

Confirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting on 26 March 2025
Held in 3.7 CQ2 and electronically via Microsoft Teams
Livestreamed on the Internet

Present:		
Pippa Britton	(PB)	Chair of the Board
Tracey Cooper	(TC)	Chief Executive
Iain Bell	(IB)	National Director for Public Health Knowledge and Research
Claire Birchall	(CB)	Executive Director of Nursing, Quality and Integrated Governance
Diane Crone	(DC)	Non-Executive Director (University) and Chair of Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee
Nick Elliott	(NE)	Non-Executive Director (Data and Digital) and Chair of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee
Huw George	(HG)	Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director Operations and Finance
Sian Griffiths	(SG)	Non-Executive Director (Public Health) and Chair of the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee <i>(left at 13:51pm)</i>
Clare Jenkins	(CJ)	Vice Chair of the Board and Non Executive Director
Tamsin Ramasut	(TR)	Non-Executive Director (Equality and Diversity)
Kate Young	(KY)	Non-Executive Director (Third Sector) and Chair of the People and Organisational Development Committee
Sumina Azam	(SA)	National Director of Policy, and International Health
Meng Khaw	(MK)	National Director Health Protection and Screening Services, Executive Medical Director
In Attendance:		
Nathan Jones	(NJ)	Head of Strategy, Planning and Corporate Affairs (for item 4.2)
Neil Lewis	(NL)	Director of People and Organisational Development
Jim McManus	(JM)	National Director of Health and Wellbeing
Catherine Richardson		Graduate Trainee (Observing)
Paul Veysey	(PV)	Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit
Angela Williams	(AW)	Deputy Director of Operations and Finance
Apologies:		
Claire Sullivan	(CS)	Staff Side Representative

The meeting commenced at 11:15

PHW 2025.03.26/1	Welcome and Apologies
<p>PB welcomed everyone to the meeting which was being held in person at CQ2 and extended a warm welcome to those observing the proceedings online.</p> <p>The Board noted apologies as listed above.</p>	
PHW 2025.03.26/2	Declarations of Interest
<p>PB sought Declarations of Interest other than those recorded already on the Declarations of Interest Register. There were none.</p>	
PHW 2025.03.26/3	Board Assurance Framework
PHW 2025.03.26/3.1	Chief Executive's Report
<p>Introducing the Chief Executive's Report, TC drew attention to key highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC extended her congratulations to HG on his secondment to the post of Chief Commissioner of NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee and thanked him on behalf of the Board for his support and Leadership to the Organisation over the past 15 years. • TC highlighted a recent visit from Dr Pierre-Gerlier Forest, the President and Chief Executive of the Institute National de Santé Publique du Quebec (INSPQ), noting the Public Health synergies and went on to note the engagement with the World Health Organisation for Welsh Government to host an international policy dialogue on wellbeing economy. • Reflecting on the Young Ambassadors Programme, TC highlighted a recent workshop with young people's partner organisations, supported by PB and KY to discuss how best to reach young people across Wales. • PV provided an update on the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry Module 1 report, noting that the Senedd Special Purpose Committee had looked into potential gaps in Wales. The Organisation was internally considering the nine recommendations made and would support the Special Purpose Committee as required. • IB extended his congratulations to Alisha Davies on her award of a Presidents medal from the Faculty of Public Health. <p>PB thanked TC for the overview and invited questions from the Board. PB echoed TCs thanks to HG and welcomed AF to the interim role of Executive Director of Operations and Finance from April 2025. PB concluded the item by thanking KY for her support and contribution to the Young Ambassadors Programme.</p> <p>The Board noted the Chief Executive's Report and took assurance from the Report and the discussions at the Board meeting.</p>	
PHW 2025.03.26/3.2	Latest Public Health Overview
<p>IB introduced the latest Public Health Overview Dashboard, highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in mortality data during January 2025. IB advised that this was due to respiratory conditions during the winter period and in line with previous years. • Considering wider determinants, IB advised of the intention to work alongside other partners in this field to offer public health expertise in the area of economic activity and long term sickness. 	

- Reflecting on healthy behaviours, and smoking and alcohol substance misuse trends, IB noted the work underway within JMs team on an alcohol and drug needs assessment in order to drive forward the public health actions needed.
- Referencing the data around Communicable diseases and public health services, IB concluded his update by drawing attention to the improving trend related to antimicrobial prescribing.

