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Committee Annual Report 2024/2025

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

Public Health Wales has a range of Board Committees, which have key roles in the system of governance and assurance. The Board has five Board Committees established, whose purpose is to support the Board in the delivery of its role, the points below summarise the role of Committees:

- ❖ The organisation's activities are vast and complex: the Committees support the Board in covering the depth and breadth of the organisation's activities.
- ❖ Committees have a defined role which allows for a higher / deeper degree of scrutiny on behalf of the Board.
- ❖ Committees help ensure that the organisation operates effectively and meets its strategic objectives.
- ❖ Provides the Board with assurance that this is the case, obtaining assurance that systems and controls are working as they were designed to do.

During 2024/25 all five of the standing Board Committees were in operation, chaired by Non-Executive Directors. The Committees have key roles in relation to the system of governance and assurance, decision-making, scrutiny, development discussions, assessment of current risks, and performance monitoring.

The main purpose of this annual report is to summarise the work of the Committee during 2024/25, to assure the Board that the system of assurance is fit for purpose and operating effectively.

The report summarises the key areas of business activity undertaken by the Committee during 2024/25.

The Terms of Reference for each of the Committees are reviewed and approved by the Board on an annual basis.

The Terms of Reference are available here: <https://phw.nhs.wales/about-us/publication-scheme/committee-and-sub-groups-terms-of-reference/>

This year, the Committee Annual Report has been combined into a single report to summarise the work of the four standing Committees:

- ❖ Audit and Corporate Governance Committee
- ❖ Knowledge, Research and Information Committee
- ❖ People and Organisational Development Committee
- ❖ Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee

A summary of the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee is provided as part of the Remuneration Report, within the Annual Report 2024/25.



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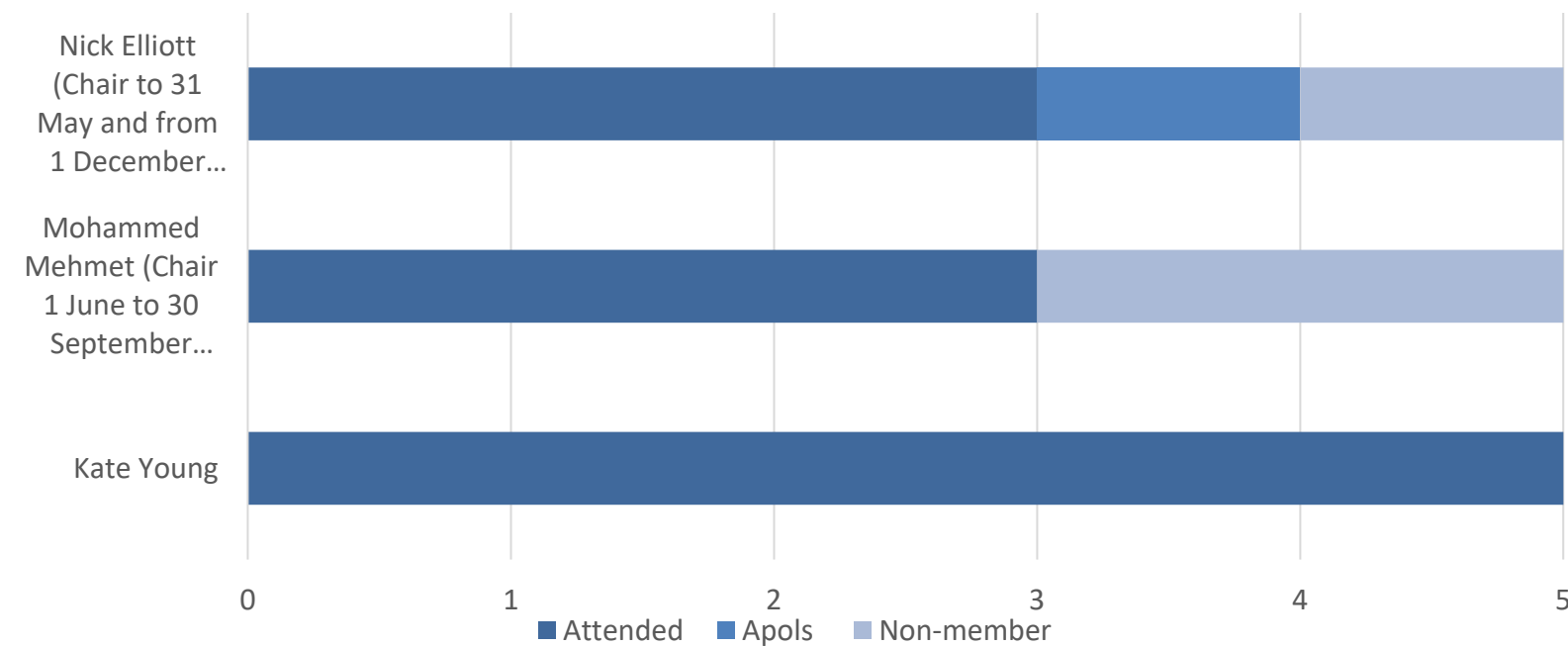
Committee Membership



