

# Chief Executive Board Report

November 2024

## 1 Staff Conference

Over 500 members of staff took part in the Public Health Wales 2024 Staff Conference. The conference took place over two dates – in Venue Cymru, Llandudno on Wednesday 16 October and Sophia Gardens, Cardiff on Wednesday 23 October. The annual Staff Conference forms an important part of our engagement cycle. The aim was to inspire and equip staff with the relevant tools, knowledge, motivation and connections, while explaining our approach to culture and engaging staff with our long-term strategy. In response to previous staff feedback, we held the conference in person, with a focus on staff networking and skills sharing.

The conference theme was '*A quest for a Healthier Wales*', with a wide-ranging agenda that included a focus on staff wellbeing, a thank-you and recognition for each directorate from the Executive Team, a session on the Well-being of Future Generations Act and skill-building masterclasses. The Cardiff conference also included 'lightning talks', with staff using silent disco headsets to learn more from subject specialists on a variety of topics, as well as a marketplace that showcased the work of our staff diversity networks.

Feedback so far from staff has been largely positive, with many staff members commenting on how valuable they found meeting their colleagues in person and having the chance to network. The wellbeing guest speakers, Sid Madge (Llandudno) and David Beeney (Cardiff), were cited as a highlight for many members of staff, as well as the skill-building masterclasses and digital thank-you board for staff recognition.

I would like to say a very big thank you to our communications team who organised and managed the events – particularly Leah Morantz, Laura Overton and Huw George; our chairs for both events – Rebecca Masters and Chris Johnson in Llandudno and Angela Williams and Giri Shankar in Cardiff, and everyone who presented and chaired the various sessions across the two days.

## 2 Bowel Screening Wales Expands the Screening Programme to Include 50-Year Olds

From the 9 October 2024, Bowel Screening Wales has started to invite people aged 50 years for bowel cancer screening for the first time. It follows the lowering of the age from 60 to 51 years over the previous three years. The programme will be rolled out to the newly eligible age group gradually over the next 10 months.

Bowel cancer is one of the most common causes of death from cancer in Wales. Over 2,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year in Wales, and it

results in over 900 deaths. Evidence shows that screening people at a younger age enables more bowel cancers to be picked up at an earlier stage, when treatment is likely to be more effective and survival chances improved.

The screening test used is the highly effective Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT), which is easy for people to use at home, requiring just one sample of poo. The test looks for tiny traces of blood (haemoglobin) in the sample, which are too small to be seen but can be an indicator of bowel cancer and benign polyps. In addition to the age expansion to 50-year-olds, Bowel Screening Wales will also lower the positive threshold level of the screening FIT from 120µg of haemoglobin/g for faeces to 80µg from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024. This change will increase the sensitivity of the screening test and result in more cancers, polyps and adenomas being detected by screening.

### **3 RIVM and the Dutch Ministry of Health Visit to Public Health Wales**

As Public Health Wales, we have had a longstanding relationship with our colleagues in the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands (RIVM), with close working and reciprocal visits to each institution over many years.

From the 17 to the 18 October 2024, at the request of our colleagues in RIVM, we were delighted to host a visit of 11 colleagues from the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and RIVM to Wales for the purpose of enabling an exchange of knowledge and insights on health in all policies, the Wellbeing economy and the Wellbeing of future Generations Act.

A total of 37 participants including the Director General of the Public Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health, the Netherlands; the Director General Health, Social Care and Early Years Group/NHS Wales; the Chief Medical Officer for Wales; Public Health Wales Directors, Chair and Vice-Chair and the Future Generations Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner came together over the two days to discuss a wide variety of areas of mutual interest.

The areas discussed included climate change, health impact assessment, foresight technologies, the Well-being of the Future Generations Act, the wellbeing economy and how to shift systems to prevention. It was agreed that both parties found the visit useful with a commitment to follow up in the future.

### **4 Organisational Awards**

#### **4.1 Diverse Cymru's Gold with Distinction Award for Cultural Competency**

In October, we were delighted to be awarded Gold level with Distinction in Diverse Cymru's Cultural Competence Scheme. This is the highest level of the scheme and was independently assessed by UK Investors in Equality and Diversity (UKIED). Public Health Wales are the only organisation to achieve this.

It demonstrates the continuous improvement that we have achieved since we started participating over the past 4 years that the scheme has been running.

The assessors looked in depth at our progress in relation to:

- Communication
- Management Commitment
- Environment
- Consultation and Engagement
- Wider Understanding of Equality
- Monitoring outcomes
- Policy and Procedures

Our focus on culture has been a passion for us over the last few years and so it is very helpful to be able to track our progress in this way.