TC reflected on the changes to gender trends and the continued female gender disparity related to healthy life expectancy since 2019, alongside children and those with protected characteristics. IB commented on the work already underway to identify the issues contributing to the decline, such as mental health, cost of living and waiting lists and the intention to develop work programmes around this.

PB highlighted the significant changes for women post 60 and commented on the potential to work with alcohol charities on the data around the use of alcohol. IB suggested this could form part of the alcohol needs assessment.

TR queried the reason for female gender disparity in waiting lists. IB advised that women utilise secondary care more often than men so an increase in waiting lists may result in a differential impact. IB agreed to explore this area further and work with health boards to improve data access to waiting lists.

JM reiterated that the alcohol and drugs needs assessment would include stakeholder perspectives and he commented on the need to provide waiting well around alcohol, smoking and weight to make a difference to women's health and life expectancy. Noting the usefulness of the dashboard, KY reflected on trends related to high food prices, community level funding needs around crisis, warm spaces and foodbanks, support for women to attend appointments as they were still predominantly the main family carer and changes to the benefit system. KY and PB commented on the need to proactively work with partner Organisations to help address these areas.

PB went on to invite MK to give a Communicable disease update. MK highlighted:

- A case of Lassa fever in a visitor from Nigeria, with no secondary cases reported.
- The decision to de-escalate and redesignate Mpox as a high consequence infectious disease.
- The Marburg disease outbreak in Tanzania was declared over on 13 March 2025.

To mark World TB day on the 24 March 2025 the Organisation hosted a Public Health Wales symposium on Tuberculosis (TB), highlighting the need for continued awareness and action in Wales in light of the rising number of cases.

The Board **discussed** and **scrutinised** the Rapid Overview Dashboard Report and **noted** the specific areas of data analysis underway.

PHW 2025.03.26/3.3

Integrated Performance Report (Month 11), Finance Report

HG presented the refreshed Performance Report to the Board and executive colleagues highlighted the following key issues:

- NL provided an update on sickness absence rates across the Organisation, noting the actions underway to promote staff wellbeing and the extensive support in place for managers. Board members queried whether any specific issues had been identified within the category of ‘Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses’ and the possibility of interrogating the data to identify any specific trends. NL gave assurance that the trends were considered and agreed to reflect on how best to further breakdown the data to identify specific trends.

Action: NL

- CB provided an update on two Freedom of Information (FOI) requests that were out of compliance and the actions underway to address these. CB went on to provide an update on incident closure rates that were out of target. Considering the Breast Test Wales Early Warning Incident, NE raised the need to expand Business Continuity plans to ensure they considered both specific and unforeseen risks. MK concurred with this and IB commented that the digital portfolio aspects would be included in the lessons learnt.
- MK provided an update on Bowel Screening and Breast Screening assessment waits which were both below the national standards and the actions underway to improve performance across both screening programmes, including regular engagement with Health Board providers and increased capacity. In considering potential impact on Breast screening patients, Board members supported MK’s intention to escalate discussion at a national level to optimise cancer pathways and wait times across Wales.
- HG provided an update on the delivery of the Strategic Plan milestones, noting the strong performance and that most milestones were on track to be delivered by March 2025. TC highlighted the intention to undertake a deep dive annual review in May, and the importance of measuring the impact of the milestones.
- TR welcomed the inclusion of inequalities data and went on to query whether there were any lessons learnt from the analysis of healthy life expectancy by local authorities, particularly Caerphilly. JM noted that that the effects of local community capacity and community infrastructure was evidence as impacting positively on a healthy life expectancy and IB agreed to review the data in further detail and report back any reflections.

Action: IB

HG concluded the update by presenting the finance report, noting the expected underspend, the system working to manage directorate budgets and highlighted that the Organisation was forecast to hit all targets at year end. TC thanked HG for his expert leadership, noting that the Organisations balanced books each year facilitated a focus on development funding.

The Board thanked all teams involved in preparing the financial reporting.

The Board **took assurance** on the organisation’s performance and governance arrangements, progress against delivering its strategy including delivery/recovery of key services and programmes.

PHW 2025.03.26/3.4	Committees of the Board: Report from Committee Chairs
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The Chair introduced the report and invited Committee members to highlight any items from their respective Committee meetings.

NE voiced his praise of HG for his leadership and support to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, and particularly his superb financial stewardship of the Organisation.

