

Annual Report
2024/25



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

PERFORMANCE REPORT



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FOREWORD

It is our pleasure and privilege to introduce our Annual Report for 2024/2025.



Pippa Britton OBE PLY
Chair of the Board
Public Health Wales

Our Annual Report this year reflects the breadth and depth of our work, structured around our six strategic priorities and underpinned by our long-term strategy, Working Together for a Healthier Wales 2023–2035.

The last year has been one of both challenge and progress for us with some significant achievements along the way. We have made substantial progress across the breadth of public health.

Against a backdrop of persistent health inequalities, the ongoing cost of living crisis, and the enduring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have remained steadfast in our mission to improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities across Wales. We have done this against the background of a cost of living crisis, the pressure on health services and the ongoing climate threat. To do this, we have led, delivered on and engaged with partners across all of our strategic priorities in the delivery of our Strategic Plan for this year and we would like to say a very big thank you to all the people who have supported and worked with us over the last year.



Tracey Cooper OBE
Chief Executive
Public Health Wales

We advanced efforts to influence the wider determinants of health, including child poverty, housing conditions and workplace health, while supporting Local Authorities and Public Services Boards to implement evidence-informed well-being plans.

Our work to promote mental and social well-being included the expansion of the Hapus programme, the development of the Early Years Framework for Action, and continued support for a whole-school approach to mental and emotional health.

We also strengthened our focus on promoting healthy behaviours, with major initiatives in smoking cessation, diabetes prevention, substance misuse and healthy weight management.

We published our Investing in a Healthier Wales: Prioritising Prevention report which takes a life-course approach to the most impactful prevention interventions to support decision-making in shifting to prevention across Wales. In addition, our international health work continued with a particular focus on the Well-being Economy (putting health at the heart of a healthy, economically and fiscally stable society) for Wales, and we supported the Welsh Government in hosting a World Health Organization Policy Dialogue on the Wellbeing Economy in Cardiff, with representation from Iceland, Finland and Scotland.

Our national health protection and infection services and our national screening programmes all had an exceptionally busy year. Our health protection services delivered critical public health functions, including the launch of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine programme, strengthened emergency preparedness and enhancements to our screening and genomics services. This included the extension of our national Bowel Screening Programme age range to include 50 – 74 years. We also made strides in tackling the public health effects of climate change through surveillance, research and capacity-building, including the work of our Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and our Health and Sustainability Hub.

In supporting the development of a sustainable health and care system, we launched the Prevention-Based Health and Care Framework, expanded the All Wales Diabetes Prevention Programme and contributed to dental and cardiovascular disease prevention efforts.

These achievements were made possible by our enabling functions—our people, digital and data capabilities, quality and governance systems, financial robustness and our commitment to sustainability and innovation—all of which have played a pivotal role in delivering impact for the people of Wales.

Throughout the year, we have embraced the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, embedding long-term thinking, prevention, integration, collaboration, and involvement into everything we do. Our route maps for each strategic priority have guided our actions and provided a clear pathway toward our 2035 vision.

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As we look ahead, we remain focused on increasing healthy life expectancy and narrowing the gap between the most and least deprived communities in Wales. We recognise that achieving this ambition will require continued collaboration, adaptability and a relentless focus on prevention and equity. This report provides a comprehensive account of our performance, achievements, and learning over the past year. It also sets the stage for the next phase of our journey—one that is rooted in partnership, driven by evidence, and committed to creating a healthier, fairer, and more sustainable Wales for current and future generations.

Finally, we would like to personally thank each and every one of our extraordinary people across Public Health Wales, our Executive Team and our Non-Executive Directors for their hard work, passion and unrelenting commitment throughout the last year. Our people are at the heart of what we do and how we do it and, once again, our exceptionally dedicated people have gone above and beyond to deliver yet another extraordinary year of protecting and supporting the health and well-being of the people of Wales.





INTRODUCTION

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HOWEVER, TOO OFTEN PEOPLE IN WALES BECOME ILL OR DIE TOO EARLY BECAUSE THE BUILDING BLOCKS NEEDED FOR GOOD HEALTH ARE WEAK OR ABSENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

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We face significant challenges in Wales, particularly in relation to stark and persistent health inequalities. Everyone in Wales deserves the opportunity for good health.

However, too often people in Wales become ill or die too early because the building blocks needed for good health are weak or absent in our communities. The legacy of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the ongoing rise in the cost of living continues to have profound effects on the people of Wales. This includes not only the direct health impacts, but also the broader and longer-term implications for our health and well-being.

Climate change is recognised as possibly the most significant global threat that we face. Its consequences will impact all areas of life that are essential to achieve and maintain good health. This highlights the profound interdependence between population, societal, economic and environmental well-being.

Although the threat from COVID-19 appears to have reduced over the past year, we have remained vigilant on threats to the people in Wales from communicable diseases and non-infectious hazards.

We have continued to learn from our response to the pandemic to build robust plans for response to future outbreaks. We also know the impact these challenges have had on the wider health and social care system.

The pressure on the NHS and social care remains significant, but this is also true for all public services. We also know that the projected rise in risk factors related to health conditions, coupled with an ageing population will further increase the number of people living with long-term health conditions.

Most of the diseases which are increasing significantly have common key preventable drivers, include : smoking, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and high risk drinking. Low levels of mental well-being impact directly on an individuals' capacity for self-care and can lead to the adoption of health harming behaviours as a coping strategy. Now, more than ever, we require the collective efforts of a range of partners to address these issues over the coming years.

We have an opportunity through making a system-wide strategic shift to prevention to address these challenges and to harness the opportunities which are available to us in Wales. This is intended to deliver benefits across the short, medium and long term, including: reducing the financial burden of preventable disease on health and social care and employment, halting the rise in preventable disease and tackling the wider determinants of health to deliver measurable improvements in our population's health.

We have seen the power and impact that we can have when we mobilise our collective efforts and expertise, including the improvements which can be realised at scale through embracing innovation, technological developments and our commitment to collaboration.

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The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) continues to provide the enabling legislative driver to enable us to take a long term preventative approach, focused on involving the public and collaborating with our partners to deliver integrated solutions as we tackle the challenges that we will face today and will face tomorrow. We also recognise that we continue to operate within a volatile and changing environment, and will therefore continue to demonstrate an ability to dynamically respond to new and emerging threats and opportunities.

In developing our strategy, we focused on where we, as Public Health Wales, can add most value for the people of Wales. We have done this through the delivery of our six strategic priorities, which are underpinned by our commitment to reducing health inequalities. We have continued to demonstrate an unwavering focus on reducing health inequalities and ensuring that we deliver maximum value and impact for our population to create a healthy and sustainable Wales.



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Following our Board's approval, we published our Long Term Strategy - Working Together for a Healthier Wales, 2023-2035 in May 2023, which sets out the actions we will take to achieve a Wales where people live longer, healthier lives, and where all people have fair and equal access to the things that lead to good health and well-being.

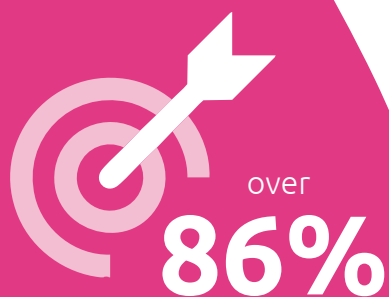
The strategy sets out our six strategic priorities, and maps out in detail how we plan to address each priority, which are:

- 1 Influencing the wider determinants of health
- 2 Promoting mental and social well-being
- 3 Promoting healthy behaviours
- 4 Supporting the development of a sustainable health and care system focused on prevention and early intervention
- 5 Delivering excellent public health services to protect the public and maximise population health outcomes
- 6 Tackling the public health effects of climate change

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WE ENDED THE YEAR WITH OVER 86% OF OUR DELIVERY MILESTONES COMPLETED AGAINST OUR BASELINE PLAN

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of our delivery milestones completed against our baseline plan agreed in March 2024.

Our Strategic Plan for 2024-27 (also known as the Integrated Medium Term Plan) was submitted to Welsh Government at the end of March 2024. On 9 August 2024, we received confirmation from Judith Paget, Director General Health, Social Care and Early Years Group / NHS Wales Chief Executive, that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care approved our Strategic Plan for 2024-27. Our plan aimed to build on progress that we have made since we launched our Long Term Strategy in 2023 aimed at addressing the key public health challenges facing Wales.

Progress against delivering our plan

The end of March 2025 saw the conclusion of our Strategic Plan for 2024/25 and we ended the year with over 86% of our delivery milestones completed against our baseline plan agreed in March 2024. This equates to 204 milestones delivered from the total of 230 milestones.

Of the remaining 26 (14%) milestones reported as incomplete in 2024/25, 9 milestones were closed as no longer required due to re-planning, 10 milestones remain suspended and 16 have had their planned delivery date moved into the next financial year and will form part of our 2025/26 plan. Delays in delivery were often due to factors outside of our control including dependencies on activities by other organisations.

Our progress in delivering our milestones represents the successful delivery on completing year two of our Long Term Strategy, which was a significant achievement for the Organisation and represents all the great work and dedication of our staff during very challenging times for public services.

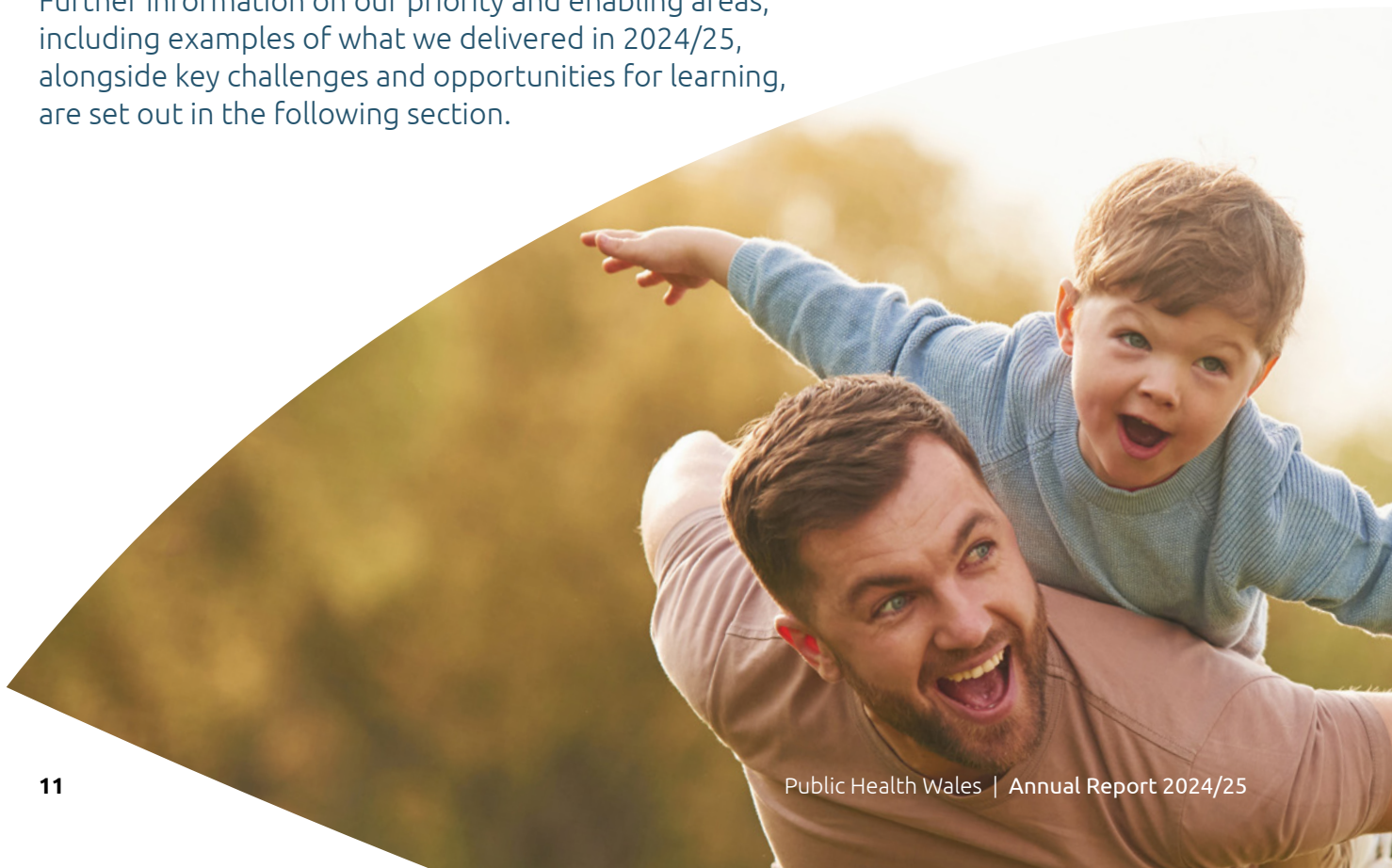
Progress against our plan is reported to our Executive Team and Board on a monthly basis through our Performance and Assurance Dashboard and Insights Report. The Report includes the ratings for each milestone, an exception report for those where issues have been identified, and a control process for managing changes in relation to milestone delivery with a projected year-end milestone status reporting the rate of completion. Ongoing assurance is also provided to Welsh Government through our Integrated Quality, Planning and Delivery and Joint Executive Team accountability review meetings.

