



 <p>Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales</p>	<p>Name of Meeting Knowledge, Research and Information Committee</p> <p>Date of Meeting 17 June 2025</p> <p>Agenda item: 3.3</p>
---	---

Strategic Priority 1 – Influencing the Wider Determinants of Health

Executive lead:	Sumina Azam, National Director of Policy and International Health
Author:	Ciaran Humphreys, Consultant in Public Health Tracy Black, Head of Planning and Business Support

Approval/Scrutiny route:	Reviewed by the National Director of Policy and International Health
---------------------------------	--

Purpose
The purpose of the report is to provide an update on Strategic Priority 1: Influencing the Wider Determinants of Health

Recommendation:				
APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input checked="" 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"> • Consider the work that has been undertaken and plans for future on Influencing the Wider Determinants of Health • Take assurance on progress to date



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	1 - Influencing the wider determinants of health
--	--

Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	No Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken as no decision is required.
Risk and Assurance	Risks are being managed in accordance with the Board Assurance Framework.
Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act	This report supports the implementation of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act by demonstrating a transparent approach to delivering improvements that address the wider determinants of health, in line with the Duty of Quality.
Financial implications	Financial implications are being considered as part of this work programme.
People implications	People implications are being considered as part of this work programme.



1. Purpose / situation

This paper provides assurance to the Committee on progress being made in Strategic Priority 1 – influencing the wider determinants of health.

2. Overview

Our role is to inform, advocate for and mobilise change in order to influence the wider determinants (or the ‘building blocks’) of health. We seek to increase capability for system change, influencing system goals, and support:

- healthy policy development,
- effective implementation, and
- beneficial information flows.

In some areas we lead, in others we contribute (see Table 1). Throughout our work we provide a consistent focus on the importance of strong building blocks of health for the future of babies, children, young people and their families and for future generations, no matter what their background or circumstances.

Table 1: Our organisational role in influencing the wider determinants of health

	Where we lead	Where we co-produce or contribute
Advocate	Framing as building blocks of health Widening health inequalities as preventable and unjust	Co-benefits of actions and integrated well-being goals Challenging the imbalances in power, wealth and income
Inform	People understand the impact of building blocks on health Evidence on effective interventions and benefits Social and economic consequences relating to health Shared learning from public health bodies	Healthy public policy Health as an integrated goal with other well-being goals System insights Research, monitoring and evaluation of interventions on the building blocks of health
Mobilise	Partners around health as an outcome Wider public health workforce	System working Joining up systems at multiple levels
Build capability	Health impact assessment Public health skills for informing, advocating and mobilising within systems	Applying the five ways of working with system partners for effective policy and implementation



3. Progress Update

3.1. Route map development

A route map has been developed to help us deliver our strategic objectives for the Long-Term Strategy, Strategic Priority 1 (see Table 2).

We took a collaborative cross-organisational development approach to the route map, building on the approach taken when refreshing our strategy. Together, we have sought to consider what we would need to do to make a difference for 2035, including using approaches, such as backcasting, from the UK Government Office for Science Futures Toolkit.

Due to the breadth of the wider determinants of health, we initially undertook a prioritisation exercise between the determinants. This helped us establish criteria of what was important in our work. Building on this, we collectively identified a grand challenge (tackling child poverty) we wanted to work towards, to unite our work and focus under the priority. Underneath this challenge we identified three topic focused themes relating to system goals, places, people and one supporting theme of our capability, evidence and alignment.

