

Chief Executive Board Report

May 2024

1 Update on the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry

The following provides an update on the current activities of the organisation in relation to the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry up to the 10 May 2024.

1.1 Module 1 (Resilience and Preparedness)

Following the conclusion of the Public Hearings in July last year, the report of the Inquiry is currently awaited, anticipated to be received in Autumn 2024.

1.2 Modules 2 (Core UK Government Decision Making) and 2B (Core Welsh Government Decision Making)

The Public Hearings for Module 2, 2A and 2B have now concluded. Public Hearings for Module 2C (Northern Ireland) commenced on the 30 April 2024 and are due to conclude on the 16 May 2024. As with previous modules, these public hearings are being monitored internally, with daily reports being circulated highlighting areas of interest and any references to Public Health Wales.

In respect of Module 2B, the Inquiry will now consider all evidence provided (documentary and oral) and the closing submissions which were provided by the core participants, with a view to preparing its report and recommendations. It is not yet known when we can expect the report to be published however, we anticipate it will be during 2025.

1.3 Module 3 (Impact on Healthcare Systems)

Public Health Wales is not a Core Participant for Module 3 but has provided evidence to the Inquiry. The position on core participant status remains under constant review.

The Public Hearings for Module 3 are scheduled to start on the 9 September 2024 and last for approximately 10 weeks. Further information is awaited from the Inquiry as to whether it intends to call any witnesses from Public Health Wales to give oral evidence.

As with previous modules, the public hearing will be monitored internally with daily reports being circulated highlighting areas of interest and any references to Public Health Wales.

1.4 Module 4 (Vaccines and Therapeutics)

Public Health Wales is a Core Participant for Module 4.

To date, Public Health Wales has provided detailed evidence to the Inquiry and will continue to support any requests made.

The Inquiry has started to release evidence onto the evidence platform in relatively large batches. A triage process is in place for reviewing each batch, with the aim of reviewing relevant evidence identified through the triage process without delay. We continue to monitor internal expert/administrative support capacity to review the evidence disclosed, in anticipation of the Inquiry releasing more frequent batches of evidence in the run up to the commencement of the public hearings.

The public hearings for this module are scheduled to commence on the 14 January 2025 and conclude on the 30 January 2024. Public Health Wales may be called upon to provide oral witness evidence at this hearing. In the event that Public Health Wales is called upon to give oral evidence, we will continue to work closely with our solicitors and barristers to ensure our witnesses are properly supported to provide any evidence they may be called to give. Legal representation to attend the hearings has already been secured.

1.5 Module 5 (Procurement)

Public Health Wales is not a Core Participant for this module.

1.6 Module 6 (Care Sector)

Public Health Wales is a Core Participant for Module 6.

We are working with the Inquiry legal team in preparation for a request for evidence. Alongside this, we are planning our resources to ensure we are able to provide the fullest response possible.

Disclosure from the Inquiry is likely to commence in the summer. As with Module 4, the plan is to adopt a similar triage process for reviewing each batch as it arrives, with the aim of reviewing relevant evidence identified through the triage process without delay. We will again continue to monitor internal expert/administrative support capacity to review the evidence disclosed, noting that it is likely that evidence will be disclosed concurrently with Module 4.

Public hearings are scheduled to commence in summer 2025. The exact dates have not yet been published.

1.7 Module 7 (Test, Trace and Isolate)

Public Health Wales has applied for Core Participant status in this module. The Inquiry's decision is awaited.

In anticipation of a request to provide evidence to the Inquiry for this module, work is underway to identify and collate key documents and evidence.

The Module 7 public hearings are due to take place in Spring 2025, before the Module 6 public hearings.

1.8 Future Modules

Further modules will be announced in due course by the Inquiry. Each module will investigate issues across the UK as a whole and will cover both 'system' and 'impact' issues across the UK. Anticipated future modules include:

- The Government's business and financial responses
- Health inequalities and the impact of Covid-19
- Education, children and young persons
- Other public services, including frontline delivery by key workers.