## **4.2 Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Awards**

At the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Cymru awards held at the National Museum Cardiff on the 1 November, the Social Marketing team in our Health Improvement Team, were awarded Gold in the Video and Podcast category for the 'Reset Your Mindset' television commercial. The 'Reset Your Mindset' campaign promotes the Healthy Weight Healthy You level 1 digital offer to support adults in Wales to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The campaign is based on insights gleaned from our *Time to Talk Public Health survey*. The thirty second video is focused on weight loss methods that are relatable to many but are often unrealistic for achieving long-term change and highlights Healthy Weight Healthy You as the free and expert led offer for them. Audience testing of the concept highlighted that the light-hearted and relatable nature of the creative approach would resonate with audiences. The award was given to Public Health Wales in partnership with Digital Health and Care Wales and our supplier Rockadove, who filmed and edited the video.

On the same evening, our Communications Team was recognised for overall excellence with a Silver award for Best In-House Communications Team at the Chartered Institute of Public Affairs Awards. This is a prestigious industry award which recognises the calibre of the work delivered by our staff, working together across Communications and other teams to deliver excellent campaigns, media relations, events and internal communications.

Big congratulations to both of our teams for such tremendous accolades.

## **5 Wales-wide Multi-Agency Exercise for MPOX**

On the 5 September 2024, we facilitated an exercise for partners across Wales who would be involved in a system response to MPOX in Wales should a case arise.

The aim of Exercise FAD FELEN was to explore the system response to MPOX in Wales. The scenario aligned to a reasonable worst-case scenario from within the National Security Risk Assessment ([NRR 2023](#)).

Exercise FAD FELEN was facilitated by our Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Team, and 231 people registered to attend from 33 separate organisations across Wales.

Evaluation feedback was very positive and a series of recommendations were identified under the six thematic areas of collaboration, communication, guidance, process, resource and training and awareness.

A full report with recommendations and lessons identified is being developed and will be utilised collaboratively by partners across the system to address any gaps and mitigate potential impacts.

## **6 The National Safeguarding Service Update**

### **6.1 Strengthening Assurance of Safeguarding in Health: Independent Review commissioned by the Chief Nursing Officer.**

The Strengthening Assurance of Safeguarding in Health independent review report considers, amongst other things, the role of our National Safeguarding Service (NSS) in supporting the NHS Executive mandate for improved safeguarding assurance, and in providing safeguarding leadership and advice to Welsh Government. The report, and its recommendations, is currently being considered by the Welsh Government.

### **6.2 Safeguarding Supervision, Restorative Supervision and Compassionate Leadership**

The NSS All-Wales NHS Safeguarding Clinical Supervision (2024) guidance is complete, published and has been shared widely with stakeholders.

Good quality restorative supervision in safeguarding is essential to building resilience to vicarious trauma and ensuring effective safeguarding practice that is sustainable. The NSS, supported by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), has facilitated two highly evaluated compassionate leadership and restorative supervision retreats for Safeguarding Leads; one for NHS organisations corporate Heads of Safeguarding and a second for Safeguarding Lead Doctors in October 2024. This work has supported the development of models of specific restorative supervision offer for NHS Wales, succession planning and safeguarding leadership.

### **6.3 Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews (SUSR)**

Our NSS professionals are joining Regional Safeguarding Board Review subgroups and offering direct support to regional safeguarding boards with SUSR from the 14

October 2024, as Chairs or Reviewers. We look forward to supporting learning and improvement as part of the SUSR process, bringing an All-Wales Health safeguarding perspective.

#### **6.4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The NSS and the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network All-Wales Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Clinical Pathway and Assessment Tool has been approved, published and cascaded to All-Wales Safeguarding Network members with the understanding that it will be shared wider within organisations.

#### **6.5 National Safeguarding Week**

National Safeguarding Week is taking place from Monday 11 to Friday 15 November. The NSS is offering a programme of national learning opportunities to raise awareness that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The events will be focussing on the newly launched All Wales Safeguarding Supervision Guidance, the importance of Professional Curiosity in safeguarding, and hearing the voice of children and young people in planning and shaping specialist health services for looked after children.

#### **6.6 All Wales Looked After Children Health Satisfaction Survey**

The All Wales Looked After Children Health Satisfaction Survey has been approved by all stakeholders, including care-experienced young people, following a consultation with Voices from Care Cymru (VFCC). The final implementation meeting has taken place in August with a soft launch during November's National Safeguarding Week in November, supported by VFCC ambassadors.

### **7 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 18 November 2024.

#### **7.1 Module 1 (Resilience and Preparedness)**

The Inquiry published its first report on the 18 July 2024 and work has started internally to progress the recommendations.

#### **7.2 Modules 2 (Core UK Government Decision Making) and 2B (Core Welsh Government Decision Making)**

The Public Hearings for Module 2, 2A, 2B and 2C have now concluded.

