

 <p> GIG CYMRU NHS WALES </p> <p> 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: 3.5</p>
--	---

Update on the Implementation of the Research and Evaluation Strategy	
Executive lead:	Iain Bell, Director of Research, Data and Digital
Author:	Elen de Lacy, Research, Development and Strategy Lead Alisha Davies, Head of Research and Evaluation

Approval/Scrutiny route:	KRIC
---------------------------------	------

Purpose
The purpose of the paper is to provide an update to KRIC on the progress and implementation of the PHW Research and Evaluation Strategy, 2023-2026.

Recommendation:				
APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/>	ASSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of this paper and receive assurance on progress on the implementation of the organisational Research and Evaluation Strategy. 				
Link to PHW Strategic Plan				
PHW has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified six strategic priorities and well-being objectives.				
This report contributes to the following:				
Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives			
Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives			
Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives			

Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	No Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken as a decision is not required by the Committee.
Risk and Assurance	Not identified as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register or Board Assurance Framework.
Health and Care Standards	This report supports and/or takes into account the Health and Care Standards for NHS Wales Quality Themes All themes Choose an item. Choose an item.
Financial implications	None
People implications	The process applies to all staff undertaking research and evaluation.

1. Purpose / situation

The [Research and Evaluation \(R&E\) Strategy](#), published in October 2023 ensures that PHW is building and strengthening R&E excellence across the organisation and in collaboration with partners. To support the implementation and oversight of the strategy, the R&E Strategic Oversight Group (RESOG) was established, alongside a co-produced implementation plan for the strategy. RESOG is the cross organisational senior leadership group responsible for developing and supporting research and evaluation in line with Public Health Wales priorities and the organisational R&E Strategy.

The R&E Strategy is focused on four key pillars:



This paper describes the implementation plan and progress of the strategy to date, with monitoring and assurance of delivery.

2. Description/Assessment

An implementation plan to take forward work outlined within the R&E Strategy has been agreed by RESOG with a focus on:

- a. **Developing and implementing R&E standards** to strengthen and support the development and production of R&E by the organisation.
- b. **Developing R&E capacity and capability** to support staff to develop and apply R&E skills to increase workforce capacity and capability, and contribute towards creating a learning organisation.
- c. **Developing and establishing effective strategic partnerships** for R&E with higher educational institutes, health boards and local authorities to support the development and delivery of public health research.
- d. **Developing effective communications and engagement** for R&E across the organisation and externally.

Progress against each of these areas over the last six months (June – November 2024) is provided below.

2.1 Developing R&E standards across the organisation

As an organisation, we want to develop and set standards for best practice for R&E, and the methods used to ensure that PHW are producing consistently high quality products.

2.1.1 Strengthening Governance for Research in PHW

In June 2024, the PHW internal audit team, audited the implementation and delivery of the R&E Strategy. The audit was completed in October 2024 with a statement of 'reasonable assurance'. A small number of recommendations were made to strengthen the oversight, monitoring and reporting of R&E across the organisation.

In response live research bid and project trackers have been developed to capture all research bids and awards, including strategic alignment, financial costs and funding information. This is an open file, which will be proactively reviewed by RESOG members and Divisional Heads of Service quarterly to ensure complete and accurate. This will enable monitoring of live research, early identification of risks and issues on research delivery, and provide an organisation wide overview of the breadth of research bids and organisations involved. It will also enable more proactive dissemination of completed research, to maximise and track impact.

2.1.2 Improving the quality and impact of R&E through Peer Review

We are in the process of implementing a cross-directorate group responsible for the peer review of PHW-led grant applications and R&E proposals. This group will provide friendly, expert advice to strength proposals in terms of; Study design – research methods and scientific quality, Resources and research management, Ethics and Governance, Patient Participation Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), value to PHW (spanning across PHW areas of research interest), and assessment.

2.1.3 Improving the standards of Evaluation in PHW

The central specialist Evaluation team have developed several open access resources and guidance on evaluation methodology drawing on national and international standards, and linking with the PHW Publication Standards Group. Alongside implementing new weekly drop-in clinics, the Central Evaluation Team are supporting those across PHW to improve the design and implementation of evaluation.

