Generating the evidence needed to make a difference to population health

Research and Evaluation Strategy
2019 to 2025
Contact Details
Research and Evaluation Division
Knowledge Directorate
Public Health Wales
2 Capital Quarter
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ
Telephone: 029 2022 7744
Email: PHW.Research@wales.nhs.uk
@PublicHealthW
@PHRWales
www.publichealthresearchwales.co.uk

Media Enquiries
Journalists wishing to contact Public Health Wales should call 029 2034 8755 (24 hours). There is a communications officer on call at all times.
Public Health Wales welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

ISBN 978-1-78986-078-8
Available at www.phw.nhs.wales

© 2019 Public Health Wales NHS Trust

Material contained in this document may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence (OGL) www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/ provided it is done so accurately and is not used in a misleading context.

Copyright in the typographical arrangement, design and layout belongs to Public Health Wales NHS Trust.
Contents

About Public Health Wales 2

1 Research and evaluation within Public Health Wales 5
1.1 Looking back: Our successes to date (2015 to 2018) 7

2 A Research and Evaluation strategy for the future (2019 to 2025) 10
2.1 Our role 11
2.2 Our goal 11
2.3 Our assets 11

3 Strategic Objectives 12
3.1 Setting the agenda for population health research and evaluation 13
3.2 Building a research and evaluation culture through investment in our staff 14
3.3 Generating evidence to inform action by leading and facilitating innovative research and evaluation 15
3.4 Working together to have a positive impact on population health 17
3.5 Being visible: effecting change through communication 19
3.6 Building an enabling infrastructure to support successful implementation 20

4 Implementation and governance 21
4.1 Implementation 21
4.1.1 Outline plan for implementation 24
4.2 Research governance and risk review 24
4.2.1 Research and evaluation principles 25

5 Success 26
5.1 Measuring overarching success 27

6 Acknowledgements 28

7 References 29
Public Health Wales has four statutory functions:

1. To provide and manage a range of public health, health protection, healthcare improvement, health advisory, child protection and microbiological laboratory services and services relating to the surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases;

2. To develop and maintain arrangements for making information about matters related to the protection and improvement of health in Wales available to the public; to undertake and commission research into such matters and to contribute to the provision and development of training in such matters;

3. To undertake the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of information about the health of the people of Wales in particular including cancer incidence, mortality and survival; and prevalence of congenital anomalies; and

4. To provide, manage, monitor, evaluate and conduct research into screening of health conditions and screening of health related matters.
**Figure 1** Public Health Wales’ priorities for population health in Wales, 2018-2030

**Our Priorities 2018-2030**

- **Building and mobilising knowledge and skills** to improve health and well-being across Wales
- **Supporting the development of a sustainable health and care system focused on prevention and early intervention**
- **Influencing the wider determinants of health**
- **Improving mental well-being and resilience**
- **Promoting healthy behaviours**
- **Protecting the public from infection and environmental threats to health**
- **Securing a healthy future for the next generation**

**Working together with trust and respect to make a difference**
1 Research and evaluation within Public Health Wales

“Information, research and evidence are the foundations of, and indispensable instruments for ensuring, quality health policies”
(World Health Organization, 2017)

“The best research and innovation, whether public or private, is driven by people with broad horizons and a global outlook”
(Prosperity for All, 2018)

Public Health Wales aims to make a difference to the health and well-being of present and future generations in Wales through focused collective efforts on key priorities identified in our Long Term Strategy (Figure 1).

Building and mobilising knowledge and skills to improve health and well-being across Wales is a strategic priority within Public Health Wales and underpins action across all others. Research and evaluation activity focused on the critical issues for population health, supported by effective collaborations with national and international partners (including health, social care, Public Services Boards, Regional Partnership Boards, education, housing, criminal justice, academia, industry, third sector organisations and many more) and people in Wales, enables us to achieve a collective positive impact on health.