Committee Member Attendance

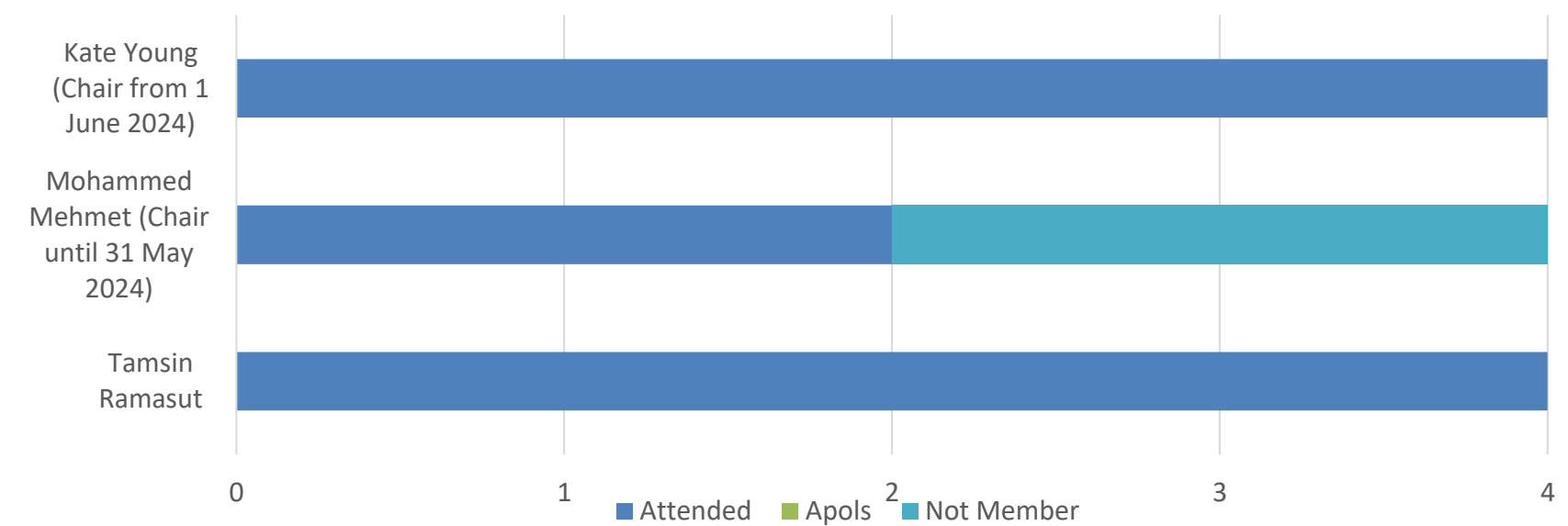
Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

The Committee met 5 times this year and was quorate on all occasions.



