

 GIG CYMRU NHS WALES Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales	Name of Meeting Knowledge, Research and Information Committee Date of Meeting 15 September 2026 Agenda item: 3.2
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International Health Strategy – Progress Update	
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Approval/Scrutiny route:	Reviewed by the National Director of Policy and International Health
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Purpose
The purpose of the report is to provide a progress update on Public Health Wales' International Health Strategy.

Recommendation:				
APPROVE ☐	CONSIDER ☒	RECOMMEND ☐	ADOPT ☐	ASSURANCE ☒
The Committee is asked to: - Consider the work that has been undertaken and future plans for Public Health Wales' International Health Strategy. - Take assurance on the progress to date.				

Link to Public Health Wales [Strategic Plan](#)

Public Health Wales has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified seven strategic priorities and well-being objectives.

This report contributes to the following:

Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives
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Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	No Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken as no decision is required.
Risk and Assurance	Risks are being managed in accordance with the Board Assurance Framework.
Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act	This report supports the implementation of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act by identifying how Public Health Wales' international health activity supports delivering improvement, in line with the Duty of Quality.
Financial implications	Financial implications are being considered as part of this work programme.
People implications	People implications are being considered as part of this work programme.

1. Purpose / situation

This paper provides assurance to the Committee on progress being made with implementation of Public Health Wales' International Health Strategy.

2. Overview

Public Health Wales's [International Health Strategy 2023-2035](#) was updated and published in October 2023 to align with, and enable, [Public Health Wales' Long Term Strategy](#) and to better reflect the significant changes in the global landscape since the original International Health Strategy was published in 2017. A wide consultation process, supported by a literature review and mapping of international partnerships, research and collaborations across the organisation, enabled us to identify and articulate our vision, aims and enabling activities for the next ten years. This work on the Strategy was carried out by the International Health Coordination Centre (IHCC), Policy and International Health Directorate, who facilitate the work of the organisation, carry out enabling activities themselves and monitor the Strategy implementation.

Our international health vision is to be a globally connected and inspiring national public health organisation addressing worldwide challenges and shared goals, working towards a healthier and fairer Wales.

The aims of the International Health Strategy are to:

- Maximise benefits for the health and well-being of the people in Wales
- Develop globally responsible people and organisations
- Respond to global health threats and benefit from international opportunities

The six enabling international health activities which underpin the aims are:

1. Strengthen partnerships, collaborations, and networks
2. Drive best practice and innovation
3. Build globally responsible citizens through building relationships nationally and internationally and fulfilling international commitments
4. Provide an 'International Health Forum'
5. Create an international health repository and Newsletter
6. Support international opportunities for funding and capacity building.

The Strategy has taken a high-level overarching approach to our international work and collaborations, allowing dynamic reflection, flexibility and response to emerging global, European and UK developments, challenges and opportunities.

Successful implementation involves:

- Facilitation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and good practice with the UK and international / global health organisations and partners
- High-level cross-directorate strategic action

- Integration into existing planning models
- Strengthening existing, and developing new, international collaborations, networks and sustainable partnerships
- Generating international learning (horizon scanning) to inform Wales's policies, strategies and public health practice
- Dissemination and communication to raise awareness of global learning and knowledge exchange
- Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact of the International Health Strategy.

3. Progress Update

Feedback from the Committee and Strategic Executive Team (SET) in 2025 highlighted the need to articulate more clearly the benefits of international health activity and to strengthen the evidence base on its socio-economic value. In response, the following actions have been taken:

- A report on the *“Wider Social and Economic Impacts of International Health Partnerships”* has been produced and is progressing to publication.
- *International Health Champions* from several directorates have been invited to join the IHCC Network and participate in quarterly International Health Activity Group meetings in order to act as conduits for information sharing in their Directorates and wider networks.
- An [animation](#) has been created to explain how international health work contributes to improved health and well-being for the people of Wales.
- Interim findings from an independent impact report on the WHO Collaborating Centre (WHOCC) on Investment for Health and Well-being, Policy and International Health Directorate provides evidence of value and impact on policy in Wales and internationally, across diverse areas such as Adverse Childhood Experiences, Wellbeing Economy and Health Impact Assessment (*see Appendix 1*).