Research and evaluation activities are essential to finding innovative ways to achieve effective and efficient change in this complex environment. As identified in A Healthier Wales², an evidence driven approach (using research, evaluation, knowledge and information to understand what works; learning from and working with others) is a core principle for driving change and transformation across the population health system.
Often the terms *research* and *evaluation* are used interchangeably, whereas in this strategy they are defined as described in Box 1. Research programmes are essential to address gaps in the evidence base to inform action to protect health and mitigate the impact of current and future challenges to health. Evaluation activities help us to understand the impact of our, and others’, actions on population health outcomes.

**Box 1. Defining key terms**

| **Research** | The attempt to derive generalisable (i.e. of value to others in a similar situation) new knowledge by addressing a clearly defined question/hypothesis with systematic and rigorous methods, which are fit for purpose. This covers a broad definition of research, including e.g. qualitative and quantitative research, observational, epidemiological and experimental studies. |
| **Evaluation** | The use of systematic approaches to determine how a policy, programme or other intervention was implemented, what effects it had against expected outcomes, for whom, how and why, providing evidence that can be used to improve it. This includes using different methods, working in different settings, with varied populations and data. |

This strategy emphasises our commitment to public health research and evaluation to generate the evidence needed to make a difference and achieve a healthier, happier and fairer Wales. Here we set the future direction for research and evaluation within Public Health Wales, building on progress to date within the 2015-2018 Research Strategy\(^3\), enhancing our approach as the national public health institute for Wales.
1.1 Looking back: Our successes to date (2015 to 2018)

Public Health Wales has made significant progress following the 2015-18 Research Strategy, as demonstrated in our annual research highlights reports, and progress against the measures of success set in that strategy;

- A shared research agenda across the public health system.

Public Health Wales has produced transformational evidence through research to better understand and improve health and well-being in Wales particularly on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and in the development of shared research and evaluation programmes across partners e.g. housing, policing. This led to securing £6.87 million from the Home Office to support a collaborative programme between Public Health Wales and the Police and Crime Commissioners across Wales (2017-2020).

Recognising our national and international role, expertise and achievements, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated a WHO Collaborating Centre on ‘Investment for Health and Well-being’ at Public Health Wales - focusing on taking forward a sustainable early intervention, people-centred long-term investment approach across all sectors and organisations.

- A clear and coherent pathway for external partners to engage with Public Health Wales in research.

Supported by Welsh Government funding, the Public Health Wales Research and Development (R&D) Office provides a clear pathway for external partners to engage with us in research. Across Public Health Wales, we work in partnership with academic and other partners to strengthen population health research.

Examples include:

- Strong links with the Schools Health Research Network, and Public Health Improvement Research Network within the Centre for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions for Public Health Improvement (DECIPHer), Cardiff University which co-produced large portfolio studies;¹

- Our collaboration in the National Centre for Population Health and Wellbeing Research, across Swansea, Cardiff and Bangor Universities, focused on multi-agency health and social care research across the life course;

- Our links with the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank, Health Data Research UK, Administrative Data Research Partnership, and All Wales Injury Surveillance Unit, Swansea University;

¹Portfolio studies including: A multicentre cluster randomised controlled trial to investigate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of an informal school-based peer-led drug prevention intervention (The FRANK friends study) (NIHR £1,506,925); Mental Health in Schools – RCT of an intervention to improve mental health support and training for secondary school staff (WISE study) (NIHR £1,291,098);
• Our investment in the Public Health Collaborating Unit\(^\text{ii}\), established in 2016 in collaboration with Bangor University to support and facilitate working with and access to academic public health assets. The Collaborating Unit has worked on a number of high profile work streams including gambling and ACEs; and

• Developments in genomics and microbiology with collaboration with Cardiff University.

• An active public health research community within Public Health Wales.

Public Health Wales has promoted an active research community through:

• Funding promising research activities amongst staff via internal pump-priming grants (10 projects across Public Health Wales since its launch in 2015); and our collaborative research grants, co-designing and delivering research studies with external partners (for example, exploring children’s perceptions of electronic cigarettes with Liverpool John Moore’s University, which was presented at the UK E-Cigarette Research Forum; examining the health and well-being needs of asylum seekers with Swansea University whose findings were presented in the Senedd supported by the Welsh Refugee Coalition);

• Supporting the development of research and evaluation groups within Divisions and Directorates across Public Health Wales;

• Sponsoring European Union (EU) Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS).