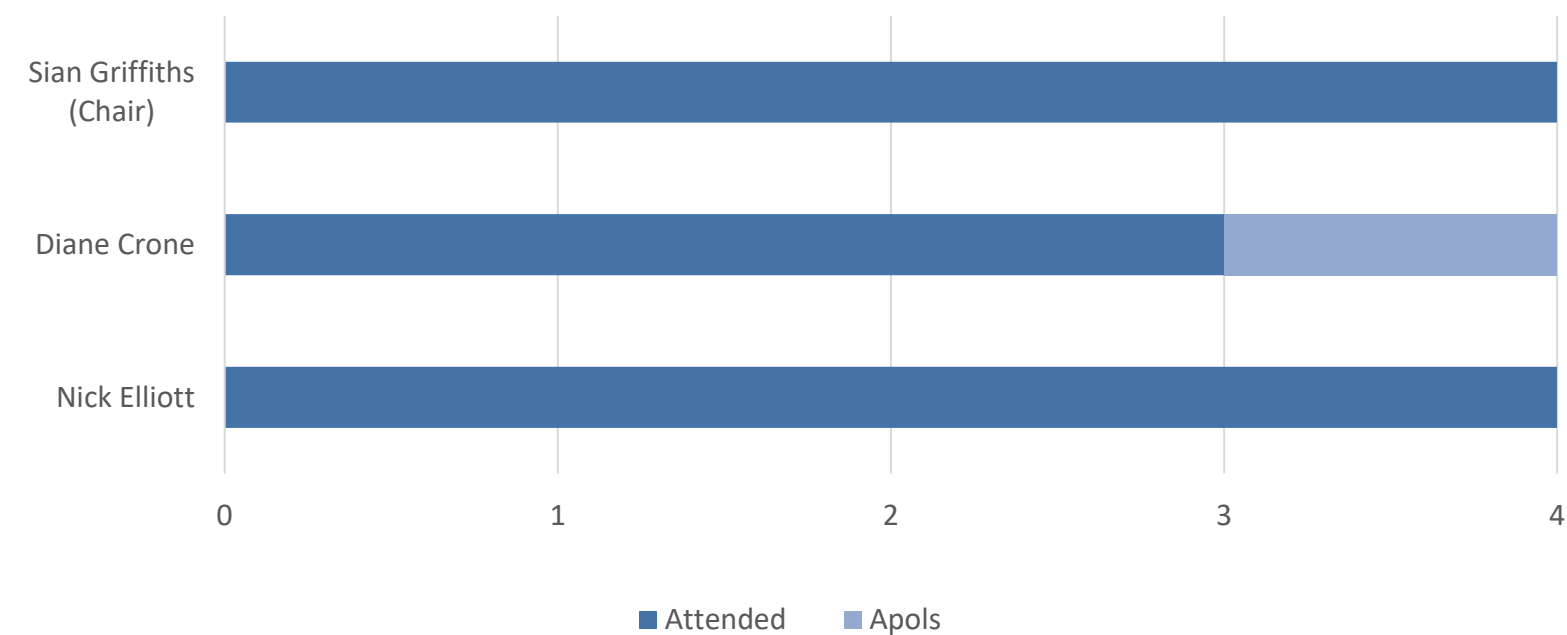
People and Organisational Development Committee

The Committee met 4 times this year and was quorate on all occasions.