Table 2: Themes to deliver our strategic objectives

Strategic objectives By 2035 we will have:	Theme supporting these objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaped thinking and decision-making on wider determinants policy areas to reduce inequality and improve health through our work with the Senedd and Welsh Government Major decisions on wider determinants which are informed by health impact assessment 	<p>System goals: So that governments and organisations across sectors increasingly make decisions that put the health and wellbeing of children and their families at their heart, and reduce the levels and impact of poverty</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport, housing and planned environment developments that support people, families and communities to live healthier lives Supported positive system-wide change on the wider determinants of health in collaboration with partners locally, nationally and internationally in pursuit of better health and wellbeing for all 	<p>Place: So that transport, housing and planning policy and implementation across Wales create healthier, fairer, and more sustainable places, benefiting children and families who are experiencing or at risk of poverty</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our future generations health and wellbeing are less impacted by poverty and inequality • Secured better and fairer opportunity for children to learn and fulfil their potential • Public and private sector work to maximise inclusive participation in fair work supporting health and wellbeing 	<p>People: So that healthy, safe and fair work and access to income improve people’s experience so that children and future generations' wellbeing is less affected by poverty</p>
--	---

The route map articulates the importance of ensuring we organise our efforts on knowledge, analysis, research and digital through an enabling theme **Our capability, evidence and alignment:**

Our teams work to common goals; are trusted in our field; with a strong body of surveillance, evidence translation and research; developing and adapting, future focused and learning from the past and from elsewhere.

The route map is due to be finalised in early Quarter 2. The route map has been developed through a cross-organisational group, providing oversight and governance to the programme. Options for future governance arrangements for the delivery of route maps have been developed and are to be considered by the Executive Team.

3.2. Our work to date

System goals

Health impact assessment is a route to integrating health into all policies. The Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) have been advising and supporting the Welsh Government on the development and publication of statutory HIA legislation and the HIA regulations. This includes supporting consultation events, agreeing a statutory HIA process map and preparing resources to support the implementation of HIA across Wales. The regulations will be debated in the Senedd in November 2025.

The Public Health Economics and Value (PHEV) team has focused on generating evidence related to the **well-being economy and social value**, which includes making links to the wider determinants of health agenda. In particular, we have published a set of evidence briefs which map the application of social value methods (social return on investment) to existing literature and analysed the Economic Impact of the Welsh Healthcare Sector which outlines how NHS Wales has direct impacts on the wider determinants. We are supporting Welsh Government with economics and value evidence and analyses related to health and well-being priorities. The PHEV team has scoped work to provide support and build capacity in relation to social value, for example the development of a value proposition for

Public Health Wales, which would enable us to better understand the impacts of our work (including that related to the wider determinants).

We have been progressing the WHO European **Well-being Economy** Initiative and well-being economy implementation in Wales, delivering to an MOU between Welsh Government and WHO Europe. This includes contributing to evidence briefs on healthy aging, youth mental health and social inclusion, and rural-urban disparities, as well as participating in the second European Health Equity Status Report, linking with our Wales Health Equity Solutions Platform, generating evidence and solution to address socio-economic and health inequities in Wales and beyond.

The International Horizon Scanning and Learning programme has examined the **commercial determinants** influencing children and young people.

Places

Our research evidence on cold **homes** and health has been shared with Welsh Government to inform its update of its Fuel Poverty Plan – thereby directly influencing policy. It has also formed the basis of written and oral evidence to the Equality and Social Justice Committee’s inquiry on fuel poverty in Wales.

Cross-directorate and cross-organisational work (for example with Health Boards and Local Planning Authorities) is underway **on spatial planning and health** related issues such as obesity to support a ‘health in all policies approach’ to health and planning. For example, an annual planning and health event enables knowledge, skills and insights exchange between organisations and sectors in Wales; WHIASU supports Local Authorities to carry out participatory HIAs for emerging Local Development Plans.

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, this 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.

People

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 worked with partners in Wales and across the UK to inform the UK Child Poverty Ministerial Task Force.

We are working together on increasing participation **in healthy, safe and fair work**, and reducing **worklessness of public health concern**. We have relaunched the website [Healthy Working Wales - Healthy Working Wales website](#). Developing an



offer which will provide tiered personal advice and guidance to employers. This new digital offer helps 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. We are supporting the three Welsh Trailblazer sites, having produced and provided an evidence briefing at the design stage on what works. These trailblazers have £10m funding (as part of Get Britain Working paper) this year to support the economically inactive back into work, focussing on those with health conditions. We are now working with local authorities and local public health teams to support a public health contribution to evaluated, impactful evidence informed interventions.

