



<b>Agenda Item</b>
4.1

**Joint Commissioning Committee**

**Clinical Support Hubs and NHS 111 Digital Front End**

<b>Dyddiad y Cyfarfod / Date of Meeting</b>	26/05/2026
<b>Statws Cyhoeddi / Publication Status</b>	Open/ Public Not Applicable
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<b>Pwrpas yr Adroddiad / Report Purpose</b>	For Approval
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<b>Engagement (internal/external) undertaken to date (including receipt /consideration at Committee/Group)</b>		
<b>Committee/Group/Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Chief Executive Management Team	07/04/2026	Noted
NHS Leadership Board	19/05/2026	Approved

## **1. SITUATION/BACKGROUND**

The Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) were asked by the Deputy CEO of NHS Wales to consider options to enable a clear, sustainable, and equitable commissioning approach for regional clinical support hubs that best supports urgent and emergency care (UEC) priorities across Wales.

In addition to this the NWJCC has recently received a recurrent ringfenced allocation of £1.243m to support iterative improvements to the NHS 111 Wales digital platform, in line with policy commitments to enable digital access to information, advice and support to help people navigate health and social care services.

## **2. SPECIFIC MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **2.1.1 Clinical Support Hubs**

In March 2026, the Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Wales wrote to Local Health Board (LHB) Chief Executives and Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) members regarding the future use of £2.98 million of nationally top-sliced funding currently supporting regional Clinical Support Hubs. These hubs were established in 2017 as part of the NHS 111 Wales programme to stabilise urgent primary care, particularly during periods of out-of-hours inconsistency and system escalation. Three hubs currently operate across Wales.

The letter sets out the need to ensure transparent, effective, and outcome-focused use of public funding, aligned with national urgent and emergency care priorities. NHS Wales intends to establish a clear and sustainable commissioning route for this funding from Quarter 3 onwards. To support this, LHBs and the JCC are asked to consider three options:

1. Returning the funding to LHBs for locally driven UEC improvement,
2. Allocating it to the JCC to strengthen national remote clinical capacity, or
3. Maintaining the existing hub model but transferring commissioning responsibility to LHBs.

Based on the assessment of the three options, the Ambulance Services and 111 Commissioning Directorate recommended Option 2 – allocation of the £2.98m national funding to the JCC to enhance national remote clinical capacity.

Option 2 provides the strongest opportunity to create a coherent, scalable, and clinically consistent national Remote Clinical Assessment (RCA) model. This approach builds directly on the progress already achieved between the JCC and WAST in strengthening capability, systems, and governance for remote clinical activity, and supports the wider strategic direction for urgent and emergency care in Wales.

By consolidating investment within a single national structure, this option enables clearer accountability, reduces duplication, strengthens clinical governance, and

supports improved patient outcomes through consistent access to experienced clinical decision-makers.

This option was supported by CEMT and NHS Leadership Board, with agreement that the JCC would maintain the status quo arrangements for the provision of the regional clinical support hubs in the interim whilst a collaborative model and service specification for future delivery is developed.

The Committee is asked to formally **APPROVE** this position and the transfer funding and commissioning responsibility to the NWJCC from Quarter 3 of 2026/27.

### **2.1.2 NHS 111 Wales – Digital**

NHS 111 Wales was established as a national programme to provide a single, consistent access point for urgent care advice and navigation across Wales. The service was designed to improve public access to timely clinical advice, support people to receive the right care in the right place and reduce avoidable demand on emergency departments and other unscheduled care services.

The programme was implemented on a phased rollout that started in 2016, building on previously inconsistent local and regional arrangements for out-of-hours and telephone advice services. In March 2022, NHS 111 Wales became a national service, it has evolved into a core component of the urgent and emergency care system, with increasing integration with wider digital access routes, including online services and the NHS Wales App.

Initial funding for NHS 111 Wales was provided through specific programme investment (for the National 111 Programme) to support establishment, mobilisation and early expansion. As the service became embedded as business-as-usual, elements of this funding transitioned into ongoing allocations to sustain national infrastructure, service continuity and agreed levels of access.

The development of the Digital access route to NHS 111 Wales has not progressed at the same pace as the rest of the service. The JCC was able to utilise a non-recurrent allocation in 2025/26 to pilot new digital innovation such as the Albot digital assistant, WhatsApp integration, text-only and multilingual access.

The provision of a ringfenced allocation for digital development now provides the NWJCC with the opportunity to develop a strategic commissioning approach to the iterative development of the 111 digital front end as a key access point to the urgent care system.

## **3. KEY RISKS / MATTERS FOR ESCALATION**

Regional clinical support hubs currently undertake a substantial level of activity during their operating hours. Ensuring continuity of capacity during any changes the NWJCC chooses to commission will be required to minimise any service disruption to patients.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT

Objectives / Strategy	
<b>Dolen i Amcan (au) Strategol CBC</b> <b>Link to JCC Strategic Objectives(s)</b>	Maximise Value
<b>Dolen i Ddeddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol – Nodau Llesiant /</b> <b>Link to Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – Wellbeing Goals</b> <a href="https://www.futuregenerations.wales/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf">150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf (futuregenerations.wales)</a>	A Healthier Wales
<b>Dolen i Hwyluswyr Ansawdd</b> (Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) / <b>Link to Enablers of Quality</b> (Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))	Leadership
<b>Dolen i Feysydd Ansawdd</b> (Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) / <b>Link to Domains of Quality</b> (Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))	Effective
<b>Effaith Amgylcheddol/ Cynaliadwyedd (5R) / Environmental /Sustainability Impact (5Rs)</b>	No - Not Applicable

Impact Assessment		
<b>Ansawdd</b> Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Ansawdd? / <b>Quality</b> Have you undertaken a Quality Impact Assessment Screening?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Outcome:	n/a
<b>Cydraddoldeb</b> Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb? / <b>Equality</b>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Outcome:	

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment Screening?		
<b>Cyfreithiol / Legal</b>	<a href="#">National Health Service Joint Commissioning Committee (Wales) Directions 2024</a> <a href="#">National Health Service Joint Commissioning Committee (Wales) Regulations 2024</a>	
<b>Enw da / Reputational</b>	There is no direct impact on the reputation of the HBs or the JC as a result of the activity outlined in this report.	
<b>Effaith Adnoddau</b> (Pobl /Ariannol) / <b>Resource Impact</b> (People / Financial)	Yes (Include further detail below)	
	The NWJCC will receive an additional £4.223m for the commissioning of services outlined in this paper.	

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The members of the Joint Commissioning Committee are asked to:

- **Approve** the transfer of funding and commissioning responsibility for regional clinical support hub from quarter 3 to the NWJCC.
- **Note** the provision of the recurrent ring-fenced allocation for the development of the 111 digital platform