During 2026-27, the IHCC as an enabling vehicle for International Health activity across the NHS in Wales, has facilitated the implementation and delivery of the International Health Strategy through focusing on direct activity which can mobilise knowledge and actions to benefit the people of Wales.

Examples of actions include:

- Strengthening partnerships, collaborations and networks by providing space for teams to connect and learn from one another through our [International Public Health Forum](#) and International Health Activity Group
- Sharing insight and learning via [newsletters](#) and providing information on best practice and how it can be adapted to Public Health Wales' and Wales wide context

- Facilitating global citizenship and global health learning across NHS Wales via workshops and webinars
- Presenting and facilitating sessions and events with international and national partners for example, RIVM (Netherlands national Public Health institute) who delivered two long term thinking / Foresight sessions to Public Health Wales and stakeholders and Global Health Partnerships Cymru (GHPC).

International learning shared via these platforms has covered a wide range of topics, including healthy behaviours, social determinants of health, digital health equity and Artificial Intelligence, long term thinking, climate resilience, mental health, emergency preparedness, and immunisation and vaccine access.

3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

The evaluation for Year 2 (2025/26) of the International Health Strategy implementation has drawn upon a range of evidence sources, for example newsletter 'opens', forum attendance, publications and feedback from workshops and lectures. **Table 1** sets out international health activity indicators where the IHCC and Policy and International Health Directorate have the lead.

Table 1. International Health Strategy implementation – January 2025 to Present for the PIH/WHOCC Directorate, including the IHCC

Key indicators (activities and outreach)	International Health Strategy enabling activities
3 International Health Forums held with 13 presenters, attended by 106 participants in total.	4, 2, 5
11 Global Citizenship workshops, and presentations delivered in person and online, to a recorded attendance of over 200 people.	3, 6
7 NHS Wales International Health Activity Group meetings held, with guest speakers presenting work from across the world. The group now has 56 members, including NHS health boards and Trusts, Welsh Government, third sector partners and academia	1, 2, 6
13 UK based international / global health meetings attended, online and in person, including 1 Chief Medical Officer Four Nations Global Public Health Forum	1, 3, 6
8 high-level events and webinars co-organised with WHO/Europe, including two high level policy dialogues in Wales on health equity and wellbeing economy; and Regions for Health Network (RHN) two webinars and the annual meeting in Austria.	1, 2, 6

6 International Health Newsletters published, with 1,016 unique opens	2, 5
The International Health stakeholder mailing list has risen from 133 to 270 – a 103% increase in interest and reach.	1, 2, 6
IHCC Progress Report 2022-2024 (published in 2025), includes 13 case studies from across Wales (196 unique opens)	1, 2, 3, 6
Report ‘Strengthening Health with Equitable International Partnerships: Key Learning and Best Practices’ published (515 unique opens)	2
Report on the economic and social return of international partnerships (pending publication)	1, 2, 6
WHOC redesignation webinar with WHO and Welsh Government participation; and Impact Report (interim findings), covering eight years of work across investment in prevention and the well-being economy, health equity, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and violence prevention, HIA and international health (Appendix 1)	1, 2, 6
Approximately \$450,000 of income generated for 2025-2027 through the Wellbeing Economics and Value Team (WEAVE) partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), alongside additional income through WHO commissioned work on violence prevention, ACEs cost estimation and social connection	6
3 International Insights (Horizon Scanning) reports published with a total of 992 unique opens; and two internal reports produced	2, 6
7 guest global health lectures at Cardiff and Warwick Universities, 2 for the masters in public health and 2 for nursing students in the School of Healthcare Sciences Two students and two PH trainees hosted, providing additional capacity for applied research	3, 2

These activities demonstrate progress in establishing networks for sharing international learning and knowledge exchange and promoting international health capability across the public health workforce.

Wider Organisation

There is considerably more international health activity across the organisation. For example, the designation of the new WHO Collaborating Centre for Digital Health Equity in the Research Digital and Data Directorate; supporting international learning and research in genomics; leading on International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI) topics such as climate change and preparing to host the IANPHI Europe meeting in Cardiff (October 2026). This is contained in **Table 2**.

A broader organisational review including mapping of international partnerships and activity will be carried out at the end of year three of the Strategy (2026/27). This will be a significant undertaking for the IHCC, which has staffing of a 1.0 WTE Band 7 practitioner and 0.2 WTE Consultant in Public Health.