DC highlighted the in-depth discussion at the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee into the Organisation's Screening Programmes and their associated challenges. DC also noted the assurance taken that the Organisation had fully addressed the actions raised by Health Inspectorate Wales's Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IR(ME)R) inspection at Breast Test Wales and the associated lessons learnt.

The Board **noted** the report and **took assurance** from the content and the updates provided at the meeting.

Break

PHW 2025.03.26/4

Items for Approval

PHW 2025.03.26/4.1

Managing Risk

CB introduced the report and summarised the work undertaken to refresh the Strategic Risks to ensure they reflect the Organisation's Long-Term Strategy (LTS) and Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP). CB thanked Board members and directorate colleagues for their contribution to the refresh of the Strategic Risks and noted that a revised Strategic Risk Register with updated sources of assurance and risk appetite was due to be tabled at the July Board meeting.

CB summarised the work underway across each of the existing strategic risks, with contribution from the Strategic Risk Owners.

Strategic Risk 1

- CB noted to focus on inequalities and a review of the health and wellbeing programmes and their impact, highlighting the diabetes programme and the World Health Organisation (WHO) work on wellbeing economy.

Strategic Risk 2

- CB noted the work underway on a specialist Public Health system.
- JM emphasised the cross- collaboration in this area and a review of programmes to ensure clear direction on the contribution and the ongoing work underway to deliver this.

Strategic Risk 3

- Highlighting the refresh of the Our Approach to Engagement work, CB raised her anticipation of a National People's Experience Framework which would inform our approach to population experience and gathering feedback.
- SA reflected on the behavioural science work underway and the development of an informal network for Inclusion Health to enable shared learning.

Strategic Risk 4

- CB noted the good progress made against many of the actions, in particular the Leadership and Management academy and noted that the Organisation looked forward to considering the staff survey results in due course.
- NL noted that the delay of the refreshed People Strategy was due to the need to seek further engagement across the workforce.

Strategic Risk 5

- CB noted that this risk had undergone significant change since the last report which was reflected in a number of proposed changes to actions. CB went on to highlight the work underway on the Quality assessment against the six domains of healthcare quality standards.
- MK advised that this risk was under constant review and dynamically reflected changes across the system.

PB thanked CB for the updates to each of the existing strategic risks and asked invited CB to introduce the updated strategic risks as referenced within the next agenda item, IMTP.

CB briefed the Board members on the reframed strategic risks, noting that Strategic Risk 1, 2 and 3 had been amalgamated and a new strategic risk added. CB also referenced the inclusion of a new risk on climate change. PB invited Board members to comment on the new risks and sought their approval for inclusion in the IMTP.

NE noted the need to review further Strategic Risk 6 (Cyber Security), which had been considered in private session due to the nature of the risk.

Reflecting positively on the improved language, transparency and ability to measure impact from the updated Strategic Risks and their control measures, the Board **approved** the refreshed strategic risks and took **assurance** on the management of Strategic Risks within the Organisation.

PHW 2025.03.26/4.2	Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) / Annual Plan / Budget Strategy
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NJ joined the meeting for this item (joined at 13:22).

HG introduced the item and reminded the Board of the statutory duty to submit a financially balanced IMTP showing our plans over the next 3 years, which delivered the Cabinet Secretary Priorities set out in the Remit Letter.

HG also reminded the Board of the two Board Development sessions that were conducted on the IMTP in December 2024 and February 2025. Following the February session, the Chief Executive wrote to the Director General at Welsh Government setting out which priorities would need further conversations and funding. There had been no response from Welsh Government at present.

HG praised the IMTP plan and reminded the Board of the new Route Maps implemented to show the steps taken between now and 2035. HG discussed the risks and concerns, including the feasibility of delivering an ambitious plan, especially the digital strategy. HG added that a lot of work had happened on the analysis of change, how we would measure the benefits to ensure our work was aligned.

HG highlighted that the Budget Strategy was committed to supporting the delivery of our IMTP. HG discussed the key themes that would need to be maintained in order to ensure we continue to deliver against our financial duties.

IB noted one minor change to the IMTP, in relation to the action on the gap in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas and setting our ambition for 2035 for the reduction in this in the first quarter. IB noted that this would have been dependant on the Office for National Statistics publishing data on 3 April which was cancelled due to concerns over the figures. This was changed to quarter 3 to allow time to work through the data.

