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Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales

**Unconfirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting  
held on 26 March 2020,  
(held electronically via skype / telephone)**

<b>Present:</b>		
Jan Williams	(JW)	Chair
Tracey Cooper	(TC)	Chief Executive
Jyoti Atri	(JA)	Interim Executive Director of Health and Wellbeing
Rhiannon Beaumont-Wood	(RB-W)	Executive Director of Quality, Nursing and Allied Health Professionals
Kate Eden	(KE)	Non-Executive Director, Vice Chair and Chair of Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee
Dyfed Edwards	(DE)	Non-Executive Director and Chair of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, via teleconference
Huw George	(HG)	Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Stephen Palmer	(StP)	Non-Executive Director, via teleconference
Shantini Paranjothy	(ShP)	Non-Executive Director (University) and Chair of the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee
Judi Rhys	(JR)	Non-Executive Director (Third Sector) and Chair of the People and Organisational Development Committee
Alison Ward	(AW)	Non-Executive Director (Local Authority)
<b>In Attendance:</b>		
Sian Bolton	(SB)	Interim Transition Director, Knowledge Directorate,

John Boulton	(JB)	Director of NHS Quality Improvement and Patient Safety/Director Improvement Cymru
Phil Bushby	(PB)	Director of People and Organisational Development
Helen Bushell	(HB)	Board Secretary and Head of Board Business Unit, via teleconference
Andrew Jones From item 41	(AJ)	Deputy Director of Public Health Services (part of the meeting)
Reanne Reffell	(RR)	Corporate Governance Officer (Secretariat)
Giri Shankar	(GS)	Professional Lead for Health Protection
Stephanie Wilkinson	(SW)	Representative of Staff Partnership Forum
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Mark Bellis	(MB)	Director of Policy and International Health, WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health & Well-being (WHO CC)
Quentin Sandifer	(QS)	Executive Director of Public Health Services/Medical Director

*The meeting commenced at 09:00*

<b>PHW32/2020</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
<p>JW welcomed all to the meeting, being held in the midst of a global public health emergency. COVID-19 represented a pandemic, the like of which was unprecedented in anyone's lifetime. Consequently the Board would focus its business on the response to this pandemic for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The Board <b>received</b> the Ratification of Chair's Action report (ref <a href="#">1.260320</a>).</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved</b> to ratify the Chair's Action, in line with the report.</p>	
<b>PHW33/2020</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
<p>The Board <b>noted</b> the apologies for absence.</p>	
<b>PHW34/2020</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
<p>DE declared an interest in agenda item <b>PHW44/2020</b> - Novel Coronavirus, highlighting the employment of two family members in Betsi Cadwalader Health Board. DE had previously declared these interests on the register.</p>	

HB declared an interest in agenda item **PHW39/2020** – Hosting agreement extension to NHS Wales Health Collaborative, highlighting the employment of a family member in the organisation. HB had previously declared this interest on the register.

**PHW35/2020 Board and committee arrangements for the foreseeable future**

The Board **received** the Board Governance Arrangements report (ref [3.260320](#)).

The Board considered the proposed governance arrangements for the foreseeable time in light of COVID-19.

The Board resolved to:

- **Approve** the proposed temporary variations to the identified standing orders;
- **Approve** the revised approach to Board Level decision making;
- **Approve** the approach to public communication from the Board given that the Board would not meet in public for the foreseeable future.

**PHW36/2020 Committees of the Board: Report from Committee Chairs**

The Board **received** the composite report from the Committee Chairs' (ref [6.4.230320](#)).

**Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee**

KE introduced the report from the meeting on 6 February 2020, commenting specifically on the service user engagement agenda item. The Board would return to this on the resumption of business as usual and would look at delivering Public Health Wales' ambitions in this area.

KE went on to outline the Committee's arrangements for the next meeting, which would focus on its core Terms of Reference, in particular, the Annual Quality Statement and Putting Things Right, together with its assurance role linked to COVID-19.

**Audit and Corporate Governance Committee**

DE introduced the report from the meeting on 15 January 2020 and provided a verbal update on the further meeting held electronically on the 19 March 2020. The latter had focused on governance and financial reporting. The Committee was pleased to note Welsh Government's flexibility on the previously agreed schedule.