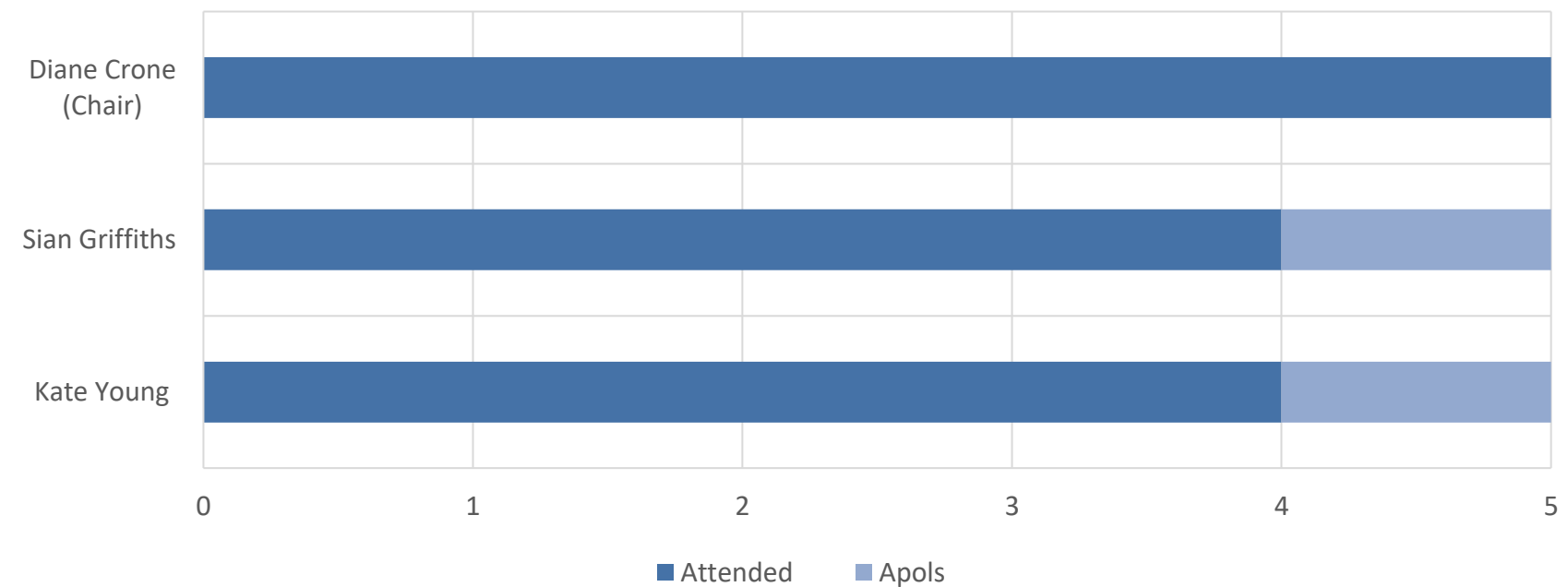
Knowledge, Research and Information Committee

The Committee met 4 times this year and was quorate on all occasions.



Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee

The Committee met 5 times this year and was quorate on all occasions.





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Committee Governance



Committee Governance Arrangements

Reporting to Board

The Committees reported to the Board through a composite Chair's Report, providing an overview of items considered by the Committee and highlighting any cross-committee issues/themes or items needing to be brought to the attention of the Board.

The Composite Chair's Report and confirmed minutes are published following approval at the next meeting with the Board papers.

Reporting outside of Committee / Chairs Action

There is a process in place to approve reports out of Committee meeting where required; this is consistent with the Chair's Action process in place for Board.

There have not been any reports which have been considered out of Committee this year.

Workplans

The Committee Work Plans ensure that the Committees discharge their responsibilities in a planned manner.

It assists with agenda planning and is updated during the year to ensure that the Committee considers any additional items which may arise during the year.

Each of the Committees has had a work plan in place this year, and reported to Board in May 2024 for assurance.

The 2025/26 Work Plans are being finalised and will be submitted to Board in May 2025. This year, the workplans include an assurance map and reference to the cross Committee working arrangements.

Action Log

In order to monitor progress and any necessary follow up actions, the Committee has an Action Log which captures all agreed actions. This provides an essential element of assurance to the Committee and from the Committee to the Board.

