

Chief Executive Board Report

26 May 2022

1 Public Health Wales' World Health Organization Collaborating Centre Re-designation Event

Public Health Wales became a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Investment in Health and Well-being in 2018. We are delighted to have been re-designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for a further four years and held a re-designation event which marked the renewal of the WHO Collaborating Centre status. The Centre is the first and only one in this area of expertise in the world, and is part of a global network of more than 800 Collaborating Centres in more than 80 countries. It was a well attended virtual event with colleagues from across Wales, WHO and also from other parts of the UK. The Minister for Health and Social Services provided a pre-recorded speech supporting the work of the WHO Collaborating Centre and the re-designation.

Over the past four years, the Collaborating Centre has worked in close collaboration with key stakeholders and partners across Wales, the UK and internationally. The Collaborating Centre has successfully developed, synthesized and shared information, international guidance, actionable intelligence, practical tools and approaches on how to invest in a more sustainable way to improve people's wellbeing, reduce inequity and build stronger, more resilient communities, economies and planet.

The new 4-year programme of work for the Centre focuses on providing scientific and policy evidence and expertise to build capacity and implement effective inter-sectoral policies for health and equity across the life course. It also plans to innovate and harness economic and multi-disciplinary tools and approaches to support building an *Economy of Well-being* in Wales, exploring and identifying solutions to the global challenges of widening health gap and socio-economic disparities, COVID-19 response and recovery and climate change. You can find more information here: [More information - World Health Organization Collaborating Centre On Investment for Health and Well-being \(phwwhocc.co.uk\)](https://phwwhocc.co.uk)

2 Visit of the World Health Organization to Wales

On the 11 May 2022, Chris Brown, Head of the WHO European Office for Investment for Health and Development, came to Wales for a visit with us and also to meet face to face with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chief Medical Officer. This was part of the strong and close relationship between Wales and the WHO and the purpose was to discuss

the current work being undertaken between the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and the WHO under the auspices of the Memorandum of Understanding that is in place between the WHO and the Welsh Government and supported by our WHO Collaborating Centre. This was an excellent meeting discussing the next phase of the Welsh Health Equity Status Report, taking a public health approach to the cost of living crisis and supporting the NHS to shift to prevention. Further developing bilateral relationships with other countries in Europe, as part of the Economy of Well-being work that we are involved in with the WHO, was also explored.

3 Attendance at the Health and Social Care Senedd Committee

On the 19 May 2022, we attended the Health and Social Care Senedd Committee to give evidence on their Inquiry into Mental Health Inequalities. The Inquiry is exploring four key themes as follows:

- Mental health and society: the wider determinants of mental health, and the role of society and communities in promoting and supporting mental health.
- Community solutions: the role of communities in promoting and supporting mental health, and social prescribing.
- The impact of mental health inequalities on people with neurodiverse conditions.
- Role of the healthcare and wider workforce: including mental health and equality awareness across the whole workforce, training, joined up working within the health service and with other organisations, and the role of GPs as the 'front door' to mental health services.

I attended together with Julie Bishop, Director of Health Improvement, and Jo Hopkins, Director of the Adverse Childhood Experience Support Hub. We covered a wide range of areas relating to mental health inequalities.

I would like to thank Nathan Jones for supporting the preparatory work and Julie and Jo for all of their expert contributions during the Committee. Attached is the evidence submission that we submitted to the Inquiry in the earlier phase of its consultation.

4 Establishment of the NHS Executive

The Director General for Health and Social Services/NHS Wales Chief Executive has announced that the Minister has taken the decision to formally commence the establishment of the NHS Executive for Wales.

The decision to establish an executive function was announced in *A Healthier Wales* in 2018 and reconfirmed in the Programme for Government. This decision was based on the findings and recommendations of both the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Delivery (OECD) Quality Review and the Parliamentary Review of the long term future of Health and Social

Care, published in 2018. Both of these reviews called for a stronger centre, additional transformation capacity and streamlining of current structures.

The NHS Executive's key purpose will be to drive improvements in the quality and safety of care - resulting in better and more equitable outcomes, access and patient experience, reduced variation, and improvements in population health. It will do this by:

- Reinforcing and refocusing national leadership for quality improvement and transformation
- Planning
- Enable stronger performance management and quality improvement support arrangements.