Further information on our priority and enabling areas, including examples of what we delivered in 2024/25, alongside key challenges and opportunities for learning, are set out in the following section.

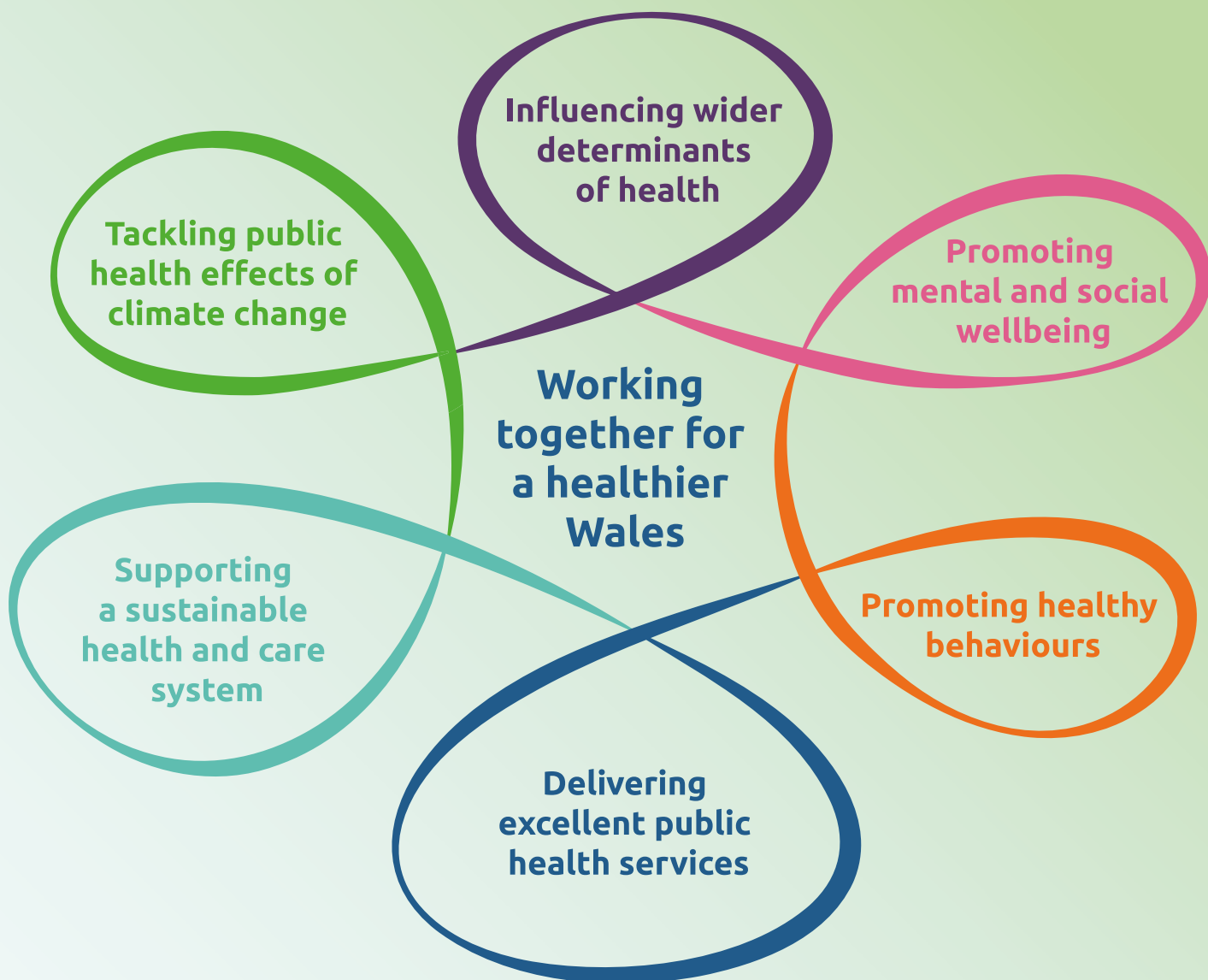
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OUR PROGRESS IN DELIVERING OUR MILESTONES REPRESENTS THE SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY ON COMPLETING YEAR TWO OF OUR LONG TERM STRATEGY

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Our Priorities 2023-2035



We are Public Health Wales.
We exist to help all people in
Wales live longer, healthier lives.

Our values are **working together**
with **trust and respect** to **make a difference**.



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Public Health
Wales

STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE: INFLUENCING THE WIDER DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



Everyone in Wales deserves the opportunity for good health. However, too often people in Wales become ill or die too early because of a lack of the essential building blocks needed for good health.

These building blocks include our education and skills, a warm safe home, fair work, money and resources, access to affordable and sustainable transport and healthy physical environments. These conditions affect us from our earliest experiences and throughout our lifetime.

The wider determinants drive health and health inequalities in Wales. Different experiences of these determinants lead to differences in health outcomes, or health inequalities, which in turn are responsible for a substantial proportion of the total early deaths and ill health of the population of Wales. These systematic and unfair differences, continue across the generations.

Further information on this priority can be found in our [Long Term Strategy](#).

What we delivered

Child Poverty

During 2024/25, we have focused on the impact of poverty, especially child poverty, following on from the cost of living challenges and the publication of Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy in 2024.

With our Building a Healthier Wales Coordination Group partners, we are leading an assessment of need to support enabling and empowering collaboration on child poverty. We are incorporating the building blocks of health into our developing the Early Years Framework for Action (see priority 2).

Health Impact Assessment

Building on 20 years of the Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit, we have continued to develop health impact assessment approaches, including providing expert and practical advice and support to developing the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Regulations and preparing for implementation.

We developed our Welsh Health Equity Solutions Platform further to support engagement with the evidence, data and practical tools for action on health inequalities. We will build on our work to date, framing the building blocks of health, describing a well-being economy approach which puts the health of our population at the heart of creating a fiscally and economically sustainable nation, engaging policy makers with evidence and supporting health impact assessment, contributing to regulations and guidance.

Healthy Homes

We examined the impact of cold homes on health and well-being with a report and recommendations on the satisfactory heating regime in Wales and we provided evidence at the Equality and Social Justice Committee meeting on fuel poverty in Wales. We are now working with partners to consider the future vision for housing in the context of child poverty.

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WE ARE NOW WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE VISION FOR HOUSING IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD POVERTY.

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Workplace Health

We have further developed our digital offer for employers through Healthy Working Wales, helping employers to provide the right support to staff with health conditions to stay in work, scoping out our approach to support employers to reduce inequalities in employment for those living with disability or long-term health condition.

Working with and through our partners

We have supported Public Services Boards in their work to influence wider determinants of health, including through the launch of the Shaping Places for Well-being in Wales Programme, funded by the Health Foundation. Working across themes of poverty and inequalities, climate and nature emergency, and neighbourhood well-being, the Programme focuses on taking a theory and evidence informed systems approach to the implementation of well-being plans, sharing learning across Wales and the UK.

We also built on the strong relationships with local government, locally in partnership with local public health teams, regionally making new links with Corporate Joint Committees, and nationally continuing our working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on shared priorities where we support local authorities in their work on addressing the wider determinants of health.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO: PROMOTING MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Mental and social well-being are essential components of lifelong health, forming the foundation for healthy individuals and communities.

Mental and social well-being are the foundations for healthy people and communities, comprising a range of different elements; how we think, how we understand our emotions and those of others, how we form healthy relationships and our resilience, how we make sense of our experiences.

Mental and social well-being is significantly influenced by our social environment, including where we live, work, play, and learn. Early childhood interactions with parents or carers and the quality of parental relationships are crucial in developing mental well-being. Inconsistent conditions during childhood can lead to long-term harm due to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Social well-being is strengthened by strong social networks within families and communities, fostering a sense of belonging, community connectedness, and active engagement. Communities that nurture these conditions are less likely to experience loneliness and isolation and are more resilient in the face of adversity and trauma.

Mental well-being is fundamental to our ability to handle daily challenges and practice self-care. Good mental well-being can mitigate the impact of wider determinants, while low mental well-being can exacerbate them. Further information on this priority can be found in our [Long Term Strategy](#).



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WE HAVE
WORKED CLOSELY
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DEVELOPMENT
OF THE NEW
MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING
STRATEGY

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What we delivered

Our work on this priority touches all ages, from the first 1000 days of life through school and working age to older people.

Hapus Programme

We established our Hapus National Conversation to help people to prioritise their mental well-being and take actions to protect and promote it. The website has received over 100,000 page views and we have recruited over 60 community organisations to our Hapus supporter network. We have completed a range of baseline measures and have established an evaluation programme to help us to understand and monitor the impact of our work.

The Hapus Strategic Partnership engages with a range of organisations, including the Arts Council for Wales, Sport Wales, Natural Resources Wales, Tempo, National Trust Cymru, Cadw, NHS Confederation, Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales and the Mental Health Foundation, to support the goal of widening access to and participation in mental well-being promoting activities. We have worked closely with Welsh Government to support the development of the new Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, particularly vision statement two on mental well-being.

First 1000 Days

Our First 1000 Days programme has continued to advocate for greater system wide action on early child development as a foundation for lifelong well-being. The programme led the collaborative work, bringing stakeholders together to develop and agree a shared Early Years Framework for Action. The Framework specifically addresses the Ministerial priority on First 1000 Days and the period beyond it up to the child's fifth birthday. The Early Years Framework for Action will be published in May 2025 and a launch event will be held in June 2025 to share the Framework more widely and discuss ideas for its implementation.

Whole School Approach to Mental and Emotional Well-being

We have continued to support the implementation of the Framework for a Whole School Approach to Mental and Emotional Well-being, working closely with the Directors of Public Health at a local level. We have reached 83% of all schools action planning, achieving the target of 80% by the end of March 2025.

The rise in mental and emotional health problems among children and young people has been a concern for some time both across Wales, the wider UK as well as many other countries internationally. To date, the focus has been on enabling the system to respond to the needs identified but there is also a need to understand what is driving this increase so we can focus our efforts on prevention. We have brought together clinicians, academics and the third sector to start to explore this issue. We have started by working to identify what the data tells us about when this rise started, which aspects of mental and emotional health have shown change over time, and we will then use this work to start to explore possible causes.

Adverse Childhood Experience

The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Hub Wales has continued to co-lead the implementation of the Trauma-informed Wales Framework providing knowledge, resource and guidance to over 50 organisations and key sectors such as education and criminal justice in implementing the Trauma and ACE informed Toolkit. The Violence Prevention Unit has been progressing the implementation of the Wales Without Violence Framework and developed an Engaging Men and Boys Toolkit to provide a range of accessible information for understanding, supporting and critically assessing the role that programmes engaging men and boys can play in preventing violence.

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THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION UNIT HAS BEEN PROGRESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WALES WITHOUT VIOLENCE FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPED AN ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS TOOLKIT

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Case study: Strengthening community connections to improve health and well-being in Wales

Background

Social connections play a vital role in our health and well-being and can be a contributory factor in some peoples' experience of poorer health outcomes than others.