• Supporting research skills development in collaboration with the People and Organisational Development Division, and external research career development funding (3 successful Clinical Research Time Awards\(^4\) since 2015).

• Raising awareness of funding and development opportunities through a monthly R&D bulletin, a Dysgu@ Lunch seminar programme on areas of public health interest, a virtual research community\(^5\) to facilitate networking, annual research conferences to promote research collaborations with all sectors, and annual reports highlighting successes.

• Year on year increase in the number of publications by Public Health Wales staff in peer reviewed journals.

Public Health Wales staff remain actively involved in writing academic publications, with 119 peer reviewed journal articles published in 2018, compared to 106 in 2014 (average annual increase over the period 2014 to 2018 of 9%)\(^\text{iii}\).

---

\(^{\text{ii}}\) This is a dedicated resource, hosted by Bangor University, which aims to respond to emerging needs for academic support in line with Public Health Wales’ objectives. The Public Health Collaborating Unit links directly into our World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Investment in Health and Well-being.

\(^{\text{iii}}\) Figures from Public Health Wales Library Services of publications linked to Public Health Wales staff. May underestimate the total number of publications produced.
• **At least a 30% increase in external research funding received over the next three years from the baseline levels in 2014.**

The income to support research and evaluation activities led and facilitated by Public Health Wales has increased by at least 30% since 2014 to exceed £980,000 in 2017/18.

• **A clear and coherent pathway for knowledge mobilisation and communication to facilitate and promote evidence-informed policy and practice.**

We have also facilitated conferences, seminars and workshops in Wales promoting evidence-based practice for practitioners and researchers, including Research in Wales, our annual cross-organisational research conference. The organisational Knowledge Mobilisation Strategy has also supported progress in this area. The annual Public Health Wales Research Highlights reports showcase how our research has influenced policy and practice over the years, for example population level surveys (e.g. ACEs, Stay Well in Wales) informing our organisational priorities and the wider policy agenda in Wales; research informing early action and prevention through the development of trauma-informed approaches to policing; research informing response frameworks to challenging areas for population health including mass unemployment events, and preventing radicalisation in the UK.

Whilst there are many areas of excellence within Public Health Wales, we recognise the need to further strengthen our research, in line with recommendations following the 2017 International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI) peer review of Public Health Wales.

This strategy sets out our strategic approach to research and evaluation as a national public health institute for Wales, both supporting our progress against priority areas (Figure 1) and harnessing expertise across the organisation. As we look towards 2030, we will continue to strengthen research and evaluation across the organisation to meet the complex existing challenges and emerging issues for population health over the next decade.
2 A Research and Evaluation strategy for the future (2019 to 2025)

The aspiration outlined within Public Health Wales’ long term strategy is to develop a thriving research environment achieving excellence in the generation of evidence through translational research and evaluation to address health challenges in Wales by 2030 (Box 2).

To support that long term aspiration, this Research and Evaluation strategy builds on successes to date (Section 1) and defines our overarching role, goals to be achieved, and outlines six strategic objectives for 2019 to 2025 which will support progress towards our 2030 aspirations.

Box 2. Public Health Wales’ strategic priority linked to research and evaluation, and long term aspirations

Building and mobilising knowledge and skills to improve health and well-being across Wales (Strategic Priority 7)

By 2030, we will:

• have a thriving research and development environment, drawing from and contributing to the best international evidence, attracting diverse investment and employing research talent from around the world.
2.1 **Our role** as the national public health institute for Wales is to be a system leader for population health research, identifying the priorities for population health, influencing the population health research agenda, leading a credible research and evaluation portfolio, to generate and use evidence to improve population health, and reduce health inequalities in Wales.

