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Public Health  
Wales

**Confirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting  
held on 26 November 2020,  
(held electronically via Microsoft Teams and livestreamed via the  
web)**

<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
Diane Crone	(DC)	Non-Executive Director (University)
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
Huw George	(HG)	Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Sian Griffiths	(SG)	Non-Executive Director
Mohammed Mehmet	(MM)	Non-Executive Director (Local Authority)
Quentin Sandifer	(QS)	Executive Director of Public Health Services/Medical Director
<b>In Attendance:</b>		
Mark Bellis	(MB)	Director of Policy and International Health, WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health & Well-being (WHO CC)
Sian Bolton	(SB)	Interim Transition Director, Knowledge Directorate,
Helen Bushell	(HB)	Board Secretary and Head of Board Business Unit

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Liz Blayney	(LB)	Deputy Board Secretary and Head of Board Business Unit
Andrew Jones	(AJ)	Deputy Director of Public Health Services and Interim Executive Director of Public Health Services from 1 Dec 2020
Nathan Jones	(NJ)	Programme Manager
Neil Lewis	(NL)	Acting Director of People and Organisational Development
Jamie Topp	(JT)	Digital Editor
Stephanie Wilkins (from 10.45am)	(SW)	Representative of Staff Partnership Forum
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Eleri Davies	(ED)	Head of HCAI and AMR Programme and Interim Executive Director of Public Health Services from 1 Dec 2020
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)

*The meeting commenced at 10am*

<b>PHW 179/2020 Annual General Meeting</b>
The meeting opened with the Public Health Wales Annual General Meeting, which included the presentation of the Annual Report 2019/20, the Accounts 2019/20, and the Annual Quality Statement 2019/20.
(Note - A full summary from the AGM is published on the website)
<b>PHW 180/2020 Welcome and Apologies</b>
The Board <b>noted</b> the apologies for absence.
JW welcomed everyone to the meeting, explaining the need to continue with virtual meetings, centred on a COVID-19 related agenda. The meeting was open to the public and to staff via a livestream link on the website.
JW summarised the role of the Board as the Governing Body of the organisation, with specific responsibilities for: strategy development and direction; building and sustaining strategic partnerships; setting risk appetite and overseeing strategic risks; scrutinising in-year performance against plans

and setting the organisational tone and culture. The Board was committed to ensuring that every member of staff could come to work and be their authentic selves, without fear of disadvantage or discrimination of any kind.

JW advised that the Board conducted its meetings in line with a formal Board Etiquette, details of which could be found on the website. She also explained that, in line with its commitment to continuous improvement, the Board had adjusted the agenda for the meeting, to optimise the time spent on assurance and approval.

#### **PHW 181/2020 Declarations of Interest**

Board members made no declarations of interest in addition to those recorded on the Declarations of Interest register.

#### **PHW 182/2020 Chief Executive's Report**

TC drew attention to the following points from her report:

- The implications of the primacy of the health protection response to COVID-19; she noted the discussions with the CMO and his team to reframe the system-wide Operating Framework and the submission of the business case in respect of health protection resources. Success with both would assist with addressing wider population health harms and with maintaining statutory functions in full.
- The constructive meeting that she and JW had attended with the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language on 25 November; the discussion had included the mental health and well-being of children and young people, and the wider harms resulting from COVID-19.
- The continued engagement with the Information Commissioner's Office regarding the data breach; the Office had yet to issue a response.
- The signing in October of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Welsh Government and the World Health Organisation. This was a world first and TC congratulated MB and the WHO Collaborating Centre team on this achievement.
- The reactivation of screening programmes.
- The publication of the *Building Resilience in the Fishing Sector* Report.

TC then invited QS and SB to add detail as appropriate.

QS provided a further update on the reactivation of screening programmes. For each of the five programmes subject to pause and reactivation QS reported on: the level of resumption and the impact of limiting clinic numbers; the current backlogs; the challenges associated with each backlog and the actions in hand to mitigate against them. QS noted specifically the difficulties in accessing appropriate venues.

