



 <p>GIG CYMRU NHS WALES Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales</p>	<p>Name of Meeting Knowledge, Research and Information Committee</p> <p>Date of Meeting 5 December 2024</p> <p>Agenda item: 3.4</p>
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Tackling the Public Health Impacts of Climate Change Key Developments and Updates	
<p>Executive lead:</p>	<p>Huw George, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Operations and Finance</p> <p>Sumina Azam, National Director Policy and International Health</p>
<p>Author:</p>	<p>Rebecca Masters, Consultant in Public Health and Strategic Lead for Climate Change</p>

<p>Approval/Scrutiny route:</p>	<p>Update for assurance directly to Knowledge, Research and Information Committee</p>
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Purpose
<p>To provide the Committee with an update on progress in the climate change research agenda since the deep dive on climate change in December 2023.</p>

Recommendation:				
<p>APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>ASSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the work that has been undertaken on climate change research Take assurance on progress since December 2023 				



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

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

This report contributes to the following:

Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	6- Tackling public health effects of climate change
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Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An Equality and Health Impact Assessment is not required as this paper is providing an assurance update
Risk and Assurance	The risks are managed at Directorate and Corporate levels. They are used to help inform Strategic Risk actions.
Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act	
Financial implications	None
People implications	None

1. Purpose

This paper provides assurance to the Committee on progress in the climate change research agenda since the deep dive on climate change in December 2023.

2. Progress update

This paper sets out the key developments over the past 12 months, focusing on four main areas:

- Developing our research agenda
- Collaborating with partners
- Increasing capacity
- Surveillance

a. Developing our research agenda

Over the past 12 months Public Health Wales has focussed on developing our climate change and research agenda, to enable us to deliver the long-term strategy, and is referenced explicitly within the strategic priority route map. In June 2024 we partnered with Public Health Network Cymru to deliver a [webinar](#) looking at the evidence base and identifying any specific gaps and future priorities for research activity in Wales. The webinar was aimed at broader partners within Wales with a



specific focus on our academic partners, and over 100 participants attended. The feedback from the webinar has been used to inform our approach to the climate change research agenda here in Wales, and is currently being collated into a report. Our ambition is to grow the climate change and research agenda in Wales so that we are able to access research grants or influence wider UK research so that it has a greater relevance to Wales.

Our developing research agenda focuses specifically on the climate impacts on health in Wales, and to that effect two agile scoping reviews were commissioned via the Research, Data and Digital Directorate:

- I. *Flood Early Warning Systems* – this review aimed to explore the usefulness of flood early warning systems for mitigating the health impacts of flooding and was commissioned in response to rising global flood events. The review identified that there is a paucity of evidence around the effectiveness of early warning systems, as well as areas for further research and development.
- II. *Flooding and mental health and wellbeing* – this review explored what interventions are effective to support people’s mental health and wellbeing in areas either at risk of flooding, or after a flood has occurred. The review identified a paucity of high-quality evidence and is an area that will be considered for future research and development

The findings of these agile scoping reviews are currently being incorporated into our approach to climate change research in Wales, and further reviews are currently being scoped out. Oversight and assurance of this approach is provided by Climate Change Programme Board.

b. Collaborating with partners

Over the past 12 months we have worked to grow our research collaborations with academic partners across the UK. PHW supported a bid by Exeter University, Met Office, and UK Health Security Agency for the development of a new £10m UKRI research centre to tackle the health impacts of climate change. The funding bid was successful and the new £10m centre has now been [launched](#). The Strategic Lead for Climate Change will be attending the official launch early next year and will be working directly with the centre to progress research that will support us here in Wales.

c. Increasing capacity

The Climate Change strategic priority has secured additional recurrent funding to support the development of a climate change research co-ordinator. This co-ordinator will be based within the Research, Data and Digital Directorate and will



work with partners across Wales and internationally to progress our climate change research agenda.

The recruitment of the role has been delayed due to challenges with Job Evaluation that are outside of our control. Climate related roles do not sit within the current job families of the Agenda for Change job profiles, and as such require each role to undertake a Job Evaluation Questionnaire. We are working with the People and Organisational Development Directorate to address this identified risk in relation to climate change related job roles within Public Health Wales.

d. Climate change surveillance

Significant progress has been made in relation to climate change surveillance, which is lead by the Screening and Health Protection Services Directorate. A Climate Change Surveillance Sub-Group has been set up, meeting monthly and reporting directly to Climate Change Programme Board. The sub-group has representation from across the organisation, including Research, Data and Digital, with external partners also invited to attend as observers. Two new data analysts have been recruited to support the workstream, and the current focus is on how we develop our heat mortality surveillance work in partnership with other UK public health agencies. The Sub-Group is also looking at how it can develop our partnership working with the Office of National Statistics.

3. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work that has been undertaken on climate change research
- **Take assurance** on progress since December 2023