2.2 **Our goal** is to have a demonstrable impact on population health in Wales visible at a national and international level, through leading and facilitating population health research and evaluation.

2.3 **Our assets** supporting the growth of research and evaluation include the depth of knowledge and expertise within our staff; our population health programmes and datasets; laboratory infrastructure; close relationships with practitioners and policy makers across health and non-health disciplines; effective collaborative partnerships with higher education institutions; and our ability to identify challenges and respond effectively to generate and use evidence to have a positive impact on health.
3 Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives will deliver the long term aspirations described in Box 2;

1. **Setting the agenda** for population health research and evaluation

2. **Building a research and evaluation culture** through investment in our staff

3. **Generating evidence to inform action** by leading and facilitating innovative research and evaluation

4. **Working together** to have a positive impact on population health

5. **Being visible:** effecting change through communication

6. **Building an enabling infrastructure** to support successful implementation

The strategic objectives are strongly interlinked and action in one area will support progress against another (Figure 2).

**Figure 2** Public Health Wales, Research and Evaluation strategic objectives, 2019 to 2025.
3.1 Setting the agenda for population health research and evaluation

Public Health Wales’ Long Term Strategy states that the organisation will develop a new research and development agenda aligned to the seven priority areas for action to improve the health of the population in Wales (Figure 1). In our role as a national public health institute for Wales, we will set the agenda for population health research and evaluation to support us in achieving our long term strategy, drawing on expertise within Public Health Wales and with engagement from others including policy makers, higher educational institutes, and the public.

This will include identifying where evidence is needed to inform policy or practice, and influencing the national and international research infrastructure to focus on priorities to improve population health in Wales.

We will achieve this by

3.1.1 Developing and applying a systematic approach to identifying key research and evaluation priorities for population health aligned to priorities for population health in Wales, in collaboration with policy makers, the public and interdiscipliinary researchers.

3.1.2 Influencing the strategic direction of population health research including national health research funders (e.g. national and international academic funders such as National Institute for Health Research, Economic and Social Research Council, Medical Research Council, and voluntary sectors), governmental sectors (e.g. Welsh Government and others), and the research agendas of academia and partner organisations.

3.1.3 Building a joint research agenda within and across strategic priorities in collaboration with academia, the public sector, local and national government, Public Services Boards, Regional Partnership Boards and others.
3.2 Building a research and evaluation culture through investment in our staff

Public Health Wales aspires to have a thriving research and evaluation environment attracting diverse investment and employing research talent from around the world. This will mean continuing to build an organisational culture which values research and evaluation activities, and supports staff to develop and apply research and evaluation skills to strengthen evidence-based practice, and contribute towards creating a learning organisation.

Over the longer term to 2030, we will create innovative staffing models including working across higher education institutions, to support transdisciplinary research and evaluation to help us to develop a sustainable network of population health research and evaluation expertise.

We will achieve this by

3.2.1 Developing and implementing a sustainable research and evaluation development programme addressing technical knowledge and skills, and application into practice - responding to competency gaps in new and emerging research methodologies across data analytics, genomics and bioinformatics.

3.2.2 Raising awareness of research and evaluation purpose and value amongst all staff.

3.2.3 Encouraging and supporting staff to develop research and evaluation proposals and funding applications based on their public health practice experience in collaboration with partners and academic networks (linked to Section 3.4).

3.2.4 Promoting and developing research and evaluation leadership amongst public health specialists through formal and informal mentoring programmes, development of clear research career pathways internally and with higher education institutions, and maximising uptake of internal and external funded programmes to develop (e.g. Health and Care Research Wales funded Clinical Research Time Awards, postgraduate research programmes).

3.2.5 Proactively identifying and facilitating opportunities for academic placements, postgraduate supervision, staff secondments, honorary contracts and joint posts spanning organisational boundaries; understanding the value and skills transfer in both directions.

3.2.6 Working with academia and the Faculty of Public Health, to strengthen Public Health Wales’ roles in the training and development of academic Public Health Specialty Registrars in Wales; and continued engagement in research amongst Public Health Consultants within Public Health Wales.