SB explained the background to the Report on *Building Resilience in the Fishing Sector*. The Welsh Government had welcomed an earlier report in 2019 which focused on developing a framework to support the mental health and wellbeing of farmers at times of uncertainty; specifically within the context of the EU Transition. Building on this work Welsh Government had requested an additional piece of work in relation to supporting the fishing communities also facing challenges due to the EU transition. Welsh Government officials were now involved with the team in working through the findings.

JW thanked TC, QS and SB for the reports and updates; she invited any comments or questions:

- DE welcomed the updates as being timely and informative. He reflected on the wealth of data set out in the COVID response map of Wales and asked about liaison with other data providers. TC and SB confirmed the liaison and co-ordination arrangements in place.
- MM appreciated the challenges facing Public Health Wales in reactivating and addressing the screening programme backlogs, whilst also responding to the second wave of COVID-19. He sought information on the plans for managing the backlog and whether these included employing additional staff.
- QS reflected on the complexity of screening reactivation and identifying effective responses to the backlog. In addition to protecting screening staff from COVID-19 mobilisation, other avenues being explored involved: outsourcing opportunities; a broader approach to sourcing venues, including the use of arts' venue accommodation and vacant retail outlets; and active discussions with GPC Wales on the possibility of undertaking cervical screening in primary care settings.

JW noted the role of the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee in exercising detailed oversight of screening and invited KE to expand on this. KE summarised discussions at a Committee meeting the previous week and confirmed that management of the backlogs would continue to feature on the agenda. She would report back to the Board specifically on this issue.

**ACTION:** KE/AJ

The Board **resolved** to **receive** the information set out in the report and to **take assurance** from the discussions.

### **PHW 183/2020 Integrated Performance Report**

JW welcomed NJ to the meeting and complimented him and the team on the further in-month development of the Performance Assurance Dashboard (PAD).

HG introduced the PAD, referencing the additional 'tile' now available on the Operational Plan. NJ would navigate the PAD and then demonstrate the

additional range of data now available. HG then asked each lead Director to highlight the key points in each section:

### People

NL took the Board through key workforce issues, including: sickness and absence rates; the significant increase in the head count; the People Support Plus service; the shift towards more distance/home working; appraisals and statutory/mandatory training compliance. NL noted the dip in the latter and the action being taken.

JW thanked NL for his summary; she noted that the newly-formed People Advisory Group (PAG) had held its first meeting and invited the chair, MM, to comment on its deliberations.

MM welcomed the PAD and reflected on its added value in providing key information for the Board and its Committees. In line with its remit, the first meeting of the PAG had focussed on: staff health and well-being; recruitment; and resilience. He spoke positively about the ways in which the organisation had adapted to reflect its response to COVID-19, the many initiatives in place to support staff, the significant success of recent recruitment rounds and the high confidence level in respect of filling remaining vacancies.

MM then highlighted: the need to be clear about expectations around statutory and mandatory training, in the current climate; the assimilation of a significant number of new staff into Public Health Wales' culture; take up rates of support services.

JW thanked MM for his update and referred the issues raised to the Business Executive Team.

### **ACTION:**NL

### Finance

HG drew attention to the financial position as at month 07 and the year-end break-even forecast. This was dependent on both timely receipt of £3m cash from Welsh Government for COVID-19 work already undertaken and delivery against revised in year spending plans and budgets.

JW thanked HG and his team for their ongoing sound financial management and discipline; the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee would continue its oversight on behalf of the Board.

### **ACTION:**DE/HG

### Delivering key services

QS explained the reasons for slippage against timescales set out in the Operational Plan. Workforce mobilisation had been challenging and training

redeployed staff had taken a little longer than hoped. The revisions to the Operating Framework, once agreed, would also assist considerably.

QS went on to summarise progress against the broader public health services' programme, drawing attention to the conditions under which screeners were working and their remarkable performance in light of these conditions. The slight dip in performance against the newborn blood spot screening avoidable repeat target concerned one specific area and was subject to current action.

