 <p> GIG CYMRU NHS WALES </p> <p> Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales </p>	<p> Name of Meeting Knowledge, Research and Information Committee Date of Meeting 06 June 2024 Agenda item: 3.3 </p>
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Update on the Implementation of the Research and Evaluation Strategy

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Approval/Scrutiny route:	Iain Bell, Director of Public Health Data, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Directorate
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Purpose

The purpose of the paper is to provide an update to the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee on the progress and implementation of the Public Health Wales Research and Evaluation Strategy.

Recommendation:

APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/>	ASSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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The Committee is asked to:

- note the contents of this paper and receive **assurance** that Public Health Wales, and the Research and Evaluation team are delivering on the core elements of the strategy.

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

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

This report contributes to the following:

Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives
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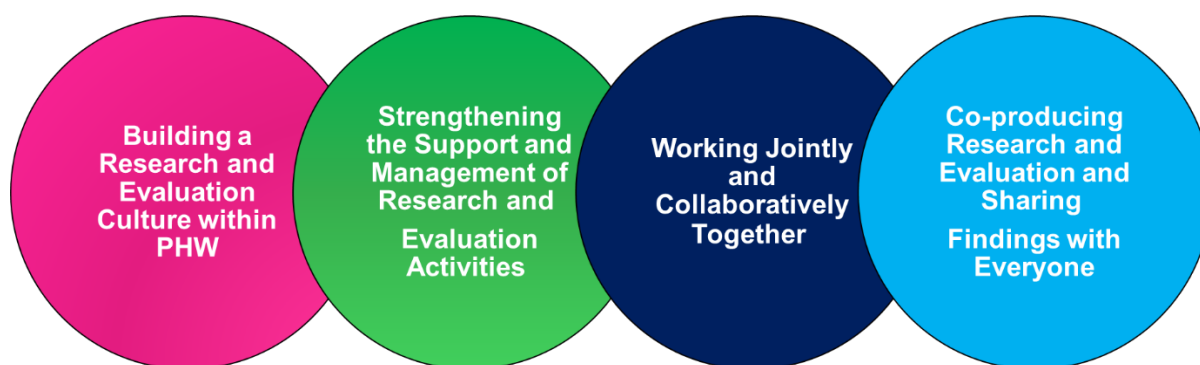
Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	No Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken as a decision is not required by the Committee.
Risk and Assurance	Not identified as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register or Board Assurance Framework.
Health and Care Standards	This report supports and/or takes into account the Health and Care Standards for NHS Wales Quality Themes All themes Choose an item. Choose an item.
Financial implications	None
People implications	The process applies to all staff undertaking research.

1. Purpose / situation

The Research and Evaluation (R&E) Strategy was published on the Public Health Wales website in October 2023, and was extensively shared internally and externally. This strategy will ensure that Public Health Wales is supporting R&E excellence across the organisation and in collaboration with partners. To support the implementation and oversight of the strategy, the R&E Oversight Group was established which meets on a monthly basis and has senior cross-divisional membership.

Within the strategy, there are four pillars of work outlined for development:



This paper outlines the implementation plan and progress of the strategy to date, with monitoring and assurance of delivery.

2. Description/Assessment

An implementation plan to take forward work outlined in the R&E Strategy over the next 18 months has been agreed by the R&E Oversight Group.

Key areas of focus include:

- a. **Developing R&E standards** to strengthen and support the development and production of R&E by the organisation.
- b. **Developing R&E capacity and capability** to support staff to develop and apply R&E skills to increase workforce capacity and capability and contribute towards creating a learning organisation.
- c. **Developing and establishing effective strategic partnerships** for R&E with academics, health boards and local authorities to support the development and delivery of public health research.
- d. **Developing effective communications and engagement** for R&E across the organisation and externally.

Further detail on the progress of each over this initial six months is provided below.

2.1 Developing R&E standards

As an organisation, we want to develop and set standards for best practice for R&E, and the methods used to ensure that Public Health Wales are producing consistently high quality products.

2.1.1 Development of Standards for Evaluation in Public Health Wales

To ensure consistency across Public Health Wales in the conduct and delivery of evaluation, the central evaluation team collated internationally recognised standards in the design, planning, conduct and governance of evaluation including the UK Gov Magenta book (standards of good practices aimed at policy makers), UK evaluation society, MRC guidelines for developing and evaluating complex interventions. These were reviewed by the cross-organisational R&E Oversight Group and Public Health Wales Publications and Principles Group.

We took the approach to improve evaluation activities in an open and supportive way - by sharing and raising awareness of the standards through PUBLIC HEALTH WALES and the Evaluation Community of practice, encouraging adoption and implementation. The standards are not mandatory, enabling the flexibility to develop evaluation which suits the needs of the specific programmes.

We are continuing to develop and build on this approach to further strengthen the development, review and assurance for evaluation across the organisation.

2.1.2 Strengthening Governance model for Research in Public Health Wales

Through the R&D Office and R&E Oversight group, the existing research standards and governance model will be reviewed, and a supportive risk and governance checklist developed. This will support researchers, managers and senior leaders to ensure good research governance is followed, ensuring consistency in the requirements across the organisation. This will include research governance, safeguarding, information governance, and finance and workforce risks.

2.1.3 Improving the quality and impact of our R&E through Peer Review

We are in the process of implementing a cross-directorate group responsible for the peer review of Public Health Wales-led grant applications and R&E proposals. This group will provide friendly, expert advice to strength proposals in terms of; Study design – research methods and scientific quality, Resources and research management, Ethics and Governance, Patient Participation Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), value to Public Health Wales (spanning across Public Health Wales areas of research interest), and assessment of the importance and potential impact of the proposed research.

