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Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
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Public Health  
Wales

**Confirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting  
held at 11:00 on 28 July 2022  
(held electronically via Microsoft Teams  
and livestreamed via the web)**

**Present:**

Jan Williams	(JW)	Chair
Tracey Cooper	(TC)	Chief Executive
Iain Bell	(IB)	National Director Knowledge, Research and Information
Diane Crone	(DC)	Non-Executive Director (Academic Public Health)
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
Nick Elliott	(NE)	Non-Executive Director (Data and Digital)
Huw George	(HG)	Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Siân Griffiths	(SG)	Non-Executive Director (Public Health)
Rhiannon Beaumont-Wood	(RBW)	Executive Director of Quality, Nursing and Allied Health Professionals

**In Attendance:**

Sumina Azam	(SA)	Consultant in Public Health, Head of Policy, Deputy Director (WHO CC)
Liz Blayney	(LB)	Deputy Board Secretary and Head of Board Business Unit
John Boulton	(JB)	National Director of NHS Quality Improvement and Patient Safety/Director Improvement Cymru
Helen Bushell	(HB)	Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit
Andrew Jones	(AJ)	Deputy Director Health Protection and Screening Services

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Angela Jones	(AnJ)	Acting Director Health and Wellbeing
Neil Lewis	(NL)	Director of People and Organisational Development
Stephanie Wilkins	(SW)	Staff Side Trade Unions representative (from 11.20am)

#### **Apologies:**

Mark Bellis	(MB)	Executive Director of Policy and International Health, WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health & Well-being (WHO CC)
Fu-Meng Khaw	(MK)	National Director Health Protection and Screening Services, Executive Medical Director
Mohammed Mehmet	(MM)	Non-Executive Director (Local Authority)
Claire Sullivan	(CS)	Staff Side Trade Union representative
Kate Young	(KY)	Non-Executive Director (Third Sector)
Verity Winn	(VW)	Audit Wales

*The meeting commenced at 11am*

#### **PHW 1/2022.07.28 Welcome and Apologies**

JW welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending a warm welcome to those observing the proceedings online. She summarised the role of the Board as being the Governing Body of the organisation, with specific responsibilities for: strategic direction-setting; building and sustaining strategic partnerships; setting risk appetite and overseeing strategic risks; scrutinising in-year delivery against plans and setting organisational tone and culture.

In respect of this last role, the Board adopted a learning culture, and one in which everyone could come to work and be their authentic , best selves, without fear of discrimination or disadvantage of any kind. The Board conducted its business in line with a formal Board Etiquette, the detail of which was on the web-site. This referenced the reading of all papers before the meeting, optimising the time available for debate on the day. The Board also adhered to Public Health Wales' Values: Working Together, With Trust and Respect, to Make a Difference.

JW noted that the preceding Annual General Meeting had prompted a shorter agenda for this meeting, with a focus on in-year delivery against plans, a number of governance matters and the consideration of proposals from Public Health Wales' Young Ambassadors on engaging with the Board. The Performance and Insights report also introduced a Public Health Rapid Overview performance assurance dashboard, a new feature that would facilitate enhanced Board level focus on the big public health issues facing Wales.

#### **PHW 2/2022.07.28 Declarations of Interest**

Board members declared no interests outside those recorded already on the Declarations of Interest Register.

JW referenced the importance of declaring conflicts of interest, as a requirement of practising good governance. She invited HB to summarise the provision set out in the Standing Orders, to assist new Board members.

HB summarised the requirement to have a conflict of interest register in place, the need for Board members to consider it and to report any personal, professional or business interests that warranted a declaration; the register was subject to a bi-annual review.

