

NHS WALES EMERGENCY PLANNING, RESILIENCE & RESPONSE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Name of NHS
Organisation

Public Health Wales

Date

30th April 2025

Signature of Chief
Executive Officer

Purpose

The NHS Wales Emergency Planning Resilience and Response Annual Report is a mechanism for providing assurance to NHS organisations, the NHS Executive and Welsh Government of the emergency planning arrangements, preparedness and resilience within organisations across NHS Wales. The NHS Executive will review reports from across the system, seeking assurance that organisations:

- Mitigate where possible against the risks identified within the NSRA and Wales Risk Register.
- Have a robust emergency plan in place for major incidents (CBRN, terrorist attacks, major power outages, high consequence infectious disease outbreaks, cyber-attacks etc).
- Have appropriate business continuity management arrangements in place.
- Regularly test the efficacy of organisational plans through training and exercise; and
- Ensure staff have the appropriate training in command-and-control processes and maintain their skills and knowledge including through CPD opportunities.

Governance

1. Please provide the name and position of your nominated Executive level lead for civil contingency/emergency preparedness arrangements.

Professor Fu-Meng Khaw National Director, Health Protection and Screening Services Executive
Medical Director

2. Please provide the name and position of your nominated Executive level business continuity lead if different from the above.

As above

3. Please provide the name and position of your officer(s) who has lead day to day responsibility for your civil contingencies/emergency preparedness arrangements.

- Tom Fowler: Deputy National Director of Health Protection and Screening Service
- Huw Williams: Head of Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response (EPRR)
- Daniel Rixon: EPRR Manager
- Cameron Muir: EPRR Officer
- Katie Austin; EPRR Officer
- Samantha Smith: EPRR Support Officer
- Holly Jones, EPRR Support Officer

4. Please provide the name and position of your officer(s) with day-to-day responsibility for your business continuity arrangements.

As above

5. Please provide the name and position of the officer in your organisation responsible for PREVENT activities (normally delivered as part of Safeguarding).

Claire Birchall: Executive Director of Nursing, Quality & Integrated Governance.

Donna Newell: Named Lead for Safeguarding based in Nursing, Quality & Integrated Governance.

6. Is there a mechanism for discussing and co-ordinating health emergency planning arrangements internally within your organisation?

YES NO

7. Please provide details of your internal mechanism for co-ordinating your emergency planning arrangements – for example: contingency/risk group structure, emergency preparedness strategy, EP work plan etc.

The EPRR function manages the day-to-day resilience activity for Public Health Wales. This includes the maintenance of core PHW plans and procedures, delivery of training on key roles required response to emergencies.

PHW also has long established Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Group (now EPRR Group) which is cross-organisational, and chaired by Professor Fu-Meng Khaw National Director, HPSS, Executive Medical Director. Its purpose is to collectively work to an agreed annual action plan based on planning, training, and exercises to address risks and lessons identified. It provides assurance and reports to the HPSS DMT, for onward reporting to BET, QSIC and Board.

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the EPRR Group were last reviewed, updated and agreed by members on 10th April 2025.

8. If applicable, who represents your organisation at the Local Resilience Forum meetings?

The EPRR Team represent PHW at LRF meetings across Wales, with support from subject-matter experts within the organisation when needed as noted below. Each LRF area has an identified Communicable Disease Consultant/s, and nationally agreed subject matter leads giving PHW consistency across the country, with a similar arrangement in place for environmental public health support

The EPRR team are fully engaged with multi-agency partners across the Wales and UK resilience structures in LRFs, and indeed with partner Public Health Institutes and Government covering all hazards and all aspects of the resilience agenda (planning, training, exercising etc.)

As the national public institute for Wales, PHW is a core member of the following 'regular' groups for EPRR, and represented accordingly:

Group	Representation	Frequency
UKHSA/DG Board	National Director, HPSS, Executive Medical Director.	Quarterly
UK Health Protection Committee	National Director, HPSS, Executive Medical Director.	Quarterly
UK Health Protection Oversight Group	Deputy National Director, HPSS.	Quarterly
UK 4 Nations EPRR Public Health Group	EPRR Team*	Quarterly
Wales Resilience Forum	National Director, HPSS, Executive Medical Director.	Quarterly
Wales Resilience Partnership Team	Head of EPRR.	Quarterly
Wales CONTEST Protect & Prepare Group	Head of EPRR.	Quarterly
Wales CBRN Countermeasures Group	EPRR Team.	Quarterly
Wales Risk Group	EPRR Manager.	Quarterly
Wales Learning & Development Group	EPRR Manager	Quarterly
NHS Wales Health & Social Services Group	Head of EPRR.	Weekly
NHS Wales Emergency Planning Advisory Group	EPRR Team.	Quarterly
4no. LRF Strategic Groups	Head of EPRR.	Quarterly
4no. LRF Coordination Groups	EPRR Manager.	Quarterly
Multiple LRF Operational (T&F) Groups	EPRR Team.	As required

*This group is chaired by the Head of EPRR, PHW.

9. When were your business continuity arrangements for maintaining critical services last reviewed and adopted by your Board.

Please provide detail of your business continuity management arrangements.

The revised PHW Business Continuity Strategy (V2), Impact Analysis and Plan Templates were approved by the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Group on the 16th of July 2024.

Services undertook a review of their Impact Analyses and Business Continuity Plans in December 2024 – specifically considering digital resilience and the applications required for the maintenance of the organisation’s critical services.

Activity is reported through the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Group (now the PHW EPRR Group) and Business Executive Team.

As part of the programme’s annual assurance, an annual report detailing the EPRR activity at PHW was received via the following governance route:

Group	Date
Emergency Planning and Business Continuity (EPBC) Group:	01.07.24 (email) 16.07.24 (meeting)
Health Protection Screening Services Directorate Management Team (HPSS DMT):	09.07.24
Business Executive Team (BET):	15.07.24
Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee (QSIC)	24.07.24
PHW Board	25.07.24

The 2024/25 annual report detailing the EPRR activity at PHW will be received via the following governance route:

Group	Date
Emergency Preparedness Resilience & Response Group (EPRR) Group:	10.04.25 (Meeting) 30.04.25 (email)
Health Protection Screening Services Directorate Management Team (HPSS DMT):	07.05.25
Business Executive Team (BET):	21.05.25
Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee (QSIC)	02.06.25
PHW Board	31.07.25

10. Does your organisation's corporate risk register include any business continuity or emergency planning risks? If yes, please provide details of these specific risks and how they are managed within the organisation.