Situation

We must protect and promote stronger social connections in a rapidly changing world to improve health and well-being for all in Wales. People are living longer and having fewer children than in previous generations. The average UK family size has steadily been decreasing – from 1.91 children per woman in 2010 to 1.49 in 2022, with projections suggesting we may also see more multi-generational and single-person households. While multi-generational living could contribute to advantages like increased financial security and more resources for child and elder care, there is the risk that more deprived families could be forced into situations where homes are overcrowded and strained. Single person households could experience increased isolation, by comparison.

We did

[‘No one left behind’](#), a report from Public Health Wales examined some of the potential impacts of future trends on our social connectedness and community networks. The report considered trends like our aging population, changing family compositions, the expansion of online communities, and the future of work, to assess how these could affect our health and well-being. Alongside the report, a webinar was delivered in partnership with Pobl Group's The Hive Centre in Newport and the Ageing Well Lead at the Older People's Commissioner for Wales's Office. A workshop on the future of social connection was delivered at the Tenant Participatory Advisory Group Cymru Annual Conference.

Impact

Good media engagement including ITV Wales News at Six, Global Radio, BBC Radio Cymru and reported on in local newspapers. The report findings were used to inform our work to support Welsh Government's Communities Policy. The report helped forge meaningful relationships with key stakeholders including with the Older People's Commissioner and housing and community groups.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE: PROMOTING HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS

Promoting healthy behaviours encompasses activity to reduce the burden of disease, disability, and early death that results from use of tobacco, our diet, how active we are and whether and how we use alcohol and other substances.

behavioural risks
contribute



25%

of the years of life lost
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mortality (YLLs)

The latest estimates from the Global Burden of Disease Study indicate that behavioural risks contribute 25% of the years of life lost to due to premature mortality (YLLs) and the years lived with a disability (YLDs) due to non-communicable disease in Wales, which includes Cancer, Heart Disease and Respiratory Diseases. Of these behavioural risks, tobacco contributes the largest among (10%), followed by diet (8%). Additionally, a high BMI is responsible for a further 8%. The growing burden of non-communicable disease is a significant threat to the sustainability of our health and care system. We have established a Prevalence of Disease Programme which enables us to identify trends in diseases especially non-communicable diseases. The first projections and data from the Programme on Diabetes were the impetus for creating our Tackling Diabetes Together programme and further work will directly inform how we shape and refresh our Programmes to meet the changing profile of health and disease in Wales.

Our behaviours are closely linked to the social, economic, and environmental factors which have been outlined in earlier priorities. For the majority of the behaviours, we see a clear socio-economic gradient (those people who are less advantaged in terms of socio-economic position have worse health than those who are more advantaged); these gradients are more common among groups in the population where disadvantage is experienced. These factors are one of the primary mechanisms through which the wider determinants lead to ill health and health inequalities. Behavioural factors also play a part in the conditions which lead to disability such as musculoskeletal diseases and substance use. One of the emerging behavioural risks to health and well-being is gambling which will be an increasing focus over the next three years.

Further information on this priority can be found in our [Long Term Strategy](#).



What we delivered

Smoking cessation

Self-referrals to the Help Me Quit (HMQ) service are



↑ 8%

ahead of last year

Over the last 12 months we have worked closely with Welsh Government and our wider system partners to make the most of the opportunity presented by the legislation on tobacco and vaping in Wales and across the UK which will be a major step forward to realising our ambition of a smoke free Wales by 2030. We have worked with the Directors of Public Health in Health Boards to review the Help Me Quit smoking cessation system so we can harness the potential of smoking cessation to reduce the burden of disease and ill health from tobacco for individuals and the health and care system as a key component of our shift to prevention.

Self-referrals to the Help Me Quit (HMQ) service are 8% ahead of last year and on track to reach a record high in 2024/25. This growth has been driven by the success of the Feel the Difference campaign, as well as a major update to the website user interface and content in January 2025. We developed a partnership with Sheffield University academics to increase our capacity to model the potential future impact of a range of policy measures in relation to smoking and to explore the potential impact of price controls on smoking. We have continued our work to reduce the impact of smoking during pregnancy and to optimise contact with healthcare to promote a quit attempt.

Diabetes

In response to the stark figures and future projections of the rise of diabetes in Wales arising from our Prevalence of Disease programme, we have established Tackling Diabetes Together, a Programme which brings together key partners from across the system to improve outcomes for people living with Diabetes (Types 1 and 2) and halt the rise in prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes by 2028. This work sits across this Strategic Priority, and also our Strategic Priority Four focused on supporting the development of a sustainable health and care system.

Substance Misuse

During 2024/25, we undertook an extensive needs assessment on substance use related harm in Wales and are now developing a cross organisational approach to ensure that Public Health Wales is focused on maximising its impact in this area.

We have developed an e-learning package to promote the use of alcohol brief intervention and the use of risk assessment tools, which have been shown to save money in the NHS. We have worked closely to support Welsh Government to develop proposals for reducing gambling related harm in Wales arising from the introduction of the Gambling Levy in 2025.

Healthy Weight

Our role in the implementation of Welsh Government's Healthy Weight Healthy Wales Strategy has continued, facilitating the adoption of a whole system approach including the development of goals and indicators which will help focus action and enable the measurement of impact. We have continued our work to get the best impact from the All Wales Weight Management Pathway including advising on the role of a growing range of weight loss medications.

The 'Healthy Weight Healthy You' website has continued to grow its user base reaching a significant milestone of 200,000 users visiting since launch, with 84% of users saying that it was helpful or very helpful. Our forthcoming goal-setting digital assistant and updated health assessment once launched will give users greater control over their weight management journey. The Reset Your Mindset campaign in May 2024 attracted 18,000 new users and the highest number of returning visitors since launch. In November, it won Gold for Video of the Year at the CIPR Awards.

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We have undertaken process evaluations of both the Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight and the Children and Families Pilots so we can make recommendations on the next steps for both of these programmes. We have continued our work to support the implementation of the Breastfeeding Action Plan and to develop options for a new infant feeding action plan in Wales. We have also supported the review of the nutrition and food standards for school meals in Wales.

Physical Activity

We continue to recognise opportunities the school day presents to increase physical activity through the next phase of our place-based approach to active school travel. Alongside this, we have supported a whole school approach to health and well-being by developing curriculum toolkits for schools in key areas and proposing a set of minimum standards which are currently being refined through engagement with schools. The JUSTB programme was fully re-established after the pandemic and delivered to schools identified as having the highest need as part of our work to reduce inequalities in smoking outcomes.

Healthy Workplace

The Healthy Working Wales programme has continued implementation of the new digital delivery model with the development of a new website and delivery of a number of e-learning packages and webinars.

To support the NHS to shift to prevention, we re-established the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) programme across Wales to ensure that as many people as possible could benefit from the National Exercise Referral Programme. We also re-established Add to Your Life and continue to work with Health Boards to deploy this tool as part of work to prevent deconditioning and support people to stay in employment or economically active while waiting for NHS treatment and care.

Over the next three years we will identify opportunities for digital platforms and solutions and pursue these to enable greater uptake and impact on our population, and get the benefits of a shift to making greater use of digital solutions for better health.

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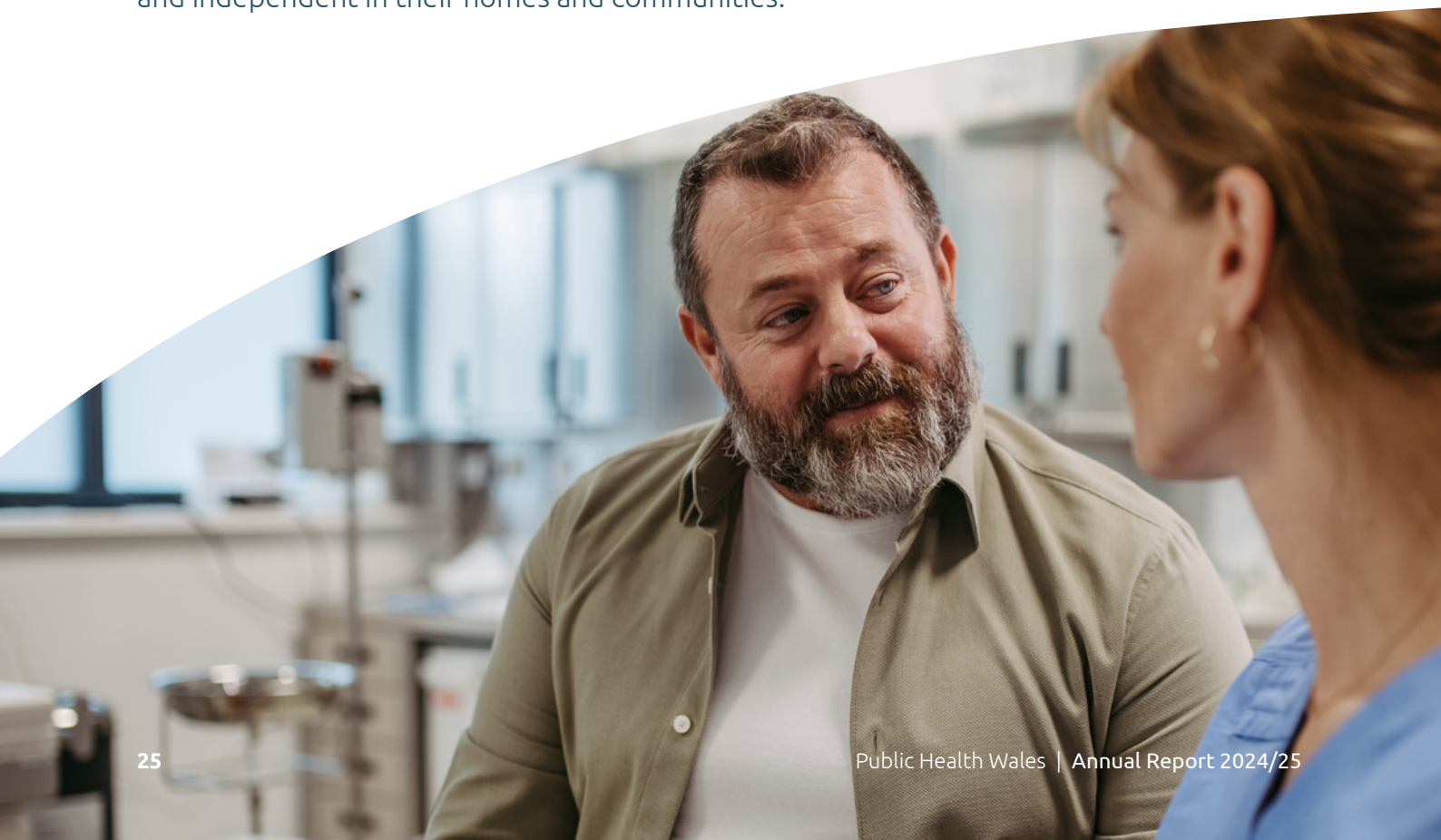
WE HAVE ALSO SUPPORTED THE REVIEW OF THE NUTRITION AND FOOD STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL MEALS IN WALES

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR: SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEM FOCUSED ON PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

***'A Healthier Wales'* aims for everyone in Wales to lead long, healthy, and happy lives. It sets the policy direction for the health and social care system to deliver sustainable models of care.**

Sustainable healthcare means providing high-quality care without harming the environment, being affordable now and in the future, and delivering positive social impacts. This includes shifting services from hospitals to communities where appropriate, enhancing early detection and prevention of illnesses, and helping people manage their health and long-term conditions. It also focuses on making it easier for people to stay active and independent in their homes and communities.



The need for sustainable healthcare is underscored by the increasing demand for health and social care in Wales resulting from an ageing population, health inequalities, healthy harming behaviours, environmental and social determinants. These factors have created significant pressures on the health and care system, affecting access to timely treatment, causing avoidable harm, and impacting overall outcomes.

Despite these immediate pressures, it is essential to focus on prevention, early intervention, and equity to develop sustainable care models that meet current and future population needs, reduce harm, address health inequalities, and improve outcomes.