We do not anticipate another module being opened for a number of months. However, consideration is being now as to how we can potentially prepare of these future modules (i.e., identification of key individuals, events, advice and documents).

1.9 Operational changes

Andrew Jones has now joined the team as a Consultant Advisor and will support the team for 2 days per week.

There are no further operational changes to note since the March update.

2 Our Chairperson

After seven years, our Chair, Jan Williams, will be leaving us to start an exciting new role as Chair of Swansea Bay University Health Board from the 1 June 2024.

Jan has been amazing over her time with us, supporting the Board, the Executives and the whole organisation in the most challenging of circumstances – through a global pandemic. Her stewardship has enabled the ongoing development and maturity in how the board does its business and she has championed our people right across the organisation - particularly as a champion, ally and advocate of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Jan has been an excellent chair and I shall miss Jan enormously, as will the whole organisation. We will have more opportunities to say a proper goodbye to Jan and we all wish her well in her new role.

3 Changes to the Executive Team

After more than five years with us, Professor John Boulton, our National Director of Quality and Patient Safety/Director of Improvement Cymru, moved on to a new opportunity at the end of March 2024. John has been excellent in his leadership of Improvement Cymru over the last few years, and particularly during the Coronavirus pandemic when John led significant and new developments and

services as we scaled up our response to protect the population. Over the last few years, John has re-branded the Team and he and the team have been supporting the NHS through the recovery period. We wish John well in his new endeavours.

4 Ministerial Meetings

Together with Jan Williams, Chair, and Professor Jim McManus, National Director of Health and Wellbeing, we met with Jayne Bryant, MS, the Minister for Mental Health and Early Years on the 9 May 2024. This was an introductory meeting with the Minister who took on the portfolio following the recent Cabinet changes. It was a constructive and positive meeting during which we updated the Minister on our work generally and then focused the discussion on our mental health and wellbeing and early years work that we are undertaking across the organisation.

On the 21 May 2024, together with Jan and Jim, we met with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Minister for Mental Health and Early Years. The purpose of the meeting was to update the Cabinet Secretary and the Minister specifically on the work we are doing with schools in relation to the whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing and adverse childhood experiences. An update on the meeting will be provided at the Board meeting.

5 Tackling Diabetes Together Programme

The Tackling Diabetes Together Programme is mobilising key partners for the case for change in relation to diabetes in Wales. Informed by future projections, and signed off by Ministers and the NHS Wales Leadership Board, this programme will seek to mobilise the system to achieve two system-level ambitions:

- ❖ Having more people living well with diabetes (Types 1 and 2), as measured through a reduction in amputations and other diabetes pathways by December 2028.
- ❖ Stopping the prevalence of diabetes increasing, focusing principally on Type 2 Diabetes, by December 2028.

Public Health Wales, working with the Welsh Government, NHS Executive and key partners, proposed the establishment of a formal programme of work to deliver these system ambitions. The *Tackling Diabetes Together* programme will focus on delivering the system ambitions, which were agreed with the then Minister for Health and Social Services and at the NHS Leadership Board in December 2023.

In early 2024, work began with a range of stakeholders, including the Welsh Value in Health Centre, the National Strategic Clinical Network for Diabetes, Diabetes UK Cymru, and NHS leaders and clinicians, to formally establish the programme and scope the key actions and activity needed to deliver on the system ambitions. Significant progress has already been made, focused on key enabling and foundational work needed to enable and sustain system change. This includes:

- ❖ The establishment of four Local Advanced Delivery Areas, focused on local level action within Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.
- ❖ Development of diabetes-specific key performance metrics by partners, including the Clinical Network for Diabetes, Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, which will form a key part of the NHS Wales Performance Framework. This will provide the basis for monitoring progress, both nationally and at a local level.
- ❖ An initial assessment of changes to procedures and medication, which will deliver better outcomes and value from existing spend has been undertaken by the Clinical Network for Diabetes, with clinical input.
- ❖ Piloting of work within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board focused on developing a behavioural systems map of the local systems of diabetes care and support, which can be used to inform the behaviours that should be targeted to best optimise care and outcomes.
- ❖ Completion of discovery on diabetes-related data and information governance, including development of proposed recommendations for improvements and developments.
- ❖ Continued delivery of the All Wales Diabetes Prevention Programme (AWDPP)
- ❖ The development of a toolkit for health and social care staff, which will be distributed in May 2024. The toolkit is designed to support internal communications and workforce initiatives to improve health and wellbeing across the NHS health and social care workforce in Wales