Yes.

Public Health Wales has a Strategic Risk Register (SRR) and EPRR features heavily in the context of Strategic Risk 05.

The Strategic Risk Register (SRR) is the vehicle through which the Board takes assurance that it has a clear understanding of the strategic risk facing the organisation in the delivery of its strategic objectives, together with an understanding of the likelihood and the impacts if the risks are realised.

It provides assurance that any necessary actions required to mitigate those risks have been identified and are being suitably managed.

The Strategic Risk Register details the six current Strategic Risks (approved by the Board) which are the highest-level risks that could prevent the organisation from delivering on its strategic priorities.

Strategic Risk 05

Risk of: Failure to deliver excellent public health services on screening, infection, health protection and Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response (EPRR) and comply with the Duty of Quality

Due to: Weakness in systems and processes, specialist workforce capacity and capabilities and innovative practice.

Key Strategic Objectives contributing to mitigating the risk and agreed risk appetite level:

- Supporting the development of a sustainable health and care system focused on prevention and early intervention (**Willing**)
- Delivering excellent public health services to protect the public and maximise population health outcomes (**Accepting**)

Executive sponsorship for this risk is provided by Meng Khaw, National Director of Health Protection and Screening Services, with contribution from Claire Birchall, Interim Exec Dir Quality, Nursing and Allied Health Professionals and Iain Bell, Director of Knowledge and Research.

The EPRR Team also contribute significantly to...

Strategic Risk 06

Risk of: Disruption to services and/or loss of confidential data in conjunction with a failure to exploit appropriate data to inform relevant public health actions.

Due to: Cyber incident, other external factors, weaknesses in systems and processes, silo working and lack of strategic oversight of data outputs.

Key Strategic Objectives contributing to mitigating the risk and agreed risk appetite level:

- Supporting the development of a sustainable health and care system focussed on prevention and early intervention. [**Willing**]
- Delivering excellent public health services to protect the public and maximise public health outcomes. [**Accepting**]

Key Areas of Progress 2024/25

11. Please provide details of the key areas of progress against your organisation's EPRR priorities detailed in your 2023-24 Emergency Planning Annual Report.

In the 2023/24 report, Public Health Wales noted its priorities as;

Enhanced PHW EPRR Team

In order for the EPRR function to meet extended ongoing organisational business need; in March 2024, PHW Executive agreed to further strengthen the EPRR function by granting approval to recruit another EPRR Officer (1) and an EPRR Support Officer (1).

A successful recruitment process was undertaken, and the team achieved its new 'full establishment' in September 2024. This further strengthened PHW's presence at LRFs across Wales, enhanced existing arrangements, extended provision for internal and external emergency preparedness and business continuity resilience, training/exercising opportunities in Wales and across the UK.

A 24/7 EPRR On-Call Service

In December 2023, approval was given by HPSS Directorate Management Team for a dedicated 24/7 EPRR On-Call Service, which went 'live' on 1st April 2024. It has operated very successfully since, providing support internally and externally in response to a range of emergencies and major incidents.

As part of the commitment to delivering excellent public health services, Professor Fu-Meng KHAW, National Director of Health Protection and Screening Services, Executive Medical Director committed to a review (internal survey) of the dedicated 24/7 EPRR On-Call Service for Public Health Wales established on 1st April 2024 after six months.

During the six-month period (April - October 2024), service provision was alerted on 22 occasions, initiating and coordinating the corporate response to enable the organisation to meet its statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Alerts have primarily required engagement and coordination from an environmental public health perspective in relation to adverse weather, major fires, explosions and Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) incidents.

Survey results noted that 85% of respondents confirmed they had been contacted, or had cause to contact the service, with 82% confirming that it had met or exceeded their expectation.

When reflecting on aspects of the service which have embedded well; respondents made reference to the professionalism, level of EPRR expertise and high quality of service displayed, its scope and flexibility, the value of a single point of contact for incoming alerts, the quality of information communicated of the service which 'now feels more robust and appeases any anxiety.'

PHW Digital Disruption & Resilience Exercise

In October 2024, the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response Team in conjunction with the Digital Services Team successfully developed and delivered Exercise ERIS; to provide assurance in relation to the organisation's compliance with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act [2004] and the NHS Wales Emergency Planning Core Guidance [2015].

The aim was to review Public Health Wales' preparedness, response and recovery arrangements for a significant digital disruption. It highlighted five thematic areas from which recommendations were accepted;

1. Digital System Resilience:

2. Business Continuity Plan:
3. Training & Exercising:
4. Communication:
5. Workforce Resilience:

Prioritised work will continue to address the recommendations and feature in elements of the 2025/26 EPRR workplan.

Pandemic Preparedness & Recommendations from COVID Inquiry Modules

As part of its ongoing commitment to learning and improvement, PHW conducted a facilitated learning event that captured staff experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic response. The learning event included a staff survey conducted during the summer 2024, followed by a series of workshops.

The final report, which was completed in December 2024, highlights key lessons identified and areas where improvements can be made. The report was presented to the Executive Team on January 2025. The team has welcomed the findings and is preparing a report to include learning identified from all debriefs carried out in PHW.

In Autumn 2024, Public Health Wales established a corporate Pandemic Preparedness Task & Finish Group. Its purpose is to provide a forum to support the development of a consistent, resilient and coordinated level of planning and preparedness across Public Health Wales to enable an effective response to a pandemic.

This is the forum ensuring that internal pandemic response arrangements are consistent and well-coordinated. It is led by the Deputy National Director of Health Protection and Screening Services, supported by the Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response Team.