Our workforce is important not just because of their significant role in better health outcomes for everyone but also because a healthcare workforce which is itself as healthy as possible will bring benefits to them, to the NHS and to everyone who uses NHS services. Working together, we assess the actions they can take respectively and jointly to embed prevention in our workforce.

Further information on this priority can be found in our [Long Term Strategy](#).

What we delivered

Embedding Prevention

Over the past year, we built significant momentum to a shift towards a prevention-focused approach across the health and care system in Wales. The Prevention Based Health and Care Framework was launched alongside a steering group to guide this transition.

The All Wales Diabetes Prevention Programme (AWDPP) continues to show positive results, with nearly 10,000 people attending consultations. An equity toolkit and a service user experience report were also published to assess the programme's impact.

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OVER THE PAST YEAR,
WE BUILT SIGNIFICANT
MOMENTUM TO A
SHIFT TOWARDS A
PREVENTION-FOCUSED
APPROACH

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The Primary Care Obesity Prevention Programme developed a Postnatal Health and Well-being Programme in partnership with the Women's Health Network.

Efforts under the Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) prevention programme included a review of health checks and proposals for a quality improvement project in primary care.

In response to the stark figures and future protections of the rise of diabetes in Wales, we established Tackling Diabetes Together, a Programme which brings together key partners from across the system to improve outcomes for people living with Diabetes (Types 1 and 2) and halt the rise in prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes by 2028.

Primary Care

A strong focus has been placed on reducing health inequalities through primary care. Key actions included co-producing with professionals a consensus framework for action and collaborating with partners to create a multi-professional education framework on health inequalities and inclusion health, with resources, made available on the Primary Care One website to support embedding these in practice.

The national evaluation of the Primary Care Model for Wales continues, including cluster peer reviews and self-reflection cycles, with the development of key indicators to measure system progress. A cluster planning portal was launched on the Primary Care One website to aid in planning activities.

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THROUGH PRIMARY
CARE.

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In dental care, national coordination of programmes like Designed to Smile and child dental health inspections all aim to prevent tooth decay in children. Collaborative work with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) sought to improve the oral health of care home residents. Training and calibration events were held for the Dental Epidemiology Programme, and the Welsh Oral Health Information Unit provided resources and reports to stakeholders.

We supported Welsh Government's Dental Reform Programme, advocated for a need-based, preventive dental care system, and worked with Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) on an annual Quality Self-Assessment for Health Boards and dental practices.

We have also worked with a focus on social value methods which has included delivering training on assessing well-being impact and creating a toolkit to help shift NHS budgets towards prevention.



Safeguarding

This year, the NHS Safeguarding Service has continued its strategic role in coordinating the NHS Wales Safeguarding Network and publishing its annual report, sharing learning from quality improvements and innovations. A key focus has been on addressing recurrent safeguarding themes through innovative learning approaches. Multi-agency events on Professional Curiosity and Hearing the Voice of Adults at Risk have tackled challenges in protecting individuals from abuse and neglect.

By emphasising person-centred practice, applying a behavioural science-based approach, and encouraging constructive challenge, NHS Wales is strengthening safeguarding practices and driving meaningful improvements in decision-making and frontline engagement.

Sustainability

We continue to chair the National Decarbonisation Inhaler Use and Disposal Task and Finish Group and have provided a coordinated approach, national oversight, input and support to address inhaler use and disposal in Wales and across the UK. This has resulted in a substantial decrease in the use of high global warming potential inhalers and identified areas for improvement in the management of respiratory conditions.

Our efforts in supporting primary care to be more environmentally sustainable and meet the Net Zero ambition have been recognised through winning at the NHS Wales Sustainability Awards 2024 and the Welsh Pharmacy Awards 2024.

Our Greener Primary Care work continues to grow from strength to strength with over 500 practices participating and over 4,200 climate friendly actions reported since the establishment of the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme in 2022.

Our Greener Primary
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to grow



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STRATEGIC PRIORITY FIVE: DELIVERING EXCELLENT PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND MAXIMISE POPULATION HEALTH OUTCOMES

Protecting the public from the effects of infections and exposure to environmental harms, such as air pollution, and the delivery of our national screening programmes are core responsibilities for Public Health Wales.

As a Civil Contingencies Act Category 1 responder, we collaborate with others to safeguard the public from major infectious diseases and environmental risks through robust emergency planning, preparedness, and response actions. This includes addressing inequalities that may arise from health protection threats, existing population health status, and wider determinants influencing health.

We participate in efforts led by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales to strengthen the health protection system. This includes focused work at both Wales and UK levels to learn lessons from the COVID-19 response, implement recommendations from the COVID-19 Public Inquiry, and enhance planning and preparedness for future pandemics. We provide system leadership to further strengthen the health protection system, including multi-agency work to implement lessons from the COVID-19 response and Public Inquiry.

We have continued to support the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry by producing witness evidence, documentary evidence and oral evidence at Public Hearings against the 10 module areas. As part of this work, our Public Inquiry Response Team works with our external legal team to meet the evidential requirements of the Inquiry.



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SUPPORTING THE HEALTH SYSTEM ACROSS WALES, WE OFFER NATIONAL HEALTH PROTECTION, LABORATORY, CLINICAL INFECTIOUS DISEASE, PATHOGEN GENOMICS AND INFECTION CONTROL SERVICES

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They also coordinate and support our staff to produce and give evidence to the Inquiry. Upon the publication of module reports, we will ensure the reports are considered in detail, recommendations are addressed, organisational learning is captured and is implemented within our emergency preparedness planning process. By doing this, we ensure the Inquiry is able to make appropriate recommendations which drive improvements to our emergency preparedness response where necessary.

Supporting the health system across Wales, we offer national health protection, laboratory, clinical infectious disease, pathogen genomics and infection control services. We deliver, monitor, and evaluate seven population-based screening programmes and coordinate the All-Wales managed clinical network for antenatal screening. These Programmes aim to reduce disease incidence or improve early diagnosis to lessen the disease's impact. Our screening services continue to explore and adopt evidence-based technological advances to improve service delivery.

The Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act (2020) underscores the Duty of Quality to provide safe, effective, person-centred, timely, efficient, and equitable healthcare within a learning culture. Delivering excellent service quality and striving for continuous improvements are vital. This includes developing new programmes or deploying innovative tools and technologies to better understand and respond to threats, ultimately supporting people to live longer and healthier lives. Public Health Wales aims to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Wales by focusing on equity to reduce health inequalities and support all people in Wales to lead healthier, longer lives. Cancer is a leading cause of death in Wales, with many cancers being curable if detected early and treated effectively. We support primary prevention through HPV vaccination and deliver three cancer population-based screening programmes. Welsh Government has tasked Public Health Wales with scoping and appraising options for a targeted lung cancer screening programme for high-risk individuals aged 55 to 74. Further information on this priority can be found in our [Long Term Strategy](#).

What we delivered

Health Protection

Over the past 12 months, a notable achievement for the Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme (VPDP) has been the launch of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine programme across Wales, targeting individuals aged 75-79 and pregnant women aiming to significantly reduce the burden of RSV each autumn. The development of the National Immunisation Framework has continued, with Public Health Wales leading the creation of new national standards for vaccine patient information and a repository for evidence and good practices.

We have supported Welsh Government with the drafting of the National Health Protection Framework and published key reports on drug-related deaths, blood-borne viruses, sexually transmitted infections, and air quality in Withyhedge.

Collaborative efforts with various programmes have enabled the modelling of hospitalisations and mortality due to respiratory infections among care home residents. Our public relations and communications efforts were recognised with two awards at the Public Relations and Communications Association DARE Awards Cymru for HIV campaigns.

Case study: Launch of the Health Protection Inequalities Programme 'Best Practice Guide'

In April 2025, the Health Protection Inequalities Programme (HPIP) launched their 'Best Practice Guide'. This guide offers a set of guiding principles, case studies, practical tools, and support resources to help health protection and emergency planning specialists to describe and mitigate inequalities through their work and evaluate impacts of action. The guide has been promoted through a formal training session where over 100 PHW colleagues came together to learn about the guide and how to embed it in their work. The guide is also being used to inform broader health inequalities work across PHW. Looking ahead in health protection and emergency planning services, both the HPIP and guide will feature in the induction programme for all new starters to achieve an early, shared awareness around the importance of tackling inequalities in all we do.

Infection Services

We have strengthened our control measures through successful accreditation of ISO 15189 across the entire Public Health Wales diagnostic laboratory network. Infection services have been recognised by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Porton Down for successful implementation of a network-wide response to potential viral haemorrhagic fever. Additionally, within four weeks of notification, we developed Mpoxclade typing across Wales.

Our Pathogen Genomics Unit (PenGU) has undertaken development for new services covering Mpox, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) bacteria. PenGU has played a key role working with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory to deliver an initial operating capacity to the UK Microbial Forensics Consortium, outcome 11 of the UK Biological Security Strategy.



Case study: Access to effective services – preventing the spread of disease

Background

Vaccination and immunisation are an important way of protecting people from infectious diseases. The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella, the complications caused by these diseases and the spread of these diseases in the community.

Situation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Wales did not see any measles cases. The number of measles cases started increasing on a global scale once the pandemic restrictions started to ease with the potential for measles to also spread within Wales. Detecting cases early is crucial to avoid the spread of measles in the community.

We did

We have targeted improving vaccination uptake among school-aged children and healthcare workers, as these are the areas where transmission is most likely to occur. During 2024/25, we have continued to work with partners of the catch up campaign for MMR in schools. This campaign has resulted in delivery 1,500 and 1,000 first doses were delivered to primary school and secondary school aged children in Wales respectively. Furthermore, over 2,000 and 1,000 second doses were delivered to primary school and secondary school aged children in Wales. This is a significant improvement in MMR uptake. We have also undertaken modelling work to identify the areas and age groups where under vaccination in Wales could result in large outbreaks, to support the targeting of the next phase of activity.





Emergency Preparedness

Our emergency preparedness, resilience, and response efforts include the establishment of a 24/7 on-call service, coordination of responses to over 60 incidents, and the conduct of major national response exercises. We have also been recognised as part of the CONTEST Cymru governance structure and assessed the UK's preparedness for pandemics.

Finally, we have developed a strategic route map to guide our planning, focusing on coordinated engagement with people in Wales, strengthening partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally, and supporting services to deliver outcomes effectively and efficiently. These achievements underscore our commitment to improving public health services and our strategic vision for the future.

Screening Services

Our screening programmes have seen the implementation of new digital functionalities which include cohorting components for breast screening, e-referral for diabetic eye screening, and sharing of screening histories across the England-Wales border for cervical screening. Diabetic Eye Screening Wales has rolled out 40 new cameras for retinal photography, which improves image capture quality enabling improved identification of patients with diabetic retinopathy.

Our Bowel Screening Wales Programme successfully completed optimisation and now offers screening for adults aged 50-75. Our Breast Screening programme has recovered following the temporary pause resulting from the COVID pandemic. We have also collaborated with Cardiff University to establish a partnership to carry out research to improve the outcomes of our screening services.

Tenth Anniversary of our Newborn Bloodspot Screening Wales

In April 2024, the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Wales Programme (NBSW) celebrated its tenth anniversary as a national screening programme. Over the past decade, it has screened more than 322,500 babies, identifying over 600 with suspected rare conditions for specialist diagnosis and treatment. On April 11, 2024, the NBSW annual conference celebrated the achievements of NHS Wales colleagues, reflected on the programme's progress over the last decade, and discussed future challenges and developments in delivering excellent newborn bloodspot screening in Wales.

Public Health Genomics

Our Public Health Genomics Programme has overseen the formation of a Genomic Epidemiology Unit which has worked to analyse outbreaks and perform genomic surveillance for SARS-CoV-2, Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV.

Healthcare Associated Infection, Antimicrobial Resistance and Prescribing (HARP)

Over the past year, the HARP programme has supported implementation of the UK Antimicrobial Resistance National Action Plan (2024–2029) in Wales through close collaboration with Welsh Government, national oversight groups, and direct support to Health Boards and Trusts. This included surveillance and analysis of antimicrobial use and resistance, development of stewardship and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance, and maintenance of the National IPC Manual for Wales.