The work is being overseen by a Programme Board, which met for the first time in April 2024. This includes representatives from a number of key partner organisations, including health boards, the NHS Executive and Diabetes UK Cymru. The Programme Board reports to the Welsh Government’s Value and Sustainability Board, which is the sponsoring Forum for this work. The Programme Board is co-chaired by Professor Jim McManus, National Director of Health and Wellbeing in Public Health Wales, and Paul Mears, Chief Executive of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Chair of the Diabetes Implementation Group in the NHS Executive.

6 Prevention Based Health and Care (PBHC)

On the 20 May we launched the Prevention-Based Health and Care (PBHC) Framework with system partners. As part of our work to support a sustainable

health and care system, this work is designed to create a shared understanding of the components required to embed prevention in the health and care system.

The framework aims to help those working in the health and care system to identify:

- ❖ what action is required from their own and other parts of the system, to achieve the common goal
- ❖ interdependencies that need to be navigated and opportunities for alignment within the health and care system
- ❖ who they need to collaborate with to take a systematic and coordinated approach, to optimise their collective impact.

To illustrate the PBHC framework in action, a supporting document is shortly to be published, presenting a series of case studies which showcase how elements of the PBHC Framework have been applied, and exemplars which demonstrate how the breadth of the framework could be implemented in different situations.

7 Vaping Incident Response Group

Public Health Wales has published the final report of the *Vaping in Young People Incident Response Group (IRG)*. The group was established last summer in response to concerns being raised across the system about the rise in vaping by young people and particularly problematic vape use which was impacting on wellbeing and learning.

The approach taken was a novel one in utilising methods normally applied to communicable disease or environmental incidents to a non-communicable disease issue. The advantage of this way of working is that a more rapid response can be achieved in situations where there is limited published evidence. In this case, the IRG brought together representatives from health boards (paediatrics, paediatric and adult respiratory specialists, toxicologists, school nursing and smoking cessation staff; local authorities including trading standards, Directors of Education; third sector; further education and academic specialists. The group conducted a series of investigations which was able to confirm that there was a significant problem which had arisen due to dependency on nicotine from vaping. A series of recommendations were made which have fed into proposed legislation on vaping. Work will continue to implement the recommendations in partnership. The Directors of Public Health, Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government will review the approach and consider how we can make use of this model in future emerging issues.

The link to the report is phw.nhs.wales/news/tackle-dependency-visibility-and-availability-to-address-rapid-rise-in-youth-vaping-say-public-health-experts/vaping-amongst-children-and-young-people-in-wales-incident-response-group-report/

8 Building a Public Health Value and Economics Unit

In times of scarce resources, particularly in the area of public health and prevention, collaboration among decision-makers, budget-holders, practitioners and researchers is crucial. This collective effort should aim to maximise the wider (social, economic, and environmental) value created from spending and investment in (public) health services and interventions.

Quantifying and measuring the social value and well-being impact of health and social care initiatives is a critical aspect of evaluating overall return on investment. To bring greater focus on delivering value and help to progress the Wellbeing Economy in Wales, Public Health Wales is bringing together our health economics and social value work to support the organisation and wider NHS. This also supports the work of the renewed Welsh Government / World Health Organization (WHO) Memorandum of Understanding. We have recently created a new post, 'Head of Health Economics and Value' and we are delighted to welcome Dr Jo Charles to this role, who has joined us from her previous position as Deputy Head of Health Economics at the Welsh Government.