### **PHW 3/2022.07.28 Board Assurance Framework**

### **PHW 3.1/2022.07.28 Chief Executive's Report**

TC introduced the report and drew attention to the following issues:

- The UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry (The Inquiry), chaired by Baroness Hallett. She drew attention to the confirmed Terms of Reference and to further information made available after the drafting of the report as an Opening Statement (this can be accessed via the following link: [UK-Covid19-Inquiry-Launch-Statement.pdf](#) )  
The Inquiry would adopt a themed, modular approach, with the first three modules confirmed as:
  1. The UK's preparedness for whole-system civil emergencies, including resourcing, the system of risk management and pandemic readiness.
  2. Core political and administrative governance and decision-making for the UK.
  3. The impact of Covid, and of the governmental and societal responses to it, on healthcare systems generally and on patients, hospital and other healthcare workers and staff.

Preliminary hearings for Module 1 would start in September 2022; public hearings would begin in early 2023. TC expected Public Health Wales to have 'core participant' status and she outlined the preparatory work underway across the organisation.

- The end of year Accountability Meeting with the Welsh Government on 1 July 2022, with the focus on: performance against the Operational Plan; lessons learned in 2021/2022; and Ministerial priorities and plans for 2022/2023. The meeting had been constructive, covering the significant breadth of the agenda and acknowledging the ongoing commitment of all staff.
- The meeting that she, the chair and Julie Bishop had held with the Minister for Education and Welsh Language on 8 June 2022. This had resulted in a number of commissions from the Minister and JW reflected on the welcome resumption of the programme of Ministerial meetings paused during the height of the pandemic. These meetings were an important opportunity for JW and TC to

learn more about how Public Health Wales could support the delivery of the Programme for Government.

- The opening of the new Screening Centre in Mountain Ash. TC advised that this was the first screening centre of its kind, in a high street location and accommodating multiple screening programmes, designed to improve public accessibility.
- TC extended a warm welcome to Angela Jones as Acting Director of Health and Wellbeing and noted the significant contribution that AnJ had already made.
- Finally, TC invited AJ to provide an update on both COVID-19 and Monkey Pox.

On COVID-19, AJ reported that the recent high levels of infection in the community (1 in 17 people) had seemingly plateaued. Hospital admission rates, particularly for those aged 60 and over, had also begun to fall. The start of the school summer holidays had helped with rate reduction, although incidents in residential settings continued, with COVID-19 present in 55 residential care homes across Wales as at 20 July 2022

On Monkeypox, AJ noted the global nature of the spread. On 23 July the World Health Organisation had designated Monkeypox as an international public health emergency, a move designed to stimulate further international co-operation and co-ordination. In the UK, most cases were resulting in a mild illness, with the greatest number in London and a few other major cities. On 27 July, there were 30 cases in Wales, with a steady presentation of around six new cases per week. Most of the cases were in North Wales. AJ confirmed that contact tracing was underway with agreed clinical pathways in place across all four nations and local outbreak areas having priority. Vaccine availability was currently limited but expected to increase by September. AJ concluded by confirming that Public Health Wales' website provided the latest information on vaccine delivery.

JW thanked TC for her wide-ranging update, and AJ for his additional information; she then invited questions:

- DE thanked TC and AJ for their comprehensive reports. He welcomed the opening of the new Screening Hub in Mountain Ash and asked about the measures in place to assess whether increased accessibility had an impact on uptake rates. HG confirmed that this had been an underpinning design principle and data on uptake rates would help inform any further roll out of the model.
- SG drew attention to the reference in TCs Report to Public Health Wales' response to the Health and Social Care Senedd Committee Inquiry into Mental Health Inequalities. Public Health Wales had an important system leadership role and SG asked for regular Board-level updates on the Committee's findings and implications. AnJ noted the importance of applying a mental health

inequalities lens to all programmes and looked forward to sight of the Committee's findings to inform the work in hand. JW suggested that AnJ update the Board on progress at the November 2022 meeting, as part of the detailed scrutiny of the Operational Plan 2022/23 undertaken at the half-year point.

### Action: AnJ

The Board **received** the Chief Executive's Report and **took assurance** from the Report and the discussion.