There has been continued support for outbreak management and epidemiological analysis through the Healthcare Epidemiology Network. The programme also delivered regular reporting on healthcare-associated and surgical site infections during 2024 and are committed to working with the NHS Executive Quality Safety and Improvement team on a collaborative to reduce *Clostridioides difficile* infections during 2025/26.



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STRATEGIC PRIORITY SIX: TACKLING THE PUBLIC HEALTH EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is recognised as the most significant public health threat of the century, endangering physical health, mental health and well-being. It threatens all areas of life that impact our ability to achieve and maintain good health.

In 2019, Welsh Government declared a climate emergency for Wales and in October 2021 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared climate change to be the single biggest health threat facing humanity.

The impacts of climate change are multifaceted, impacting the social and environmental determinants of health (clean air, food security, safe homes, and access to services). The impacts of climate change are already being felt within Wales, both in terms of physical threats to life through extreme weather events, as well as climate related anxiety. In short, climate change is already adversely impacting the health of people in Wales and will continue to do so well into the future.



We know that some communities in Wales are likely to be more adversely impacted by the effects of climate change than others, and some less likely to be able to take action to respond to these effects, for example, lower income households and those living with disabilities and/or chronic conditions residing in areas prone to flooding. As such, the effects of climate change are likely to further exacerbate existing health inequalities in Wales. Our focus must be on ensuring that efficient and equitable adaptation policies and interventions are in place that help to reduce health inequalities.

We have identified several elements where we have a role in supporting the climate change and sustainability agenda, including developing, understanding and interpreting the evidence to inform action, provide evidence-based interventions, and to provide integrated technical advice to partners. This includes key functions such as policy advice, behavioural change, communication, surveillance, and guidance.

Further information on this priority can be found in our [Long Term Strategy](#).



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OUR HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY HUB HAS CONTINUED TO SUPPORT ACTION, BUILD CAPACITY, INSPIRE AND EDUCATE THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR

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What we delivered

Over the past 12 months, we have made significant strides in strengthening external partnerships, enhancing surveillance capabilities, advancing research, and building capacity in climate and health.

Our collaboration with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Public Health Scotland has led to an agreement on aligning surveillance metrics and methods, while the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI) framework for action has provided a solid foundation for our strategic route map. We have also engaged with key global partners, including World Health Organization, broadening our academic collaborations.

In surveillance, the launch of a dedicated sub-group within the Climate Change Programme Board has been instrumental in developing a climate and health surveillance system for Wales. We have also made significant progress in aligning our surveillance efforts internationally and fostering academic partnerships with Universities in Wales, the UK and worldwide.

Capacity-building efforts have been bolstered through our Greener Primary Care work and Healthy Travel Charters. Additionally, we have developed publications, including on demographic insights from a public survey on the links between climate change and how it affects health and a report on reducing single-use plastics in our microbiology laboratories.

Our Health and Sustainability Hub has continued to support action, build capacity, inspire and educate throughout the past year. Further information and examples of some of our key deliverables during 2024/25 can be found in the Well-being of Future Generations Report.

ENABLING THE SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY OF OUR PLAN

Our enabling functions continue to be pivotal to the successful delivery of our strategic priorities, playing a critical role in the leadership and delivery of a number of major areas of work, alongside the delivery of our full range of statutory functions and activities.

We have focused on delivering maximum impact by building on innovative approaches that work, placing users at the heart of what we do and through an unwavering focus on quality improvement.

Our People

Our people are at the heart of our work to reduce health inequalities and protect and improve the health and well-being of the people of Wales. Our People Strategy provides our long-term direction and priorities which shape the Organisation and our culture and ways of working. Our long-term people ambition is to develop a flexible, sustainable, diverse and thriving workforce, with the capability and capacity to deliver our strategic priorities. Given how critical our people are to our success, we want to attract, retain and develop great people, to create a positive impact in the communities we serve throughout Wales.

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OUR PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK TO REDUCE HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE OF WALES

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This year we have undertaken work to refresh our People Strategy to better align with the refreshed Long-Term Strategy published in 2024; build on the actions we have taken since 2020; recognise how the world has changed over the last 5 years and take account of the key challenges for the next 10 years. We expect to publish the strategy by the end of June 2025.

Our key objectives and other achievements for the year are summarised below.

Culture and Experience

Our aspiration is to have a compelling cultural narrative and a consistent organisational culture; a staff experience that prioritises well-being, flexible working, opportunities for career progression and makes Public Health Wales an employer of choice that attracts, recruits and retains people to reflect the communities we serve and a workforce which understands and advocates for diversity.

- We have developed a strategic approach to employee engagement, which responds to the results of the NHS Wales Staff Survey, Medical Engagement Survey, Culture Assessment and other inputs, and identified measures to track our progress with the actions agreed to close the gap between current and ideal culture and increase employee engagement.
- We developed more accredited Cultural Advocates, providing knowledge and developing skills that will enable our advocates to confidently and effectively support our culture work.
- Behaviours are core to culture and this year we evaluated 'Being Our Best', the behavioural Framework we launched in 2023, following extensive engagement with colleagues about how we want our values – working together, with trust and respect, to make a difference – to show up in our everyday working experiences. We will use the evaluation to shape how Being our Best is embedded.

- We were pleased to see an increase in the response rate to the NHS Wales staff survey, from 54% in 2023 to 60.5% in 2024. This is compared with the 21.9% overall NHS Wales response rate for 2024. The results will inform further development of our employee engagement plan and help us target action.
- Our new Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028 was published to meet our Public Sector Equality Duties and enable us to achieve our ambitions.
- Building on the Gold award that we were awarded in 2023, we achieved Gold with Distinction in the Diverse Cymru Cultural Competence assessment for 2024. Public Health Wales was the only organisation that participated to achieve this level of recognition.
- Our Staff Networks continue to develop and grow, and they are an integral part of the way we work. Networks are sponsored by an Executive team member and this year each Network attended a Board meeting to discuss their work and agree priority actions. A subgroup of our Porffor Network was launched to support Neurodivergent Staff.



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Organisational Effectiveness

Our aim is to plan and work towards our agreed optimum workforce size and shape which is aligned to our Long-Term Strategy, have clear approaches to develop or access the skills we need with increased flexibility, deployment of resources where needed, reducing silos and building collaboration to support organisational performance.

- We launched an updated workforce planning process in April 2024 and saw high levels of engagement across the Organisation . The outcomes have been categorised into three broad area – Recruitment and Retention; Learning and Development; and Planning for Change.
- We clarified that there are three common skills themes; we need to build digital literacy skills, leadership and management skills, and Welsh language skills.
- The need for a robust succession planning approach, especially for our critical roles, was another key output. Work is underway to further develop succession planning in 2025/26.
- We identified clear connections between the challenges highlighted in our workforce plans and our People Strategy aims and objectives, and this will allow the People and Organisational Development Directorate to adapt our programme of work to better meet the needs of the Organisation .
- Our People Strategy states our commitment to embed a Job Family approach to support professional development, succession planning and workforce planning and this year we established a clear vision outlining the function of job families within Public Health Wales. We will implement the vision next year.
- We evaluated the pilot of our Leadership and Management Academy programme, together with feedback and data obtained from the Leading with Impact programme and designed and delivered an ongoing programme of leadership and management development which has inspiring culture and compassionate leadership as its heart.



Professional Standards

As part of our ongoing commitment to professional standards, accountability for all regulated healthcare professions—excluding Nursing and Midwifery, which remains within the Nursing, Quality and Integrated Governance (NQIG) Directorate—has been transferred to the Office of the Medical Director (OMD). This builds on the OMD’s existing remit, which includes oversight of General Medical Council (GMC)-regulated professionals and multi-professional consultants registered with the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR). Regulated health professionals are a critical component of our workforce, and both the OMD and NQIG continue to strengthen regulatory oversight, clinical supervision, peer support, professional networks, and, where applicable, revalidation and appraisal quality assurance

Welsh Language

We take great pride in being a bilingual Organisation, championing the Welsh language at every level. Our Welsh Language team plays a vital role in ensuring compliance with Welsh Language legislation, providing expert guidance, templates, and delivering high-quality Welsh content. They also lead Welsh Language Awareness training and support staff in learning and using Welsh in their daily work. In the past year, we have made significant strides by recruiting a Welsh Translation Coordinator to oversee our translation work and develop a new Welsh Translation Request Portal, which launched in January 2025. Furthermore, we have embedded the Welsh Language into our impact assessment processes, ensuring that our policy decisions positively impact the Welsh language and its speakers.

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WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN BEING A BILINGUAL ORGANISATION, CHAMPIONING THE WELSH LANGUAGE AT EVERY LEVEL

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OUR PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE RECEIVED THE GOLD AWARD WITH DISTINCTION FROM DIVERSE CYMRU

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We have six active staff diversity networks in Public Health Wales that bring employees with shared characteristics such as gender, race, cultural heritage, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith, age and disability together in a safe space and offer a range of opportunities for their members. In the past year we have held events to raise awareness, raise the profile of our networks and offer support through education for all our employees. In 2024, we ranked 31st most inclusive employer and a Gold Standard employer in the Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index, and our People and Organisational Development Directorate received the Gold Award with Distinction from Diverse Cymru as part of their Certificate of Cultural Competence Progress, after an external assessment by UK Investors in Equality and Diversity (UKIED).

Business and Processes

We are continuing to evolve our policies, processes, and supporting services to drive and enable high performance through managers and key people metrics to inform planning, decision-making and team management.

- We reviewed and updated a number of policies in partnership with Trade Union colleagues and in consultation with staff, to deliver streamlined and simplified processes. This includes our establishment control process.
- Improvements were made to processes, forms and templates and we utilised automation to enhance customer experience and increase process efficiency.
- We undertook a programme of user research to help us understand the needs of People and Organisational Development service users, to put our people at the heart of our service design, and develop more effective processes and service improvements. This informed the development of a prioritised plan for improvement.
- This year we have assessed our readiness and commenced the work that will prepare us for the future NHS workforce solution which will replace the current system, the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR), the biggest system of its kind in the world.

Challenges and Risks

- We continue to face challenges which impact our people and the work we do, as well as the wider population of Wales. Factors such as an ageing population, larger numbers of people working to a later age, socio-economic challenges, the impact of the pandemic, and climate change all affect the workforce we require and the workforce that is available to us, now and in the future.
- There's a need to develop recruitment strategies for hard-to-fill roles and in response to planned future expansion, including lung screening, data science, AI and genomics. We need to build digital literacy skills, leadership and management skills, and Welsh language skills and a requirement for clear career pathways for all job families.
- We need to be able to recruit and develop a more diverse workforce that better reflects the communities we serve, and provide insight into the needs and motivations of all our service users. We have further work to do to embed strategic workforce planning within our long term, integrated planning cycle.

We also want to embed ways of working that will attract and inspire a multi-generational workforce to work effectively together, valuing each other's skills and perspectives, and supporting people's changing needs by increasing the opportunities for flexible and agile working.



Organisational, Improvement and Risk Management

We aspire to be an exemplar in quality and aim to deliver excellent public health services. Over the last 12 months, we have developed our approach to quality and continuous improvement utilising a Quality Management System to effectively describe organisation design and participate in system transformation and continuous quality improvement.

We are committed to operating this Quality Management System (QMS) which is designed for excellent outcomes and driven by the needs of the population we serve. This in turn enables a quality culture and learning environment which supports our staff and provides a great place to work and thrive. This approach supports the achievement of our strategy and strategic priorities, and our ambition about the culture we want as an Organisation.

The pursuit of an organisation-wide approach to managing for quality enables us to implement the Duties of Quality and Candour within the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act (2020). It also enables us to focus more clearly on the needs of the system and purpose of the organisation. Following the introduction of the Duty of Quality and the Duty of Candour, we have been working with our staff and key stakeholders to ensure we meet the requirements of both duties, with the ultimate aim of delivering excellent public health services.