QS also reported good progress against several HAI indicators; staph aureus rates remained a concern, however, and the team was working with health boards on this.

### Quality Indicators

RB-W updated the Board on the complaints, compliments and claims received in month and in the system. There had been no serious incidents and those incidents reported reflected both the reactivation of screening services and COVID-19-related matters. In line with learning from incidents, complaints and claims, she then provided examples of recent learning.

HG then asked NJ to demonstrate the new Operational Plan 'tile' that enabled users to interrogate the data from a number of different perspectives. NJ provided examples of the way in which the data could be analysed, using the most up to date performance indicators to aid efficient and effective decision-making. The 'tile' also supported oversight and scrutiny functions.

- On behalf of the Board, JW congratulated everyone involved in this ground-breaking work.
- KE added her congratulations, commenting specifically on the value of the system for grading the quality of the source data.
- SG welcomed the overall approach and asked about the possibility of collating all COVID-19 related data, to provide the Board with one over view position. HG agreed to explore this in time for the January 2021 Board meeting.

### **ACTION:**HG

The Board **resolved** to **receive** the information set out in the Integrated Performance Report and to **take assurance** from the discussions.

## **PHW 184/2020    Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 General Update**

In presenting his final COVID-19 update to the Board, QS reflected on the course of the pandemic during 2020; he drew particular attention to the following issues:

- The fragile position regarding case numbers. Whilst the firebreak had led to a reduction in incidence rates, these were now starting to rise again, particularly in south east Wales, but with variation across the 22 local authority areas;
- The arrangements at a UK and devolved nations level for Christmas and ongoing discussions around the intervening period;
- The current mass testing programme;
- Progress in respect of COVID-19 vaccination availability;
- Uptake of the flu immunisation programme at 70% amongst those aged 65 and over; an increase up to 75% would assist greatly with population level resilience during the winter period. QS also confirmed the availability of sufficient doses to extend the programme to those aged 50 and over.

JW thanked QS his update and sought comments or questions:

- DE asked what could be done to engage with 'hard to reach' groups, especially with the move towards mass vaccination programmes. In response, QS noted the need to provide easy access to the vaccines, when available. He also reminded the Board that, whilst the pandemic had brought to the fore issues such as handwashing and social distancing, the availability of vaccines could lead to the public dropping their guard. Ongoing public messaging would be vital.
- JB added detail on the arrangements made for mass population sampling, including drive- through and walk- in centres.

The Board **resolved** to **take assurance** from the discussions.

### **PHW 185/2020 Committees of the Board: Report from Committee Chairs**

The Board received the composite report from the Chairs of the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee, the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, together with the report from the Chair of the newly-formed People Advisory Group.

- KE drew attention to the positive Health Inspectorate Wales report on the experience of women attending for Breast Test Wales appointments; she congratulated the team on the outcome of the HIW review.
- DE confirmed that the Audit Committee was focussing on the 'Right Touch Governance' approach to discharging its role
- MM noted his comments earlier in the meeting, confirming that the PAG had made a positive start.

<b>PHW 186/2020 Items for Approval</b>
<b>PHW 187/2020 Minutes and Action Log from the Board Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020</b>
<p>The Board <b>approved</b> the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2020 as a true and correct record.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the Action Log, <b>approving</b> the closure of actions marked as complete.</p>
<b>PHW 188/2020 Strategic Risk Register</b>
<p>In introducing this item, JW reminded the Board of the agreement to review the whole approach to risk and the overarching risk architecture in 2021. She asked Board members to bear this in mind when considering the papers presented to this meeting.</p> <p>In introducing the paper, RBW drew attention to the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approval in principle, at the September Board meeting, to remove Risk 7 (Innovation Risk), subject to embedding an innovation approach across all other risks. This had not proved possible to progress, given COVID-19 pressures, and needed further time;</li> <li>• Table I requesting changes to actions;</li> <li>• Table 2 requesting closures for actions;</li> <li>• The transfer of Risks 2 and 3 to the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee.</li> </ul> <p>The Board <b>considered</b> the updates provided and <b>resolved</b> to <b>approve</b> the proposed changes set out in the paper.</p>
<b>PHW 189/2020 Risk Management Policy</b>
<p>RB-W noted that both the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and the Business Executive Team had reviewed the Policy document before the Board; it included some minor amendments to reflect updated organisational governance provisions.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved</b> to <b>approve</b> the revised Risk Management Policy.</p>
<b>PHW 190/2020 Annual Equality Report and Annual Workforce Equality Report 2019/20</b>
<p>NL presented the two reports for Board approval; he referenced the Public Sector Duty to publish the Annual Equality Report and Annual Workforce Equality Report by 31 March 2021. NJ confirmed that the Business Executive Team had undertaken prior scrutiny of the reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW sought clarity on the % of not disclosed or unspecified returns, a point that MM echoed. NL advised that this was partly a result of current</li> </ul>