Table 2. Public Health Wales strategic international partnerships

WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO EURO) and the WHO European Regions for Health Network (RHN)	The renewed MOU between WHO Europe and Welsh Government (2023-2026 & 2026/27) is advancing health equity and well-being economies in Wales and globally. Public Health Wales delivers against the MOU through work such as the Welsh Health Equity Status Report initiative (WHESRI) and Health Equity Solutions Platform (WHESP); the joint Wales-WHO Special Initiative on Health and the Well-being Economy; and innovative tools for sustainable investment in prevention. In November 2025, the Research Digital and Data Directorate, Public Health Wales was designated by WHO as a new Collaborating Centre for Digital Health Equity. This will help shape regional and global priorities by contributing to technical reviews, research, and evidence development. The partnership aims to advance progress in digital health equity across the region. The WHO Collaborating Centre (WHOCC) on Investment for Health and Well-being has been re-designated for a further four years (2026-30). The WHOCC is a participant in the new WHO European Public Health Innovation Platform. Wales is supporting WHO to advance the adoption of well-being economies across Europe and globally. The first WHO and Public Health Wales Policy Dialogue on the Well-being Economy, held in Cardiff in March 2025, brought together the four Wellbeing Economy Governments of Finland, Iceland, Scotland and Wales and produced a synthesis report and four country overviews. A second Policy Dialogue followed in Cardiff in January 2026, examining how impact investment can catalyse and complement public funding for prevention and launching the WHO report “Unlocking funding for well-being, health and equity”. Dr Mariana Dyakova is the National Focal Point for Wales for the WHO Regions for Health Network and a member of its Advisory Group and has been appointed to the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases.
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	The Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) provides expert advice and peer review of policy briefs for the WHO Regional Office for Environment and Health in Bonn, supporting practice and advocacy for HIA in ministries for health and national public health institutes. WHIASU has also written a case study on the health impact assessment of the Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Trade Agreement for the first WHO Global Report on the Commercial Determinants of Health, due in 2026. The Public Health Collaborating Unit, Policy and International Health Directorate, has contributed to the WHO Global Report on Social Connection.
The International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI)	Public Health Wales has full IANPHI membership, and its role has been strengthened with Prof. Meng Khaw, National Director of Screening and Health Protection Services, serving as an IANPHI Focal Point Lead. This includes representing Public Health Wales at the IANPHI annual meeting and leading on IANPHI engagement across the organisation. Meng Khaw also chairs the Pandemic Preparedness, Response and Recovery Committee and Giri Shankar chairs the Climate Change Committee. The partnership has been further strengthened by Tracey Cooper (CEO), who sits on the IANPHI Executive Board. The Building Bridges to Resilience work undertaken by the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response team forms a key element of a collaborative project led by IANPHI. The IANPHI European Regional Network annual meeting will be held in Cardiff in October 2026.
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)	The WEAVE team is progressing a three-year project with PAHO and its Comprehensive Immunization Special Program on the social value of immunisation, examining the wider benefits and outcomes of vaccines that traditional economic measures do not capture. Phase I (2025-26) gathered the global evidence base and adapted Social Return on Investment methods to immunisation programmes; Phase II will support implementation and policy application across the Americas and bring learning to address vaccine hesitancy and inequalities in Wales.
EuroHealthNet	Public Health Wales is a member of EuroHealthNet, which advocates for policies that target the determinants of health, fostering collaboration and cross-sectoral engagement and improving the sustainability of health systems. Membership has enabled Public Health Wales to promote its work to a European audience, take part in cross-country exchanges and working groups on relevant topics, and draw on learning from public health policy, research and practice from across Europe. Sumina Azam, National Director of Policy and International Health, is Vice President of the EuroHealthNet Executive Board.
UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)	Public Health Wales' relationship with UKHSA is strengthened by Amanda Daniel, Infection Prevention and Control Specialist Community Nurse and