We will be working with the Welsh Government to support the establishment of the NHS Executive and also supporting the hosted entities within Public Health Wales that will be moving into the hybrid model of the new NHS Executive. These include the NHS Wales Health Collaborative and the Finance Delivery Unit. Improvement Cymru will also be a key part of the NHS Executive although we do not envisage any structural change to Improvement Cymru in relation to it being an embedded and key directorate within the organisation.

We will keep our staff and the Board updated as progress is made in the establishment of the NHS Executive.

5 Fair Work for Health, Well-being and Equity

This month we release a guide for local authorities, health boards and other regional and local agencies on improving health, well-being and equity through action on fair work. This is informed by advice and recommendations of an expert panel convened by Public Health Wales and chaired by Professor Ceri Phillips and included representation from across sectors, Welsh Government and the World Health Organization.

Work and working conditions are critical determinants of health, and a healthy engaged workforce contributes to business productivity and societal prosperity. Participation in fair work provides a sense of purpose and means that people have money and resources for a healthy life for them and their families. This reduces psychological stress, creates a stepping stone out of poverty and helps children have the best start in life.

The guide is supported by case studies of fair work in action, infographics, animations and 'talking head' style interviews, with resources for employers on Healthy Working Wales website. Local agencies and their partnerships are asked to place fair work at the heart of policies and plans, get better value for money through socially responsible procurement, job creation and attracting fair work employers, to be an exemplar of fair work, to partner

with business and addressing the barriers that stop some people accessing fair work.

The panel received evidence from Public Health Wales and subject experts, identified additional evidence, and brought member's own expertise to formulate themes, opportunities and draft recommendations outlined in a panel report. An interim report was submitted to Welsh Government in October 2021 to inform the update of the Employability Plan. Following release, there will be a period of engagement with agencies across Wales.

This builds on [previous work](#) which highlighted how the pandemic and associated control measures disrupted working lives, affecting particular groups such as young people, older people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, women, especially mothers, and ethnic minority groups. Access to fair work remains an essential way of improving long term health and well-being of individuals and households, including for children, benefiting business and the wider community.

5 Swansea University Research and Innovation Award for our Microbiology Team

The medical microbiology and infectious diseases team in our Swansea clinical laboratory service in Public Health Wales was recognised for *Outstanding Response to COVID-19* at Swansea University's recent Research and Innovation Awards event.

The Awards dinner took place on the 5 May 2022 at the Great Hall on Swansea University's Bay Campus and was attended by 250 people from across the University. The team was represented by Steve Hadfield and Jenny Hudson for Public Health Wales and Angharad Davies for the medical school. Team members were directly responsible for the expert microbiology care of COVID-19 patients in the Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) area throughout the pandemic, providing a clinically excellent 24 hour, 365/7 service. They were responsible for the care of the first COVID-19 patients at the beginning of the pandemic, set up the first COVID-19 ward to admit infected patients and the last ward to close during the first two waves. The team showed leadership at a time of widespread challenge and demonstrated how COVID-19 patients could be looked after with appropriate risk mitigation early in the pandemic.

The Team rolled out extensive laboratory testing of clinical samples at pace in our Swansea Microbiology service to support clinical services in SBUHB. At the start of the outbreak viral PCR testing was not available in SBUHB and during the challenging period of scaling up testing infrastructure and capacity, the team worked tirelessly and innovatively to deliver testing by adopting a wide range of testing platforms to build capacity and resilience. SBUHB can now deliver over 800 PCR tests daily and carry out COVID-19 variant assay testing, with contingencies to rapidly deploy a

further 500 daily tests. The service runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week providing access to rapid turn-around results (approximately 90 minutes) as well as high throughput tests.

Congratulations to all our Swansea team on this very well-deserved recognition of their hard work and dedication throughout the pandemic. We are so very proud of all the amazing work of our microbiology teams across Wales who have worked at pace and scale to protect the people of Wales and this award is also testament to all of our wonderful microbiology staff across Wales.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to **receive** this information.

Tracey Cooper
CHIEF EXECUTIVE