

# Chief Executive Board Report

May 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). The Inquiry published a 'List of Issues' for Module 1 on the 6 April 2023.

I received a further Rule 9 request for a personal statement on the 21 March, and this was submitted on the 4 May. It is anticipated that Public Health Wales will be invited to participate in the public hearing for Module 1, which runs for six weeks from the 13 June 2023 to the 21 July 2023.

We are continuing to review a high volume of statements and evidence from other core participants placed on the Inquiry's Relativity system (digital evidence system), supported by our legal team. We have also internally reviewed four expert reports in relation to Module 1 to date.

### 1.2 Modules 2 and 2B

We are a Core Participant for Module 2B which focused on the Welsh Government's core political and administrative decision-making in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the Module 2B Preliminary Hearing on the 29 March, the Inquiry confirmed that the public hearing will take place in Wales from the 26 February 2024 for three weeks. A List of Issues for Module 2B was published on the 12 May.

Responses to three individual (personal) Rule 9 statements were submitted on the 6 April. These were from me, Huw George (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Operations and Finance) and Dr Quentin Sandifer (formerly Director of Public Health Services/Medical Director and currently Advisor to us for the Public Inquiry) We also received a list of queries in relation to our draft corporate statement previously submitted, which we are currently responding to.

To date, two expert reports have been reviewed. The Inquiry is still to start uploading final versions of statements and evidence in relation to Module 2b.

### **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).

There is no further update on Module 3 since the last report.

### **1.4 Future modules**

An early Rule 9 request in relation to procurement was received on the 4 May, which may be covered by a future Inquiry module to be confirmed. A response of the 17 July has been agreed with the Inquiry.

### **1.5 Wales Covid-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee**

On the 16 May, the Senedd passed a motion to establish a Wales Covid-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee, which will allow for additional scrutiny of the handling of the pandemic in Wales. At the conclusion of each UK Public Inquiry module, the Committee will determine whether to undertake any additional scrutiny. Further details on the Committee's terms of reference are awaited.

## **2 Meetings with Ministers**

Jan Williams, Chairperson, Angela Jones, Acting National Director for Health and Well-being, and I met with the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing on the 27 April. This was a constructive meeting and we discussed a wide range of items including key Health Improvement Programmes and Policy developments and an update on our new Long Term Strategy.

On the 18 May, Jan Williams, Angela Jones, Iain Bel, National Director for public Health Data, Knowledge and Research and I met with the Minister for Health and Social Services. This was a constructive meeting and we shared with the Minister a deep dive into diabetes in Wales, our approach to Healthcare Public Health to tackle it and provided an update on our new Long Term Strategy.

## **3 Meeting with the Future Generations Commissioner**

On the 5 April, Jan Williams, Chairperson, Sumina Azam, Acting Director of Policy and International Health/Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre, and I met with Derek Walker, the new Future Generations Commissioner. This was an excellent introductory meeting to discuss the strong relationship that has been in place between us and the Future Generations Commissioner's Office for many years, share our current and future focus of work and hear from the Commissioner how he felt we could support him going forward.

## 4 Networks Conference

On the 17 May, we held our first conference for our seven Staff Networks. This was an in person event, with an agenda that included an inspirational talk on “The Power, Pain and Potential of Staff Networks”, given by Dr Neil Wooding, a session on our Culture and People Promise, and an interactive session in the afternoon for participants to help us develop our Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024-28.

I had the pleasure of opening the event and it was closed by Jan Williams with Neil Lewis, our Director of People and Organisational Development, chairing it. The Executive Sponsors of the Networks also attended, and this helped to demonstrate the visible senior leadership and support for this work.

Around 85 people attended the event, which has received lots of positive feedback. The opportunity to provide input into organisational strategies as well as listen to and learn from personal stories and network with others was very much welcomed.

I would like to say an enormous thanks to Sarah Brewer, our Head of Employee Experience, Abby Headford, our Diversity and Welsh Language Advisor and our People and Organisational Development Team for organising the event and, of course, our Network chairs and members for all of their leadership, commitment and expertise.

## 5 Establishment of the NHS Executive

The Welsh Government decision to establish an executive function was set out in *A Healthier Wales*, with the focus for a stronger centre, additional transformational capacity and streamlining of a number of activities and structures within the NHS.