	Trustee of Global Health Partnerships Cymru, who is part of the UKHSA Public Health Rapid Support Team. UKHSA's quarterly Global Health Security group meetings are attended by Public Health Wales representatives Liz Green and Meng Khaw. In February 2026, at the invitation of UKHSA, and with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office funding, the Violence Prevention team delivered a three-day violence prevention workshop in Anguilla using the WHO INSPIRE framework. Outputs included a national violence prevention strategy, a national coordination mechanism and an Anguillian pledge for the Global Ministerial Conference on INSPIRE. Participants' understanding of the public health approach to violence prevention increased from 0% to 85%.
The UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH)	Public health professionals across Wales take part in FPH Special Interest Groups (SIGs) covering a range of topics, such as global violence prevention, sustainable development and global health, as well as specific geographical areas including Europe, Africa, India, Pakistan, Yemen and Sudan. Giri Shankar, Director of Health Protection, is co-chair of the FPH India SIG. In 2025 Jo Peden, Consultant Lead, Policy and International Health, was appointed lead for the Advocacy SIG. Liz Green, Consultant Lead for the IHCC, sits on the Faculty in Wales Committee as the global health representative. Public Health Wales, via the IHCC, is a member of the Global Health Committee, a quarterly meeting of these SIGs which also includes representation from Scottish and English public health organisations. The IHCC provides the Welsh perspective and enables the sharing of information and learning, and collaboration on joint projects.
Wales and Africa programme, Hub Cymru Africa, Global Health Partnerships Cymru and Cymru Global (formerly the Welsh Centre for International Affairs)	Public Health Wales continues a strong relationship with Wales and Africa, Hub Cymru Africa and Global Health Partnerships Cymru. Representatives from each organisation are members of the International Health Activity (IHA) Group, whose members include health boards, NHS trusts, Welsh Government, third sector partners and academia. The group meets quarterly to discuss international health updates and opportunities. Four presentations were delivered in IHA Group meetings during 2025-6, and Public Health Wales representatives attended two Hub Cymru Africa events. Hub Cymru Africa have worked collaboratively with Public Health Wales, for example on the Charter for International Partnerships Toolkit refresh. The Chair of Global Health Partnerships Cymru (Israa Mohammed, Advanced Epidemiological Scientist, Public Health Wales) collaborates regularly with the IHCC. The annual GHPC conference was held at Public Health Wales in

	September 2025, where Public Health Wales chaired sessions, facilitated a workshop and delivered the keynote talk. A further presentation was delivered at the GHPC annual conference in June 2026. Global Health Partnerships UK and Public Health Wales jointly wrote the IHCC 2022-24 progress report. The IHCC works in partnership with Cymru Global (formerly the Welsh Centre for International Affairs) on the Global Citizenship Programme across NHS Wales, including e-learning, workshops and webinars.
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3.2 Global Citizenship

Global Citizenship learning is an indicator of the Well-being of Future Generations Act's Globally Responsible Well-being Goal. The IHCC facilitates this via two main pathways:

- [Global Citizenship E-learning](#) is available to all NHS staff. The Core and climate change modules have been updated, and the other modules are under review. A Global Health e-learning module is in development with the Cymru Global, aimed at a wider range of stakeholders including those outside NHS Wales.
- Webinars, workshops, lectures and presentations. Audiences included teams from Health Boards, the School of Healthcare Sciences at Cardiff University, Cymru Global, the Global Health Partnerships Cymru conference, and a Cardiff University student visit from Grenada. Topics covered gender equity, respecting different cultures, the wider determinants of health and partnership working in global health.

Feedback has been consistently positive. Participants describe committing to more culturally sensitive care, greater awareness of health inequalities and applying global learning in their own practice.

4. Strategic alignment

Table 3 provides examples of how international partnerships and knowledge exchange contribute to our Strategic Priorities.

Table 3. International Health Partnerships and Long-Term Strategy Strategic Priorities

