

# Chief Executive Board Report

July 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 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 15 July 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 due to be published at midday on the 18 July 2024. There is a restricted sitting for core participants to read the report in confidence the morning of the publication and Paul Veysey, our Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit and Public Inquiry lead, our senior counsel and I will attend the closed sitting.

Once the report is available, we will consider it in detail and will bring an update to the Board in relation to how we take the recommendations forward as an organisation, and in collaboration with the Welsh Government, partners across Wales and across the wider UK.

### 1.2 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.

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. 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. The date for publication of this report is currently unknown.

### 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.

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 continues to release evidence onto the evidence platform in relatively large batches 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. Additional expert support is expected to be in place by the end of this month.

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. Further details on this are expected to be received in the Autumn.

#### **1.5 Module 5 (Procurement)**

Public Health Wales is not a Core Participant for this module. In response to the need to provide evidence to the Inquiry, we have identified a core group of individuals who will assist in the collation of information and evidence. Public hearings are due to commence on the 3 March 2025 and will end on the 3 April 2025.

#### **1.6 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.

In response to the need to provide such evidence to the Inquiry, we have identified a core group of individuals who will assist in the collation of information and evidence. In anticipation of the need to provide a Corporate Witness Statement, the corporate witness for this module has also been agreed. Public hearings are scheduled to commence on the 30 June 2025 and conclude on the 31 July 2025. Public Health Wales may be called upon to provide oral witness evidence at this hearing. Further details on this are likely to be received in the New Year, 2025.

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

Public Health Wales has been designated as a core participant for this module. The first preliminary hearing for this module took place on the 27 June 2024. The

Inquiry has advised that the process for requesting evidence through Rule 9 requests has started. We are expecting a Rule 9 request to be received in this module; however, we have not yet been provided with an indication as to when this may be.

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. We have also identified a core group of individuals who will likely contribute to a Rule 9 request and have already had productive meetings with them. The Module 7 public hearings are due to commence on the 12 May 2025 and conclude on the 30 May 2025. Legal representation to attend the hearings has already been secured.

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

Module 8 opened on the 21 May 2024. This module will examine the impact of the pandemic on children and young people in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It will consider the impact of the pandemic on children across society including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and from a diverse range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Following detailed consideration of the Module scope and feedback on from individuals within the organisation regarding Public Health Wales' role, it was decided by the PI Steering Group and Sub-Committee, that Public Health Wales would not apply to be a core participant in this module. Public hearings for this module are expected to take place in Autumn 2025.

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

This module launched on the 9 July 2024. Applications for core participant status are open until the 6 August 2024. This module will look at, and make recommendations on, the economic support for business, jobs, the self-employed, vulnerable people, and those on benefits, and the impact of key economic interventions. It will also consider additional funding given to relevant public services and the voluntary and community sectors. Public Health Wales is currently considering whether to make an application for core participant status in this module.

### **1.10 Future Modules**

Further modules are expected to be announced in due course by the Inquiry. The next module is expected to explore the impact of the pandemic in various ways, including on the mental health and wellbeing of the population. We are expecting this module to be launched in the Autumn.

## **2 Ministerial Meetings**

On the 15 July, Nick Elliott, interim Chairperson, Professor Jim McManus, National Director of Health and Wellbeing, and I met with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, the Minister for Mental Health and Early Years and the Director General for health and Social Care. This was one of our regular quarterly meetings.

We had a wide-ranging positive discussion focusing on our work in relation to:

- our Tackling Diabetes Together Programme
- promoting healthy weight and preventing obesity
- an update on work that our Policy and International Health Team has been doing in relation to the 'Best Buys' prevention interventions that will have the greatest impact on outcomes and yield a return on investment.
- an update on our First 1000 Days and Early Years programmes.

### **3 Wellbeing Economy Forum, Iceland**

On the 11 and 12 June, together with Mariana Dyakova, our Head of International Health, I attended and presented at a Wellbeing Economy Forum in Iceland. This was jointly organised by the Government of Iceland and the World Health Organization (WHO). We were invited as a result of the extensive work that our WHO Collaborating Centre has been doing in the Wellbeing Economy and the close working with the WHO's Venice office that is leading on driving 'health in the wellbeing economy' on behalf of the WHO. In addition, two Welsh Government officials attended to share the work that the Welsh Government is doing from an economic perspective – all connected to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. This was an opportunity to learn from partners from a range of countries and to share the work that is going on across Wales.

### **4 Report on a Cultural Review of the Nursing and Midwifery Council**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is one of the largest healthcare regulators in the world, regulating more than 808,000 nursing and midwifery professionals in the UK, and has a role to regulate education and professional standards for registrants across the UK. It maintains the register for professionals eligible to practice, and investigates nurses and midwives referred to them for fitness to practice concerns. It plays a vital role in protecting the public.

Rise Associates and Nazir Afzal OBE were commissioned to undertake an independent cultural review of the NMC in January 2024, following a series of disclosures by a whistleblower in 2023. Their remit was to review the workplace culture over the last five years at the NMC.

Their report, the Independent Culture Review was published on the 9 July and is a concerning and difficult read. It identifies poor culture and working and organisational practices including racism, bullying and fear of speaking up in the organisation. The toxic culture revealed in the report and the themes and issues identified have been raised for some time, and worryingly as part of previous reviews. The report identifies not only leadership concerns, but also issues around Fitness to Practice processes, including timescales for cases to be heard, make up of panels and safeguarding of those registrants who have been referred.