### PHW 3.2/2022.07.28 Integrated Performance Report (Month 3)

Introducing the Performance and Insight Report HG noted the work underway to refine the reporting of key issues to the Board. The Report for June 2022 reflected this continuous development and introduced an additional perspective, aiming to capture population health level challenges and manage these as one of the key themes.

HG then invited executive leads to comment on their respective areas:

- NL drew attention to the following points:
  - A slight increase in sickness and absence rate at 3.9%; NL outlined the focused work underway in health improvement, screening and microbiology, as the teams with the highest rates of sickness/absence.
  - COVID-19 continued to contribute to staff sickness, with 16 staff currently affected.
  - The focus of the People and Organisational Development Committee on the equality and diversity dashboard;
- For Finance, HG highlighted:
  - The continuing forecast of a break -even financial position. HG reminded the Board of the approved 2022/23 Budget Strategy and its provisions;
  - Progress with 51% of expected capital expenditure, an encouraging sign at this early stage in the year;
  - Ongoing work with Welsh Government around COVID-19 related expenditure. The current forecast indicated a reduction in expenditure, linked to lower levels of testing and genomic sequencing; Welsh Government met this cost, based on monthly recharging.
- AJ noted:
  - The drop in the 6 in 1 routine child vaccination programme rate to below 95% for the first time in a decade. AJ confirmed that Public Health Wales' role involved surveillance and training rather than delivery. Health Boards had the surveillance data, together with additional reports to support their

actions. He noted that socio-economic deprivation links to vaccination rates were less marked for earlier childhood vaccines.

- RBW noted:
  - 202 incidents occurring in June 2022, and are still within the 30 day time frame and currently remain open. One 'no surprises incident' has been reported to Welsh Government, concerning a data breach. The investigation was now concluding and the Information Commissioner had confirmed that no further action would be necessary.
  - 100% performance in responding to complaints across all measures; compliments had increased, with 90% of these recognising positive staff attitudes in Bowel Screening Wales. One new claim for negligence related to Breast Test Wales.
  - The September Board meeting would include a full report on strategic risks.

HG then invited IB to provide an update on the additional insert into the Performance Report that would reflect population level health challenges.

- IB advised that:
  - This section of the Report would continue to develop and evolve. The initial focus centred on the cost-of-living crisis and how the higher rates of inflation, linked with a lower rate of wage growth, had led to a decline in available income. Predictions that fuel costs would rise further in the coming winter would add to the current cost pressures and indicated the increasing risk of harm at a population level.
  - Reflecting the population impacts, IB noted the work planned to support staff and signpost people to support available.
  - Welsh Government could also access advice to support relevant policy developments; free school meals' policy was one example of this.

HG thanked IB for the update and welcomed this new perspective and focus within the performance report. JW invited SA to add her comments. SA welcomed the inclusion of the new dashboard and confirmed the intention to consider the population perspective at an international level.

JW invited comments and questions:

- SG welcomed the development of this additional insert and reflected on the importance of cost-of-living impacts upon public health. She commended the work and sought assurance on its wide dissemination. JW confirmed the plans for this, including at Ministerial, Welsh Government, and public service leadership level.

The Board **noted** the update and **took assurance** from the papers and discussion

**PHW 3.3/2022.07.28 Young Person's Engagement**

In introducing this discussion, RBW noted the range of work underway across Public Health Wales to engage young people and wider population groups. The pandemic had impacted during the past two years leading to a pause in work with the Young Ambassadors, but a recent two-day Residential had reactivated the discussion about engaging with the Board. This had concluded with a proposal to set up a Young Ambassadors Board Partnership Forum, as outlined in the report. This also built on discussions with the Office of the Children's Commissioner and RBW signalled her intention to liaise with the incoming Children's Commissioner.