3.2.7 Recognising and celebrating success amongst our researchers.

3.2.8 Investing to support and strengthen research and evaluation capacity and capability within Public Health Wales (see Sections 3.6 and 4.1.1).

3.2.9 Increasing levels of engagement with the virtual research community for Public Health Wales to share examples of good practice and promote networking.
3.3 Generating evidence to inform action by leading and facilitating innovative research and evaluation

Strengthening purposeful research and evaluation activities across our organisation will generate the evidence needed to inform action at a local and national level to improve population health in Wales. Drawing on our assets (Section 2.3), we will both lead and facilitate research and evaluation programmes aligned to our strategic priorities, whilst also proactively identifying and addressing new and emerging challenges to population health.

We will achieve this by

3.3.1 Leading strategically focused collaborative research and evaluation programmes, including high quality research portfolio studiesiv.

3.3.2 For each strategic priority (Figure 1), identifying and systematically evaluating key public health programmes and initiatives, understanding the impact and value to population health, informing future action.

3.3.3 Encouraging and facilitating access to, and the utilisation of our routinely collected population datasets to generate evidence to improve population health.

3.3.4 Building a research and evaluation programme focused on next generation sequencing, bioinformatics, big data and artificial intelligence.

3.3.5 Implementing a network of dedicated Research and Evaluation (RE) Leads embedded within each strategic priority, working across agendas and with external academic partners to drive forwards the research and evaluation agenda (Figure 3, and see Section 4.1).

3.3.5.1 In the short term (1-2 years): work towards developing a network of specialist RE Leads to support the identification of research and evaluation priorities, planning research and evaluation programmes, identifying academic partners, and capitalising on opportunities to deliver multi-disciplinary research, evaluation and/or development.

3.3.5.2 In the medium term (3-5 years): Embedding RE leads and supporting the establishment of research and evaluation satellite teams through internal and external funding, to develop and lead research and evaluation programmes closely aligned to practice (linked to Sections 3.4 and 3.6).

3.3.6 Funding innovative research activities or pilot studies through competitive pump-priming and collaborative research grants.

iv The Health and Care Research Wales Portfolio is a register of high quality health and social care research studies active in Wales. The eligibility criteria for inclusion onto the Portfolio has previously been focused on participant-facing studies solely, however this has been amended recently so that all high quality studies are captured (including data linkage, non NHS settings) which will allow more high quality research underway in Public Health Wales to be recognised as ‘portfolio’.
Figure 3 Public Health Wales Research and Evaluation infrastructure aligned to strategic priorities (RE Research and Evaluation; SP Strategic Priority [see Figure 1])
3.4 Working together to have a positive impact on population health

Public Health Wales is a viable partner in translational research and evaluation. Our strengths include our ability to identify the need for research and evaluation, our work with multidisciplinary partners to generate purposeful evidence, and ability to translate the new knowledge to inform policy and practice decisions.

Health and its determinants spans across agendas, sectors and disciplines. Public Health Wales recognises that effective collaboration across an extensive research infrastructure (Box 3), health and non-health sectors, commercial and industry partners in the UK and internationally\(^8\) has the potential to deliver greater beneficial impact on population health. The context of EU transition highlights the importance of maintaining existing and establishing new international partners for research and evaluation.

We will achieve this by

3.4.1 Facilitating the development of research and evaluation partnerships with a shared research agenda across academia, Welsh Government, Public Services Boards, local government and non-health sectors, at a national and international level through informal (e.g. workshops and events) and formalised (e.g. co-location of roles, joint programmes) arrangements (through Objectives 3.2.5, 3.3.2 and 3.3.5).
3.4.2 Co-producing research and evaluation programmes to ensure the purpose and outcomes are strongly linked to policy and/or to practice and disseminated through key stakeholders.

3.4.3 Ensuring an effective and meaningful model of engagement with the public to inform and share our research and evaluation programmes.