A key function of the group role is to foster cross-organisational collaboration to develop effective plans, policies, and procedures. To ensure arrangements are robust and cover all aspects of public health activity which Public Health Wales is responsible for, we have established workstreams which cover a broad range of areas: Clinical Countermeasures, Diagnostics & Testing, Safe & Scalable Care, Community Protection, Health Inequalities, Data & Collaborative Surveillance, Infrastructure (Digital Systems), Communication & Emergency Coordination (both internal and external), Research & Evaluation, and other relevant Module One recommendations.

The group is working to deliver two products - Public Health Wales Pandemic Response Arrangements and an internal Pandemic Preparedness Assessment, both of which are targeted for completion during 2025/26.

Major Incident/Emergency Plan

12. When was your Major Incident/Emergency Plan last reviewed and considered by your Board?

The Public Health Wales Emergency Response Plan describes the organisation's roles and responsibilities in response to an emergency or major incident, as well as providing a framework for its activation and deactivation arrangements, command and control structures, and recovery arrangements.

Version 3.0 of the document was approved in a private session of the Public Health Wales Board on 25th May 2023; with version 3.1 of the Public Health Wales Emergency Response Plan ratified by the EPRR Group, approved by the PHW Business Executive Team and noted at Public Health Wales Board in July 2024.

13. When was your Major Incident/Emergency Plan last updated to reflect any organisational changes and essential plan contacts?

The document is reviewed on an annual basis incorporating any lessons identified or changes to arrangements.

For example - in 2024, lessons were identified during Exercise CYHYRAETH - the internal major incident exercise to validate the plan and associated arrangements. This included;

- Updating the dynamic risk assessment for determining the PHW response level.
- Updating the Strategic Response Group membership to include communications.
- Incorporation of the Charter for the Bereaved within the principles of EPRR for PHW.
- Inclusion of updated notification and alerting processes following the establishment of the 24/7 EPRR Duty Officer.
- Strengthening the recovery section, providing a framework to address recovery at the short, medium and long-term priorities.

To ensure that Public Health Wales continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) in maintaining an Emergency Response Plan which is fit for purpose; the document is scheduled for annual review in Q2 2025/26.

This review will incorporate lessons identified from a range of sources such as Exercise ERIS – the internal exercise exploring the response to and recovery from a significant digital disruption.

The Public Health Wales Emergency Response Telephone Directory which supports the arrangements was last updated in Q3 of 2024/25, and is scheduled for review and update in Q1 of 2025/26.

14. Do you have resilient activation systems, action cards and suitably trained and equipped staff to provide for a 24-hour emergency response to support your Major Incident/Emergency Plan?

YES NO

15. If NO, what are the gaps and how are these being addressed?

As above.

National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA)

The following sections focus on preparedness and risks in relation to some of the highest rated risks within the NSRA and Wales Risk Register.

Your organisation's responses to these questions will inform the NHS Executive's programme of work in these areas with a view to improving assurance and resilience across NHS Wales. Please provide any supplementary information in support of your responses below.

Threat Mitigation/Security

16. Does your organisation have written procedures that may be needed to respond to a change in threat level to critical?

YES NO

17. When was your organisation's Lock Down arrangements last worked through or tested?

Dates	Details of what was undertaken
	<p>In Q3 of 2024/25, EPRR working with Infection Services (at UHW) delivered a series of lone worker training events to for staff to support PHW polices including 'lone worker and 'lockdown'.</p> <p>This formed part of a wider collaboration to implement recommendations from an internal security review which was jointly undertaken by Estates, Infection Services and supported by EPRR in at UHW during Q1-Q3 of 2024/25 advocating;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff training to influence and change behaviours.• Review of risk assessments.• Audit of the sites existing security and baselining against minimum standards.• Additional physical security (CCTV & TDSI) <p>which was successfully granted funding for completion in Q4 of 2024/25.</p>
09.01.25	<p>In Q4 of 2024/25, EPRR working with Estates and Communications delivered and information brief to all staff;</p> <p>To help ensure the safety and security of our workplace, colleagues are asked adhere to the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be Aware: Always be mindful of your surroundings when entering or exiting the building. If you notice someone attempting to follow you without proper identification, do not hesitate to report it to our 3rd floor reception or to the ground floor security desk.• ID Pass (Access card): All staff are asked to ensure they are wearing and displaying their PHW issued ID pass.• Use Your ID Pass (access card): Ensure that you use your access card every time you enter the building and our floors, even if the door is already open. This helps maintain an accurate record of who is in the building at any given time.• Do Not Hold Doors Open: Whilst this is seen as courteous to hold the door open for others, please refrain from doing so unless you are certain they are authorised to enter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report Suspicious Activity: If you observe any suspicious behaviour or individuals attempting to gain unauthorised access, please report it immediately to our 3rd floor reception and the ground floor security desk. <p>Support New Employees: Line managers and colleagues should ensure that new employees are aware of the need for vigilance and understand the importance of preventing tailgating both into the building and across our four floors.</p>
27.01.25	<p>In Q4 of 2024/25, Estates reviewed and updated its security processes linked to receiving visitors at CQ2 and other primary office locations.</p> <p>The revised measures also tightened up on staff attending premises without an approved ID badge and documented the processes to be followed in both situations.</p> <p>NB. It also reinforced the messages shared on 09.01.25.</p>

18. Were any issues identified as a result and if so how has / is your organisation addressing these?

Work is always ongoing to develop and strengthen arrangements. Whilst engaging operationally (as noted above), it was identified that Public Health Wales weren't embedded in national governance structures for this workstream.

PHW is a member of the Wales CONTEST Protect and Prepare Board and attends regular meetings to engage with the agenda at the national level, support and ensure alignment.

Power Outage

19. Do your business continuity arrangements include response arrangements for maintaining critical services in the event of a major power outage?

YES NO

20. Please describe the preparedness actions the organisation has undertaken over the last 12 months (e.g. protocols, guidance, exercising etc) to respond to a major power outage?

In Q2 2024/25, PHW issued National Power Outage Grab Bags for key 'identified' staff to hold, with a procedure to deploy to the nearest SCG and to ECCW in the event of an NPO.

