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Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

# Ambulance patient handover guidance (WHC/2024/041)

Guidance for health boards and trusts on the handover of patients from ambulance to hospital care.

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## Details

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# Details

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Compliance – must be complied with by the recipient.

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Performance / delivery.

## Title:

Ambulance patient handover guidance.

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October 2026.

## Action by:

- Health boards.
- Welsh Ambulance Service.
- NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee.

## Required by:

Immediate.

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## Sender:

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Health Social Care Early Years,  
Welsh Government.

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## Enclosures:

- Letter, Jeremy Griffith, Director of Operations, Health Social Care Early Years Welsh Government.
- [Annex 1: Ambulance patient handover guidance, 29 October 2024.](#)

# Ambulance patient handover guidance

Chief Executives  
Chief Operating Officers  
Medical Directors  
Executive Directors of Nursing  
Local health boards  
Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

29 October 2024

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Dear colleagues,

I am writing to draw your attention to a newly published Welsh health circular relating to **ambulance patient handover guidance**.

This guidance is intended to set a statement of intent for health boards to deliver when managing the ambulance patient handover process, and to set out key actions for consistent delivery to support optimal outcomes and experience. It has been developed with clinical and operational input and should be read as a second iteration of the original document released in May 2016.

This guidance is intended for executive level staff of health boards, the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee and the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust. It may also be useful to emergency department and ambulance service clinical and managerial teams when designing local protocols.

As you will be aware, ambulance patient handovers continue to represent a significant challenge to patient experience and outcomes and the ambulance service's ability to respond quickly to people in the community. You will also be aware this is an issue requiring system wide solutions, both in the community and in supporting timely patient flow through emergency departments, the hospital system and back out into the community.

All members of the health board executive team have a responsibility for timely and safe ambulance patient handover, and the communication of this guidance and its content throughout their organisation. This may sometimes include an acceptance of sharing risk across the system, in line with local and national escalation frameworks.

We will continue to monitor progress against ambulance patient handover trajectories over the coming weeks in conjunction with the NHS Executive which will undertake audits of organisations' compliance with the guidance over the

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remainder of 2024 to 2025.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Griffith  
Director of Operations  
NHS Wales / Health and Social Services Group, Welsh Government

Carbon copy:

Judith Paget, Director General Health and Social Services / NHS Chief Executive.

Nick Wood, Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Wales.

Sue Tranka, Chief Nursing Officer, Welsh Government.

Richard Bowen, National Director for the Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care Programme.

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