

Chief Executive Board Report

March 2023

1 Update on the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry

The following provides an update on the current activities of the organisation in relation to the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry.

1.1 Module 1

We are a Core Participant for Module 1 (focusing on pandemic preparedness). We have complied with Disclosure requests from the Public Inquiry team and our documents are currently being reviewed by the Inquiry team.

A Preliminary hearing was held on the 14 February 2023 which has since confirmed that the Module 1 Public Hearings have been pushed back to 13 June 2023 to 21 July 2023 given delays in the disclosure process to date. The length of the hearing has also been extended from four weeks to six weeks. There is a further Preliminary Hearing on the 25 April 2023. We are currently awaiting a schedule of issues to be provided by the Inquiry Team to further concentrate the scope of Module 1.

1.2 Modules 2 and 2B

We are a Core Participant for Module 2B (Module 2 focuses on the UK's, and England's, core political and administrative decision-making in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and Module 2B focuses on the Welsh Government's core political and administrative decision-making in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic).

We have complied with Disclosure requests from the Public Inquiry team and our documents are currently being reviewed by the Inquiry team. The next preliminary hearing for Module 2B will take place virtually on Wednesday 29 March where it is expected that there will be an update from the Counsel to the Inquiry and the submissions from Core Participants will be provided.

1.3 Module 3

We have made the decision to not apply to be a Core Participant for Module 3 (which will consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare systems in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). A Preliminary hearing was held on the 28 February 2023, which confirmed there will be a further Preliminary Hearing in late 2023 with Public Hearings expected in 2024. We will monitor any requests and respond to the Inquiry as required for Module 3.

2 Report of the Independent Review of Health Protection in Wales

An independent review of the Welsh Health Protection System was commissioned by the Welsh Government to assess its strengths against an established benchmark of a high performing health protection system and to provide reasonable and actionable recommendations on the ways in which the health protection system in Wales could be further strengthened to meet or exceed the established benchmark. The report and recommendations were published in February 2023.

The review team undertook a survey of stakeholders and carried out interviews with key health protection system partners focussing on the following themes: System Design; Governance and Accountability; Workforce, Leadership, Collaboration and Communication; Intelligence and Horizon-scanning and anticipation.

Actions have been identified to take forward the 15 recommendations through an implementation plan overseen by a multi-agency implementation group reporting to the Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group. Public Health Wales will play an active role on the implementation group and will co-ordinate any actions for the organisation through the Health Protection and Screening Services Directorate. A Board development session is planned in April 2023 to discuss the findings and recommendations of the review.

3 Health and Social Care Senedd Committee Inquiry into Endoscopy Services

The [Health and Social Care Committee](#) has held a short follow up Inquiry into endoscopy services in Wales to consider what further action is needed to implement the [national endoscopy action plan](#), reduce waiting times and ultimately improve patient outcomes and survival rates in Wales.

Public Health Wales was invited to provide written evidence and also attend the Committee to provide verbal evidence on the 2 February 2023. Thanks to Sharon Hillier, Director of Screening Services, and Steve Court, Head of Programme for Bowel Screening Wales for attending the Committee.

The written [submission](#) focused on the following key areas relating to the provision of the Bowel Screening Wales (BSW) programme and symptomatic faecal immunochemical testing (FIT) service:

- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the BSW programme and the delivery of screening colonoscopy procedures
- Waiting times for screening colonoscopy and measures taken to manage this situation
- Progress against the plan to optimise the bowel screening programme in Wales and how the position compares to other UK-based bowel screening programmes.

- Primary care access to symptomatic FIT and how this is being used to prioritise patients for endoscopy.

We are anticipating a report to be produced by the Committee when it has concluded this follow up Inquiry and will share it with the Board as and when it is published.

4 Attendance at the Trade and Rural Affairs Senedd Committee: The Food Bill (Wales) Stage 1 consideration of the general principles of the Bill

Public Health Wales was invited to provide written evidence and attend the Trade and Rural Affairs Senedd Committee in relation to the Food Bill (Wales) Stage 1 consideration of the general principles of the Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to establish a more sustainable food system in Wales. The Bill sets out the food goals in two categories: *Primary Food Goal* - this is the overarching goal of providing affordable, healthy, and economically, environmentally and socially sustainable food for the people of Wales, and *Secondary Food Goals* - these underpin the primary food goal and cover specific areas including: economic well-being, health and social, education, environment and food waste.

A written submission was developed by Liz Green and Rachel Bath, Consultants in Public Health, along with Angela Jones, Interim Director of Health and Well-being, who also attended the Committee on the 16 February. It was noted that the Bill was well intentioned in its scope. However, there are other legislative vehicles that could be utilised including the Well-being of Future Generations Act, with Well-being Assessments and Plans through Public Services Boards, to explore the benefits of local food plans and Town and Country Planning legislation. These could be strengthened to limit fast food takeaways in areas of high obesity and close proximity to schools. In addition, opportunities to improve food products reducing sugar, salt and fat content would ideally be best taken forward on a UK level to influence producers in a global marketplace. The submission can be seen in appendix 1.