2.2 Developing Capacity and Capability for R&E

We want to build an organisational culture, which values R&E activities and supports staff to develop and apply research and evaluation skills to increase workforce capacity and capability, strengthen evidence-based practice and contribute towards creating a learning organisation.

2.2.1 Increasing Personal Development Opportunities for PHW Researchers

Through a cross-organisational Expression of Interest exercise, we have brought together a small cohort of PHW researchers to apply to the Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) Faculty personal development awards scheme. We have provided wraparound support and a programme of opportunities for this cohort to encourage and increase the level of high quality applications. This has included monthly webinars on areas such as PPIE and talks from HCRW. This has resulted in three applications to HCRW and this approach will be developed further for a 2025 cohort.

2.2.2 Developing PhD opportunities aligned to PHW Areas of Research and Evaluation Interest

We have entered discussions with Bangor University (at their invitation) to co-develop their public health postgraduate offer in line with public health policy/practice needs in Wales. The potential benefits to students includes applied translational research development and application with an NHS partner, widening opportunities for career development. The potential benefits to PHW include capacity development of early career researchers in areas of strategic priorities, embedded in PHW, supporting the development of the next generation of public health researchers.

2.2.3 Developing cross-organisational data analysis capacity through the SAIL Feasibility Hwb

The Memorandum of Understanding between Swansea University and PHW establishing the SAIL Feasibility Hwb has been agreed. The Hwb is a virtual collaboration space in SAIL for 10 data analysts across the organisation to explore the feasibility of public health questions, share learning and best practice. The first cross-organisational research within the Hwb is to assess potential inequalities in access, outcomes and treatment of PHW services (e.g. understanding screening pathways using PHW linked datasets alongside census 2021 and health service datasets).

2.2.4 Developing evaluation capacity and capability through a community of practice

The PHW Evaluation Community of Practice (ECoP) was established in March 2023 with the following purpose:

- To connect staff, whose roles involve conducting, commissioning or using evaluation evidence
- To support cross-Divisional knowledge and best practice
- To strengthen our understanding of what works to address health inequalities in Wales.

The ECoP now has over 400 members from across PHW, and has delivered 6 webinars a year to support the skills and capabilities of staff in evaluation methods.

2.3 Developing and Establishing Effective Strategic Partnerships for R&E

We are developing and strengthening our effective collaborations and partnerships for R&E across two key areas of focus:

2.3.1 Developing a Vision for Academic Public Health Research in Wales – 2024

The “Developing a Vision for Academic Public Health Research in Wales” will be published in 2024/25 and has been presented to the Dean’s and Pro Vice-Chancellors of Research for all Higher Educational Institutes across Wales through Health Care Research Wales meetings and the Wales Innovation Network (WIN). Working with WIN, we are beginning wider engagement with partners to co-produce the vision and strategy for academic public health in Wales (planned workshop in spring 2025).

2.3.2 Developing Academic Strategic Partnerships

In line with our strategy, PHW is open to the development of strategic partnerships with academia in areas of mutual benefit to develop a long-term, ambitious, multidisciplinary relationship, focused on co-creation, with defined and shared strategic priorities across research, innovation, education and skills, and other agendas.

We have begun this process with Cardiff University hosting a series of joint workshops to explore mutual areas of research interest and strategic alignment across PHWs six strategic priorities. This will inform the development of a proposed strategic partnership for consideration by both organisations.

2.3 Developing effective communications and engagement for R&E across the organisation and externally.

A core aim of the R&E Strategy is to develop and communicate research priorities, which will lead to greater engagement across the organisation and wider research system.

2.3.1. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement for research

To develop our Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) for research we have engaged with Health and Care Research Wales to promote standards for PPIE and to start to scope the development of a role within PHW, linked to the refresh of the organisational engagement strategy.

3. Monitoring and Assurance

R&E Strategy indicators are being reported through the Research, Data and Digital quarterly Directorate report.

Through RESOG, all parts of the strategy are monitored and contribute to all areas of the Strategy including collaborative bids, strategic partnerships, R&E priorities and communication and engagement of R&E across the organisation.

4. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this paper and **receive assurance** on progress on the implementation of the organisational Research and Evaluation Strategy.