Our Nursing, Quality and Integrated Governance Directorate is responsible for enabling, advising, collaborating and supporting across the Organisation as subject matter experts ensuring arrangements are in place for quality assurance and integrated governance and safeguarding. In 2024/25 some of the key achievements by this Directorate are as follows:

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WE ARE COMMITTED TO OPERATING THIS QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS) WHICH IS DESIGNED FOR EXCELLENT OUTCOMES AND DRIVEN BY THE NEEDS OF THE POPULATION WE SERVE

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Quality and Improvement

In response to the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, the Health and Care Standards have been reviewed as part of the Duty of Quality implementation. The Health and Care Standards have been replaced with a quality reporting Framework, based on new Health and Care Quality Standards. The twelve Health and Care Quality Standards are framed around six domains of quality and six quality enablers, to describe what good quality care looks like.





The new reporting framework and the Duty of Quality sets out a clear framework for quality management that will strengthen the connection between the Duty of Quality, Health and Care Quality Standards, and wider quality management systems in NHS Organisations in Wales.

In 2024, the first [Annual Quality Report](#) was published to demonstrate how Public Health Wales complied with the Duty of Quality and the twelve standards. It looked back at achievements and delivery through a lens of quality, and highlighted the learning which would help us improve our services across the coming year. To see detail on how we have complied this year, please read the 2024/25 Annual Quality Report which is due to be published on our [website](#) in September 2025.

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IN 2024, THE FIRST ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT WAS PUBLISHED TO DEMONSTRATE HOW PUBLIC HEALTH WALES COMPLIED WITH THE DUTY OF QUALITY AND THE TWELVE STANDARDS

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Records Management Project

This Project has delivered the implementation of SharePoint Online as a single Electronic Document Management System (EDRMS) for Public Health Wales. This programme has been in train since 2023 to improve collaborative working, reduce staff time in searching for and using documents and records, and ensuring that Public Health Wales is compliant with Information Governance legislation.

We are already seeing improvements in governance and version control, and our external partners such as Health Boards and Local Authorities can join us in collaborating on documentation, reducing the time it is taking to complete vital pieces of work. This was a significant organisational change, which was received very well by staff and engagement in the Project was high. This is an exciting change for Public Health Wales, which will continue to support staff to deliver our strategic priorities.

Service User and Patient Experience

The Directorate provides support for both public-facing engagement and service user experience for teams and programmes across Public Health Wales. In 2024/25 we carried out an extensive review of our Young Ambassadors Programme (a young person's engagement programme) and, in 2025/26 we will plan to work with the expertise of community youth organisations to bring together an advisory group of young people from across Wales to support the development of a refreshed programme which is driven by the voices of young people. In 2024/25, the Engagement team also commenced a detailed baseline assessment of engagement activity by the organisation with people, communities and the third sector across Wales. Recommendations will be presented over the summer of 2025.

To promote the importance of listening to and capturing feedback from the people who use our services, the Service User Experience Team have been working with all Public Health Wales National Screening programmes to introduce service user experience and feedback surveys. These surveys are now live and available on the respective Screening Webpages, [Screening - Public Health Wales](#). The surveys are promoted by screening teams using posters, flyers and embedded within the appointment and results letters which we send. Work was completed in partnership with the Putting Things Right Team (Complaints and Concerns) to develop and introduce a single Feedback and Complaints webpage with links to online surveys. The page can be accessed via the following link: [Feedback and Complaints - Public Health Wales](#).

As an Organisation, we are required to adopt the 'always on' approach to receiving feedback. This means that people can leave feedback at a time and location of their choosing. Our team has worked to introduce SMS text messages to seek feedback. This included working through the NHS governance requirements, resolving IT issues and to ensure the project was compliant with Data Protection Legislation. The SMS approach is being piloted with Diabetic Eye Screening Wales and in its first five weeks it attracted 460 feedback responses.

The SMS approach is being piloted with Diabetic Eye Screening Wales and in its first five weeks it attracted



Finally, we have also worked with our Health Protection team and Microbiology to offer Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C testing, along with HIV testing, to underrepresented communities. As a result of the joint working initiative over 90 people were tested and the work was evaluated through service user feedback.

Risk Management

Managing risk is essential to running a safe, effective, progressive and successful organisation. It should be at the heart of decision-making, business agendas and allocation of resources at both an operational and planning level and should aim to identify opportunities to innovate and invest, alongside the need to minimise risk exposure.

During 2024/25, we reviewed and revised our strategic risks and corporate risks in line with our newly refreshed Long-Term Strategy and IMTP. We took a good look at our route maps that support the delivery of our Long Term Strategy through a risk management lens. As a result of this, our strategic risks have been refocussed to best describe the most significant organisational risks we face through a Public Health lens, and through that of Quality.

By utilising this approach, we can concentrate our activities on the mitigating actions that are within our control but also highlight the areas that require our influence within the system, to achieve our intended outcomes.

It is anticipated that by end of quarter one of 2025/26, a revised risk appetite framework will be adopted across the organisation. This will mean that staff from the front-line workers right through to our Board will be able to understand and apply a risk appetite to their specific area. This will promote consistency, and ensure our risk appetite, risk processes and mitigation match our ambition that we have laid out in our Long Term Strategy.

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MANAGING RISK
IS ESSENTIAL TO
RUNNING A SAFE,
EFFECTIVE,
PROGRESSIVE AND
SUCCESSFUL
ORGANISATION

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National Safeguarding Service

Over the past year, the National Safeguarding Service has focused on improving safeguarding practice across Wales through quality assurance, the development of a reporting and performance monitoring framework, and collaboration with partner agencies.

Support models have been designed for NHS Wales safeguarding leaders to help prevent stress and burnout, enabling continued engagement and curiosity in their roles. National learning events held in both North and South Wales focused on professional curiosity, safeguarding adults at risk and restorative supervision facilitated sharing of key lessons to strengthen practice.

Awareness-raising initiatives developed include training resources on professional curiosity, amplifying the voice of adults at risk, sexual safety, child exploitation and the process following an unexpected child death.

Looking ahead, the voices of children and adults will remain central to safeguarding policies and practices, with opportunities for service user feedback embedded in all new national policies, procedures, and practices. Work will also continue to strengthen safeguarding across NHS Wales, as identified in a review commissioned by the Chief Nursing Officer in 2024.

Maximising the use of digital, data and evidence to improve public health

In developing our strategy, we focused on where we can add most value for the people of Wales. We also focused on how we enable and drive the delivery of our plan through embracing more agile and data driven approaches, along with adopting innovation where possible, placing users at the heart of what we do and embedding quality improvement.

With the diversity in programmes of work within our Research, Data and Digital Directorate, we have delivered many key achievements across the Organisation and in collaboration with key partners.

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LOOKING AHEAD,
THE VOICES OF
CHILDREN AND
ADULTS WILL
REMAIN CENTRAL
TO SAFEGUARDING
POLICIES AND
PRACTICES

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Research and Evaluation

Some of the key achievements in Research and Evaluation this year include:

- Completed a review of Academic Public Health in Wales, and working with the Welsh Innovation Network to co-produce a vision for public health research in Wales for the future.
- Children and young people's mental health research into understanding the association between mental well-being and mental health, examining key groups at risk of crisis presentation for mental health and routes to accessing support – including qualitative insights from those less likely to be heard.
- Building strategically aligned, transparent and robust evaluation of interventions to improve health including behaviourally-informed national communications and engagement campaign for the winter vaccines and preventive behaviours; HAPUS Strategic Partnership and baseline national survey; a pre-habilitation to rehabilitation service for cancer patients; and an outcome evaluation of the All Wales Diabetes Prevention Programme.

Data Science and Analysis

Our Data Science and Analysis Team provides data and analysis to drive decision-making. This is used by Public Health teams, planners, service designers, policymakers and other decision-makers. We also lead the delivery of workstreams of the Digital and Data Strategy route map, to ensure that we make the best use of our data, in ways that are safe, efficient and deliver value for money.

Some of our main achievements in 2024/25 were:

- The launch of our Primary Care Clusters dashboard and the publication of a complementary set of interactive profiles to help decision makers understand population health need and inform planning and resourcing.
- The publication of web articles on the prevalence of non-communicable disease and trends in risk factors.

- The development of the Public Health Wales measurement system, to enable us to understand and monitor the impact of our activities, and drive prioritisation and decision-making.
- Developed the approach to the governance of AI in Public Health Wales, which will allow us to confidently take the opportunities that AI offers, in a way that is safe, legal, ethical and efficient.

Digital and Data

Some of our main achievements in 2024/25 were:

- New Digital and Data Routemap overview delivered to our Knowledge, Research and Information Committee.
- Work continues on the Health Protection System (Tarian replacement). The alpha phase has looked at how we build the business case for a health protection system that meets our needs both now and is pandemic ready.
- A breast screening cohort selection application that has replaced the legacy National Health Application and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS) system.
- Significant progress in the re-platforming of the Newborn Screening systems. Despite needing replanning for a new server infrastructure, the project is progressing well with completion due by the end of May 2025.
- Improvement of our cyber posture through the rollout of training, reduction of legacy systems and applications, firewall replacement and remediation, exercise ERIS on cyber resilience as well as the formation of a new cyber team.
- A discovery phase on the National Breast Screening System (NBSS) to determine future developments and support for the application.
- Supporting the development and implementation of national digital programmes, such as Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS2.0) and Radiology Informatics System Procurement (RISP).

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NEW DIGITAL AND
DATA ROUTEMAP
OVERVIEW DELIVERED
TO OUR KNOWLEDGE,
RESEARCH AND
INFORMATION
COMMITTEE

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- Deployed a reporting server and the environmental module for Tarian, our current Health Protection digital system.

Registries

Our Directorate is also responsible for the statutory reporting of our Registries. The teams process multiple sources of information, some of which remain affected by the pandemic. The Registries activities include:

- Congenital Anomaly Register and Information Service (CARIS) annual meetings and official statistics reports in November 2024. The face-to-face meeting was held in Wrexham and the reports included:
 - Congenital anomalies data
 - Childhood rare diseases data with new local health board level output
 - Antenatal detection rates
- Adult Rare Diseases (ARD):
 - Continued work to formally establish the registry, with support from the Information Governance Team, including website updates with information required to progress achieving Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG) permissions.
- Child Measurement Programme (CMP):
 - Official Statistics Annual Report published May 2024 (2022-2023 data).
 - Teaching delivered to school nursing teams.
 - First iteration of CMP dashboard was presented to the stakeholder group in June 2024. Phase two of the CMP dashboard published in December 2024, adding data for Wales deprivation 5ths and comparative UK nations' data.

- Welsh Cancer Intelligence Surveillance Unit (WCISU):
 - Cancer incidence official statistics for registration years 2002-2021 published September 2024.
 - Cancer survival official statistics for registration years 2002-2021 published March 2025.
 - Official statistics for non-melanoma skin cancer incidence for registration years 2016-2020 published May 2024.
 - Completion of Moondance Cancer Initiative funded project to agreed parameters - Realising the Power of Bowel Cancer Audit - Bespoke Welsh Audit.

- Child Death Review (CDR):
 - A communication/escalation process has been developed, and work is underway to improve the surveillance function of the programme.

- Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance (RTSSS):
 - Publication of second surveillance report on 'Deaths by suspected suicide, 2023/24'. Presentation of findings at the three regional suicide and self-harm prevention fora in December 2024.

Knowledge Mobilisation

Knowledge Mobilisation is integral to how knowledge is obtained and used both within and between organisations. The team are leading the Organisation to define 'Publication Principles and Standards' and implement our Impact Monitoring Approach. The team have:

- Implemented an impact monitoring approach, including an annual service user survey and product specific follow up, and will draw this together into an annual report.
- Co-produced and agreed publication standards and supporting resources, combining these with the Design Standards to improve the Public Health Wales staff user journey. The implementation of both these sets of standards will come in seamlessly as Public Health Wales moves towards its new website.



Evidence Service

Our Evidence Service informs health policy, practice and decision making which underpins public health action through producing review products such as rapid reviews, evidence maps and scoping reviews. The service is designed to help users help themselves by signposting to important public health evidence, supporting users with the evidence searches and developing a number of supportive training resources and sessions to help empower others to access appropriate information. The Evidence Service has also produced a number of user-led products, including:

- A review of systematic reviews looking at [Universal, whole system and settings-based interventions for stabilizing or reducing the prevalence of overweight and obesity.](#)
- A rapid review looking at Understanding the role of health beliefs amongst adults engaging with secondary and tertiary preventive services to live well with Type 2 diabetes (Publication due April 2025).