Committee Governance Arrangements

Cross Committee Working

The Committees have continued to work closely together this year, and have been developing and strengthening the approach.

During 2024/25, the Committee Chairs have agreed an approach to Cross Committee working, to manage referrals and items for which there is crossover with other Committees, this has then been developed and mapped against the work plans.

This year, any referrals between Committees have been managed via co-ordination through the Board Business Unit. There have been referrals this year between the Committees, which have been managed between the Committees. The Cross Committee Chairs group have reviewed the approach in January 2025 and continue to consider improvements / developments in the approach for 2025/26.

The following cross over areas have been identified and managed this year:

Current Cross Cutting Issues - Summary		
Current Cross Cutting Issues	Primary Committee	Secondary Committee/s
Information Governance	ACGC	KRIC
Internal and External Audit	ACGC	All
Risk	ACGC	All
Workforce	PODC	All
Data and Digital	KRIC	QSIC, ACGC
Service Delivery	QSIC	KRIC, PODC
Equality:		
1. Our Workforce, Board and Committees	PODC	QSIC, KRIC
2. Listening to and Understanding our People	PODC	QSIC, KRIC
3. Fair Pay	PODC	QSIC, KRIC
4. Culture and Leadership	PODC	QSIC, KRIC
5. Data and Systems	KRIC	QSIC, PODC
6. Access to Services and our Environment	QSIC	KRIC, PODC

Committee Effectiveness

During the year the Committee has continued to review and revise its ways of working to optimise the need for a robust governance approach and balance the need reduce pressure on staff during this time.

The Committees continued to review its effectiveness thorough the year, to ensure effective use of time and ensure it fulfilled its role to provide assurance to the Board, this includes a formal Committee effectiveness review process which took place in February 2025.

Key themes emerging from this include:

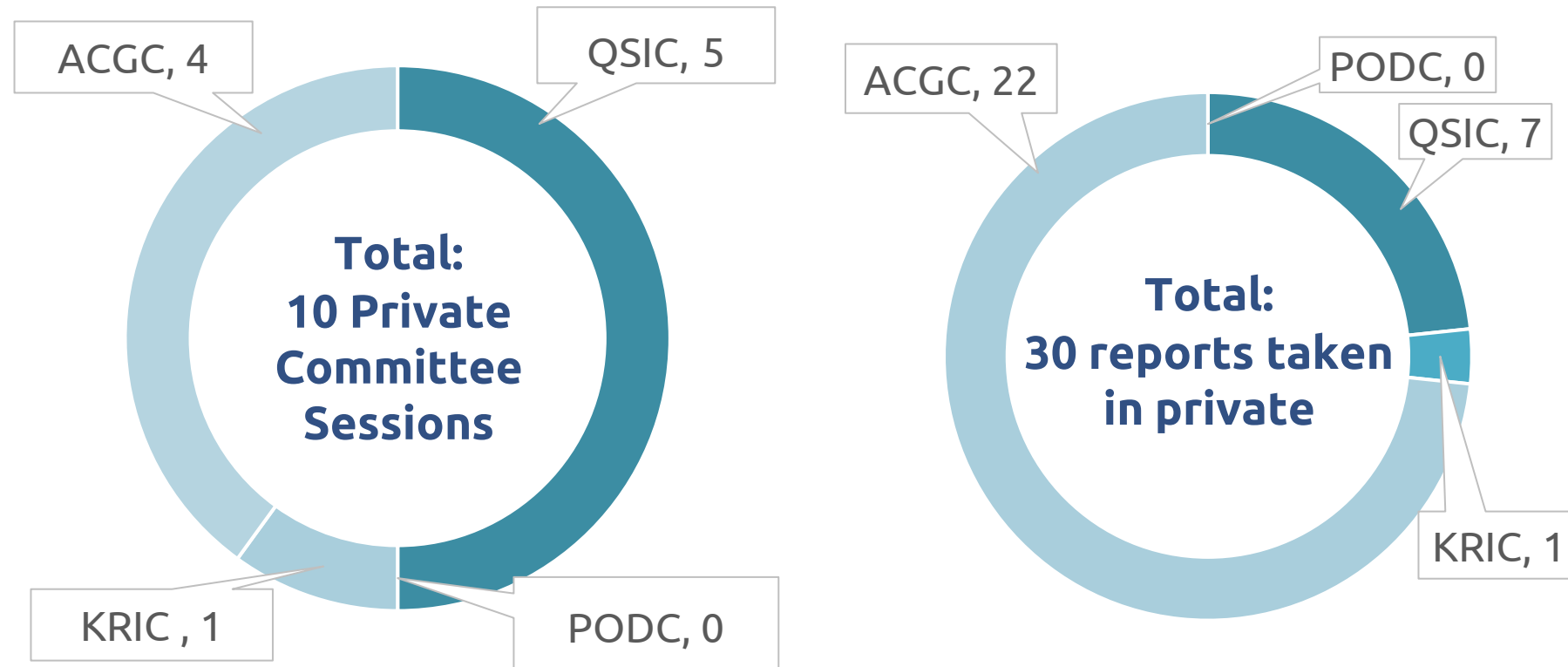
- Highlighted the connection between understanding Committee roles and improving scrutiny and challenge, and emphasis of the importance of bringing personal stories to life to measure impact. There was a consensus on the importance of service user feedback, but it should be done meaningfully and not superficially. It was suggested using targeted pieces of work based on data and evidence to ensure this is done consistency.
- Clarity on purpose of papers for report writers and committee to ensure focused and clear reporting, and the different types of papers.
- Look at the Committee members induction pack and consider developing a Committee handbook for both members and staff.