Capability, evidence and alignment

As a part of developing the measurement system for the route map the proposed top level **strategic indicator** is the gap in healthy life expectancy, and we are exploring presenting this by WIMD domains of education, housing, income and employment.

To increase **capability across the public health workforce** we have developed a community of interest on wider determinants of health to support the development of the public health specialist and practitioner workforce to become demonstrably recognised and valued by partners as effective systems leaders in influencing the wider determinants of health in both policy and practice. A baseline survey of members showed that although most members consider themselves to have a system leadership role, only 42% were confident in the role. At the time of the report there were 160 members from local and national teams, we had delivered three master classes, an online summit, a workshop with Frameworks UK and topic focused peer engagement sessions with positive feedback from participants.

4. Next steps for 2025-2028

System goals

We will continue to support the development of **healthy public policy** ahead of and beyond the Senedd elections in spring 2026, advocating for policy action that prioritises health, wellbeing and equity in Wales. As part of this work, we will engage with decision-makers to assess their information and communication needs for supporting the building blocks of health through public policy.

We will continue to prepare for the introduction of **Health Impact Assessment** legislation, for example, through supporting public bodies, undertaking a training needs analysis, updating training and holding network of practice events.

We will identify how we can make a stronger case for the role of public health in the **well-being economy**, including through partnerships to model economic policy issues that have a direct effect on the wider determinants.



We are developing our **research** links to support policy decisions that intervene on the **economic drivers of health and health inequalities**, engaging with the PHI-UK Policy Modelling for Health – led by the University of Glasgow which is a £7.5 million project and part of the £35 million UKRI Population Health Improvement Network.

We will also develop an organisational framework to support our response to the **commercial determinants** of health (linked to Strategic Priority 2).

Places

We will seek to influence the review of Future Wales, the Wales **spatial planning** framework, which will commence in late 2025/early 2026.

Working with our key stakeholders we are scoping an approach to influence **Corporate Joint Committees** to ensure their work on economic well-being takes account of the wider determinants. We will also build on our exploratory work on the role and impact of wider determinants in urban settings, for example ‘healthy high streets’, through an economic and social value lens.

Building on our previous **housing** and health work, we will develop a vision for homes and place in Wales, in the context of child poverty. This will complement our wider work on building knowledge and skills in planning systems.

People

We are completing our assessment of needs for collaboration on **child poverty** to inform enabling actions that we can take.

We are improving the evidence base on **worklessness of public health concern**, working with our four nations partners. We are focusing initially on the literature on what is meant by worklessness of public health concern, and the impacts of work; in parallel colleagues in Scotland are examining the evidence base on interventions for economic inactivity.

Through **Healthy Working Wales**, we are analysing data and evidence to increase understanding of employees aged 16-24 including sectors worked in, reasons for sickness, reasons for economic inactivity and best-practice support for mental health challenges. We are developing tools and resources for employers to support young people stay in work and prevent economic inactivity.

We are supporting an NIESR led **UKRI research** application: *Interventions Stimulating Economic Activity (ISEA): integrating empirical evidence with lived experience to model effective place-based policies focusing on ill-health and worklessness*. A decision is expected in October 2025.

Capability, evidence and alignment

Our work will focus on:



- Developing a vision for monitoring and surveillance of the wider determinants of health, to inform a coherent approach, including integration into our current reporting mechanisms
- Further developing the indicators we use as part of our measurement system, including exploring healthy life expectancy by domain, and more specific indicators below this level.
- Identifying how we evaluate our impact
- Developing coordinated resources on the building blocks of health (wider determinants) – including why they matter for health and what policies are most important for change
- Further developing our academic partnerships for modelling economic policy impacts on health
- Evaluating Public Health Network Cymru and Community of Interest to support system capability

5. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- **Consider** the work that has been undertaken and plans for future on Influencing the Wider Determinants of Health
- **Take assurance** on progress to date