

Confirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting on 30 January 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
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
In Attendance:		
Liz Blayney	(LB)	Deputy Board Secretary and Deputy Head of the Board Business Unit
Tom Fowler	(TF)	Deputy National Director of Screening and Health Protection Services
Jim McManus	(JM)	National Director of Health and Wellbeing
Jo Peden	(JP)	Consultant in Public Health
Neil Lewis	(NL)	Director of People and Organisational Development
Paul Veysey	(PV)	Board Secretary and Head of the Board Business Unit
Apologies:		
Sumina Azam	(SA)	National Director of Policy, and International Health
Meng Khaw	(MK)	National Director Health Protection and Screening Services, Executive Medical Director
Claire Sullivan	(CS)	Staff Side Representative

The meeting commenced at 10:35

PHW 2025.01.30/1	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 2025.01.30/2	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 2025.01.30/3	Board Assurance Framework
PHW 2025.01.30/3.1	Chief Executive's Report
<p>Introducing the Chief Executive's Report, TC drew attention to a few key highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC welcomed Pippa Britton as new Chairperson to her first formal Board meeting since taking up the post on 1 December 2024. • TC thanked NE for his excellent contribution and support to the Organisation during his time as Interim Chairperson, and noted that he had resumed his position as the Chair of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. • TC highlighted the mid-year Joint Executive Team (JET) accountability meeting with the Director General for Health, Social Care and Early Years Group/Chief Executive NHS and their senior team in Welsh Government. TC commented on the constructive meeting which focused on performance, strategy and the development of route maps. • TC drew attention to a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, commenting on the focus and timely conversation around prevention, with emphasis on diabetes and healthy weight, infectious disease and mental health and wellbeing. • TC highlighted visits with World Health Organisation (WHO) officials and Welsh Government in support of the Memorandum of Understanding between WHO Europe and Welsh Government, and highlighted a WHO publication co-produced by Public Health Wales 'Country deep dive on the well-being economy: Wales'. • TC went on to highlight a recently published report 'Investing in a Healthier Wales: Prioritising Prevention', developed by the Policy and International Health team, which looked at the most recent evidence that focused on the prevention interventions that provide the greatest impact on health outcomes and the biggest return on investment. Reflecting on the impact of the report, JP provided an update on the wide-scale dissemination and positive engagement following the reports publication, and highlighted that the Future Generations Commissioner had written to the Minister of Finance, Mark Drakeford asking for a ring fenced budget for prevention. • TC highlighted that the Wales Specialist Virology Centre was awarded the 'NHS Wales 2024 award for team culture' which recognised their multi-disciplinary team working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Hepatitis C Trust colleagues to achieve this. 	

PB thanked TC for the overview and invited questions from the Board.

SG commented on the excellency of the Investing in a Healthier Wales: Prioritising Prevention report, and in particular its approach to economic analysis and impact of older people in addition to the focus on the early years sector. SG also extended her congratulations on the global impact, collaboration and progress with the WHO and promotion and celebration of the leadership role the Organisation has undertaken.

PB concluded the update by congratulating TC on her well-deserved Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) honour in the Kings New Year Honours list for 2025. TC thanked the Board for their positive ministrations, thanking all teams within the Organisation for their support.

The Board **noted** the Chief Executive's Report.

PHW 2025.01.30/3.2

Latest Public Health Overview

IB introduced the latest Public Health Overview Dashboard, highlighting that:

- The number of people who had reported that they found it difficult to pay rent, make mortgage payments or pay bills had remained stable, but was still a significant proportion of the population.
- Waiting lists remained at a significant level, and this needed to be addressed as part of work on healthy life expectancy.
- Healthy behaviours data remained largely stable, but identified some indicators for concern around alcohol that would require further monitoring.
- Work remained ongoing to gather data in regard to vaping.
- Covid hospitalisation rates were stable, but work was required to increase the uptake of vaccination rates for COVID and flu.
- C-difficile infection rate in the Swansea Bay area was improving.

TF highlighted that:

- A case of human avian influenza was announced, and that close work was being undertaken around that.
- Close work was continued with the UK Health Security Agency to monitor M-Pox cases
- Influenza rates remained at elevated levels, and that this would continue to be monitored.

KY noted that work could be undertaken to access data from conversations and research occurring within communities, in order to improve and expand on the monitoring data gathered. JM highlighted that the lack of data on vaping was due to the estimate data being based on survey data, which did not provide information on specific age groups, and that this was due availability of shared figures from retailers.

SG asked about how the raising alcohol figures would be monitored. IB noted that JM would monitor this as part of work around substance misuse and would develop a needs assessment around this.

PB thanked IB for the update.