PHW Strategic Priority	Example of International Activity
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Influencing Wider Determinants of Health	- Identifying solutions with WHO for health equity and supporting the NHS and wider system in Wales to reduce the health gap via the the Welsh Health Equity Solutions Platform (WHESP), - The Research Digital and Data Directorate was designated by WHO as a new Collaborating Centre for Digital Health Equity. - Chairing of International HIA conferences and events - Wales HIA Support Unit have advised several national public health institutes for example from The Netherlands and New Zealand and national governments for example, the Federal German Commission on Prevention.
Promoting Mental and Social Well-being	- ACE Hub Wales, Policy and International Health, has driven Wales' emergence as an early and internationally referenced model of ACE-informed, trauma-informed practice, working across health, justice, education and community sectors through the Trauma-Informed Wales Framework, the Wales Violence Prevention Team. The work has been presented internationally at conferences. - Members of the Five Nations Public Mental Health Network. - Working with WHO and international partners on the first Global Report on social connection and health.
Promoting Healthy Behaviours	The Behavioural Science Unit, Policy and International Health, has a working relationship with WHO, applying behavioural science across topics such as vaccination, screening, smoking cessation, healthy weight, climate action and health communications. The Unit's own enabling plan draws directly on the WHO European regional action framework for behavioural and cultural insights for health 2022-2027, and on WHO Europe's guide to setting up behavioural insight units for improved health outcomes. The Unit has provided advice to WHO Europe Offices in Geneva and Venice.
Supporting a Sustainable Health and Care System Focused on Prevention and Early Intervention	- Strengthening our global role as a live innovation site for sustainable, value-based spending and investment in health and well-being through WHOCC on Investment for Health and Wellbeing - Providing leadership on a range of global health risks, including Health Care Acquired Infections (HCAI) and Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) and vaccine preventable diseases
Delivering Excellent Public Health Services	The Vaccine Equity Toolkit was published in 2026, co-produced with the Wales Vaccine Equity Network, and is being shared more widely including with WHO Europe.

	• UK-wide plans for pathogen genomics services have identified, where possible, a shared roadmap for service development and adoption. • Membership of UK Health Protection Committee and Four Nations Oversight Group. • There is significant involvement with IANPHI in Health Protection and Screening Services, particularly through Meng Khaw's focal point role. • Public Health Wales' two WHO Collaborating Centres bring access to international evidence, shared standards and shared learning that help strengthen its own public health services.
Tackling the Public Health Effects of Climate Change	• Collaborative working with national public health institutes across Europe and globally to address the health impacts of climate change. • Presenting our HIA on climate change internationally. • Working with four nations colleagues to address data and evidence gaps for climate change and health.

[International Health Insights](#) have been used to support evidence-informed policy and practice across all priorities through gathering actionable intelligence and best practices on public health programmes and NHS system transformation.

4.1 Alignment with the Research and Evaluation Strategy

Public Health Wales' Research and Evaluation Strategy highlights collaboration with researchers across Wales, UK and internationally with the aim of strengthening and extending these relationships.

Examples of alignment between the International Health Strategy and the Research and Evaluation Strategy include:

- Supporting novel pathways for international and applied research and teaching partnerships to deliver meaningful and practice-oriented research and evaluation initiatives.
- Enhancing research and evaluation through global knowledge exchange by facilitating sharing of international policy, practice, and research insights.
- Building research capacity and leadership globally, supporting the development of globally responsible people and organisations, contributing to a culture of research and continuous professional development.
- Insights gained from international best practices and networks help Welsh Government, NHS P&I and Public Health Wales shape research and inform innovative approaches to address challenges, such as inequalities, mental health, climate impacts.

4.2 Alignment with the Digital and Data Strategy

Public Health Wales' Digital and Data Strategy aims to 'Build in Alignment – Connecting to Global Goals and Standards.' Examples of alignment between the two strategies include:

- Facilitating Global Collaboration and Shared Digital Learning for example, via digital channels such as the International Health Forum.
- Enabling Workforce Digital Literacy & Global Responsiveness - through digital enabled capacity building, such as the [Global Citizenship e-learning module](#).
- Platforms such as the [Welsh Health Equity Solutions Platform \(WHESP\)](#), enable co-development and knowledge exchange through digital tools and global linkages in data and evidence.
- Global collaboration and insight are accelerators for improving the accessibility, quality, security, and utility of organisational digital and data systems.
- The designation of the Collaborating Centre for Digital Health Equity will help shape regional and global priorities and advance progress in digital health equity.