To build capability across NHS Wales, we have delivered Value in Public Health masterclasses focused on building skill in measuring social value and wellbeing impact. This interactive webinar enhanced understanding of the wider social, economic and environmental value of public health through the application of Social Value and related return on investment. It provided knowledge, tools and practical examples on how to measure the wider value of health services and programmes to support Value-Based evaluation, budget shift and investing in prevention towards building Foundational and Wellbeing economies in Wales. Over 140 registered and more than 80 attended with positive feedback and multiple requests for further support. [Social Value Masterclass: Measuring the value of public health](#) ; [Sustainable Investment for Health and Well-being](#)

9 Directory of Education and Training in Inclusion Health for Health Professionals

Inclusion health is an umbrella term used to describe individuals who face social exclusion and various risk factors for poor health, including poverty, violence, and complex trauma. This category includes those who are homeless, dependent on drugs and alcohol, vulnerable migrants, members of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities, sex workers, individuals involved with the justice system, and victims of modern slavery. People belonging to these inclusion groups often experience significantly worse health outcomes compared to the general population, with a lower average age of death.

The workforce's knowledge and skills in inclusion health are crucial in providing equitable services. Evidence published by organisations employing staff who work with inclusion health groups shows that many healthcare practitioners have recognised the need to acquire the knowledge and skills to support service users from socially excluded communities.

Collaborating with the National Inclusion Health Nurses Network, the Inequalities team in our Primary Care Division has developed an education and training directory in Inclusion Health for health professionals. [Directory of Education and Training in Inclusion Health for Health Professionals - Primary Care One \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/primary-care-one)

This directory is designed to help healthcare professionals identify currently available education and training opportunities to help them meet the knowledge base for inclusion in health and health inequalities. The directory does not claim to be an exhaustive or comprehensive guide to all education and training opportunities. It is limited to those identified from a review of educational health websites, health professionals' knowledge, and a rapid internet search from January to March 2024.

Discussions are underway in Wales to create a national Knowledge and Skills Framework for Inclusion Health. Meanwhile, this directory is designed to help healthcare professionals identify education and training opportunities to help them meet the knowledge base for inclusion health and health inequalities.

10 Tenth Anniversary of our Newborn Bloodspot Screening Wales

In April 2024, we marked the tenth anniversary of the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Wales Programme (NBSW) being delivered as a national screening programme across the nation.

During the ten years of the programme, it has screened over 322,500 babies. Over 600 babies with suspected rare conditions have been identified and referred for specialist diagnosis and treatment to prevent serious illness, permanent disability, and in some cases, death.

On the 11 April 2024, the great work of colleagues across NHS Wales was celebrated as part of the NBSW annual conference. The conference reflected on the progress and developments that have been made over the last decade and considered what lies ahead for NBSW and how we might continue to address challenges faced in delivering excellent a newborn bloodspot screening programme for people in Wales.

11 The 21st Welsh Immunisation Conference

The start of World Immunisation Week 2024 was marked in Wales by the 21st Welsh Immunisation Conference. This conference, with over 150 delegates from across vaccination and public health teams in Wales, was held for the first time at our Public Health Wales Head Office at Capital Quarter 2, Cardiff. The conference started with a keynote speech from Eluned Morgan, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, which recognised the dedication and hard work of vaccination teams to support the pandemic response and help return to a state of normality, but also looked forward positively to new advances which will ensure that vaccination goes on to save many millions more lives in Wales and across the

world. Presentations then went on to look at emerging programmes with Professor Sir Andrew Pollard, Chair of the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation, provided a keynote talk on respiratory syncytial virus and Professor Adam Finn describing the harms of varicella infection. Dr Siddhartha Datta from WHO Europe provided an insight into WHO thinking on vaccine equity.

The conference also saw the 2nd annual Vaccination Saves Lives Awards. The efforts of individuals and teams from across Wales were recognised, and the ceremony culminated with a lifetime achievement award which was presented by the Sir Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer for Wales, to Nicola Meredith, former Lead Nurse of Influenza within the Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme in Public Health Wales. Dr Atherton then opened the afternoon session focussed on local initiatives to improve vaccine uptake and presentations were received from Betsi Cadwaladr, Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Cardiff and Vale University Health Boards. Big thanks to the team for their excellent planning and organisation of a very successful conference.