Each bag contains the:

- PHW Emergency Response Plan, PHW Threat Response Procedure, Countermeasures Plan, PHW Emergency Response Handbook, Provision of Scientific & Technical Advice in Wales 2019 (STAC) and UK (CMO) agreed Public Health advice and guidance for a national power outage.

Practically – they also hold:

- Contact Details, Aide Memoire, PHW Log Decision Log x 2, First Aid kit (St John Ambulance small workplace kit - BS 8599-1:2019), Solar Charge/Wind-up Radio, Wind-up Flashlight, Power bank, Multi charger lead, Laptop charger, Notebook, Pen, Ruler, Water bottle, Spare Zip tag x 4

Grab bags have also been issued to infection services facilities:

- Glangwilli Hospital
- Singleton Hospital
- Gwynedd Hospital
- Wrexham Maelor Hospital
- UHW

- Wales Genomic Health Centre (Pengu)
- Llandough Hospital
- Bronglais

Throughout Q3 and Q4 of 2024/25 - a series of successful training events for staff holding the grab bags were held to confirm the procedures for their usage.

On Sunday 29th of December 2024, the power at Public Health Wales Microbiology Laboratory at University Hospital of Wales (UHW) Cardiff unexpectedly went down for 2 hours (between 14:20-16:19). Following the incident, a structured debrief was undertaken and recommendation made. Action to address identified recommendation was undertaken in Q4 of 2024/25 with further planned activity planned for 2025/26.

21. What are the key risks to your organisation in respect of a major power outage and how are you mitigating these? Please provide details of key vulnerable sites / facilities, how these have been assessed and dates of last assessments.

Exercise Mighty Oak - the Tier 1, national exercise exploring the impacts, response and recovery from a national power outage (NPO) in Great Britain which aimed to support the development of the national response and recovery to an NPO.

The exercise clarified the critical activities which PHW must continue to deliver - mainly microbiology services at hospitals to support lifesaving activity and some frontline health protection services. It also highlighted the importance of being co-located with multi-agency partners in this scenario.

As a result, PHW undertook work with critical services including Microbiology and Health Protection to understand and mitigate the impacts where practicable. This was initially focussed on UHW in Cardiff, with engagement a site exercise (Operation POET September 2023).

Importantly, the learning has now been shared with laboratory sites across Wales for implementation. It has also been incorporated into business continuity plans for Microbiology and Health Protection.

Work is ongoing to provide further 'grab bags' and training for staff at the 'Hot Lab' sites across Wales as a change in service function identified a critical activities (via BIA) which required enhanced coverage.

Mass Casualty Incidents

22. Please describe how your emergency planning arrangements ensure your organisation can appropriately respond to a Mass Casualty incident in line with extant Mass Casualty guidance. .

Public Health Wales is a member of the Wales Pre-Hospital Group and consulted with the Mass Casualty Subgroup in the development of the Mass Casualty Arrangements for Wales.

Public Health Wales' role in response (page 20) confirms that the organisations responsibilities to assess impact on population health to inform the multi-agency response and recommend measures to protect public health and mitigate the effects of the incident.

Depending on scenario, the response could also include seeking preliminary advice from specialists regarding likely symptoms of those exposed (both immediate and delayed) and the need for immediate countermeasures such as decontamination, mass chemoprophylaxis and further guidance (e.g., anti-microbial prophylaxis).

The commitment is also clearly documented in the PHW Emergency Response Plan (page 45), and details the role of the PHW Medical Director (Strategic Response Director initially out of hours)

Cyber Attack

23. Do your business continuity arrangements include written procedures for responding to a cyber-attack / ICT incident impacting across the organisation?

YES NO

24. Has your organisation assessed the risk of a Cyber attack and identified mitigating actions for the vulnerabilities highlighted? Please provide details.

Yes. Public Health has an ongoing program of development. It has a full time Lead Cyber Security Manager and a Principal Data Security Specialist as part of the Digital Services Team to coordinate activity in this area.

This is complimented by work undertaken (coordinated by the EPRR Team) with business continuity preparedness across PHW.

25. Please describe the preparedness activity the organisation has undertaken in the previous 12 months (e.g. protocols, guidance, exercising etc) to build its cyber resilience.

During 2024/25, activities/achievements included;

- Updated Service level IT Business Continuity Plan and a Cyber Incident Response Plan.
- Regular exercising of some aspects of business continuity and recovery e.g. restoration of information.
- Cyber security training has been mandated across all staff, with regular phishing tests launched across the organisation to raise awareness amongst staff.
- Exercise ERIS – an internal exercise exploring the response to and recovery from a significant digital disruption was held in Q3 of 2024/2025 and focussed on a cyber-attack disrupting business across the whole organisation.

Recognising that over the last two years there has been significant work to further develop BC Planning across Divisions and Directorates - particularly focusing on aspects relating staff loss (industrial action); following Exercise ERIS the Executive Team requested;

- Fresh assurance from all Directorates that BC plans have been reviewed and updated in the last 12 months via Directorate Governance processes.
- A statement regarding the current position on mitigation/continuity arrangements in place for a digital disruption to critical activities and services.
- An initial organisational continuity response document which identifies the services which support critical activities, to support decision-making in terms of sequencing for shutting off and restoring digital platforms.

This work was completed and presented to the Lead Executive for Digital Services in Q4 of 2024/25.

Communicable Diseases and Pandemics

26. Do your business continuity arrangements include plans to respond to a new pandemic?

Business Continuity Management (BCM) process at Public Health Wales provides a strategic framework for improving organisational resilience to disruption and supports the delivery of prioritised services during incidents.

The BCM Strategy adopts the Plan-Do-Check-Act Model (PDCA) which is identified as best practice in ISO 22301 and 22313. All Directorates and Divisions are required to complete a Business Impact Assessment (BIA), consider their activities and impacts from a loss of people, loss of information, loss of critical systems and a denial of access to premises.

Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) then draw the in key information from the BIAs to ensure plans are shaped to cover the key response activities required to mitigate the areas identified above. BCPs cover all hazards (including pandemic), and Directorates and Divisions are expected to consider this as part of their business continuity preparedness.

NB. Please also note the work outlined in Q.11 as a significant contributor in this area also.

27. What are the major risks in terms of your organisation's resilience / capabilities to be able to respond to a new pandemic?

The major risks identified are;

- Retention of corporate memory (as staff move and/or retire) on systems and process utilised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pace of improvement in digital infrastructure, data quality & governance processes preventing robust monitoring / analysis / modelling / epidemiology etc.
- Maintenance of key skills for staff mobilised to support critical functions across the organisation in the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Risk that the next pandemic requires a completely different response from the organisation, requiring only a very limited reach-back to the skill sets, systems and processes adopted for COVID-19.

NB. Public Health Wales is seeking to address these risks via its Pandemic Preparedness Task & Finish Group, the Public Health Wales Pandemic Response Arrangements and an internal Pandemic Preparedness Assessment.

28. Following the preparedness activity colleagues across NHS Wales undertook during 2024, please describe the organisation's priorities for 2025/6 in relation to HCID preparedness.

Public Health Wales were a key contributor in relation to the preparedness activities for HCID. In particular - the organisation established and jointly chaired the Wales High Consequence Infection Disease Preparedness Group (MPOX) with the NHS Executive in September 2024.

Its purpose was to provide a strategic national forum to support the development of a consistent, resilient and coordinated level of planning and preparedness across NHS Wales in preparedness for confirmed Mpox clade 01case(s) in Wales.

In jointly leading, coordinating and support the delivery of activities such as the development of MPOX pathway action cards, public information posters and IPC advice and guidance for the system in Wales.

Upon agreement to stand the group down in March 2025 in line with the national derogation of MPOX as a HCID; Public Health Wales committed working with the NHS Executive and wider system to;

- Update MPOX IPC advice to reflect the changes in its classification.
- Review the MPOX pathway action cards with a view to amendment for use as a more generic HCID pathway action card.
- Completing work being undertaken by the HCID task and finish group for HCID (separately commissioned by Welsh Government).

CBRN

29. Do your business continuity arrangements include plans to respond to a chemical, biological or radiological incident?

Public Health Wales have detailed responsibility for the activation of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Countermeasures contained within Welsh Government Guidance on access to UK Reserve Stock for Major Incidents.

Public Health Wales maintains a Countermeasures Protocol for Activation. This document was recently updated in conjunction with updates made to the NHS Wales Emergency Planning Guidance: Guidance on Access to UK Reserve Stock for Major Incidents.

The intent of the PHW document is to detail the process for authorisation of the UK stockpile of countermeasures, and solely details countermeasures which Public Health Wales are responsible for deploying in the event of a deliberate or accidental release of chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear materials.

30. Please describe the actions undertaken over the previous 12 months to ensure the organisation can respond to a CBRN incident.

During 2024/25, PHW led (jointly delivered by the EPRR and Environmental Public Team) a review and update of the NHS Wales 'Chemical Decontamination Guidance for Health Boards (V.2) incorporating the changes reflected in the latest [Initial Operational Response to Incidents Suspected to Involve Hazardous Substances or CBRN Materials](#) Guidance.

This update has prompted Health Boards to update procedures for managing patients involved in a chemical contamination.

Since its inception in Public Health Wales have also been actively engaged in the Wales Countermeasures Oversight Board; established to provide assurance to Welsh Ministers and senior officials that national countermeasures planning is fit for purpose in the event of an emergency requiring their deployment.

In a further linked action, Welsh Government has also commissioned Public Health Wales (led by Health Protection) to develop a suite of documents that describes the pathway for procuring, prescribing, and accessing these health protection medicines.

31. What are the key risks / vulnerabilities for your organisation and how are you addressing these?

A key risk is ensuring that Consultants in Communicable Disease Control / Consultants in Health Protection, Consultant Epidemiologists and the National Director of Health Protection and Screening Services/the Executive Medical Director remain fully briefed on the document and are aware of their responsibilities and that of Public Health Wales in response.

Public Health Wales continues to address this directly (jointly via the EPRR and Environmental Public Team) with consultants to ensure that this remains part of training and awareness delivered via the Health Protection Training & Guidance Team.

Training and Exercise

32. Does your organisation have robust arrangements for reviewing emergency plans that take account of lessons from incidents and exercises (including following the process set out in the NHS Wales Lessons Identified Register)?

YES NO

Please describe these below and provide a copy of your lessons identified register if one is held locally.

As noted in question 07, the EPRR function manages the day-to-day resilience activity for Public Health Wales. This includes the maintenance of core PHW plans and procedures, delivery of training on key roles required response to emergencies.

PHW also has long established Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Group (now EPRR Group) which is cross-organisational, and chaired by Professor Fu-Meng Khaw National Director, HPSS, Executive Medical Director. Its purpose is to collectively work to an agreed annual action plan based on planning, training, and exercises to address risks and lessons identified. It provides assurance and reports to the HPSS DMT, for onward reporting to BET, QSIC and Board.

33. Please provide the dates during 2024/25 when your organisation tested its Major Incident / Emergency Plan, through:

a. Carrying out a communications/activation test every six months. Please provide details below