ESR functionality and partly the need to engage more with staff networks to assure staff of the confidentiality around usage of any information supplied. He outlined the work underway on this point and MM took assurance from the explanation given.

- DE thought that the reports read well and reflected the significant amount of work involved. He also complimented the organisation on the great strides made in embedding the Welsh language and looked forward to further progress in 2021.
- DC asked about plans to increase access to the Diabetic Eye Screening Wales programme for people of working age; QS suggested that this formed part of the work of the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee and KE confirmed this point. She invited DC to discuss the issue in more detail outside the meeting.

**ACTION:**KE/DC

The Board **resolved** to **approve** the Annual Equality & Annual Workforce Reports for publication.

#### **PHW 191/2020 Items for Noting**

#### **PHW 192/2020 Impact on the Leaving of the European Union**

QS introduced the paper, noting that it provided a generally positive account of the Public Health Wales position. He advised that he had worked closely with the other UK Countries to develop non legislative frameworks. Some concerns remained around the loss of access to early warning, reporting and surveillance systems across other EU countries post 31 December 2021; however, there were liaison arrangements in place with other UK and European Countries to mitigate against this. AJ would provide a further update to the Board in December.

**ACTION:**AJ

The Board **noted** the significant progress made in relation to Public Health Wales' Brexit preparedness, as set out in section 3 of the report; the Board took **assurance** from the arrangements put in place in advance of 31 December 2020.

#### **PHW 193/2020 Corporate Risk Register**

In introducing this agenda item, RB-W drew attention to the following points:

- The detailed work undertaken to review risks related to screening services;
- The addition to the Corporate Risk Register of Corporate COVID-19 related risks along with non covid risks;
- The de-escalation and removal of risks related to the reactivation of screening services.

The Board **noted** the updates provided on the Corporate Risk Register.

### **PHW 194/2020 Retirement: Dr Quentin Sandifer**

JW reminded the Board that QS had begun his professional career in Wales and that it was fitting to end this stage of his career in his home country.

QS had enjoyed a long and distinguished career, during which he had worked tirelessly to promote health protection, public health improvement and the prevention agenda.

QS had always discharged his Public Health Wales' role with diligence and dedication and the people of Wales owed him a great debt of gratitude, never more so than during 2020. QS' professional leadership of the COVID-19 response had been outstanding and his evident command of his subject had given confidence and assurance to the Board, the organisation, Welsh Government and partners across the health and care system.

On behalf of his Board colleagues, JW thanked QS for his exemplary public service spanning more than 3 decades. She wished him and his family well for the future and presented QS with tokens of appreciation from the Board and his colleagues.

QS thanked JW for her kind words and reflected on his career; he expressed his pride in having been part of Public Health Wales for the last 8 years and thanked all his colleagues for their support and friendship. QS extended his good wishes to everyone.

### **Date of Next Formal Meeting of the Board**

JW closed the meeting at that point; she thanked everyone for their contributions and looked forward to the next meeting, scheduled for 17 December, 2020.

JW reminded those observing the meeting on line that they were welcome to follow up any points of interest through contacting the Board Secretary.