A number of Agile scoping reviews and as part of our ongoing collaborations with the Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) Collaboration we have produced a number of high impact rapid reviews.

- We have also updated and digitised our entire [suite of evidence maps](#) to enhance accessibility of key evidence.

Long Term Strategy

Our [Long Term Strategy for 2023-2035](#) sets out our vision for achieving a healthier future for Wales by 2035 through focusing on the delivery of our six strategic priorities that will drive our work over the long term.

What we delivered

During 2024/25, to support the delivery of our Strategy, we applied futures thinking methodology to develop route maps for the six strategic priorities. They are internal planning documents that connect our 2035 objectives to our current position. They help us to identify opportunities and solutions in partnership with key stakeholders and provide transparency in our direction of travel.

The route maps bring together our thinking for each strategic priority on:

- Our unique delivery role (e.g. influence, mobilise, advocate, deliver)
- The strategic and policy context and how its shaped our priorities
- Our 2035 objectives and the steps needed in the short term, medium term and long term to achieve each of them
- Measurement to help us understand our impact and where we need to adjust.

They have been developed through cross-organisational and multidisciplinary working and by drawing feedback from our stakeholders and partners that we gathered during the development of our strategy.



Communications and Engagement

Communications is a strategic business function as well as a public health intervention in its own right. Our aim is to deliver world-class communications, campaigns and engagement activities that support Public Health Wales' strategic priorities, improve people's lives, and help achieve a healthier future for Wales.

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PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS AIM TO MOTIVATE, INFLUENCE AND ENABLE PEOPLE TO ACCESS PUBLIC SERVICES AND MAKE CHOICES TO IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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Public health campaigns aim to motivate, influence and enable people to access public services and make choices to improve their health and well-being. When planned and implemented using data, behavioural science and creative skills, campaigns can be a powerful force for good, helping people to take positive action to improve and protect their health; and at the same time building confidence and trust in our institutions and brands making it more likely that people will take up health advice.

To achieve these goals in a changing world we have to stay at the forefront of communications, marketing and engagement techniques, applying rigorous and consistent approaches to our work, and undertaking rolling evaluation. We adapt to the changing needs of our service users and the public, and work to capitalise on the potential of data and new platforms and channels. To meet the rigorous standards required to meet public health goals, we must consistently apply rigorous, evidence-based approaches.

What we delivered

In 2024/25, some of our key achievements were as follows:

- Our communications work was recognised for excellence across the communications and public relations industry. This year, our work was shortlisted for six CIPR Cymru Awards including best in-house team and best low budget campaign. We also received the UKPHR Award for Best Social Media Campaign 2024, and a PRCA DARE Cymru award. This reflected work across public campaigns, media relations and engagement.

- An example of effective use of social media was the work we delivered to help people understand the benefits of bowel screening and provide an opportunity to respond to questions from the public. We filmed a [case study with a cancer survivor](#) who received treatment for bowel cancer following a routine screening appointment. The content performed well, and showed the power of using real stories to explain public health. This led to an opportunity to share our message on S4C's Prynawn Da.
- We continued to shape the public discourse through proactive media work. For example, we achieved significant media coverage including an exceedingly high level of UK National coverage for the final Vaping Incident Review Group report. Our broadcast highlights included interviews about vaping on Radio 5 Live and Talk TV – both audiences we do not often reach. Media particularly highlighted our recommendation that young people should be given nicotine patches to combat vaping addiction.
- Our public campaigns used behaviour science and robust methodology to deliver results. As an example of this, Wales HIV Testing Week campaign (November 2023) won two prestigious awards at the PRCA Dare Awards Cymru. The campaign aimed to increase HIV testing among sexually active people in Wales and led to 9,006 orders of the home testing kit in November 2023. Evaluation indicated strong overall results. The campaign exceeded expectations in engaging with diverse groups. Most notably, it achieved the highest-ever level of engagement with Black and Asian communities in Wales—a groundbreaking milestone. The campaign drove over 22,000 visits to the Sexual Health Wales website to order test kits, with more than 16,000 directly linked to campaign promotional materials.
- Engaging with staff is a critical part of our communication work. June was Pride month, and we celebrated our LGBTQ+ colleagues by sharing very personal stories of 'what Pride means to me' on the intranet. We ended the month with a colourful photo montage of Public Health Wales staff taking part in the Pride parade. The feature story by Jim McManus was one of the most read articles with 28 comments and 1284 views.



9,006

orders of the
home testing kit
in November 2023



500

More than 500 staff attended our two Staff Conferences in October

- More than 500 staff attended our two Staff Conferences in October, with overwhelmingly positive feedback. This was an opportunity for staff from every part of the Organisation to come together to hear about our six strategic priorities, how we align ourselves for success and spend time getting to hear about each other's work.
- Working with teams across the whole of the Organisation, the Web Transformation Programme is working to modernise our web services, bringing an evidence-based, user-centred perspective to everything we publish. We have refreshed our web strategy, set out audience segments along with user needs and goals, and redesigned our site architecture to improve the user experience. All of this work underpins the refresh of our web site which will be launched in 2025.

Financial Performance

What we delivered

In quarter one of 2024/25 we finalised our 2023/24 financial position and annual accounts, delivering our financial duty to break-even for the financial year 2023/24 and for the rolling three-year period 2021/24. We also met the NHS Wales target to pay 95% of non-NHS contracts within 30 days. The Trust submitted its draft financial statements within the required timescales, with Audit Wales issuing an unqualified opinion on the Financial Statements.

Our 2024/25 financial statements provide a detailed overview of our financial performance in 2024/25 are contained within the Annual Accounts Report.

Other financial successes during the year included development of 2024/25 Investment Plans enabling the organisation to resource key priorities within our strategy. We also developed and redesigned our Performance Report which was reported to Board for the first time in September 2024, introducing a range of new performance measures and Strategic Priority updates, receiving excellent feedback from stakeholders.

Our Estate

The year has seen a focus on the continued development and enhancement of our estate, supporting staff to work differently in line with our Work How it Works Best Policy and enhancing existing working environments to provide improved working environments for colleagues and service users.

During these Projects circular economy principles continue to underpin the way we work wherever possible along with looking to do things which support our sustainability commitments – this has included making further donations of surplus furniture to communities and other parts of the NHS.

Opportunities for the further development of our Electric Vehicle infrastructure have been pursued and work commenced to increase the scope of the coverage of our ISO 140001 accreditation to a greater part of the Organisation as a part of our commitment to sustainability.

What we delivered

In 2024/25 some of our key achievements were as follows:

- Completed the fit out of floor 6 at Capital Quarter 2 (CQ2) in Cardiff to allow for increased numbers of staff attending CQ2 to have access to workspace.
- Increased the use of the CQ2 event space; hosting significant large events including the first World TB (Tuberculosis) Day conference, the All-Wales Nursing and Midwifery conference and hosted the Welsh Circular Economy Innovation Communities conference. The Division has received very positive feedback being received from both Public Health Wales users and other NHS Organisations utilising the facility.
- Successfully completed the delivery of Welsh Government funded capital works supporting estates improvement works at Breast Test Wales, Swansea.

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THE YEAR HAS SEEN A FOCUS ON THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF OUR ESTATE, SUPPORTING STAFF TO WORK DIFFERENTLY

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- Supported staff health and well-being whilst working from home through increased access to and completion of Working From Home Safely training to support staff across the Organisation who have chosen to adopt hybrid working arrangements.
- ISO 140001 Environmental Management accreditation attained for 2024/25.
- Completed the reconfiguration of the Acute Response Centre, Public Enquiry room and Help Me quit Call Centre.
- Commenced work aimed at improving and enhancing the provision of accommodation for some of our estate in North Wales, completing two weeks of face to face engagement with North Wales colleagues.
- Successful completion of a number of our capital works projects including the upgrade of air-cooling units at Breast Test Wales Cardiff and Bowel Screening Magden Park site, and conversion works at Llys Castan Parc Menai to support the relocation of Diabetic Eye Screening service from Llys Britannia to the Parc Menai Llys Castan site in North Wales.



Sustainability

Our Decarbonisation and Sustainability Plan 2024-2026 details the actions we are taking to be a carbon-negative organisation (removing more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than we release). The plan builds on our previous progress and includes actions we are taking across the Organisation to support the foundational and circular economy agendas and contribute to the goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We have integrated these agendas within our planning due to the significant overlaps between them, to ensure that we have one plan that demonstrates our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint.

As a key provider of NHS services across Wales, we have an important role to play in supporting sustainability activities. We aligned our own ambition with key priorities and targets set out in the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan to ensure we reduce our carbon emissions to work to achieve Net Zero emissions. We have continued to work in co-ordination with our partner NHS Health Boards and trusts and with NHS Wales's Shared Services Partnership, to deliver our 2024-2026 Decarbonisation and Sustainability Plan.

As set out above, we have delivered several projects to reduce our environmental impact that contribute to the organisation's decarbonisation, circular and foundational economy agenda. In line with Welsh Government guidance, we will also be publishing a separate Sustainability Report covering sustainability data and our carbon footprint for 2024/25 on our [website](#) once finalised data is available in September 2025.



WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (WFG) ACT (WALES) 2015

Helping us work towards a healthier future for Wales

The world is changing, and so are the challenges we face when it comes to our health. That is why we're setting our sights on what truly matters: improving healthy life expectancy and reducing the gap between the most and least deprived communities. To achieve this, we recognise the importance of the Well-being of Future Generations Act as an enabler for sustainable change.

It is about more than just responding to today's challenges, it is about shaping a brighter, healthier future for everyone. We have set out six bold priorities, and over the past year, we have been working on developing our Route Maps, which set out the things we need to do to achieve our ambitious vision for a healthier Wales by 2035.

We are embracing the 5 Ways of Working approach to guide us along this exciting journey to help us identify the best route to delivery and to further integrate and align objectives to improve performance. These Route Maps will help us hit crucial milestones and help us make real, lasting change at every stage, short term (2025-28), medium term (2028-31), and long-term (2031-35).

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THE WORLD IS CHANGING, AND SO ARE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE WHEN IT COMES TO OUR HEALTH

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Long term: For each strategic priority we used back casting methodology to identify the steps needed to achieve our long-Term Strategy 2035 objectives. We worked with the School of International Futures to help visualise the route maps and ensure the work we are doing now leads to delivering our 2035 objectives.



Prevention: Prevention of ill health is a core part of our organisational mission as we work together for a healthier Wales. Our route maps highlight the public health actions required to prevent disease, protect health, provide system leadership, specialists services and public health expertise.



Collaboration: The route maps built on the extensive engagement carried out when developing our Strategy. They provide transparency in our direction of travel and help us identify opportunities and, solutions in partnership with stakeholders as well as our enablers to ensure we're doing the right things in a joined-up way to address key issues.



Integration: The six strategic priorities are intrinsically linked, and many areas of work cut across two or more strategic priorities. The priority leads meet to discuss areas of cross over to ensure the route maps complement each other and reflect a single approach to cross-cutting issues.



Involvement: The route maps have been developed through cross organisational, multi-disciplinary working led by Priority leads and Executive Team Sponsors. They have continued with the approach adopted when developing our Strategy-involvement of and engagement with colleagues across the organisation, where they bring their knowledge from work within the public health system.



The Sustainable Principle and developing route maps

Long term: For each strategic priority we used back casting methodology to identify the steps needed to achieve our long-Term Strategy 2035 objectives. We worked with the School of International Futures to help visualise the route maps and ensure the work we are doing now leads to delivering our 2035 objectives.

We are dedicated to working together with key stakeholders and the public to address the root causes of health inequalities and transform the health and well-being of the people of Wales. The power of prevention takes centre stage in our report, [Investing in a healthier Wales: prioritising prevention](#), released in January 2025. It shines a spotlight on the urgent need to focus on prevention, given the scale of the challenge we face in Wales. Building a strong foundation for good health is not just essential, it's the key to improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities now and in the future. It will also ease the financial strain on the health and care system, benefiting society as a whole.

Our Organisation is committed to improving health and well-being and reducing health inequalities in Wales through a long-term approach. This ensures sustainable strategies and decisions, helping us shape a better future for the communities we serve and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.