The recommendations within the report include changes to leadership and management to drive a new approach and culture, improvements to regulatory functions including clearing the Fitness to Practice backlog, the introduction of an oversight board, improvement in recruitment and retention practices, improving safeguarding and the development of anti-racism and equality action plan.

The Executive Directors of Nurses across NHS Wales have collaboratively responded to the NMC and have requested assurance from the Council across a number of areas.

Claire Birchall, our Executive Director of Quality, Nursing and Allied Health Professions, will be working with the Chief Nursing Officer and Directors of Nursing across the NHS in Wales, to support and ensure the restoration of the NMC as a fit for purpose regulatory body, and to support our registrants through what will be a concerning time. Claire has already reached out to our registrants and will be sharing and discussing the report in more detail through existing professional meetings. We are providing support to any of our registrants who may be affected by the report, as well as understanding how we can respond, support and influence the delivery of the recommendations.

## **5 Annual Quality Report**

Earlier this month, we published our first Annual Quality Report under the new Duty of Quality, which forms part of the Health and Social Care (Quality Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

The Duty of Quality impacts every team within Public Health Wales, and our first annual report under the new Duty includes 50 stories demonstrating how our teams drive quality by identifying areas of concern, developing improvement plans, and implementing solutions to enhance our services.

Coming into effect on the 1 April 2023, the Duty of Quality defines quality as 'continuously, reliably, and sustainably meeting the needs of the population that we serve'. This Duty encompasses 12 Health and Care Quality Standards that guide our commitment to delivering high-quality services across all areas of our organisation. The organisation has worked collaboratively in the design of the Report and will reflect on any feedback and learning we receive as part of the publication, as well as planning early for next year's report.

The report gives excellent examples of our commitment to continually improving and developing the quality and impact of our work across the organisation. The report can be found through the following links:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/news/putting-quality-at-the-heart-of-public-health-wales/>

<https://icc.gig.cymru/newyddion1/rhoi-ansawdd-wrth-wraidd-iechyd-cyhoeddus-cymru/>

## 6 Workplace Equality Index, Stonewall

This year, we have been ranked 31st most inclusive LGBTQ+ employer in the UK, by the charity Stonewall in its annual Workplace Equality Index (WEI).

Stonewall's annual WEI ranks the top 100 most inclusive employers across the UK as part of the charity's commitment to supporting employers to create welcoming workplaces for LGBTQ+ people. As well as being named as a Gold Award Employer, we are in the Top five LGBTQ+ inclusive employers in Wales and the only Welsh NHS employer in the Top 100. We have made progress from being ranked 64th in 2022, which demonstrates the advances we have made for LGBTQ+ people in our organisation.

Over the last year, we have strengthened our LGBTQ+ inclusion work by creating and updating useful factsheets on awareness of LGBTQ+ identities, terminology and tips for LGBTQ+ allies. In addition, we have arranged a number of awareness raising events using external speakers to help us better understand the lived experiences of minority identities.

We also have an amazing staff network, Enfys, which has a significant impact on supporting us in our journey to be an inclusive organisation, and big thanks to our People and Organisational Development Team and our Enfys network for helping us achieve the progress over the last year.

## 7 PRCA DARE Awards Cymru

The work of our Communications team has been recognised with two awards at this year's PRCA DARE Awards Cymru, which is the leading awards for PR and communications professionals in Wales. November's Wales HIV Testing Week campaign, which achieved its aim of increasing HIV testing among people in Wales, won awards in the 'Charity/Not for Profit' and 'Diversity and Inclusion' categories.

Developed in collaboration with our Sexual Health and Behavioural Science teams and delivered in partnership with Fast Track Cymru and Golley Slater, the campaign positioned the free home test kit as 'the most important home delivery you can get'. Judges praised the campaign's creative approach and its effective use of social media advertising, which drove 9,006 test kit orders in November alone. It is a testament to our teams, and our partners, to have our work gain this recognition from the world's largest association of PR and communications professionals.

## 8 Greener Primary Care Wales' work recognised nationally and internationally

The Greener Primary Care Framework and Award Scheme, launched in 2022, enables primary care contractors in Wales to take climate friendly action. Our Primary Care Team in Public Health Wales was successful in winning the *Healthier Wales* award at the NHS Wales Sustainability Conference and Awards held on 13 June 2024, out of approximately 90 entries, and separately have had a case study

*Award Scheme to Engage Primary Care Workers on low carbon sustainable practice in Wales* published by the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate Change and Health (World Health Organization).

To date, approximately 100 primary care teams have registered each year with a potential reach of over 500 individuals reporting nearly 3,000 climate-friendly actions implemented across primary care (data since 2022 to May 2024). The team is in the process of calculating carbon savings against these actions. A new corporate offer has also been developed with Boots and Specsavers. Further information including animation, *Greener Primary Care Wales 2022 Yearbook* of case studies and setting specific videos can be found at Greener Primary Care - Primary Care One (nhs.wales).

Primary care is at the forefront of healthcare and the *NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan, 2021* reports the health sector in Wales to be responsible for the largest carbon emissions in the public sector, the Scheme contributes to the Just Transition to Net Zero Wales commitment, and therefore the contribution of primary care to achieving net zero is significant.

## **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to receive this information.

**Tracey Cooper**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**