JW thanked RBW for the detailed paper and her verbal update; JW had welcomed the opportunity to join the Young Ambassadors at their recent Residential and had noted the energy and enthusiasm in the room. JW then invited comments and questions:

- DC reflected on her engagement with the Young Ambassadors and described the group as inspirational. She sought confirmation of the inclusion of an evaluation mechanism to assess the benefit and success of the proposed Forum and RBW provided that assurance.

The Board **considered** the feedback from the Young Ambassadors residential event and **approved** the establishment of a Young Ambassadors Board Partnership Forum.

### **PHW 3.4/2022.07.28 Committees of the Board: Report from Committee Chairs**

Introducing this item, JW outlined the role of the Committees in undertaking agreed annual programmes of work on behalf of the Board. She noted that the composite report now included links to all recent Committee meeting papers in the public domain. JW invited each Committee Chair to provide an update and to identify any specific issues:

#### Quality Safety and Improvement Committee (QSIC)

KE provided a verbal update on a QSIC meeting held on 20 July, when the Committee had:

- Undertaken a 'deep dive' on aspects of user engagement, including Young Ambassadors and a new system to maximise service user engagement nationally;
- Held an extended session with Verity Winn of Audit Wales on her report into quality governance. This included positive and useful recommendations that QSIC would consider, to help drive implementation across the organisation.

#### Audit and Corporate Governance Committee (ACGC)

In addition to the Report provided DE drew attention to a special meeting of ACGC to receive and approve the annual accounts. DE extended his thanks to MM for chairing the meeting on his behalf.

#### Knowledge Research and Information Committee (KRIC)

SG confirmed that work continued to develop the research and data strategies. She drew attention to the slides from the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) presented at the last KRIC meeting, noting the intention to work closely with the OSR team.

The Board **noted** the updates provided in the Reports and **took assurance** from the contents and the discussion.

#### **PHW 4/2022.07.28 Items for Approval**

#### **PHW 4.1/2022.07.28 Minutes and Action Log from the Board Meeting (26 May 2022 and 14 June 2022)**

The Board **approved** the Minutes of the 26 May and 14 June 2022 as accurate records of each meeting.

HB confirmed the completion of all but two actions, both of which were on track.

#### **PHW 4.2/2022.07.28 Board and Committee Governance**

HB advised that Standing Orders required an annual review of the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee (RATs) Committee, the last review being in May 2021. The 2022 review had resulted in the suggested amendments set out in the report and recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board **considered** the proposed changes to the Committee terms of reference and **approved** the revisions.

#### **PHW 4.3/2022.07.28 Policies, Procedures and Other Written Control Documents Management Policy**

HB noted the updating of this Policy to reflect the Welsh Language requirements and the Socio-Economic Duty.

SW suggested sharing all policies with Trades Unions, not only those that called for consultation. This would help raise awareness about all extant policies.

#### **Action: HB**

The Board: **considered** the updated Policy for the management of Corporate Policies within Public Health Wales; **considered** the information contained within the Equalities Impact Assessment; and **approved** the PHW 47 - Corporate Policies, Procedures and other written control documents Management Policy.



**PHW 5/2022.07.28 Items for Noting**

**PHW 5.1a/ 2022.07.28 Chair's Report (26 May 2022)**

The Board **noted** the Chair's Report to the Board on the matters considered in the Private Board meeting on 26 May 2022.

**PHW 5.1b/2022.07.08 Public Health Wales Board: Forward Plan 2022/23**

The Board **noted** the Forward Plan 2022/23.

**PHW 6/2022.07.28 Date of Next Formal Meeting of the Board**

The next scheduled Board meeting was the 29 September 2022.

**PHW 7/2022.07.28 Close of Public Meeting**

JW expressed the Board's appreciation of the way in which SA had stepped up to cover for MB and thanked her for leading the Directorate with purpose and commitment during his absence. The Board counted itself fortunate to have SA's expertise and talent to call on and hoped that she had found the experience a positive one.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

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