3.4.4 Increasing the visibility of the R&D Office as a clear initial point of contact to facilitate research, commercial, industry and academic collaboration opportunities with Public Health Wales.
3.5 Being visible: effecting change through communication

As a national public health institute, we will identify the key challenges to population health in Wales (Section 3.1), lead and facilitate the generation of evidence to inform action (Sections 3.2 and 3.3), and communicate widely with our stakeholders to ensure the translation of that evidence into public health policy and practice (Section 3.4).

Whilst we have some highly successful and visible research programmes recognisable to internal and external stakeholders, we recognise the need to increase the visibility of Public Health Wales as a systems leader in population health research and evaluation, and to further develop as a coherent and impactful research active organisation.

We will achieve this by

3.5.1 Developing a recognisable research and evaluation brand for Public Health Wales that acts as an identifiable quality marker for the delivery of our work.

3.5.2 Delivering the annual Research and Evaluation conference for population health in Wales.

3.5.3 Being innovative in our approach to dissemination of findings from research and evaluation to diverse audiences including public, practitioners and policy makers supported by the development of a new model for knowledge dissemination and use across the public health system*. For example, learning from our existing successful partnership approach with the School Health Research Network, which routinely provides system level data for the Healthy Schools programmes through a range of activities including joint networking events, webinars and lay summaries for schools.

3.5.4 Encouraging and supporting staff across the organisation to share their work through peer reviewed journals, other peer reviewed media, evidence synthesis programmes, policy informing routes, and national and international conferences.

3.5.6 Developing a system to better capture Public Health Wales research and evaluation outputs, including examining the translation of evidence into action.

* Linked to Public Health Wales Long Term Plan “By 2030, we will be a recognised lead in the mobilisation of knowledge for population health, through system wide leadership”
3.6 Building an enabling infrastructure to support successful implementation

The successful delivery of this organisational strategy requires cross-organisational support within Public Health Wales to embed research and evaluation to generate the evidence needed to address complex challenges for population health in Wales (Figure 1). Building an enabling infrastructure within Public Health Wales will drive forwards the implementation of this strategy to support the sustainable development of a thriving research and evaluation environment by 2030.

We will achieve this by

3.6.1 Establishing a network of dedicated Research and Evaluation (RE) leads linked to strategic priorities, to embed these functions within strategic priority areas and support cross-organisational development at pace (linked to Objective 3.3.5).

3.6.2 Establishing a network of research and evaluation satellite teams aligned to each strategic priority and in collaboration with key stakeholders including academic and non-academic partners to capitalise on opportunities (linked to Objective 3.3.5).

3.6.3 Creating a facilitative environment to support research and evaluation through streamlined efficient systems and processes, and capacity to support as needed, including;

3.6.3.1 responsive and agile research and evaluation support function, including research governance.

3.6.3.2 dedicated business support function for research and evaluation programmes led by Public Health Wales, including finance and legal support (e.g. ensuring full cost recovery for all externally funded programmes; clear guidance on intellectual property).

3.6.3.3 a central academic liaison support function for strengthening academic partnerships, contracts and business management.

3.6.3.4 ensuring meaningful public participation, engagement and involvement through links with established patient/public involvement groups in Wales.

3.6.4 Strengthening links with the research infrastructure in Wales (Section 3.4).
4 Implementation and governance

4.1 Implementation

Our organisational values “working together, with trust and respect to make a difference to population health in Wales” will shape the implementation of this strategy both in our actions within Public Health Wales and with external partners. Establishing joint ownership of this Research and Evaluation strategy across Public Health Wales is essential to support successful implementation towards our 2030 Long Term Strategy goal of having a thriving research and evaluation environment addressing the major health challenges in Wales.

Each Public Health Wales Directorate will support the identification of research and evaluation needs, and application of research and evaluation skills through workforce planning and investment. The People and Organisational Development Directorate will lead on identifying skills gaps to inform workforce development plans to support learning and development programmes.

The Operations and Finance Directorate will commit to supporting the financial governance for research applications and income; and the development of models to support staff capacity and capability. The Communications Team will work with programme leads to support the development and implementation of effective dissemination plans for research and evaluation outputs, to increase visibility, and work with the R&D Office to monitor impact with internal and external partners.