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

PHW 2025.01.30/3.3

Integrated Performance Report (Month 9), Finance Report

HG presented the Finance Report to the Board and highlighted the following:

- Noted that the chart on Page 117 showed that the most spend this year would be in the next 3 months, which would be managed carefully.
- Highlighted that each Directorate had spending plans which are being reviewed regularly.
- Identified a burden on the capital programme in the last month of the forecast, explaining this was due to come earlier in the year, but had been delayed due to an extensive procurement process.
- Noted potential expenditure in terms of the continued Covid testing costs. He added that there had been substantial work with Welsh Government and the Health Protection and Screening (HPSS) team to minimise the costs.
- Highlighted a risk for the system going into the next financial year, as some of the savings had been non recurrent this year.
- Informed the Board that as of the 30 January, Public Health Wales had not received its allocation for next year from Welsh Government.
- Noted that the organisation was currently on track to report a breakeven position by year end.

There were no questions from the Board on the Finance Report.

HG explained that the IPR report had been refreshed to focus on delivering actionable insights and assurance whilst identifying areas for further improvement across all of the report sections. HG added that following agreement at the September Board meeting, the month 9 report had introduced a new update on inequalities. An update on work related to inequalities would be reported bi-monthly, in line with formal Board meetings. HG highlighted that there was an additional 'Inequalities data in Health' document included in the Annex on page 190, provided by SA.

Governance and Accountability

NE noted that there were over 1,000 days of sickness absence reported as 'Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses'. NE queried if this is an area of concern. NL agreed that this continued to be our highest absence reason, although there had been investment in training and support for managers in this area. NL added that feedback from the Staff Survey had also helped understand specific challenges, which formed part of our ongoing engagement with staff, along with work with our Staff Networks.

PB added that there had been a Civil Service survey published recently, which provided some insight into where the shift has happened in reporting musculoskeletal problems compared to mental health issues, where people may not have wanted to talk about mental health previously.

Service Delivery

HG reminded the Board that there had been changes to the detail that was being reported in this section of the report; each Directorate had been concentrating on recording which Key Indicators were meaningful to report.

TF noted that there had been improvements in screening performance since the last period, however the position was short of achieving the national standards. SG queried what progress has been made in recruitment for a Radiologist for North Wales, and whether there were any alternative strategies in place to mitigate. SH advised that alternative delivery methods were being considered in the North; a Breast Conditioning training had been scheduled with colleagues in Manchester, and there were 2 Consultant Radiographers' in post. SH added that the telecommunications aspect had been centralised to provide more support virtually.

NE asked for more information regarding the minor breach reported in the Research, Data and Digital KPI's. IB explained the definition of a major and minor breach and provided a summary of this breach. NE suggested changing the language of how minor breaches were reported to the public to explain it more clearly. PB agreed that minor breaches were important to consider, whilst balancing the need concentrate on the more strategic issues.

In relation to the Whole School Approach data, KY noted the difference between Primary schools and Secondary schools on board and self-evaluating and action planning. JM explained that we are awaiting the results of an evaluation by the Wolfson Centre at Cardiff University on the Whole School Approach. JM noted that there were issues with capacity to implement this, particularly within secondary schools, and the need to engage with and support schools. JM noted that ESTYN and Welsh Government were scheduled to meet with Public Health Wales to discuss this further.

JM outlined the current work with the NHS Executive and the National Mental Health Network on both the needs assessment to revise the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) pathway and moving the in reach of CAMHS into schools into the NHS Executive, including the development of an action plan on children's mental health.

PB noted that further clarity could be provided within the data to explain whether it showed proportions of schools that Public Health Wales had approached or number of schools who had implemented this approach.

In relation to the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), DC suggested changing the categories of the data going forward to provide clarity on the overall picture. JM and DC agreed to discuss this further following the meeting.

Strategy Delivery

HG introduced the Strategy Delivery section of the report and noted the changes to milestones and to the Strategic Change Programmes overview, including the Newborn Screening Re-platforming changing to Amber/Red. HG raised that the 8 requests for Change to approve which have been approved by the Business Executive Team (BET).

TR suggested more of a focus on the impact would be useful in the report. TC agreed with this point, and noted the challenges of this within the context of the wider system and establishing the impact that Public Health Wales made to issues on a national level.

TC outlined the work internally on inequalities, and thanked TR for joining a recent Executive Session on this topic. She also noted that since then, there had been engagement with communities in the third sector to further develop this work on inequalities, including Population Health Management.

TC referenced the need to clarify a consistent definition of 'inequalities' to ensure the definition was being consistently applied and referenced within Public Health Wales. JP explained that there has been work ongoing across the organisation to explore this to ensure clarity.

NE questioned whether 5 red figures against the strategic priority for promoting healthy behaviours was of concern. JM responded that this was largely due to changing of Welsh Government Priorities. JM assured the Board progress on implementation was being monitored by the directorate on a weekly basis.

PB thanked team for their work on the report.

The Board **took assurance** on the organisation's performance and governance arrangements, progress against delivering its strategy.

Break

PHW 2025.01.30/3.4	Committees of the Board: Report from Committee Chairs
---------------------------	--

NE provided a verbal update from the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 14 January 2025.