DE highlighted the Wales Audit Office annual report, along with a report reviewing the organisation's implementation of the Future Generations Wales Act; both reports reflected well on Public Health Wales and would be circulated in due course. DE confirmed that the committee would meet on a virtual basis

<p>during the forthcoming months with a focus on its core responsibilities.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the report from Committee Chairs, which also included updates from the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee held on 6 February 2020, and the People and Organisational Development Committee, held on 27 February 2020.</p>	
<b>PHW37/2020</b>	<b>Minutes from the Board Meeting on 23 January 2020</b>
<p>The Board <b>approved</b> the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of 23 January 2020 (ref <a href="#">4.1.260320</a>).</p>	
<b>PHW38/2020</b>	<b>Board Action Log</b>
<p>The Board <b>considered</b> the Action Log (ref <a href="#">4.1.2.260320</a>), noting the suspension of business as usual for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the closure of the actions marked as complete, noting the movement of action PHW09/2020, related to the workforce plan to open status, for consideration at a future Board meeting.</p>	
<b>PHW39/2020</b>	<b>NHS Wales Collaborative hosting agreement 2020/21</b>
<p>The Board <b>received</b> the NHS Wales Health Collaborative – hosting agreement extension (ref <a href="#">6.5.260320</a>).</p> <p>Board members considered the report, noting that the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee had taken assurance from the NHS Wales Collaborative annual assurance report at its last meeting.</p> <p>The Board resolved to <b>approve</b> the extension to the hosting agreement for the NHS Wales Health Collaborative for the 2020/21 financial year.</p>	
<b>PHW40/2020</b>	<b>Ratification of Chair's Action and Affixing of the Common Seal</b>
<p>The Board <b>received</b> the Ratification of Chair's Action and Affixing of the Common Seal report (ref <a href="#">6.6.260320</a>).</p> <p>Board members resolved to <b>ratify</b> the affixing of the Common Seal to extend the lease to part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9JL.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>AJ joined the meeting</i></p>	
<b>PHW41/2020</b>	<b>Items for Noting</b>
<p>The Board <b>received</b> and <b>noted</b> the Annual Equality Report 2018-19 (ref <a href="#">8.260320</a>).</p> <p>PB advised of the revised publication timescales for the organisation's Strategic Equality Objectives and Gender Pay gap reports.</p>	

<b>PHW42/2020      Integrated Performance Report</b>
<p>The Board <b>received</b> the Integrated Performance report (ref <a href="#">6.2.260320</a>).</p> <p>In introducing the report, HG drew members' attention to the fact that current performance monitoring and management focused on all aspects of mobilization in support of COVID-19. He referenced indicators around call center performance, the testing response time, mortality rates and associated workforce indicators. The report on the agenda would assist in the compilation of the Annual Accounts and Annual Report; the executive team would review the whole approach to reporting following the resumption of business as usual.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved</b> to note the report provided and update given on current performance management and monitoring.</p>
<b>PHW43/2020      Chief Executive's report</b>
<p>TC reflected on the fundamental ways in which the world had changed since the last Board meeting, and the implications for Public Health Wales; she noted that the following agenda item focussed on COVID-19 and used her report to highlight three associated issues, for completeness.</p> <p>Andrew Goodall, Director General of Health and Social Services and Chief Executive, NHS Wales, had instituted regular calls with his officials and Chief Executives; he had issued a revised financial framework this week, to assist the system. The Public Health Wales team was working closely with the Director General and his team, using their prompt approval of capital submissions as an example.</p> <p>TC went on to talk about the Ministerial decision in respect of screening programmes and rehearsed the advice submitted to policy leads in Welsh Government. In making his announcement, the Minister for Health and Social Services had commented that the well-being of the people of Wales was his top priority, that the suspensions were temporary and would resume at the earliest opportunity when it was safe to do so.</p> <p>TC outlined the internal arrangements for day-to-day management and oversight within the organisation.</p> <p>TC confirmed the maintenance of the Help Me Quit service at this point, although its continuance depended on Health Boards maintaining relevant services.</p> <p>TC then commented on discussions around vaccination and immunisation programmes and confirmed that she would update the Board for information as the advice around this issue crystallised.</p>

DE welcomed the information on the rationale underpinning the suspension of the five screening programmes; he commented on the messaging around the continuation of symptomatic services and hoped that the programmes' resumption would include acting on the many gains made in recent months. TC confirmed that this would be the case, also noting that the resumption of programmes would present Public Health Wales with a further system leadership role, and involve societal level behavioural messaging.

**PHW44/2020      Urgent items - Novel Coronavirus**

TC began by outlining the scale of the organisational transformation over the last month, led by staff, whose response to the COVID-19 mobilisation continued to be both exceptional and inspiring. She was profoundly grateful to all concerned, and drew the Board's particular attention to the expertise, professionalism and outstanding system leadership from: Eleri Davies, Huw George, Robin Howe, David Heyburn, Giri Shankar, Andrew Jones, Quentin Sandifer, Chris Williams and Rhiannon Beaumont-Wood.