4.1 International Health Partnerships and Opportunities

Public Health Wales has many UK and International partners for a range of purposes outlined in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Policy, Practice, Research and Funding

Engagement Type and Purpose	Example partners - UK	Example partners - international
Policy and Advocacy Driving public health policy through advocacy and engagement at all levels	Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC); UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH); UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA); Public Health Scotland; Institute of Public Health, Ireland; Global Health Partnerships Cymru (GHPC); Four Nations Forums/Groups; NHS Confederation	UN and WHO bodies; IANPHI; EuroHealthNet; European Public Health Association; Global Network for Health in All Policies (GNHiAP); Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGO) and Well-being Economy Alliance.
Practice and Implementation Translating evidence/innovation into action through system leadership, capacity and capability building	UKHSA; FPH; Four Nations Forums/Groups; National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE); NHS England.	WHO & WHO Collaborating Centres; IANPHI; EuroHealthNet; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Centre on Well-Being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE); country National Public Health Institutes.
Research and Evaluation Advancing evidence, research, and innovation to guide public health decisions and investments	National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR); UKHSA; UK Research Councils (RC); Wellcome Trust; King's Fund; Institute of Health Equity; universities e.g. University College London.	WHO & WHO Collaborating Centres; Universities e.g. Maastricht, The Netherlands, Cork, Ireland and New South Wales, Australia; EUPHA; EuroHealthNet; The Lancet Commissions.
Funding and Income Generation Securing existing and new funding for strategic priorities and interventions	UK Research Council & Think Tanks; the Health Foundation; Wellcome Trust; Joseph Rowntree Foundation	WHO/ Pan American Health Organization; EU Horizon Europe Cluster 1: Health, Impact Investment alliances and funders.

5. Next steps for 2026-2027

The following activities are planned to further embed the International Health Strategy across all directorates and maximise impact:

- Publication of a report on economic and social return of international partnerships.

- An organisational international health activity mapping exercise to identify strengths, gaps, overlaps and opportunities for better coordination.
- The IANPHI European Regional Network annual meeting hosted in Cardiff in October 2026 where Public Health Wales will play a key role.
- Continued collaboration with WHO Europe and Welsh Government, delivering to the MOU and a Special Initiative on Well-being Economy and Health.
- Publication of the reviewed Global Citizenship e-learning and creation of a Global Health e-learning module with Cymru Global.
- Continuous engagement with key networks such as the WHO Regions for Health Network and Healthy Cities.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of year three of the International Health Strategy
- Publication of the IHCC Progress Report 2024-6.
- International Health briefings prepared for Welsh Government.

6. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- **Consider** the work that has been undertaken and future plans for Public Health Wales' International Health Strategy.
- **Take assurance** on progress to date.

Appendix 1

Delivering Impact in Wales and Beyond

Working as a WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being

Interim Executive Summary

August 2026

Background

The Policy and International Health Directorate, Public Health Wales has been designated as a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being (WHOCC) since 2018. It has delivered a comprehensive and impactful programme of work, positioning Wales as a global leader in prevention, health equity, and well-being-oriented cross-sector public policy. Through this recognition and partnership with the WHO, Welsh Government and other key partners, the Centre operates as both a national asset and an international platform for innovation, collaboration, and policy influence.

The Centre's work builds on a clear premise: improving population health and reducing inequalities requires sustained investment in prevention, the social determinants of health, and a whole-system approach that extends beyond the healthcare sector. This aligns strongly with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and reinforces Wales's role as a "live innovation site" for translating global public health frameworks into practical, scalable solutions.

This report highlights the impact of WHO Collaborating Centre work in Wales from 2018 to the present. It defines achievements as a combination of activities, key outputs and measurable outcomes and by systematically reviewing evidence through desk review, stakeholder interviews and structured analysis.

Key areas of work

Over the past eight years, the Centre has combined robust evidence generation, policy support, capacity building, and international engagement to deliver measurable benefits for the population of Wales while contributing to global knowledge and practice. Its work demonstrates how prevention-led, equity-focused systems can be embedded into governance, policy, and service delivery.

The Centre's activity is organised across four interconnected pillars, each addressing critical determinants of health and contributing to system-wide change.

Pillar 1: Investment in Prevention and the Well-being Economy

The WHOCC has played a leading role in strengthening the economic and policy case for prevention through pioneering and advancing well-being economics and Value-Based approaches. It has been supporting policy makers and budget holders to move beyond short-term, reactive thinking towards commitments to long-term funding and investment for population health and equity, health system resilience, societal prosperity and sustainable economic development. This includes developing novel evidence, guidance, tools, and frameworks that demonstrate the broader (social, economic and environmental) value of public health to inform budget shift and investing in prevention.