2.2 Developing R&E Capacity and Capability

R&E provides opportunities for staff development and enhanced job roles which helps with recruitment and retention, as well as developing leaders and critical

thinkers within the organisation. We want to build an organisational culture which values R&E activities and supports staff to develop and apply research and evaluation skills to increase workforce capacity and capability, strengthen evidence-based practice and contribute towards creating a learning organisation.

2.2.1 Job families for Public Health Wales Evaluators

The R&E Division has worked with People and OD to develop a Job Family for Public Health Wales Evaluators. This has been developed through series of cross-organisational workshops. The aim of this job family is to develop a framework for roles with specialist evaluator skills responsible for supporting and leading the development and delivery of evaluation activities across Public Health Wales. This approach will support career development, training and consistency/standards of practices, innovation and develop a professional peer support network for career progression in these types of roles (supporting recruitment and retention).

2.2.2 Personal Development Opportunities for Public Health Wales Researchers

Through a cross-organisational Expression of Interest exercise, we have brought together a small cohort of Public Health Wales researchers to apply to the Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) Faculty personal development awards scheme. We will provide wraparound support and a programme of opportunities for this cohort to encourage and increase the level of high quality applications and help to develop capacity and capability for research in Public Health Wales.

2.3 Developing and Establishing Effective Strategic Partnerships for R&E

A key pillar of the R&E strategy is to ensure that we work jointly, fostering collaborations and strengthening links with a wide range of partners and funders, both nationally and internationally.

There are currently three key areas which we are developing to strengthen our research collaborations:

2.3.1 Developing a Vision for Academic Public Health Research in Wales – 2024

As previously described, Public Health Wales is developing a co-produced vision for academic public health research in Wales alongside partners in the research community. This piece of work identifies a key role for Public Health Wales including:

- Providing **leadership and collaboration**
- Acting as a **systems facilitator and convener**
- Enabling **stronger partnerships and facilitating the development of research careers**

A Steering Group chaired by Iain Bell has peer reviewed the work alongside an Expert Panel made up of UK-based academic public health experts who have sense checked the findings and provided independent oversight.

A short-report is currently in the write-up stage and will be shared in mid-June, 2024. A communications plan is currently under development to bring together the Areas of R&E Interest (outlined in 2.4.1) and the vision for academic public health research to ensure effective engagement, co-ownership and co-production and across the academic and funding sectors.

2.3.2 Developing Academic Strategic Partnerships

Public Health Wales are in the process of developing and formalising a number of academic and other strategic research partnerships aligned to our priority areas to bring in the skills and data which we need.

Strategic partnerships aligned to organisational need include:

- A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the SAIL databank** (Swansea University) is being formalised to maximise population scale data sources for Public Health Wales, to build capacity in linked data application for public health, and develop collaborative research bids. As part of the implementation of this MoU, a cross-organisational Public Health Wales Linked Data Feasibility Hub (Public Health Wales -SAIL Hwb) has been set up with 10 analysts brought together across Public Health Wales. This provides a space for cross-organisational working to examine the *feasibility* of using SAIL Databank to answer Public Health Wales-relevant research or analytical questions. Feasible projects will then be taken forwards – the first of which is in development, with a focus on health inequalities.
- A **MoU between Public Health Wales and the Division of Population Medicine** (Cardiff University) is currently under development led by Health Protection and Screening Services. This MoU will help to facilitate collaborative research opportunities and bid development, around a Research Screening Unit for Improved Outcomes.
- An **Operational Alliance** document is currently under development with DECIPHer (Development, Evaluation, Complexity and Implementation in Public Health Improvement) Centre at Cardiff University. This Alliance builds on an existing relationship across Public Health Wales to create a longer-term collaborative approach for analysis outputs, research and evaluation and research workforce development.
- A **strategic partnership with Cardiff University** is currently being explored to develop areas of mutual interest across both organisations. The goal of this strategic partnership is develop a long-term, ambitious, multidisciplinary relationship, focused on co-creation, with defined and shared strategic priorities across research, innovation, education and skills, and other agendas.

- A strategic partnership with **Rhondda County Council** is under development as part of a successful NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration bid.

2.3.3 Collaborative research bids

The R&D Office offers cross-organisational support for these and is keeping a register of all the joint research bids and collaborations which Public Health Wales undertakes. These opportunities are being shared at the R&E Oversight Group to ensure effective input.

2.4 Developing effective communications and engagement for R&E across the organisation and externally.

A core aim of the R&E Strategy is to develop and communicate research priorities which will lead to greater engagement across the organisation and wider research system.

2.4.1 Areas of R&E Interest for Public Health Wales - 2024

The [Areas of R&E Interest for Public Health Wales](#) document was published in HTML on the Public Health Wales website in May 2024 and has been shared internally and with our partners across the research system. The development of Public Health Wales R&E priorities aligned to Public Health Wales' six strategic objectives, is designed to effectively engage both funders and the wider academic community to target research to areas of need.

The Areas of R&E Interest will be updated on an annual basis to ensure emerging research gaps are identified.

3. Monitoring and Assurance

To ensure that research is undertaken and used by Public Health Wales and by the wider public health system to influence practice and service delivery, the R&E Oversight Group are in the process of developing indicators and mechanisms to measure the value associated with the research we produce and its impact.

The R&E Oversight Group monitor and contribute to all areas of the Strategy including collaborative bids, strategic partnerships, R&E priorities and communication and engagement of R&E across the organisation.

4. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

Note the contents of this paper and receive **assurance** that Public Health Wales, and particularly the R&E team are delivering steadily on the core elements of the strategy.