

# PRUDENT HEALTHCARE



## What's it all about?

Prudent healthcare is the Welsh Government's response to the pressures of austerity, rising costs, and increasing demands on the health service. It aims to create a system that focuses on patient outcomes instead of volume of activity, and to achieve continuous quality improvement while making the most effective use of available resources. It was initially proposed by the Bevan Commission in 2013 and is the result of a widespread consultation spearheaded by the 1000 Lives initiative.

It is based on four core principles: co-production, prioritising those with the greatest need within the system, evidence-based care, and reducing waste and unnecessary interventions.

### Co-production



To achieve health and wellbeing for patients by health professionals, patients and the public working together as equal partners.

### Prioritisation



To make effective use of resources by providing services for those in greatest need first. This includes health promotion and illness prevention as well as care.

### Evidence



To reduce variation in service provision by sharing best practice, ensuring all care is evidence-based and that the system is consistent and transparent.

### Reducing waste



To update and make use of initiatives such as NICE's 'do not do' guidelines to reduce unnecessary, and potentially harmful interventions with a poor evidence base.

## What's being done?

All NHS organisations in Wales are being asked to incorporate the prudent healthcare principles into their integrated medium term plans, which will theoretically bring all Health Boards and other organisations into line with its goals. Programmes such as the Planned Care programme provide additional resources for projects and innovations relating to issues such as integrated services and outcome-led data collection - where results for patients are measured instead of purely the number of people who come through the system.

These are already being put to good use with initiatives such as virtual cardiology clinics established to improve access to specialist advice for primary care and streamline referral pathways for patients, as well as joint ventures between the Welsh Ambulance Service and Health Boards to identify and support repeat users of 999 services.

## How will it affect me?

For those clinicians working in Wales, all new service developments and improvements should align with prudent healthcare principles. However, there is a host of online resources regarding prudent healthcare and quality improvement initiatives that are open to all wishing to incorporate them into practice or longer-term service strategy. Similar work is being undertaken by organisations such as the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges with the Choosing Wisely campaign.