Pillar 2: Health Equity

The WHOCC has played a key role in advancing health equity in Wales through the Welsh Health Equity Status Report Initiative (WHESRI) highlighting how wider determinants drive health inequalities and informing a more equitable post-pandemic recovery. By generating intelligence, data and applying innovative analyses, the Centre strengthened the evidence for cross-sector action. Implementation is progressed through establishing a unique Welsh Health Equity Solutions Platform (WHESP), knowledge-sharing activities and international collaboration, helping embed health equity in policy and practice in Wales while sharing Welsh learning across Europe and beyond.

Pillar 3: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Violence Prevention

The WHOCC has advanced a public health approach to violence prevention, addressing adverse childhood experiences through system-wide, trauma-informed strategies. Its work spans evidence generation, policy development and implementation tools that support multi-sector action. Enhanced use of data and strengthened collaboration across agencies have notably improved prevention, early intervention and response.

Pillar 4: Health in All Policies (HiAP), including Sustainability, HIA and Behavioural Science

The WHOCC has played a critical role in embedding health and equity into policymaking across all sectors. Through a HiAP approach, it has supported broader recognition of how decisions outside the health sector shape population health outcomes and vice versa. Embedding Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Sustainable Development practices and Behavioural science have been key enablers, improving both the design and implementation of policies and interventions.

Shared impact across pillars

Across the four pillars, the WHOCC has delivered impact that is greater than the sum of its individual programmes. Its distinctive contribution lies in combining robust evidence

generation, practical policy tools, system-level implementation support, and international leadership within a single, prevention-focused mandate. While this analysis focuses on impact per pillar, it is also important to recognise the integrated impact across all four pillars. Several themes recur, as outlined below, highlighting the comprehensive and integrated nature of the work delivered by the WHOCC.

- **Prevention as a system principle:** Work in all pillars reinforced prevention as the primary route to sustainability, whether through early years investment, violence prevention, equity-focused policy, or anticipatory impact assessment.
- **Equity at the core:** Health equity is now actively embedded across investment cases, well-being economy work, violence prevention frameworks and HiAP processes, rather than being treated as a standalone agenda item.
- **From evidence to action:** The Centre has consistently bridged the gap between analysis and implementation, translating complex evidence into practical frameworks, tools, platforms and guidance used by policymakers and practitioners.
- **Whole-of-government approach:** Work across pillars has strengthened governance, commissioning, budgeting and accountability mechanisms beyond the health sector, aligning with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- **Crisis-ready public health:** Experience across COVID-19, cost-of-living pressures, climate change and violence prevention have demonstrated the Centre's ability to support rapid, evidence-informed decision-making under uncertainty.
- **Global relevance, local application:** Wales is now positioned as a live test-bed for WHO-aligned innovation, with learning exported internationally and global expertise continually feeding back into national policy.

Key Messages for Policy and decision making

The following key messages are relevant across all four pillars of the WHOCC's work and can help guide policy and decision-making.

- Prevention, equity, and well-being must be treated as system fundamentals, not policy add-ons.
- Long term impact depends on investing in capacity, capability, national and international intelligence and governance, not just individual programmes.
- Integrated public health functions such as evidence generation, health impact assessment, policy development, cross-sector partnership working, knowledge translation, capacity building and prevention-focused public health action have enabled governments to respond better to both chronic challenges and acute crises.
- Embedding health, equity and well-being early in policy design avoids costly downstream harms.

- Continued impact requires stable partnerships between government, academia, public and international institutions.

Benefit to the population of Wales

The work of the WHOCC has delivered tangible benefits for the population of Wales, specifically:

- **Helped improving health outcomes** through providing evidence and know-how on high value prevention and early intervention programmes. For example, the “Investing in a Healthier Wales: Prioritising Prevention” work identifies interventions with the highest return on investment (ROI) along the life course to improve population health.
- **Helped reducing inequalities through targeted, cross-sector action** which is evident in the WHESP work and the HIA Guidance where public bodies can assess impacts on disadvantaged communities and relevant stakeholders are engaged and committed to contribute to reductions in health inequities.
- **More efficient use of public resources** by addressing root causes supported by the Centre’s prevention investment reports and value-for-money evidence support shifting spending towards prevention and the wider determinants of health.
- **Increased resilience across communities and systems** is linked to work supporting well-being economy approaches and the Health and Sustainability Hub which promotes stronger communities, sustainable development and resilient public services.
- **Better-informed decisions through robust, accessible evidence** are now available from resources such as the Centre’s HIA toolkits, behavioural science reports, toolkits and evidence briefings providing practical evidence for policymaking.

