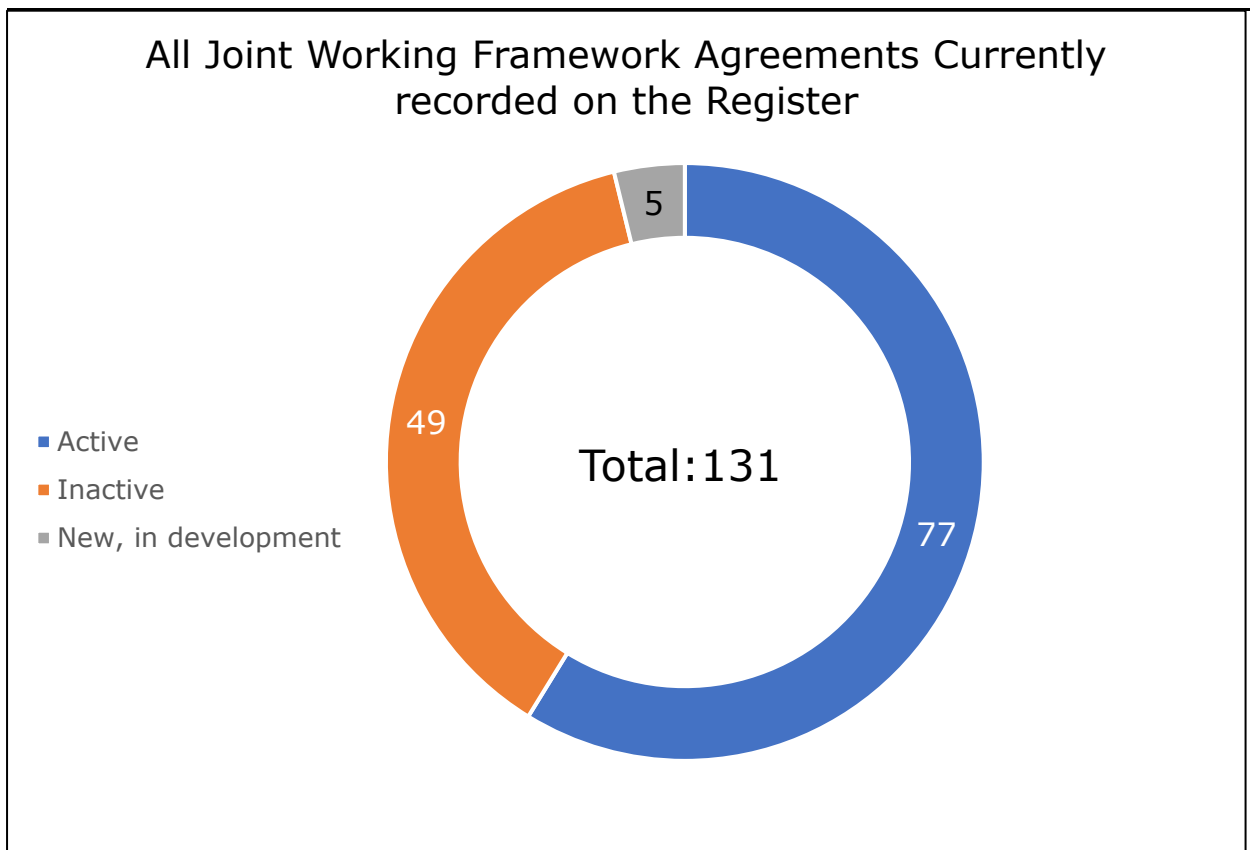
The new plans will be included in a list to Business Executive Team who will maintain their broad overview of all joint working across the Organisation.



The following shows the breakdown of the types of agreements on the Register:



The following shows all the agreements recorded on the register:



Appendix 5 shows the Active Joint Working Framework Register at 11 September 2025.

Appendix 6 shows the Inactive Joint Working Framework Register at 11 September 2025.

The next report to this Team will be in March 2026.

5. Corporate Policy and Procedures

The Board approved a Organisation-wide Policy and Written Control Documents Policy and Procedure in July 2022. All new/revised documents are developed and approved in accordance with the provisions and processes set out in these documents. The procedure specifies that the Register will be reported annually to the Board, and the relevant sections reported to Board Committees Bi-Annually.