The Research and Evaluation Division of the Knowledge Directorate will lead the delivery of an impactful research and evaluation programme working across strategic priority areas; and continue to support the development of research and evaluation programmes across the organisation through the R&D Office, and Evaluation and Impact teams.

The overarching implementation and governance framework is illustrated in Figure 4, and an outline of the role of each group is provided overleaf. Full terms of reference for each will be developed in due course.
Figure 4 Proposed governance and accountability structure for the Research and Evaluation strategy for Public Health Wales
The Public Health Wales Research and Evaluation Strategic Priority Leads will work across agendas and with external partners to drive forward the research and evaluation agenda aligned to that strategic priority. The leads will develop an action plan to identify research and evaluation priorities, and with the support of the Research and Evaluation Division capitalise on opportunities to build a research and evaluation programme embedded within the strategic priority. In the medium term, the leads will build satellite, multidisciplinary Strategic Priority Research and Evaluation Teams, working in a matrix model across Divisions and Directorates to deliver.

The Research and Evaluation Implementation Group will develop and drive forwards the implementation plan for the strategy, assessing progress against the outcomes of this strategy and monitor the research and evaluation activity across Public Health Wales. This group will be chaired by the Head of Research and Development and include representation from the R&D Office, Evaluation and Impact Team, RE Leads (or nominated deputies), existing Divisional/Directorate Research and Evaluation Group Leaders (or nominated deputies) and as necessary, representation from People and Organisational Development, and Operations and Finance Directorates.

The Directorate / Divisional Research and Evaluation Groups will support the implementation of the strategy, with a specific focus on capacity and capability development. Accountability and reporting will be to both the Public Health Wales Executive Team, and to the Public Health Wales Board via the Knowledge, Research and Information Board Committee. Accountability to Welsh Government is via Health and Care Research Wales.

This strategy proposes the development of an external Research and Evaluation Strategic Opportunities Panel focusing on maximising research and evaluation opportunities for collaboration with external partners, and providing advice to support the development of leadership for research within Public Health Wales. This panel will be chaired by the Head of Research and Development and include RE Leads and appointed external Research and Evaluation Advisory Academic Members, voluntary organisations/third sector representation, funders and members of the public. External membership would be on a three-year term.
4.1.1 Outline plan for implementation

This strategy is for the period 2019 to 2025 and a cross-organisational implementation plan will be developed against the strategic objectives (Section 3) and progress reviewed annually. A high-level plan for implementation focused on building the infrastructure (Objective 3.6) for year 1 is outlined below.

**Year 1**

- Develop the Terms of Reference of the Implementation Group and Strategic Opportunities Panel and establish membership.
- Develop the role of the Research and Evaluation Leads, exploring options for sustainable investment and development, leading to a business case for resource justification, if needed.
- Implement early adopters Strategic Priority Research and Evaluation Leads, where possible.
- Ensure linkage within other organisational change programmes, for example the long term workforce strategy.
- The new Director of Knowledge to review the strategy including progress and proposed model for implementation.

**Year 2**

- Revise strategy as required following review and develop implementation plan for 2021-2025.

4.2 Research governance and risk review

Public Health Wales provides a rigorous governance structure for research to ensure the quality, ethical integrity, and efficiency of its delivery.

The Public Health Wales R&D Office receives core funding from Welsh Government to support the development and delivery of high quality research activity, and works with Health and Care Research Wales to provide a range of services to help support researchers in Public Health Wales.