12 Public Health Wales Nursing and Midwifery Conference

On the 13 May, the Quality, Nursing and Allied Health Professionals (QNAHPs) Directorate hosted the annual Public Health Wales Nursing Midwifery Conference.

The event coincided with the International Day of the Midwife and International Nurses Day and the theme for the day was: 'Economic Power of Care'.

The event was attended by nurses and midwives from across the organisation and included a range of speakers both from within and outside of the organisation, including the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales, Sue Tranka. This was an excellent event and an ideal opportunity for networking with peers, sharing good practice and celebrating the unique and valuable contribution that our nurses and midwives make. A big thanks to the team for the excellent planning and delivery of the event.

13 Communicable Disease Outbreak Exercise (Exercise CYD)

Exercise CYD was held on the 19 March 2024 to test the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales which aims to ensure an effective and co-ordinated approach is taken to outbreak management, from initial detection and outbreak declaration to formal closure and review of lessons identified.

The plan describes the overall approach and responsibilities of different agencies in responding to communicable disease outbreaks and clarifies how they work together to provide effective action.

The exercise scenario was divided into four stages and plenary sessions, fostering discussion and engagement with excellent multi-agency, pan-Wales representation at a strategic, tactical and operational level. Over 180 people representing 37 organisations from across Wales took part in the exercise, with evaluation feedback

providing an overall approval rating of 4.6 out of 5.0 and many participants commenting positively on the credibility of the scenario.

Public health partners from Scotland and Northern Ireland, under the auspices of the Four Nations Public Health Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response Group, and the UK Health Protection Committee also observed the exercise.

Lessons identified will be incorporated into future updates to the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales. A full report with recommendations is currently being drafted and will be shared using the existing governance arrangements for the Health Protection system in Wales.

14 Welsh Experience National Awards

I am thrilled to say that Junaid Iqbal, our Lead for Service User Engagement, has been awarded the Welsh Experience National Award (WENA) recognizing excellence in people's experience of health and community care - *Excellence in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*. The award was peer-nominated and links back to the work, leadership and values demonstrated by Chairing and Vice Chairing the National Service User Network and Listening and Learning from Feedback group.

It is in recognition of the inclusive values demonstrated in supporting the wider system to move forward with the Service User experience and feedback journey. Over time, Junaid has managed to support a shift in focus in not only language moving from Patient to service user and now to people and communities but also to broaden out and lead on the development of a People Experience and Feedback Framework for Wales. Congratulations Junaid and very well deserved!

15 Antimicrobial Stewardship Silver Award at the Journal of Wound Care awards

Congratulations to our Clinical Liaison Biomedical Scientist based in our Swansea service and the Swansea Bay Community Wound Care Service for winning the Antimicrobial Stewardship Silver Award at the Journal of Wound Care awards recently.

The team, led by Clinical Operational Lead Karly Harvey, received the award following the trial of digital wound assessment application Healthy IO. The use of this technology has helped improve and embed recommended evidence-based practice and standardise wound care. In addition, through collaborative working with Greg Williams, Clinical Liaison Biomedical Scientist and the Swansea Microbiology Department of Public Health Wales, this technology has been used to strengthen communication between microbiology, Wound Care and GP practice in line with antimicrobial and antibiotic stewardship.

Initially a Swansea Bay University Health Board collaborative improvement, this has now been agreed as a nationwide service improvement being supported by the Welsh Wound Innovation Centre, the All-Wales Tissue Viability Nurses Forum and Public Health Wales.

Through this work, we are achieving a standardisation of swabbing technique, wound infection assessment. This new collaborative working approach integrates stewardship protocols into existing daily workflow, promoting standardisation within SBUHB Community Services.

16 World Health Assembly Roundtable

On the 29 May 2024, I had the pleasure of facilitating a roundtable event at the World Health Assembly which was organised by Dr Theresa Tam, the Chief Medical Officer of Canada. The title of the event was *Focusing on Health System Transformation to Maximise the Future of Immunisation*, and it included a range of speakers from global organisations, the WHO and from a range of countries.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to receive this information.

Tracey Cooper

CHIEF EXECUTIVE