



	<p>GIG CYMRU NHS WALES</p>	<p>Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales</p>	<p><b>Name of Meeting</b> Board <b>Date of Meeting</b> 28 November 2024 <b>Agenda item:</b> 4.6</p>
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<b>Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy</b>	
<b>Executive lead:</b>	Professor Fu-Meng KHAW, National Director of Health Protection and Screening Services, Executive Medical Director
<b>Author:</b>	Huw Williams, Head of Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response

<b>Approval/Scrutiny route:</b>	Public Health Wales Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Group Public Health Wales Board Health Protection & Screening Services Directorate Management Team Business Executive Team (approved as below)
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<b>Purpose</b>
This paper updates Public Health Wales on progress work across Wales regarding the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy (also known as the Hillsborough Charter) and requests that the organisation considers its adoption.

<b>Recommendation:</b>				
APPROVE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ASSURANCE <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CONSIDER</b> the detail contained within this report, the Charter and its six commitments.</li> <li>• <b>ADOPT</b> the charter at PHW.</li> <li>• <b>APPROVE</b> PHW engagement in a continued dialogue with partners across Wales to understand how we can collectively contribute to delivery on the commitments in the Charter through the local resilience fora.</li> </ul>				

**Link to Public Health Wales [Strategic Plan](#)**

Public Health Wales has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified seven strategic priorities and well-being objectives.

This report contributes to the following:

<b>Strategic Priority / Wellbeing Objective</b>	4 - Delivering excellent public health services
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<b>Summary impact analysis</b>	
<b>Equality and Health Impact Assessment</b>	Not applicable – purpose of the report is to appraise BET and Board of the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy.
<b>Risk and Assurance</b>	Not applicable – purpose of the report is to appraise BET and Board of the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy.
<b>Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Financial implications</b>	Not applicable.
<b>People implications</b>	Not applicable.

## 1. Purpose / Situation

This paper updates Public Health Wales on progress work across Wales regarding to the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy (also known as the Hillsborough Charter) and requests that the organisation considers its adoption.

## 2. Background

The Hillsborough stadium disaster on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1989 cost 97 people their lives. In 2017, The former Bishop of Liverpool, the Right Reverend James-Jones, was commissioned by the Prime Minister as the Home Secretary’s advisor on Hillsborough to produce a report on the experiences of the Hillsborough families so that their ‘perspective was not lost’.

Bishop James’ report, “[The patronising disposition of unaccountable power – A report to ensure that the pain and suffering of the Hillsborough families is not repeated](#)” provides an insight into the experiences of bereaved families in the years since, and recommends a series of necessary changes to the way in which public institutions treat the bereaved.



The Charter is one such recommendation, and presents six commitments that an organisation should prioritise in the event of an emergency or major incident. These are:

1. In the event of a public tragedy, support the activation of emergency plans and deployment of resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable.
2. Place the public interest above our own reputation.
3. Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes.
4. Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short.
5. Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely.
6. Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media.

### 3. Assessment

In early 2024, the Welsh Joint Emergency Services Group (WJESG) and Welsh Government undertook to adopt the recommendations from the Hillsborough Review captured through the Charter and run a series of Executive Workshops for Public Services in Wales.

The intention was to encourage all Public Services in Wales to adopt the Charter and develop pan-Wales delivery across local resilience forums, emergency responders, health, local authority, and the voluntary sector.

**NB.** Please refer to Appendix 01 for the initial Business Executive Team report.

Public Health Wales (PHW) have attended two all-Wales executive workshops to explore the Charter through facilitated conversations aimed at helping organisations understand how they can collectively contribute to the Charter.

The first session was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May, with the second taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Both sessions were led by the Chief Officer team in South Wales Police on behalf of WJESG and the Chief Fire Officer for North Wales Dawn Docx; supported by Bishop James as the author of the Charter.

**NB.** Please refer to Appendix 02 for a summary of both workshops.



### 3.1. Summary

The Charter was written to;

- Ensure the pain and suffering of families affected by the Hillsborough tragedy is not repeated in future tragedies.
- Obtain organisational commitment to being more 'people-focused' and provide vital services that meet the needs of people before, during and after an emergency or major incident.

Whilst the first executive workshop focussed on the implications of the Charter, many organisations noted that they had already adopted it.