The Public Health Wales R&D Office supports Chief Investigators and Sponsors in ensuring relevant NHS research approvals (including NHS Research Ethics) are in place for NHS and Social Care research, as defined in the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research. This includes providing advice on preparing applications for Health Research Authority and Health and Care Research Wales review in Wales, NHS Research Ethics Committee review where applicable and other relevant review bodies.
4.2.1 Research and evaluation principles

Implementation of this strategy will be guided by our principles for research and evaluation, which are strongly aligned to the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five ways of working / Sustainable Development Principle</th>
<th>Guiding principles for research and evaluation within Public Health Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long term:</strong> The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</td>
<td>We will develop and engage in research and evaluation that will make a difference to population health and align to the long term strategic priorities for population health in Wales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prevention:</strong> How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.</td>
<td>We will develop and engage in research and evaluation to prevent or mitigate poor health and well-being in the population and reduce inequalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration:</strong> Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</td>
<td>We will develop and engage in research and evaluation that will make a difference to population health integrated across the strategic priorities within Public Health Wales and spanning the goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration:</strong> Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.</td>
<td>We will foster collaboration internally and externally across different organisations, disciplines and partnerships working with policy makers and practitioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement:</strong> The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</td>
<td>We will conduct our research and evaluation collaboratively with those likely to be affected by the research including the public.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Success

The overarching goal of this strategy is to have a demonstrable and beneficial impact on population health in Wales, visible at a national and international level, through leading and facilitating population health research and evaluation.

The successful implementation of this strategy will be measured through the outcome measures described in Section 5.1.

Through collective ownership of this strategy and investment in our staff, we will develop as a system leader for population health research, identifying the priorities for population health, influencing the population health research agenda, leading a credible research and evaluation portfolio to generate and use evidence to improve population health and reduce inequalities in Wales.

Building and strengthening research and evaluation across the organisation is essential if we are to meet the complex challenges and maximise opportunities for population health over the next decade.
5.1 Measuring overarching success

Successful implementation of this strategy from 2019 to 2025 will be measured against the following core outcome indicators reflective of the overarching goal outlined in Section 2.2;

Success in leading and facilitating population health research and evaluation.

- Average annual increase in the quality (based on journal impact factor and wider dissemination metrics) and quantity of research publications.
- The number of staff publishing their first academic paper per year (co-author and lead author, reflecting research capacity).
- Average annual increase in the number of evaluation programmes and research grant applications led by Public Health Wales submitted for external funding (including across academic, health and non-health, industry partners).
- Average annual increase in the number of evaluation programmes and research grant applications with Public Health Wales as a collaborator submitted for external funding (including across academic, health and non-health, industry partners).
- Meeting targets as defined within the Health and Care Research Wales performance framework for NHS Trusts.

Having a demonstrable impact on population health in Wales, visible at a national and international level.

- Biennial survey of key national and international stakeholders to determine:
  - awareness of research and evaluation outputs.
  - perceived value (to consider, for example, was the evidence acted on, was there a change in actions or decisions as a result?).
- Case studies of impact of research and evaluation programmes benefitting the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of lifevi.

We will also monitor the average annual change in external income supporting research and evaluation activities, but given small annual variations in grant income can have a significant impact on trends over time this will not be a reliable indicator of success.

These overarching indicators will contribute towards the Public Health Wales Quality and Impact Framework.

vi Drawing on the Research Excellence Framework (REF)
https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1018/guidance-for-standardising-quantitative-indicators-of-impact.pdf
6 Acknowledgements

The strategy has been developed by the Research and Evaluation Division, led by Dr Alisha Davies, Dr Mark Griffiths and Claudine Anderson.

Public Health Wales would like to thank all from the following organisations who provided comments during the development of the strategy:

- Aberystwyth University
- APM Research & Involvement
- Bangor University
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Bevan Foundation
- Cadarn Housing Group
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- Cardiff University
- Cwm Taf University Health Board
- Health and Care Research Wales
- National Assembly for Wales
- National Centre for Population Health and Wellbeing
- NHS Health Scotland
- NWORTH Clinical Trials Unit
- Prifysgol Bangor
- Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland)
- Public Health England
- Swansea University
- University of Wales Trinity Saint David
- Wales Centre for Public Policy
- Welsh Government
- West Wales Academic Health Collaborative

We would also like to thank all the staff in Public Health Wales who have contributed to this document. We are grateful for their valuable input and feedback.
7 References


