



 <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 23 September 2025</p> <p>Agenda item: 3.5</p>
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KRIC Update September 2025 - Mental and Social Wellbeing	
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Approval/Scrutiny route:	N/A
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Purpose
The report which provides an update on research, data, evidence and evaluation activity related to Strategic Programme 2: Promoting Mental and Social Wellbeing.

Recommendation:				
APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/>	ADOPT <input type="checkbox"/>	ASSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive assurance that research, data, evidence and evaluation activity is progressing to support Strategic Priority 2: Promoting Mental and Social Wellbeing 				



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	2 - Promoting mental and social wellbeing
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Summary impact analysis

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	N/A
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Risk and Assurance	N/A
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Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act	N/A
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Financial implications	N/A
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People implications	N/A
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1. How does the work support the Long-term Strategy?

Work outlined in this paper is focused on progressing Strategic Priority 2 of PHW's Long-term Strategy (LTS): *Promoting Mental and Social Wellbeing*. The work develops our understanding of where to focus our efforts in delivering change, either directly or through influencing the work of partner organisations, and the impact of our activities on population mental and social wellbeing.

Our objectives in the LTS Strategic Priority 2 in relation to Knowledge, Research and Information are that by 2035 we will have:

- Synthesised, interpreted and disseminated evidence for effective action to support policy development, legislation and systemwide action to promote mental and social wellbeing to reduce inequalities
- Mobilised and enabled evidence-based action to promote and protect mental wellbeing across the system, including in key settings such as education, at work and in communities
- Supported the system to to review or evaluate policy or programmes for their impact on mental and social wellbeing and inequalities, taking a life-course approach
- Worked with partners to enable children to achieve optimum social and emotional development

2. How does the work align to the Research and Evaluation Strategy?

- **Open by default:** Our research and evaluation activity is developed collaboratively and findings are shared with key partners and the public in formats appropriate to influence relevant action.
- **Inclusive:** Our work involves those with lived experience to inform action that meets their needs and improves experience and outcomes for people in Wales.
- **Multidisciplinary:** Our work is delivered in collaboration with academic and NHS partners, Welsh Government, education and community organisations.
- **Influential:** We work collaboratively with Welsh Government, NHS and academic partners to highlight areas where further research is needed
- **Joined up:** We work with RDD research and evaluation leads to ensure work developed is of a high standard and develop partnerships to bring together expertise in research, policy and practice.



3. How does the work align to the Digital and Data Strategy?

- **User needs first:** We work to understanding the lived experience and needs of the people in Wales whose outcomes we aim to influence is central to all our work.
- **Accessible and equal:** We publish findings from research we've commissioned or carried out in accessible formats to maximise reach.
- **Open by default:** We are open about findings from our research and evaluation activity in order that others can benefit from the insights we've gained.

4. What did we say we were going to do and what have we achieved so far?

4.1. ***By 2035 we will have: Synthesised, interpreted and disseminated evidence for effective action to support policy development, legislation and systemwide action to promote mental and social wellbeing to reduce inequalities***

- **Hapus Insight articles:** A collection of practice and evidence-based articles provided to promote awareness of ways to promote mental and social wellbeing. The [Understanding Wellbeing in Wales](#) insight article provides a lay summary of research carried out by Cardiff Metropolitan University on behalf of PHW to understand inequalities in mental and social wellbeing and engagement with wellbeing-promoting activities in Wales. The findings from this research influenced the priorities within the 2025-35 [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), vision statement 2: *“Everyone has the knowledge, opportunities and confidence to protect and promote good mental health and wellbeing”*
- **Understanding Babies, Children and Young Peoples mental health:** A Mental Health Needs Assessment for Babies, Children and Young People is currently under development and will support the transformation of mental health services and support in Wales in line with vision statement 4 of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy: *“There are seamless mental health services – person-centred, needs led and guided to the right support first time, without delay”*. The needs assessment has incorporated research delivered by the RDD Directorate on the relationship between mental wellbeing and mental health problems and shared risk factors, and on patient journeys of those experiencing mental health crises. Learning has also been incorporated



from a series of Roundtable meetings with academic and clinical experts in the field, and the views of young people, on the long-term trends in children and young peoples' mental health and what is known about key drivers of change over the last two decades.