Examples of organisations who have already committed include [Cardiff & Vale University Health Board](#), [Hywel Dda University Health Board](#), [Cwm Taf University Health Board](#), [Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service](#), [London Fire Brigade](#) and the [National Police Chief's Council](#).

It highlighted the importance of preparedness, effective response, and thorough recovery processes in dealing with public tragedies.

Organisations were willing to adopt the Charter but recognised various challenges, particularly the legal implications and the need for effective communication, testing and exercising programmes.

Building trust and maintaining transparency were recurrent themes, alongside the necessity for continuous learning and improvement in disaster response and recovery practices.

The second executive workshop provided an opportunity for organisations to come together and hear the 'the lived experience' of families bereaved by public tragedy.

The audience heard directly from Geoff Edwards, an Aberfan Survivor in 1966 and from Margaret Aspell and Sue Roberts who lost a son and a brother respectively in 1989 at Hillsborough. There were also reflections from Paul Price, a survivor of Manchester Arena Bombing who lost his partner who was a serving officer, and from Edd Dunn who escaped from 16<sup>th</sup> floor of Grenfell tower.

It should be noted there is a continued commitment by the UK Government to implement the Hillsborough Bill. [The Prime Minister confirmed in his keynote speech at the Labour Party conference on 24<sup>th</sup> September](#) that legislation will be introduced in Parliament before the next anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

The legislation will create a legal duty of candour for all public bodies, with potential for criminal sanctions for any official or authority that misleads or obstructs investigations.

**NB.** It was recognised that there is a current legal duty of candour which requires care providers to be "open and transparent with people who use services".



In summarising the session, Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Mark Travis, South Wales Police emphasized the significance of Public Services in Wales adopting the Charter voluntarily, prior to being legally compelled.

He stated that the aim is for Wales to be the first country in the UK to have adopted the Charter in every public sector organisation, signalling the starting point for change-culture in emergency response.

In closing the second event, the Right Reverend James-Jones restated the six commitments of the Charter and said, 'we should go away from this not likely, but seriously.'

In reviewing Public Health Wales' current alignment to the six commitments enshrined in the Charter, it should be noted that the organisation has clearly defined processes for;

1. The activation of emergency plans.

and that through our culture, values and behaviours as an organisation that we are already beginning to demonstrate that we;

2. Place the public interest above our own reputation.

3. Approach forms of public scrutiny with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way.

4. Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible.

5. Encourage staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy.

6. Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge.

Therefore, for Public Health Wales and all public services in Wales, the next step in the process is to;

- Adopt the Charter.
- Sign and return the template 'Charter Agreement Document which will be issued by South Wales Police on behalf of the Welsh Joint Emergency Services Group (WJESG) and Welsh Government (By end of 2024).
- Engage in an ongoing dialogue with partners across Wales to understand how public sector organisations can collectively contribute to delivery on the commitments in the Charter through the local resilience fora.



#### 4. Business Executive Team – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024

The Executive Team are supportive of the Charter subject to the charter commitments being interpreted in light of the role and remit of Public Health Wales. The organisation will also review the implementation of the Charter to ensure it is trauma informed.

#### 5. Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

PHW has an Emergency Response Plan which has been developed in line with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the five ways of working.

Under schedule 1 of the CCA, PHW is a Category 1 Responder. The Act places several civil protection duties on the organisation in respect of risk assessment, emergency plans, business continuity, warning and informing, sharing of information and cooperation with local responders.

The plan adopts an all-hazards approach, helping to ensure that the organisational response is adaptable to a wide range of scenarios. It details all phases of response and incorporates clear processes to support rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating our communities.

The six commitments of this Charter are a fundamental to the organisations approach to all phases of emergencies and major incidents.

#### 6. Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- **CONSIDER** the detail contained within this report, the Charter and its six commitments.
- **ADOPT** the charter at PHW, subject to the adjustments proposed by the Executive Team.
- **APPROVE** PHW engagement in a continued dialogue with partners across Wales to understand how we can collectively contribute to delivery on the commitments in the Charter through the local resilience fora.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 01: Initial report to the Public Health Wales Business Executive Team



01 SBAR -  
Hillsborough Charter

### Appendix 02: All Wales Executive Workshop Summaries



02b Summary of All  
Wales Executive Work



02c Summary of All  
Wales Executive Work