	Details Of Communications/Activation Test Undertaken
18.04.24	Exercise Wales Connect: Weekday 'In Hours
23.04.24	Exercise Plover: Bristol Channel Pollution Group Communications test.
26.04.24	WAST Major Incident Notification: Major Incident Test
18.07.24	NRW: South Wales Flood Advisory Service Telecon
29.07.24	Exercise Wales Connect: Weekday 'Out Of Hours'
29.08.24	Cardiff Bay Chambers: 'Live' Incident Response
21.10.24	Powys Train Crash: 'Live' Incident Response
11.11.24	Commercial Fire, Abergavenny: 'Live' Incident Response
29.11.24	Ordinance, Carmarthenshire: 'Live' Incident Response
19.12.24	Gwent Police: GOV.UK Notify (LRF test of plan to move to GOV.UK Notify)
16.01.25	Bryn Cowlyd Water Works: 'Live' Incident Response
25.03.25	WAST Major Incident Notification: Major Incident Test
Weekly	PHW Alert System Test: Conduct internal EPRR system test every Monday morning, checking pagers, email and text notification (Started 18.03.24)
Summary	<p>A total of 81 'Live' incident notifications were received in 2024/25, categorised as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe Weather (22) • Fire (13) • Carbon Monoxide (8) • HCID (6) • COMAH (Fire/Explosion) (4) • Chemical Suicide (3) • Gas Leak (3) • Civil Disorder (3) • Ordinance (3) • Asbestos (2) • Suspicious Package (2) • Digital Disruption (2) • Fire Risk (1) • Train Incident (1) • Misc. (7)

b. Carrying out a tabletop training exercise within the last year. Please provide details below

Dates	Details Of Tabletop Training Exercise
16.05.24	Exercise Ajax: Multi-agency exercise to raise awareness of Valero Pembroke Refinery External Emergency Plan and the response to a major incident on-site with external consequences.
18.07.24	Exercise Nitazene: Multi-agency exercise event. Explored the response to an increase in harms relating to the emergence of synthetic opioid into the drug markets across our communities in Wales.
04.09.24	Exercise Gus: Multi-agency exercise to test the off-site plan for Vale Europe and to test multi-agency interoperability. The aim of the exercise was to test and validate the internal and external emergency plans for Vale Europe as result of its upper tier status under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Regulations 2015.
28.08.24	Exercise MPOX: The aim of the exercise was to review Public Health Wales, Health Protection & Screening Services preparedness and response arrangements to an importation of a single suspected MPOX case in Wales.
05.09.24	Exercise Fad Felen: Multi-agency exercise event. The aim of the exercise was to explore the system response to MPOX in Wales.
24.10.24	Exercise Eris: The aim of the exercise was to review Public Health Wales' preparedness, response and recovery arrangement for a significant digital disruption.
30.10.24	Exercise Celtic Response: Multi-agency exercise to test the response to a mass casualty at sea incident.
10.12.24	Exercise Viper II (Tactical Command & Media Training): Multi-agency exercise event. The aim was to test the tactical response to an incident in the A55 Tunnels (North Wales) involving hazardous substances.
11.03.25	Exercise Curacoa: Multi-agency exercise to test the off-site plan for Flogas Office (Llandarcy), and to test multi-agency interoperability. The aim of the exercise was to test the off-site plan for Flogas, under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Regulations 2015.
11.03.25	Exercise Icarus: Multi-agency exercise/event held to explore the response to a major incident involving mass fatalities.
26.03.25	Exercise Celtic Consolidation: Multi-agency exercise to explore the response to a terrorist attack at a mass gathering. Its aim is to provide the opportunity for partners to work together to refresh and enhance their knowledge, understanding and effectiveness of the 'response & recovery' from a terrorist attack within Wales.

c. Carrying out a major live or simulated exercise within the last three years. Please provide details below

Dates	Details Of Major, Live Or Simulated Exercises Undertaken
28-30.02.23	<p>Exercise Mighty Oak: Exercise Mighty Oak was a Tier 1, national exercise exploring the impacts, response and recovery from a national power outage (NPO) in Great Britain.</p> <p>The aim of the exercise was to support the development of the national response and recovery to a NPO.</p>
10-11.07.23	<p>Exercise Doll House: Multi-agency event involving a 'live' national Police Counter Terrorism Exercise largely run in the Gwent LRF area (scene was at a venue in Newport), that Gwent LRF tested and exercised the Gwent LRF SCG arrangements as part of the event.</p>
21.09.23	<p>Exercise Astral Bend: Exercise Astral Bend was a Ministry of Defence-led Level 1 Nuclear Emergency Organisation (NEO) multi-agency exercise assessing MOD operational activity and focuses on the interface between the RAF Brize Norton Immediate Response Force and the Civilian Emergency Services at scene.</p> <p>Gwent LRF tested and exercised the Gwent LRF SCG arrangements as part of the event.</p>
29.11.23	<p>Exercise Pen Y Darren: Exercise Pen-y-Darren was a hybrid table-top NHS Wales exercise based on a derailment of a passenger train into a static caravan park that took place on the 17th of October 2023.</p> <p>The aim of the exercise was to test the response to a Mass Casualty Incident using the Mass Casualty Incident Arrangements for NHS Wales.</p>
06.11.24	<p>Exercise Keep Safe: A Monmouthshire County Council (& delivery partners) exercise testing survivor reception centre processes at Caldicot Leisure Centre.</p>
24.11.24	<p>Exercise VIPER 'Live': Multi-agency exercise event. The aim was to test the response to an incident in the A55 Tunnels (North Wales) involving hazardous substances.</p>
04.02.25	<p>Exercise Tendley: Dyfed Powys LRF areas multi-agency 'live' exercise involving a train crash.</p> <p>The aim of the exercise was to ensure, that the emergency service are aware of each other's specialist capabilities to address recommendation 51 of the Manchester Arena Inquiry.</p>
24.03.25	<p>Exercise Grey Metal: A Cardiff Council (& delivery partners) exercise to validate Cardiff Council Rest Centre Guidance Document and the Fairwater Leisure Centre Rest Centre Plan.</p>
2020 - 2024	<p>MERIT Training: The PHW EPRR team are core faculty members supporting the delivery of MERIT training in Wales supporting 5no. 'passport' courses 2022-23.</p> <p>The team also facilitated volunteer casualty coordination to MERIT recertification 6no. exercises at St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan in 2022.</p>

34. Has your organisation had to initiate your major incident / emergency plan between April 2024 to March 2025?

YES NO

a. If YES, what was the nature of the incident?