These new approaches have benefit the population both directly and indirectly.

Cross-cutting themes

Across the four pillars, the following themes arose showing how the Collaborating Centre dedicated time and resources to the following cross-cutting areas.

Leadership

Work across pillars manifest many forms of leadership. Strategic leadership was evident at national and international level on well-being economy, prevention and social value, including ministerial engagement and WHO policy dialogues. Health equity measurement and policy, including contributions to WHO and regional fora illustrated visionary leadership. The WHOCC demonstrated national and international leadership in framing violence as a preventable public-health issue. HIA served as staunch advocacy for embedding health and

equity across non-health policy domains (e.g. climate, trade, housing, planning) and informed national legislation and regulation.

Service delivery

Work across all four pillars has led to development and implementation of frameworks, toolkits, campaigns and systems used by partners across Wales. HIAs and economic analyses carried out support real-time policy decisions at national and local levels. International horizon scanning and insights now dynamically inform the development and implementation of new strategies, policies and NHS system transformation and innovation.

Capacity building

The WHOCC strengthens capacity around development of investment frameworks, novel tools and guidance which enables policymakers and practitioners to build stronger prevention cases. Strengthening of systems to use equity data and evidence across sectors and levels of government has also been evidenced. Capacity has also been enhanced by offers of training, creation of communities of practice, statutory support for Welsh HIA Regulations, violence and ACEs prevention across sectors and services, and behavioural-science capability development.

Knowledge sharing

Guidance, reports, infographics and case studies translate HiAP and Behavioural Science into practice. WHESRI has been a fountain of knowledge and a live laboratory for Welsh and European health equity work, a good practice that other countries could get knowledge from. Products such as the WHESP, spotlight features, webinars and animations have been instrumental in translating complex equity evidence for diverse audiences.

Research

The WHOCC's work has led to applied health-economics research linking prevention, equity and financial sustainability across the board. Innovative analytical methods (e.g. decomposition analysis) and high-impact peer-reviewed publications have included systematic reviews, economic burden studies and evaluations. The innovative areas of behavioural insights had led to methodological development and applied research on cumulative policy impacts and behaviour change.

Fostering international learning and cooperation

Collaboration and active engagement have been strengthened with the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe), including the WHO Venice Office on Investment for Health and Development; the WHO Bonn Office on Environment and Health, and the WHO Regions

for Health Network (RHN). This has also resulted in participation in WHO expert groups, platforms and network, engagement in WHO initiatives and country deep dives, multi-country sharing and peer learning, policy dialogues, joint publications and forums. The WHOCC is working closely with other WHO regions and offices, such as with WHO Headquarters and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). It has also supported expressions of interest from other countries, such as Ireland and Northern Ireland, related to work on investment in health and well-being.

Financial and in-kind contributions

Work of the WHOCC has fostered collaboration, ranging from in-kind staff and expert contributions and has also resulted in monetary income generation. This speaks to the value given to the Centre's work both inside and outside of Wales. It is worth noting that secondments and advisory roles (e.g. WHO guideline development, regional networks, innovation platform and global commissions) represent a significant, largely uncosted contribution, strengthening WHO outputs while drawing on the Centre's expertise.

Overall, the WHOCC has demonstrated substantial, system-wide impact by embedding prevention, equity, well-being and sustainability across policy, practice and international leadership, positioning Wales as a global exemplar of integrated, evidence-to-action public health. Going forward and building on existing success, efforts may consider scaling up of proven tools and approaches (e.g., HIAs, WHESP, TrACE, BeSci, SROI) across sectors, supported by sustained funding and workforce capacity. Increased focus on implementation at scale, particularly understanding enabling conditions, removing barriers, and aligning governance and policy levers, will be essential to translate documented achievements into sustained, measurable population-level impact.

Next steps

A valuable addition would be the engagement of external stakeholders with which collaboration has taken place such as the WHO and the Welsh Government to get an outside perspective on the value of the Centre's work, triangulation of findings and identify where improvements can be made for greater future impact.