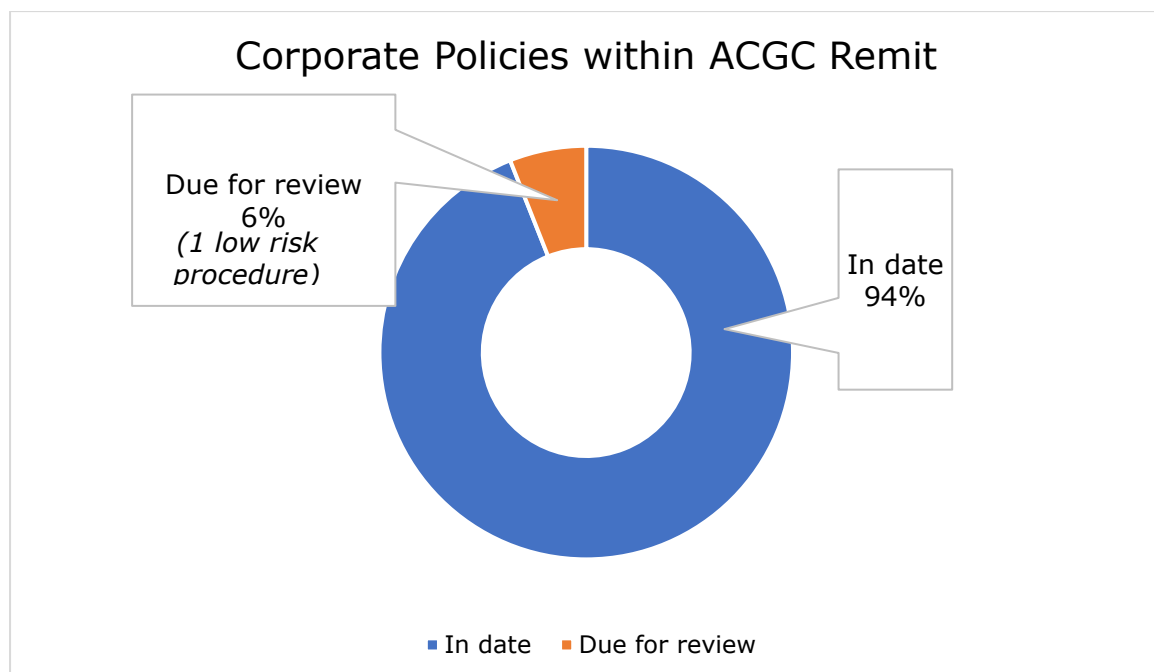
This report provides the Committee with assurance that required policies, procedures and other written control documents are being developed and maintained and that progress is being made to review and update policies that have passed their review date.

The Leadership Team considers a compliance report on a quarterly basis for ongoing monitoring and management of the main policy register. The Leadership Team last considered an update at its meeting on 17 July 2025.

➤ Status of policies and other written control documents

There are 16 policies on the policy register, which were approved by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee or have been delegated to the Committee by the Board.

As of 03 September 2025, 14 (94%) policies/procedures are in date, and 1 procedure is overdue for review (6%).



The Committee is asked to note that the overdue procedure (Risk Management Procedure) is expected to be issued for the Committee's approval at its meeting on the 30 September 2025. This overdue procedure is rated as 'low risk' to the

Organisation and the existing procedure will remain current pending the approval of the updated document.

Work is ongoing to review the overall policy list with each lead to review the number of policies on the register and look to reduce and combine where possible.

Appendix 7 is an extract taken from the Corporate Policy and other written Control Documents Register and shows the status of documents as of 3 September 2025.

6. Recommendation

The report provides assurance to the Committee that the Organisation is meeting the requirements for each of the areas reports, there are no concerns to bring to the attention of the Committee in any of the areas listed.

The Committee is asked to:

- Take **assurance** on the implementation of the Standards of Behaviour Policy and note the updated **Declarations of Interest Register** which will be published on the website following this meeting.
- Take **assurance** on management of the process for ensuring the Organisation's compliance with **Welsh Health Circulars**.
- Take **assurance** on management of the process for ensuring the Organisation's compliance with the **Joint Working Framework**.
- Take **assurance** on the prioritisation and progress being made to review **Corporate policies**, procedures and other written control documents within the remit of the Committee.