What we delivered

In the 2024/25 financial year, we have made significant strides in embedding futures thinking across the organisation, enhancing our capacity and skill set. This has included futures-focused projects such as our on the future of Social Capital in [No one left behind](#) and the future of [Affordable homes for health and well-being](#). We have also rolled out a variety of training and upskilling opportunities for all staff, as well as tailored programmes for specific teams.

We have also been actively sharing our approach with other partners through our involvement in the Hwb Dyfodol, participating in learning exchanges with partners in Cologne and the Netherlands, and also collaborating with the Future Generations Cymru Team to develop insightful case studies.

Our ongoing work with the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner has grown from strength to strength and during the past year we have shaped our commitments around the Cymru Can five missions. Our partnership agreement is key in ensuring that both our organisations can achieve their goals and deliver real impact. In support of this partnership and to further embed the Act within Public Health Wales, we have established our own WFG Champions Group with the aim of enhancing our collaboration, integration and drive meaningful change across the organisation.

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OUR ONGOING WORK WITH THE OFFICE OF THE FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMISSIONER HAS GROWN FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH AND DURING THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE SHAPED OUR COMMITMENTS AROUND THE CYMRU CAN FIVE MISSIONS

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We continue to identify areas of our work which exemplify the sustainable development principle and where we can maximise our contribution towards the well-being goals. Examples include:

- The Primary Care Division won two awards in 2024. The Task and Finish Group – Decarbonisation – Inhaler use and disposal won the Sustainability in Healthcare award at the Welsh Pharmacy Awards 2024. **The Greener Primary Care Wales Framework** and Award Scheme won the 'A Healthier Wales' award at the first national [NHS Welsh Sustainability Awards](#) in June 2024. The Scheme supports primary care settings to improve their environmental sustainability. Since the Scheme was launched in 2022, teams have achieved nearly 3000 climate-friendly actions and reached over 500 individuals annually, implemented across primary care which returned having financial, environmental, social, and clinical value and co-benefits to staff and patients. A [case study](#) of the Scheme was also published by Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (WHO).
- **Launch of our Governance Hub Pilot:** The Hub will help staff to integrate governance planning early to ensure the highest standards of assurance, compliance, and efficiency. The Governance Hub Pilot was created to help staff better understand our governance requirements and develop ways to ensure compliance and improve decision-making. It provides subject matter expertise, supporting project leads through impact assessments and helping to develop solutions that apply the five Ways of Working. This collaborative approach ensures that decisions are well-informed and aligned with our core principles.



3000

Since the Scheme was launched in 2022, teams have achieved nearly 3000 climate-friendly actions and reached over 500 individuals annually

- **SimplyDo:** The platform provides everything we need to capture, evaluate and implement great ideas, in a transparent and inclusive way for all Public Health Wales staff. By creating customisable challenges, we capture ideas securely and inspire change. The platform encourages collaboration and engagement with all Public Health Wales colleagues to gain fresh insights and share views and concepts. It also allows us to evaluate and manage ideas effectively, using tools to track idea progress and deliver results. It is an opportunity for staff to contribute towards organisational strategic priorities as a valued member of the work force. Taking part in SimplyDo challenges allows people to be heard and valued and to have direct involvement in shaping the future of the organisation and the health of the Welsh population.
- **Green Lab Champions Group:** The Microbiology staff, supported by the Health and Sustainability Hub are working to reduce lab emissions. The report [Addressing Single-Use Plastic and Waste in Public Health Wales's Microbiology Labs](#) published in April 2024, led to the formation of the Green Lab Champions group. Key achievements include: saving 29,952 bags annually; Swansea Lab recycling Pipette Tip Boxes, expanding this initiative to all labs; and reducing unnecessary printing through the LIMS system, saving 156,000 sheets of paper and £930 annually, equivalent to 15 trees' worth of carbon. This initiative is being extended to other labs. A collaboration group with 9 NHS Wales Health Boards/ Trusts has been established to scale these efforts across the country. The Hub has shared this work at several events, including the Spread & Scale Academy Leadership event and Welsh Government Health and Social Care Community of Experts group.



15

reducing unnecessary printing through the LIMS system, saving 156,000 sheets of paper and £930 annually, equivalent to 15 trees' worth of carbon.

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LAUNCHED IN JULY 2024, HAPUS IS A COLLABORATION WITH NEW STRATEGIC PARTNERS AND A GROWING NETWORK OF ORGANISATIONS IN SECTORS LIKE ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE, NATURE, AND VOLUNTEERING.

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- **Behavioural science in practice and policy:** Household recycling: The purpose of this case study was to show how applying behavioural science can help to identify and implement a range of different intervention types that can help to effectively address behavioural determinants and influence behaviour. The learning of which can be used to help inform future efforts which aim to address climate-related behaviours.
- **Hapus:** Launched in July 2024, Hapus is a collaboration with new strategic partners and a growing network of organisations in sectors like arts, culture, heritage, nature, and volunteering. It promotes a national conversation about mental well-being. We know that engaging in these activities has a proven impact on mental well-being, fostering social connection and promoting positive social health. Hapus takes a population-wide approach to prevent poor health outcomes and aims to build a happy, healthy Wales for future generations.
- **Wales Without Violence:** A Shared Framework for Preventing Violence among Children and Young People. The Framework, coproduced with multi agencies, outlines a public health and whole-system approach to violence prevention, calling for action across the life course and multiple settings. It includes nine key principles and strategies, addressing support for individuals, families, communities, and societal change. Aimed at professionals, children, young people, and communities, the Framework guides efforts to make Wales a nation free from violence, improving safety, well-being, and reducing pressure on public services like healthcare and criminal justice.
- **Country Deep Dive on the Well-being Economy:** Wales is part of a series of country deep dives published under the WHO European Well-being Economy Initiative led by the WHO European Office for Investment and Development. It identifies key concepts and strategies, governance structures and mechanisms, the role of public health, and approaches to measuring and monitoring progress. It highlights both the drivers and barriers Wales has encountered on the path towards a well-being economy.

- **Cold homes in Wales: Is the satisfactory heating regime appropriate for health and well-being?** This report in collaboration with Bangor University, recognises the importance of affordable warmth for health and well-being and provides recommendations to policy makers on the satisfactory heating regime to inform the approach to tackling fuel poverty in Wales.
- **Health Equity Frameworks and Tools** This document compiles a range of health equity frameworks and tools to enable governments, organisations and individuals to work towards health equity. The frameworks and tools include different approaches to working towards health equity, and have been categorised into 5 broad approaches: Resource library, data, action, evaluate, theory.



The Health and Sustainability Hub – Working towards a future where people and planet can thrive

The Hub works closely with staff to explore how the Sustainable Development Principle can empower individuals, teams, and the Organisation to bring the Five Ways of Working to life. Areas of work include:

- **Tackling the health effects of climate change:** Supporting teams with the Healthy Environment workshop, which helps teams to create action plans to reduce environmental and climate impacts. Over the past year, 80 staff from 22 teams across 7 directorates participated, with 45 trained to facilitate the workshop, resulting in 11 action plans focused on decarbonisation, biodiversity, and resource efficiency.
- **Second Biodiversity Action Plan:** Working with partners and colleagues and in consultation with staff and teams in Public Health Wales, [The Championing Nature for a Healthy Future](#) report was published in December 2024 and work has started towards delivering our objectives.
- **Active Travel Support to staff:** Over the past year, staff events were held to embed sustainability across the Organisation. In collaboration with Sustrans, we offered cycle training, bike maintenance sessions, and a bike library scheme, all aimed at encouraging staff to cycle to work. We have re-established a Bike User Group (BUG) for staff interested in cycling to and/or for work.
- Through our **Green Advocates Network**, which now has over 187 members, we facilitated online events and workshops on topics like making space for nature, energy saving, and sustainable fashion.
- **Wales Climate Week:** We partnered with Welsh Government to deliver a dynamic Health-focused day that delved into the health impacts and co-benefits of climate action, drawing over 500 viewers.



80

Over the past year, 80 staff from 22 teams across 7 directorates participated

Behavioural Science

Established in 2022, the Behavioural Science Unit (BSU) enables the routine application of behavioural science to improve and protect health and well-being and reduce health inequity in Wales. The BSU undertakes a range of proactive and responsive work, aiming to build the capability, opportunity and motivation of our staff and stakeholders to use behavioural science in their activities. Examples of our work include:

- Behaviourally Informed Communications Initiative (BICI): offering hands-on support and learning, to redevelop over 30 different types of personal communications produced by Public Health Wales and stakeholders. Teams involved included: Screening Services, Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme, Help Me Quit, Microbiology, Health Protection, and Primary Care Division (GP and Dental), along with stakeholders including the All-Wales Cellulitis Improvement Programme.
- Behaviour Change Agents (BCA) Programme: a learning and development programme supporting a range of behavioural outcomes, with participants from the public health system and Transport for Wales.
- Behavioural Science Community for Wales: with over 350 members, the aim is to increase behavioural science capability, capacity and connections across the public health system in Wales. Seven in person and online events have been held to date.

International Health

Our International Health Strategy supports the delivery of our Strategic Priorities, ensuring Wales remains a global leader in public health by fostering partnerships. The International Health Coordination Centre continues to enable international learning and good practice between Wales and global partners.

Examples of notable events supporting international partnerships include a Well being Economy Policy Dialogue and visit by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands.

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OUR INTERNATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, ENSURING WALES REMAINS A GLOBAL LEADER IN PUBLIC HEALTH BY FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

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Well-being Economy Policy Dialogue

Public Health Wales worked closely with the World Health Organization and Welsh Government to organise the Well-Being Economy Policy Dialogue in Cardiff (March 2025).

The Well-Being Economy movement seeks to reshape economies to prioritise population and planetary well-being, fostering more equitable, cohesive, and prosperous societies.

The dialogue aimed to drive action and develop solutions in two key areas:

- Investing in prevention and health equity.
- Understanding the relationship between ill health and economic inactivity.

The dialogue was hosted by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care brought together leaders from Finland, Iceland, Scotland, and Wales. They shared insights and experiences in promoting health within well-being economies. The event led to commitments for continuing the exchange of knowledge, reinforcing the leadership of Iceland, Finland, Scotland, and Wales in advancing well-being economies on a global scale.

Visit from Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands (RIVM)

We hosted a visit of colleagues from VWS and RIVM to Wales for the purpose of enabling an exchange of knowledge and insights on health in all policies, the Well-being economy and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Other areas discussed included climate change, health impact assessment, foresight methods and how to shift systems to prevention.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our progress in delivering our key strategic priorities during the past year is a great achievement for the Organisation and reflects the exceptional work and dedication of our staff alongside our partners, during an extremely busy and challenging time in Wales.

We have continued to evolve and mature as an Organisation to be as impactful as we can in order to achieve a healthier and sustainable Wales.

As we look forward, we have developed our new Strategic Plan for 2026-28 which sets out our overarching ambition to increase healthy life expectancy and narrow the gap between the most and least deprived. We have set our ambition to recover healthy life expectancy to the level it was in 2019 for both men and women in light of the recently published data that shows that healthy life expectancy is falling in Wales.

Our strategic priority route maps show us the path that we need to take over the coming years to address these challenges. We have drawn on international learning, innovative solutions and the best examples from across Wales. This has shaped and driven our focus on how we can deliver maximum value to the people of Wales and our partners.

We know that to realise these improvements will not be easy and will require us to work differently. We will work across organisational and professional boundaries and will demonstrate a commitment to not only collaborate but to listen – to our staff, stakeholders and the public. We will embrace feedback, learning and identify opportunities to improve.

We recognise that we cannot succeed alone or continue to adopt traditional approaches to the challenges that we face. We will harness the potential of innovations within digital and data, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence, while maintaining appropriate caution and focus on quality and safety. We will seek to create new two-way partnerships and relationships, particularly with areas such as the third sector and with the public.

We do not underestimate the challenges that we face. Success will be underpinned by the commitment, professionalism, and efforts of our wonderful staff and it is through their leadership and drive that we will build on progress to-date and continue to rise to the challenges, and seize the opportunities, that we will face in the coming years.