4.2 By 2035 we will have: Mobilised and enabled evidence-based action to promote and protect mental wellbeing across the system, including in key settings such as education, at work and in communities

- **Whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing - [What Works Toolkit](#)**

A collection of evidence reviews of school-based interventions and approaches to understand their effectiveness at improving children and young peoples' emotional and mental wellbeing. The evidence reviews are promoted to schools and Local Authorities, via the Health and Wellbeing Promoting Schools Network to inform the actions they take to support learners in Wales.

- **[Wellbeing in Action](#)**: A resource for those designing and delivering community-based activities. The guidance was developed following a literature review on what works to create inclusive, wellbeing-promoting community activities, with findings synthesised into an accessible public-facing format and publicised on the Hapus website and through our Hapus Supporter network.
- **[Healthy Working Wales](#)**: Evidence-based information provided to Employers in Wales to improve workforce health and wellbeing. Recent updates include information on the [menopause](#) and opportunities to promote [nature-connectedness](#) at work, in order to enable employers to better support employee wellbeing.

4.3 By 2035 we will have: Supported the system to to review or evaluate policy or programmes for their impact on mental and social wellbeing and inequalities, taking a life-course approach

- **Hapus evaluation**: The Hapus programme aims to increase action to protect and promote mental wellbeing in Wales through a national conversation and partnership working to increase opportunities for people to take action. The RDD R&E Division is supporting a 3-year evaluation of the national conversation and the partnership working. Findings from the baseline partnership evaluation have informed an updated workplan for the partnership and updated membership. The baseline findings for the national conversation influenced the framing of communications for priority audiences. The year 1 follow-up survey ran in August 2025 with findings due to be reported shortly,



these will provide insights into reach and impact to date and learning will influence future action to ensure we are reaching those that could most benefit.

- **Health Information for Parents evaluation:** A process evaluation of the HI4Ps (previously Every Child) resources covering pregnancy to age 0-2 has been completed in partnership with the RDD R&E Division. Learning is feeding into future developments to ensure parents have access to the information the need in formats suitable to their needs and an outcome evaluation is due for completion by March 2026

4.4 By 2035 we will have: Worked with partners to enable children to achieve optimum social and emotional development

- **Early Years Framework for Action:** A resource to influence system-wide action to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities in early child development. The evidence-based framework incorporated lived experience of parents and early years professionals, ensuring subsequent action is relevant to Wales. Work is now underway to work with partners to progress implementation of the framework.
- **Review of child development assessment tools to support effective delivery of the Healthy Child Wales Programme:** A review of best practice in the effective use of evidence-based child development assessment tools is currently being undertaken on behalf of Welsh Government. Current professional practice and perspectives in relation to the use of early child development assessment tools in Welsh Health Visiting and Flying Start services has been described and work to understand the perspectives of parents on the use of assessment tools is underway.

5. What are the gaps in delivery of research, data, information and how are we addressing them?

- 5.1. Evidence gathered through the children and young peoples' mental health needs assessment identified gaps in evidence on the long-term drivers of the declining state of young peoples' mental health. We have supported the Wolfson Centre in a grant application to carry out further research in this area that will build on the data infrastructure in Wales and the lived experience of young people in Wales. Gaps were also identified in understanding the relationship between sleep, social connectedness and screentime with mental health outcomes, an area where further analysis of SHRN data may provide additional insights.



We are working with RDD colleagues to explore a research project in this area.

- 5.2. The planned implementation of open access models of mental health support could lead to significant benefits for people in Wales. We are supporting NHS Performance and Improvement to engage with underserved groups to improve equity of provision, and to develop evaluation plans with academic partners to ensure learning from the early implementation phase informs and strengthens future delivery.
- 5.3. The relationship between mental wellbeing and physical health outcomes is a growing area of research. We are working with Cardiff Metropolitan University to better understand the impact that mental wellbeing has on cardiovascular health, and whether interventions to improve mental wellbeing influence cardiovascular health outcomes.

6. What are the digital and data deliveries and how are we progressing them?

Parental insights have highlighted the need for digital developments for the Health Information for Parents offer. We are engaging with RDD colleagues to explore potential options and timescales for delivery.

7. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- **Receive assurance** that research, data, evidence and evaluation activity is progressing to support Strategic Priority 2: Promoting Mental and Social Wellbeing.