5 Attendance at the Welsh Government Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee

On the 3 February 2023, Cheryl Williams and Nerys Edmonds, Principal Health Impact Assessment Officers in our Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit, gave a presentation to the [Welsh Government Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee](#). They were invited to the Committee to talk about the impact of flooding on population health and well-being, and also the potential impact upon healthcare service provision. The presentation focused initially on the broader aspects of the impact of the wider determinants, and the built and natural environment on health and well-being, before focusing more specifically on how flood events affect individuals and population groups. Much of the information presented to the committee was taken from our Climate Change Health Impact Assessment which is being finalised. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to

hear more about the implications of flooding on health and also how health impact assessments can help in the process of assessing those impacts.

6 All Wales Cost of Living Summit: Working together to Build a Healthier Wales

Over 180 delegates from across Wales joined the All-Wales cost of living summit on the 13 March 2023 that was organised by the Building a Healthier Wales Coordination Group and Public Health Wales. The Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt, MS, addressed senior leaders and public advocates at the summit.

The summit was co-chaired by Sir Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer, and Sue Evans, Chief Executive of Social Care Wales, and focussed on collaboration to the prevent short, medium and long-term harms of the cost of living crisis. Delegates also heard about the public health implications and context from Professor Sir Michael Marmot and Public Health Wales staff.

Delegates participated in 13 breakout sessions, covering themes relating to housing, energy, mental wellbeing, income, employment, health and care services. Together, they considered examples of good practice, the barriers and enablers to effective response and future opportunities and actions to make a difference. Through the conference many examples of good practice, were recognised with clear opportunities to work together, combine efforts and reduce duplication, taking a long term approach to get the best outcomes for the people of Wales.

The Building a Healthier Wales Coordination Group will consider the findings to guide their future work on the cost of living crisis.

7 The Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA) Cymru Conference and Public Health Wales Award Winners

The Public Health Wales' People and Organisation Development Team were delighted to win two awards at the Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA) Cymru Conference and Awards Ceremony on the 1 March 2023. The awards celebrate the incredible work that is ongoing throughout NHS Wales.

The two awards were the *Excellence in Organisational Development* and *Workforce Analytics*.

The Excellence in Organisational Development award recognised the design, implementation and evaluation of *Work How It Works Best*, and how the trial has significantly benefited the organisation. *Work How it Works Best* is a twelve-month trial developed by Public Health Wales following extensive engagement with staff across the organisation, which is running from June 2022. It enables individuals and teams across the organisation, to collectively decide how, when and where they work best, taking into account the needs of the work, the needs and wants of team members and the team as a whole.

The award for Workforce Analytics highlighted how our Performance Assurance Dashboard and Directorate and Divisional Dashboards in the organisation have improved the data literacy of decision-makers, prioritised improvement activities, and evaluated interventions relating to our people.

Both awards have been the result of a real team effort and we are proud of the impact and difference that both our *Work How It Works Best* and the Workforce Dashboards is having across the organisation.

8 Young Ambassadors Residential and Board Advisory Forum

Over thirty Public Health Wales 'Young Ambassadors' from across Wales attended a Board Partnership Forum and additional sessions on the 22 and 23 February. The main theme of the session was a discussion on the cost of living crisis with input provided. The Young Ambassadors shared their views with members of Public Health Wales' Board, how the crisis is impacting young people at home, in school and work settings and in their communities, sharing their lived experiences to show what matters to people their age and how things can be improved.

Together, they identified their emerging priorities for Public Health Wales to influence Welsh Government, local authorities and the NHS. Early themes identified were:

- Improving mental health support and counselling in communities for all ages
- Having a more equal experience of transport, food provision in schools and colleges, financial support for uniforms and equipment. We heard there was a lot of variation across Wales in terms of their experiences of support available in school, college and work.
- More communication between schools, hospitals, local authorities and other organisations were needed.

Further distillation of their top priorities will be shared at the next Board meeting.

The Board Partnership Forum was part of a two-day Young Ambassadors residential, which included sessions on our Long Term Strategy and young people and vaccines. The young people also took part in training about meetings styles and how to chair a meeting to provide skills to build confidence when working in partnership with the Board. They also became Disease Detectives in an interactive session on how Public Health Wales solves outbreak riddles.

9 Update on the Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit Appointment and Executive Team Recruitment

I am delighted to share that Paul Veysey will be joining us as the Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit on the 17 April. Paul joins us from the Legal and Risk Services in the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership where he is currently a Solicitor. Paul brings a wealth of experience with him and has been working closely with us over the last year in relation to the preparations for, and response, to the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry.

In relation to the recruitment for our National Director of Health and Well-being and our National Director of Policy and International Health/Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre, we have procured Alumni Global to provide executive search services for the roles. The posts are currently open, and we hope to interview both roles at the end of April.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to receive this information.

Tracey Cooper
CHIEF EXECUTIVE