As advised in my previous update, the Inquiry is considering 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. The Inquiry has started drafting its report, which will likely include findings and

recommendations from each of the Module 2 investigations from across the UK. We are not aware of when the re[port will be published.

### **7.3 Module 3 (Impact on Healthcare Systems)**

The Public Hearings for this Module started on the 9 September 2024 and are due to conclude on the 28 November 2024. Professor Fu-Meng Khaw, our National Director of Health Protection and Screening Services/Medical Director, gave evidence for us to the Inquiry on the 5 November 2024, supported by our legal team, and I would like to express my very big thanks to Meng for representing us and for taking the time needed to prepare for the evidence session.

As with previous modules, the public hearing is being monitored internally with daily reports and relevant documents from the Public Inquiry website being circulated, highlighting areas of interest and any references to Public Health Wales. Following the conclusion of the hearings, consideration will be given as to whether any supplemental statements should be provided by Public Health Wales to clarify any issues which may have arisen.

### **7.4 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 continues to release evidence onto the evidence platform in relatively large batches, and now at an increased frequency, and the triage process in place for reviewing each batch of evidence is working well. 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 to provide oral witness evidence at this hearing.

### **7.5 Module 5 (Procurement)**

Public Health Wales is not a Core Participant for this module. The PI Response Team continue to support the response to requests from the Inquiry Team. Public hearings are due to commence on the 3 March 2025 and will end on the 3 April 2025.

### **7.6 Module 6 (Care Sector)**

Public Health Wales is a Core Participant for Module 6. It is anticipated the Inquiry will require significant input and evidence from Public Health Wales in order to investigate this module and our PI Response team, and key colleagues from across

the organisation, continue to populate and collate information and documents in this area.

Disclosure from the Inquiry has now commenced via its Relativity platform. As with Module 4, the PI Response Team has a triage process in place for reviewing each batch as it arrives, with the aim of reviewing relevant evidence identified through the triage process without delay.

Public hearings are scheduled to commence on the 30 June 2025 and conclude on the 31 July 2025. Public Health Wales may be called to provide oral witness evidence at this hearing. Legal support is in place for the public hearing and legal conferences will be arranged in due course.

### **7.7 Module 7 (Test, Trace and Isolate)**

Public Health Wales is a core participant for Module 7. As with Module 6, it is anticipated the Inquiry will require significant input and evidence from Public Health Wales in order to investigate this module.

Work continues to collate relevant information and evidence for this Module and Corporate Witnesses have been identified.

Disclosure from the Inquiry has also commenced via its Relativity platform. The Module 7 public hearings are due to commence on the 12 May 2025 and conclude on the 30 May 2025.

### **7.8 Module 8 (Children and Young People)**

Public Health Wales is not a Core Participant in the Module but we continue to monitor this Module's progress and any amendments to its provisional scope, to ensure that the decision not to apply for Core Participant status remains valid. In anticipation that Public Health Wales will be called on to support the Inquiry's investigation in this Module, our PI Response Team has provisionally identified a core group of individuals who may be able assist in the collation of information and evidence. Public hearings for this module are expected to take place in Autumn 2025.

### **7.9 Module 9 (Economic Response)**

Public Health Wales is not a Core Participant in this Module. Noting the focus of this module, we are not anticipating a high level of involvement with the Inquiry.

Public hearings for this module are expected to commence in Winter 2025.

### **7.10 Impact on Society**

This Module opened on the 17 September 2024 and is the Public Inquiry's final module.

This module will examine the impact of Covid-19 on the population of the UK with a particular focus on key workers, the most vulnerable, the bereaved, mental health and wellbeing and will also seek to identify where societal strengths, resilience and or innovation reduced any adverse impact.

Following care consideration of the Module's Provisional Scope at our PI Steering Group and the Board's PI Sub-Committee, a decision has been made not to apply for core participant status in this module. The Inquiry has not yet confirmed when the public hearings for this module will take place, although based on the current timetable, we are expecting it to be in early 2026.

## **8 Our Chairperson**

I would like to express my enormous gratitude to Nick Elliott who has been our Interim Chairperson since April 2024. Nick has been excellent in the role and has provided a very strong continuity over the last eight months in addition to providing excellent support to me. Diolch yn fawr iawn Nick for being such a strong Interim Chairperson and for making such a significant difference in a short time.

In addition, I would like to welcome Pippa Britton who will become our Chair from the 1 December. Pippa is a double Paralympian who competed on the Welsh and GB archery teams for 15 years and achieved podium places at six World Championships and 24 international events. Pippa has served as the Chair of Disability Sport Wales, the Vice-Chair of Sport Wales, the Vice-Chair of UK Anti-Doping and as a Charity Commission Wales Board Member. Pippa is currently the Vice-Chair of the Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Health Board.

I am sure you will join me in warmly welcoming Pippa when she starts in December.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to receive this information.

**Tracey Cooper**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**