The outcome and recommendations following this review will be reported to each of the Committees, and the Board in Quarter 1 2025.

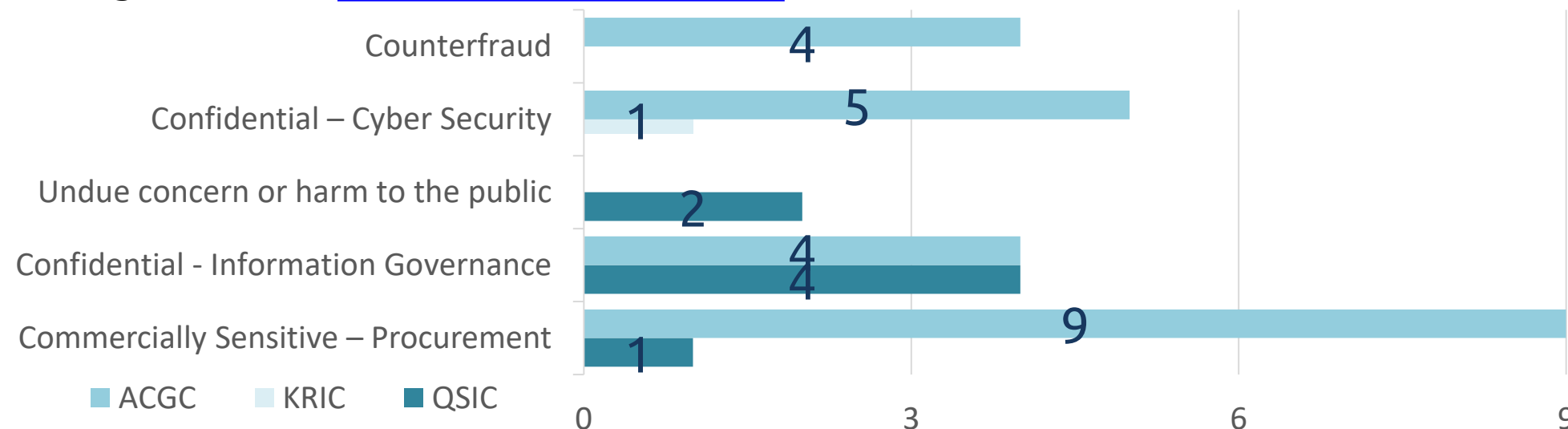
Committee Governance Arrangements

Matters in Private

The Committees held a Private Committee session where required in 2024/25 to consider business of a confidential nature, considering aspects of significant issues.



