# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Implementation of the Digital Maternity Cymru Programme** |
| **DATE**  | **19 December 2022** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

Maternity care in Wales is delivered across all health boards. It spans primary, community, and secondary care, and has close links to health visiting and social care services. Within each health board, services are configured according to local need and available services, delivered through a combination of hospital care, stand-alone and alongside midwifery led units, and home births. Clinical staff work across various maternity settings and service users move across settings and health board boundaries, as a result of clinical complexity and need, relating to choice or occasionally in response to extreme service pressures.

Welsh Government’s Maternity Vision for Wales, published in July 2019, states digitisation of maternity records will enable greater service user engagement in care, safe and effective decision making and better data informing future service delivery. Making wholesale change across maternity systems in all health boards in Wales is a critical decision that must be underpinned by an evidence base that supports improved clinical quality outcomes, with a patient centred focus. The move to digital services is underpinned by a number of recommendations from strategic and clinical publications that identifies the importance of robust data to inform quality improvement and support service users, which will result in high quality maternity services in Wales leading to a positive impact on the health and life chances of women and babies and on the healthy development of children throughout their life.

Currently there is inefficient, manual collation, reporting and auditing of outcome data at both local and national levels. No health board is currently in the position to review real time clinical information, which has the subsequent effect of increasing clinical risk. Patterns, themes and issues of concern are often identified and reported late due to the lack of real-time data that is supported by a digital system, if at all. This is of significant concern, as maternity services hold the highest area of risks and claims for health boards.

Welsh Government provided funding from the Digital Priorities Investment Fund to Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) to undertake the discovery phase of the Digital Maternity Cymru project. The project team has been engaging with teams in health boards across Wales, along with the Wales Maternity and Neonatal Network, and have gathered a large number of requirements of a potential digital solution for maternity records (which covers the full maternity progression, from the first point of contacting the midwife for self-referral, through to transfer of the record of birth into digital patient records systems).

The Discovery project has engaged with clinicians and service users to gain an understanding of what they would expect to see from digitisation of the process, so that this can be fully considered; the team are taking a user-centred design approach which will see the voice of service users and clinicians at the heart of all decisions being taken now and later in the project.

The project team has completed a market assessment to understand what potential options there are for digital maternity solutions. At this point, formal procurement steps have not yet started, but the team has built an understanding of what is available in the market to be able to produce a fully rounded proposal which includes potential ways forward for delivery on an all-Wales basis, ensuring that expectant parents across Wales can engage with maternity services in a standardised way.

I have today agreed funding for the implementation phase of the Digital Maternity Cymru programme which underlines my commitment to improving maternity services across Wales. I see the Digital Maternity Cymru programme as a key enabler for this. DMC will be hosted by Digital Health and Care Wales and will implement an all-Wales solution which will include digital patient access to their maternity notes through the NHS Wales App and website. The work will commence with the completion of user discovery and research in partnership with the Centre for Digital Public Services; the main elements of the DMC service will be delivered over the next three years.

I will continue to keep the Senedd updated on the progress of this work.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.