<p>30.04.24</p>	<p>Synthite Ltd: Following an explosion at Synthite Ltd in North Wales, PHW established its Command, Control and Coordination (C3) structures and treated the event as an 'enhanced' incident.</p> <p>About 20 workers and contractors were evacuated and one person was taken to Countess of Chester Hospital for further treatment. The explosion on site resulted in a fire in the production area and a release of formaldehyde into local water courses.</p> <p>There were cross border implications for the River Dee, concerns over public bathing/water sports/recreation, risks for abstraction points for industry and drinking water as well as concern for livestock.</p>
<p>01.06.24</p>	<p>Parc Prison: Inmate disturbance/riot at facility in Bridgend. A major incident was declared but then rapidly de-escalated as it did not meet the definition for any agency.</p>
<p>21.11.24</p>	<p>Storm Bert: PHW established its Command, Control and Coordination (C3) structures and treated the event as an 'enhanced' incident.</p>
<p>06.12.24</p>	<p>Storm Darragh: PHW established its Command, Control and Coordination (C3) structures and treated the event as an 'enhanced' incident.</p>
<p>16.01.25</p>	<p>Bryn Cowlyd: A mains water pipe burst near the Bryn Cowlyd Water Treatment Works, Dolgarrog, Conwy. Public Health Wales initiated its emergency response arrangements in support of the multi-agency Tactical and Strategic Coordination Groups established in North Wales.</p> <p>This was a substantial burst, presenting a complex fix in a very challenging location underneath the Afon Ddu. Supplies for up to 40,000 properties were affected. A major incident was declared, and Public Health Wales was fully engaged in the multi-agency coordinated response, providing public health advice.</p> <p>The loss of water supply had a significant impact for residents in Conwy, and had a substantial impact on people, schools and businesses.</p>
<p>For examples</p>	<p>Please refer to the detail captured in the table in Q.33a.</p>

b. Were post-event reports produced for these incidents? YES NO

c. If post incidents reports were produced, have these been shared with the health emergency planning network and any lessons identified uploaded on the Wales NHS Lessons Identified Register?

As per point c, both actions will take place once the reports have been formally approved via PHW governance process.

At PHW, recommendations are recorded on the PHW EPRR Lessons Identified Register. These are monitored by the PHW EPRR Team and progress reported through the EPRR Group.

Identified learning which is outside of the remit of Public Health Wales or has wider impact on NHS Wales is shared with partners through the agreed Governance arrangements of the NHS Wales Lessons identified database.

NB. The NHS Wales Lessons Identified Register was created by Daniel Rixon, EPRR Manager at PHW, and adopts the PHW process for identification and monitoring.

This is now being highlighted at 'best practice' in Wales by the NHS Wales Executive and also Welsh Government National Security and Resilience Division (NSRD); with advice being sought on how this can be adopted for Wales.

35. Have you undertaken an assessment of staff training needs in relation to your Major Incident /Emergency Plan?

YES NO

Please provide further information

Yes. Based upon the analysis undertaken, Public Health Wales have issued an EPRR Learning and Development Prospectus which lists;

- The internal and external training opportunities available from a strategic, tactical and operational context across a range of subject areas. The current version maps training for 2025/26.
- The training requirements of staff to undertake identified roles detailed in the PHW Emergency Response Plan (V3.1). All roles are mapped against the National Occupational Standards for Civil Contingencies.

The EPRR Team also work directly with Directorates to offer bespoke training packages for teams aimed at improving preparedness in key areas such as Health Protection, Communication, Estates, Environmental Public Health, Prisons and Substance Misuse.

36. Do you have a staff training programme to support your Major Incident/Emergency Plan?

YES NO

If YES, please provide further details e.g., number of staff trained in strategic, tactical & operational roles etc;

EPRR figures reference related to training undertaken within the past 3yrs (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025):

Role	Internal	External	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Wales Gold		✓		18		16	34
Strategic*	✓			7			7
Wales Silver		✓	3	4	1	7	15
Tactical*	✓		4	12		1	17
Operational*	✓			22		2	24
Loggist*	✓			10	07	15	32
Watchkeeper*	✓			8		13	21
Business Continuity	✓		7		24	1	32
Introduction to Emergencies (in person)	✓		14				14
Introduction to Emergencies (online)	✓		23	59			82
EPRR Response Awareness	✓			123			123
							401

*Internally delivered and specifically aligned to PHW Emergency Response Plan (mapped against the National Occupational Standards for Civil Contingencies and business continuity processes).

37. Please provide details of any training and exercise undertaken during 2023/24 to embed the Charter for Bereaved Families within your organisation.

In early 2024, the Welsh Joint Emergency Services Group (WJESG) and Welsh Government undertook to adopt the recommendations from the Hillsborough Review captured through the Charter and run a series of Executive Workshops for Public Services in Wales.

The intention was to encourage all Public Services in Wales to adopt the Charter and develop pan-Wales delivery across local resilience forums, emergency responders, health, local authority, and the voluntary sector.

Public Health Wales (PHW) attended the two all-Wales executive workshops to explore the Charter through facilitated conversations aimed at helping organisations understand how they can collectively embed its principles. The organisation adopted the Charter in December 2024, and formally signed with many other public sector partners across Wales on 18th March 2025.

Noting the constraints of this timeline and the organisational commitment made through its adoption; Public Health Wales will look to incorporate the Charter into training and exercises in 2025/26.

NB. Please note references in Q.13 to the incorporation of the Charter for the Bereaved within the principles of EPRR for PHW and inclusion in the Public Health Wales Emergency Response Plan (V3.1).

Communication

38. Have relevant NHS organisations and partner agencies been consulted about any role they may have in your Major Incident/Emergency Plan?

YES NO

Please provide details.

In 2022/23, the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response (EPRR) Team completed a comprehensive review of the document to ensure that PHW continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) in maintaining an Emergency Response Plan which is fit for purpose.

Whilst the document doesn't directly require support from any agency, there are significant interdependencies in response. Therefore, PHW also drew upon the valuable experiences of external stakeholders across Wales and the UK as part of the process, obtaining feedback from a cross-section of partners including the emergency services, local government, university health boards, Welsh Government, the Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, the UK Health Security Agency, and Public Health Scotland.