PB thanked NJ and the team for the work on the IMTP and praised the process, involvement of the Board and the final plan.

KY reflected positively on the narrative around our work with the public and informing the public, which comes through more than previous IMTPs. HG agreed and highlighted that these changes had come from the discussions held in earlier sessions, which were helpful.

TR praised the plan and noted that the new structure flowed better.

CJ agreed that the plan was accessible and easy to track, and the journey from the remit letter through to the planning, especially through the route map plans, was especially helpful for newer Non Executive Directors to understand the overall process. PB agreed that the Strategic Plan aligned with our Long-Term Strategy and planning for the future. PB noted as the plan was built on the route maps, it would have regular reviews.

TR raised the issue that the plan brought a lot more accountability, and questioned if we would have the data needed to report our deliverables at the end of year 3.

SG agreed with positive comments and raised concerns of the external environment we work in and asked how we share the model globally and learn lessons. TC responded that the UK 4 Nations Chief Executives meet quarterly, as do the Chairs of the 4 Nations, at the most recent Chief Executive meeting the challenges of global health and ideas to plan a UK wide exercise was discussed and would be on the next agenda in May. TC added that IANPHI would meet next week.

TC thanked the team for their work and also thanked the Board members for their input through the Board Development sessions to get the plan to this stage. TC noted a Change Programme Board would be set up with Executives who would meet monthly. TC noted that it was a challenging IMTP and we would need to ensure we were systematic in its implementation

Board **approved** the Strategic Plan (IMTP) and the Budget Strategy and Financial Plan 2025/26 - 2027/28 for submission to Welsh Government on the 31 March 2025.

NJ left the meeting at 13:52.

PHW 2025.03.26/4.3	Minutes and Action Log from the Board Meeting (30 January 2025)
<p>The Board approved the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 30 January 2025 as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>The Board considered the open Actions on the Action Log and approved the closure of completed actions.</p> <p>SG left the meeting at 13:51pm</p>	
PHW 2025.03.26/4.4	NHS Executive Hosting Agreement
<p>PV introduced the report, which set out the comprehensive review of the NHS Executive hosting agreement following previous addendum to the Original hosting agreement. The review aimed to strengthen the governance and assurance levels and outlined clear responsibilities for each party.</p> <p>PV set out the proposed key changes to the agreement, which included an assurance schedule to ensure the NHS Executive operated within the governance framework of Public Health Wales, service provision documents, clarification of professional lines of accountability and requirements around interests and risk registers. The refreshed agreement would replace all former agreements.</p> <p>PV raised two outstanding clauses for the Boards attention, noting that the hosting levy had not yet been agreed and an intention to clarify the role of the Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Wales in the operation of the NHS Executive and the hosted relationship.</p> <p>The Board thanked PV for clearly setting out the proposed changes and approved the revised hosting agreement subject to the remaining terms being agreed and subject to agreement being reached on the hosting fee.</p>	
PHW 2025.03.26/4.5	Update to the Public Health Wales Standing Orders and Reservations and Delegations of Powers
<p>PV introduced the report, which set out changes to the Standing Orders and reservations and delegations of powers review. The amendments had been considered by the Executive Team and recommended by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee at its meeting on the 10 March 2025.</p> <p>PV advised of a recent Welsh Health Circular which set out relevant changes to the timings of notice and publication of agenda and papers of Board and Committee meetings and advised that the proposed changes to the Standing Orders ensured the Organisations compliance. PV concluded the update by noting that a further review would be held in May 2025, which would also include Local Partnership Forum amendments.</p> <p>The Board approved the proposed changes to the Standing Orders.</p>	
PHW 2025.03.26/5	Items for Noting
PHW 2025.03.26/5.1	Private Chair's Report (30 January 2025)
<p>The Board noted the Private Chair's Report.</p>	

PHW 2025.03.26/5.2	Board Forward Plan
The Board noted the Board Forward Plan.	
PHW 2025.03.26/5.3	Private Board papers
None.	
PHW 2025.03.26/6	Date of Next Formal Meeting of the Board
<p>PB thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting. PV extended her thanks on behalf of the Board to both Huw George and Diane Crone who were both leaving the Organisation for their support and contribution to the Public Health Wales during their times of service.</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on 29 May 2025.</p>	
The meeting closed at 14:30	

Confirmed