HG set out the governance arrangements put in place to ensure that the Board could continue to maintain strong governance during these extraordinary times, outlining the incident management structure, the decision making processes and the separate cost centre to capture all COVID-19 expenditure.

HG went on to describe the facilities' adaptations, and capability, in Capital Quarter 2, Matrix House and Preswylfa. He paid tribute to Welsh Government colleagues for their prompt approval of key capital purchases.

RB-W summarised the features of the workforce mobilisation plan, designed to support the controlled movement of staff, enable ongoing communications with staff and prepare for reactivation post-COVID-19. RB-W then outlined the staff skills audit, part of the work to ensure resilience (n4) around surges, sickness and isolation issues. She noted the numbers involved, and the three categories of 'swim lanes', in line with internal redeployment, mutual aid and civic duties. She concluded by referencing the forthcoming staff support centre.

RB-W also confirmed that the existing arrangement for concerns' and complaints' handling remained in place.

GS took the Board through the latest position at a global level, across Europe, within the UK and in Wales, noting the current numbers at each level. He reminded the Board of the policy changes introduced during March and the impact on testing, together with the key, societal level behavioural changes introduced as part of the move from the 'containment' to the 'delay' phase. GS then summarised the reasonable worst case scenario and the possible impact of public compliance with the new social distancing and home working requirements on acute sector capacity.

GS then focussed on current testing capability and plans to increase this over the coming weeks and months. He emphasised the need to focus on older people, and on closed settings of care.

AJ briefed the Board on his role around the partnership agenda, with partners including: Welsh Government officials- the Chief Medical Officer and his team and the Chief Scientific Officer; Local Resilience Fora and their associated Strategic Co-ordinating Groups(SCGs); local Directors of Public Health; Assistant Chief Constables; local Directors of Public Protection(DPPs).

He noted the arrangements to provide a single Public Health Wales point of contact for partners and the setting up of the Public Health Co-ordinating Support Group. Membership of this comprised: the four SCGs; the DsPP; Food Standards Agency; Natural Resources Wales; a senior police officer; senior officer from the fire service.

Non-Executive Directors expressed their appreciation of the breadth and depth of the briefing, as it brought them up to speed, both internally and from the Public Health Wales system leadership perspective. They conveyed their heartfelt thanks to everyone involved across the organisation; the response to mobilisation had been, and continued to be, outstanding and all Non-Executive directors expressed their sense of pride in their Board membership.

A wide ranging discussion included the following issues:

Testing: the options for increasing capacity; the implications of the reasonable worst case scenario; the possibility of a second wave in the autumn; support for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board; evidence gathering; policy issues; testing of Public Health Wales staff.

Workforce: redeployment plans; volunteering; contractual arrangements; mutual aid; advice of travelling on public transport; access to Occupational Health.

Partnership working: the role of the universities; work to support local public health teams; the key agenda items for partnership working.

Communications: consistent messaging across the system; engagement with local Directors of Public Health.

TC summarised the way in which the Executive and Incident Management Team were handling each of the subject areas. To keep the Board up to speed, she confirmed that the executive would produce a high level summary, as a by-product of the performance matrix in use at executive level. JW thanked TC for this, emphasising that the Board did not intend this to result in any additional work, but to form an extract from the dashboard already in place.

In addition, the Board agreed to move to weekly briefings and to include a formal Board meeting in April. HB also confirmed that she would produce a once daily email for information.

In conclusion, JW reiterated the Board's sincere thanks and appreciation of the Executive leadership of the organisation. TC and the whole team involved in steering Public Health Wales through this unprecedented global public health emergency were providing outstanding system leadership. The Non-Executive Directors placed on record their total support for the actions being taken at executive level and their commitment to providing strong, appropriate Board-level governance throughout the COVID-19 period.

**Action: HG to produce a high level matrix of key governance and performance indicators.**

**PHW45/2020      Any Other Business**

JW noted that ShP was leaving the board at the end of March and that Board members wanted to thank ShP for her contribution to the work of the Board over the last three years. SP had focussed on the academic public health agenda in Wales, and had been instrumental in setting up and establishing the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee (KRIC). JW assured ShP that the Board would return to both the academic public health and KRIC agendas post COVID-19. Colleagues also wished ShP every success in her new role at the University of Aberdeen.

**Date of next meeting**

28 May 2020 at 09.00, via electronic means.

Board members agreed to review the frequency of meetings in these unprecedented times.

*The Public Session closed at 11:25*

**The Board met in Private Session to consider business of a confidential nature, publicity of which would be prejudicial to the public interest in accordance with Section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**