SG provided a verbal update from the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee meeting held on 5 December 2024, and highlighted that papers had been considered on:

- Mental Health
- Monitoring Impact Surveillance
- Climate Change

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

PHW 2025.01.30/3.5	Summary of Corporate Policies
---------------------------	--------------------------------------

In introducing the report, PV provided a summarised position of Corporate Policies, noting that the Leadership Team and Board Committees regularly considered the progress to review policies across the Organisation.

PV highlighted that 81% of policies were in date, which was an improvement on the 61% of policies in date the previous year. PV emphasised the updates provided on the actions underway to address the out-of-review date policies, advising that each policy had had a risk assessment undertaken. PV noted the out of date All- Wales Social Media Policy presented medium risk and asked that the social media local guidance which was devised to mitigate risks be circulated to the board.

Action: LB

The Board took **assurance** on the prioritisation and progress being made to review policies, procedures and other written control documents.

PHW 2025.01.30/3.6	Ionising Radiation Breast Test Wales (BTW) Improvement Notice
---------------------------	--

TF introduced SH, the Director of the Screening Division who provided Board with an update to the Improvement Notice which followed an unannounced Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW) Inspection at Breast Test Wales in Llandudno August 2024.

She noted the inspection had focused on the:

- Quality of Patient Experience.
- Delivery of safe and effective care.
- Compliance with legal regulations in terms of radiation.

The Inspector's concerns highlighted in the Report and the short time scales imposed on the Organisation to address those concerns had been fully examined and undertaken.

Twelve procedures were reviewed, approved and implemented to address the concerns raised by the 23 September 2024 deadline as required in the Report. A series of staff training sessions followed and all staff had now confirmed they had read and understood these procedures.

The Improvement Order was lifted on 13 December 2024, and the Report was published in the public domain on the same day. HIW had informed the Organisation the date of their next inspection, in Swansea on 8 and 9 April and have asked for the submission of specific information by 17 March 2025.

NE asked if there were learning or Health and Safety issues to be addressed more widely across the Organisation. SH confirmed there were no further concerns to address however they were reviewing any learning that could be applied across the other screening programmes.

TC thanked MK, TF and SH for their rapid response to address all the recommendations in the Report which allowed the Compliance notice to be lifted swiftly. She also echoed SH's point that there could be learning that could be applied across the Screening Programmes.

PB observed the speed of the response by senior staff to address the concerns raised by HIW and suggested staff feedback would be important to clarify how easily staff were able to follow procedures using previous documentation.

PB asked SH to report back to the Board following the re-inspection as required.

The Board received **assurance** that Public Health Wales has addressed the actions as raised by Health Inspectorate Wales Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IR(ME)R) inspection at Breast Test Wales, Llandudno, on 28 and 29 August 2024.

PHW 2025.01.30/3.7	Structured Assessment
---------------------------	------------------------------

PV introduced the Audit Wales Structured Assessment for 2024.

The structured assessment for this year, conducted by Audit Wales, did not include any new recommendations. However, it acknowledged ongoing efforts to address previous recommendations, particularly around, timing of committee meetings to ensure better flow between committee and Board, expansion of the audit tracking system to other areas and better aligning the assurance framework to the strategic risk profile.

The Structured Assessment confirmed that Public Health Wales has effective governance and sound approaches in place.

The Board took **Assurance** from Structured Assessment and **noted** the ongoing work against the recommendations.

PHW 2025.01.30/4	Items for Approval
-------------------------	---------------------------

PHW 2025.01.30/4.1	Minutes and Action Log from the Board Meeting (28 November 2024)
---------------------------	---

Board **approved** both the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 28 November 2024 as accurate records of the meetings.

The Board **considered** the open Actions on the Action Log and approved the closure of completed actions.

PHW 2025.01.30/4.2	Ratification of Chairs Action / Common Seal
---------------------------	--

Board **noted** there was one occasion where Chairs Action was taken to **approve** a three year call-off contract to Empyrean Digital Limited for the delivery of the Beta phase of the web transformation programme for a total value of £651,953 plus VAT.

The Board:

- **Ratified** the approval by Chair's Action a three year call-off contract to Empyrean Digital Limited for the delivery of the Beta phase of the web transformation programme for a total value of £651,953 plus VAT.
- **Noted** that there has been no use of the Common Seal to report to the Board:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Took assurance that the action was taken in accordance with Section 8 of the Standing Orders. 	
PHW 2025.01.30/5	Items for Noting
PHW 2025.01.30/5.1	Private Chair's Report
The Board noted the Private Chair's Report.	
PHW 2025.01.30/5.2	Board Forward Plan
The Board noted the Board Forward Plan.	
PHW 2025.01.30/5.3	Private Board papers
None.	
PHW 2025.01.30/5.4	Audit Wales Annual Report
The Board noted the Audit Wales Annual Report.	
PHW 2025.01.30/6	Date of Next Formal Meeting of the Board
PB thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting.	
The next meeting would be held on 26 March 2025.	
The meeting closed at 14:25	

CONFIRMED