Public Health Wales was asked by the Welsh Government to be the host body for the NHS staff within the NHS Executive and the hosting agreement between Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government was approved by the Board on the 26 January 2023. The day to day management of the NHS Executive is the responsibility of the leadership team established by the Welsh Government and not Public Health Wales as the host body.

The NHS Executive was officially established on the 1 April 2023 and consists of the former NHS Wales Health Collaborative, NHS Wales Finance Delivery Unit and the NHS Wales Delivery Unit. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in place between Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government for the next 12 months in relation to Improvement Cymru, this sets out arrangements during the first year of operation as they move to full integration within the NHS Executive on the 1 April 2024.

The programme to establish the NHS Executive was led by the Welsh Government and without the dedicated support of colleagues from Public Health Wales in our Finance, People and Organisational Development, Information Governance and Risk, IT/Digital, Improvement Cymru and Communications Teams then it would

not have been possible. I would like to thank all of our people for the leadership and support in this work.

From April 2023, the Board will receive assurance on compliance with the terms of the hosting agreement, through the production of an Annual Assurance Statement and Report from the NHS Executive. This will be reported through the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

## **6 Launch of the ACT FAST Stroke Campaign in Wales**

Public Health Wales launched a nationwide Act FAST stroke campaign in April and May. This is a significant and important campaign to raise awareness of the signs of stroke and increase knowledge of stroke as a medical emergency. The campaign has been developed with colleagues in Health and Well-being and Communications, in association with the Stroke Implementation Group.

Stroke is the fourth single leading cause of death in the UK and the single largest cause of complex disability. Increased awareness of the FAST acronym has been shown to lead to patients seeking prompt help for stroke symptoms. Early treatment not only saves lives but results in a greater chance of a better recovery. A delay in getting treatment for stroke kills brain cells and can sadly prove to be fatal. That is why it is important to act F.A.S.T – which is the essence of the campaign – the acronym being:

- **F**ace - has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
- **A**rms – can they raise both arms and keep them there?
- **S**peech – is their speech slurred?
- **T**ime – even if you're not sure, call 999

The campaign will run for four weeks from the 27 April 2023 and include television, video on demand, radio and social media advertising, and coverage in the Welsh media. The Communications Team has worked closely with NHS England, to share materials and translate into Welsh.

To ensure that our campaign has an equal impact on Welsh speakers, a new Welsh acronym has been created: N.E.S.A. This acronym highlights the same symptoms as F.A.S.T. and allows for the following call to action: 'Pan fydd rhywun yn cael strôc, cofiwch y cam N.E.S.A.' or 'When someone has a stroke, remember the NEXT step.' We will also be engaging with the media and providing a toolkit for stakeholders across NHS Wales, the Welsh Government and the third sector.

The campaign urges audiences to call 999 if they identify any single one of the signs of stroke. As such, it could have an impact on increased demand across the system during the period of the campaign. The campaign information has been shared with NHS Wales colleagues involved in the stroke pathways. The campaign will use the established F.A.S.T. acronym to raise awareness of the signs of stroke among people aged over 50 years in Wales. It will place a particular focus on reaching those who are disproportionately affected by stroke, including those in

the most deprived areas and people of Black African, Black Caribbean and South Asian descent.

## **7 Llais – the New Citizen Voice Body**

The new Citizen Voice Body 'Llais' was established on the 1 April 2023 and is an independent body to 'raise the power and influence of the voices of people living in Wales, and to shape the services being delivered. Llais intends to have a strong regional presence in the seven footprint areas of Regional Partnership Boards in Wales. It also intends to launch a national volunteering campaign intended to attract diverse community of people. It will also support people to raise concerns about health and social care through an advocacy service.

The three key areas of focus of Llais are as follows:

- Make arrangements to support the Citizen Voice Body in seeking the views of the public
- Promote awareness of its activities amongst people who are receiving, or may receive, health or social services
- Supply the body with such information as it reasonably requests for the purposes of carrying out its functions.

We are keen to engage with Llais to understand how, as a national body, we can ensure that any views and experiences from the Welsh public are considered and responded to, ensuring we work in line with the ethos of Llais. Our engagement team will discuss further with Llais how we can best engage and collaborate going forward.

### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to receive this information.

**Tracey Cooper**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**