Below is the summary of the number of items considered in private session, broken down by the categories in the [Private Meeting Protocol](#):



Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

In May 2024, the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee commenced separate open and private meetings. Papers were published for the open meetings one week in advance this brought the Committee in line with our other three Board Committees.

- ❖ Cyber Security, quarterly reports, Strategic Risk and one Deep Dive (5)
- ❖ Procurement/Finance, including quarterly losses and special payment and procurement reports and one debtors write off report, (9)
- ❖ Quarterly update reports from Counter Fraud (4)
- ❖ Quarterly Integrated Governance reports, extracts showing data breaches from the public report (4)

(The change was made to align Public Health Wales with other NHS bodies in Wales where Audit and Corporate Governance Committees [or equivalent] held public meetings to ensure transparency. Private meetings are held concurrently with the open meetings and matters discussed in the private meeting are summarised in the public meeting which follows.)

Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee

- ❖ Quarterly Reports for assurance on the Organisation’s effective management of Claims and Redress (4)
- ❖ Reviewed and recommended a revised emergency response plan to the Board for final approval. A redacted version of this plan was later published. (1)
- ❖ Summary of planned procurement activity within the Health Protection and screening Services Directorate. (1)
- ❖ A verbal briefing on HIW Report (later published on 30 January Board meeting) (1)

Knowledge, Research and Information Committee

- ❖ An overview of the Organisations assurance framework /processes on the Organisations digital developments following on from the Post Office Horizon IT scandal.

People and Organisational Development Committee

- ❖ No private sessions.



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Committee Assurance

Knowledge, Research and Information Committee

Knowledge, Research and Information Committee

The Committee's role is to provide assurance to the Board that there are appropriate and effective systems in place for areas within its remit, including ensuring that there are appropriate development and quality improvements. The Committee's programme of work was designed to ensure that it was able to discharge fully the provisions of its Terms of Reference and areas of remit:

Research and Evaluation

The Committee:

- Considered updates on the implementation of the **Research and Evaluation Strategy**, which aimed to make measurable improvements to the health of the population in Wales by leading and supporting population-level health research and evaluation.
- Took regular assurance on the **monitoring and implementation** of the Research and Evaluation Strategy and the approach taken towards areas of research and evaluation interest for Public Health Wales during 2023/2024 which documented areas of research which would be crucial to the Organisations role to deliver on its Long-Term Strategy.
- The regular updates included exploring the following areas:
 - **Academic Public Health research:** the vision and subsequent identification of relevant strategic partners,
 - **Research and Evaluation Strategy:** progression of the work to implement the strategy
 - **Genomics:** progress against the development of the Programme including medium term plan objectives, and the aim to develop a training plan to enhance skills throughout the Public Health Wales workforce.
 - **Academic Institutions:** including efforts to develop strong strategic partnerships including the Open University and other Universities.

Knowledge and Impact

The Committee:

- Regularly considered updates on the monitoring and assurance of delivering against the Organisation's strategic priorities.

Analysis and Data Science

The Committee:

- Noted the successful introduction of a new breast test cohorting system (Dewis).
- Considered and took assurance on the findings of the annual **Monitoring Impact Survey**, noting the areas identified for improvement and the plans to formulate detailed actions plans to take forward the findings.
- **Took assurance on the implementation of the findings from the Monitoring Impact Survey**
- Considered the phase one findings of the **Inequalities in Cancer project**, this project looked at cancer incidence rates in Wales by socio-demographic factors.
- Considered an update on the work undertaken to develop Public Health Wales' **Climate Change** research agenda

Knowledge, Research and Information Committee

Digital

The Committee:

- Considered updates on the implementation of the **Digital and Data Strategy**, showed the progress of transforming the route-map into a governed programme of work.
- Regularly monitored the implementation of the **Digital and Data strategy**, taking assurance that the Digital and Data services teams were delivering steadily on the core elements of the Strategy and the projects it had committed to, to improve the use of digital, data and technology to deliver excellent public health services.
- Considered an update on **Public Health Wales led research into digital health inequality** and collaboration with the World Health Organisation in this field of research and took assurance on the progress being made in the digital inequalities and future use in health care setting work.
- In private session, the Committee considered an overview of the Organisations assurance framework /processes on the Organisations digital developments following on from the **Post Office Horizon IT scandal**. This was considered in private due to the confidential, cyber security nature of the item.
- Considered updates on the work undertaken to develop the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in health and social care services within Wales.

Risk

The Committee:

- Regularly considered and took assurance on the management of both **strategic and corporate risks** within remit of the Committee.
- Noted that the Board had approved the transfer of **Strategic Risks 1 and 2** from the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee to the Knowledge, Research and Information Committee from January 2024.
- Considered updates on the work undertaken to review various aspects of the **Cervical Screening Information Management System (CSIMS)** following an escalation of CSIMS data breaches

Policies

The Committee:

- Considered bi-annual reports on the status of policies, procedures and other written control documents within its remit, and took assurance on the management of the review of Policies within its remit.

Knowledge, Research and Information Committee

Deep Dives

The Committee undertook the following cross cutting deep dives based on the Organisation's strategic priorities:

- Screening (Priority 6)
- Indicators for Mental Health – linked to Strategic Priority on Mental Health and Wellbeing
- **Inequalities – Inclusion**
- **Priority 5 (Protecting Public from infection and environmental threats to health)**

Updates

The Committee considered the following updates to deep dive items from previous meetings:

- Update on Lifestyle factors (Priority 3, Promoting Healthy Behaviours)
- Indicators for Mental Health (Priority 2, improving mental well-being and resilience)
- Update on Addictions (to include alcohol, gambling and drugs) (Priority 3, Promoting Healthy Behaviours)
- Climate Change Research (Priority 6)
- **Behavioural Change**



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Assurance to Board



Assurance to the Board

2024/25

The Committees wish to assure the Board that on the basis of the work completed by the Committee during 2024/25:

- ❖ That the Committees are fit for purpose, operating effectively and fulfilling their terms of reference;
- ❖ That effective measures and processes were place to oversee and coordinate Committee activity;
- ❖ That there no outstanding issues that the Committees wishes to bring to the attention of the Board over and above the risks and issues already raised in the Committee Chairs composite report or that are already visible in the Strategic Risk Register and corporate risk register.

Planned Activity

2025/26

- ❖ The Work plans for each of the Committees will be presented to the Board for assurance in May 2025; these contain a summary of how the Committees intends to fulfil their Terms of Reference next year.
- ❖ The Committee terms of reference are being reviewed following the discussion as part of the effectiveness review. There have been no major changes identified concerning remit or scope. Any minor changes will be recommended to the Board for approval at its meeting in May 2025.
- ❖ A summary of the Committee effectiveness themes and considerations for this year will be provided to the Board in May.

Key developments / improvements this year include

- ❖ Review of the deep dive guidance to consider how we can align the deep dives more between the Committees and ensure synergy to the Strategic Priorities
- ❖ Building on and implementing the Cross Committee working approach, to continue to improve and refine the approach.
- ❖ Develop a Committee handbook for NEDs moving between committees / new to the organisation outlining the key areas of focus, role and remit.
- ❖ Explore support to staff who attend Committees or write reports, in terms of report writing, understanding the role of the Committees and expectations. To support understanding of the assurance function in particular.



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