When updating the internal PHW Countermeasures Protocol in 2023/24, advice/feedback was obtained from Welsh Government, NHS Shared Services and Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust via the Wales NHS Countermeasures Group to ensure that the protocol is aligned to arrangements in other organisations and remains fit for purpose.

In 2023/24, Welsh Government commissioned PHW to lead a full review of the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales. The organisation worked in collaboration with all partners to produce the revised document which was approved by all partners and Welsh Government in December 2023.

During 2024/25, PHW led a review and update of the NHS Wales 'Chemical Decontamination Guidance for Health Boards (V.2) incorporating the changes reflected in the latest [Initial Operational Response to Incidents Suspected to Involve Hazardous Substances or CBRN Materials](#) Guidance.

This update has prompted Health Boards to update procedures for managing patients involved in a chemical contamination.

Welsh Government has recently commissioned PHW to lead a full review of the 'Managing public health risks from environmental incidents; Guidance for Wales'. The organisation plans to work in collaboration with all partners (Local Authorities, Fire & Rescue Services, Natural Resources Wales etc.) to produce the revised document which can be approved by all partners and Welsh Government during 2025/26.

Assurance

39. Are you satisfied your organisation is fulfilling the principles required by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as described below?

	YES	NO	Please provide any further relevant information to support your answer
1) Assess risks to inform your contingency arrangements	X		
2) Put in place Emergency Plans	X		
3) Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements	X		
4) Share information with other organisations to enhance co-ordination and efficiency	X		
5) Cooperate with other organisations to enhance co-ordination and efficiency	X		
6) Have appropriate arrangement to warn, inform and advise the public/others, including in an emergency	X		
7) Do you have an EPRR lessons identified and lessons learned procedure within your organisation that feeds in to EPAG?	X		

Priorities

40. What are your priorities for 2025/26 to strengthen your organisation's emergency planning, resilience and preparedness arrangements?

Equalities in EPRR

In conjunction with a wider project examining Health Protection Inequalities at Public Health Wales, the EPRR team have been working in partnership with colleagues in Policy and International Health to on a project aims to examine and enhance equality within EPRR across Wales.

The project has three distinct elements;

- 1) A review of existing academic literature and evidence surrounding equality in policy and practice within EPRR, with specific relevance to its application in Wales. [COMPLETE]

In 2025/26, the EPRR team will;

- 2) Deliver workshops to engage with EPRR practitioners, representatives of targeted social groups and members of the public with experience of major incidents and extreme events, to gather a further localised evidence base that can be used to identify gaps, opportunities, and challenges within the existing system. [OUTSTANDING – Q2 of 2025/26]
- 3) Produce an academic article/research paper with evidence-based recommendations to reduce inequities linked with EPRR. [OUTSTANDING – Q4 of 2025/26]

Once the project has concluded, the outcomes will be utilised to shape and inform EPRR policy and planning in Wales.

Enhanced Digital Resilience within Business Continuity Arrangements.

Digital resilience has been identified as a priority for Public Health Wales in 2025/26, with a commitment to undertaking the ten recommendations from Exercise ERIS held in Q3 of 2024/25.

NB. Refer to the detail provided in Q.11

Action includes the EPRR Team;

- Collaborating with Directorates to develop an initial organisational continuity response document which identifies the services which support critical activities, to support decision-making in terms of sequencing for shutting off and restoring digital platforms.
- Developing a BC policy which outlines the requirement for Divisions/Directorates in the development, maintenance, review and exercise of business continuity plans annually to ensure that they are effective. The policy will detail roles and responsibilities across the organisation.
- Implementing a process for alerting Executive Directors and Heads of Services in the event of a Business Continuity Incident.
- Collaborating with Communications to agree initial statements for use with Staff, Stakeholder and the public in the event of a Business Continuity Incident.

Pandemic Arrangements

Exercise Pegasus is a tier 1 national exercise, led by the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), aimed at rigorously assessing the UK's preparedness, capabilities, and response strategies in the context of a pandemic arising from a novel infectious disease.

It is being designed as an evidence-based and data-driven simulation and will focus on the initial stages of a pandemic, structured around three pivotal time points. The exercise is being held over 3 defined phases throughout Q3 of 2025/26 (September, October and November), with time between

for the national planning team to review the outputs of each phase and update the scenario as the exercise moves through phases.

At the request of Welsh Government, Public Health Wales are facilitating a build-up exercise for LRFs across Wales in Q1 of 2025/26 - in advance of the tier one pandemic exercise in the autumn.

Exercise SOLARIS (Wales) is a modified version of the Off-the-shelf exercise (OTSE) exercise package produced by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) for LRFs in England. To ensure that the scenario which has been developed is as realistic as possible for Welsh LRFs, advice has been taken from Public Health Wales and sources with specialist knowledge of the system response to a pandemic in Wales.

It aims to exercise multi-agency pandemic response arrangements and plans at LRF level in preparation for Exercise Pegasus.

Public Health Wales will extract the learning from these events and other build up exercises to ensure that Public Health Wales Pandemic Response Arrangements and an internal Pandemic Preparedness Assessment are robust and fit for purpose.

The organisation is also committed to validating these arrangements via an internal major incident exercise in Q4 of 2025/26.

Recommendations from COVID Inquiry Modules

Public Health Wales is committed to the continued identification of lessons and implementing change following the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this process, the organisation will be reviewing recommendations from each module of the Inquiry as they are published, with particular focus on the forthcoming publication of module two recommendations.

Health Promotion in the planning for, response to and recovery from emergencies

The Building Bridges to Resilience: Identifying International Good Practice Principles in Applying Health Promotion to Emergency Preparedness and Response Project aims to collect, review and analyse practice-based evidence derived from programs and actions implemented in real-life settings in the planning for, response to and recovery from emergencies.

The project shall guide and improve preparedness by integrating health promotion and community engagement as a principle of good practice. The project seeks to identify principles of good practice to improve the usefulness and credibility of practice-based evidence in informing evidence-based public health interventions, thereby complementing current available research-based evidence by building on the experience of key public health organisations

Public Health Wales has successfully received funding through the International Association of Public Health Institutes (through the International Health Grants Program of the Public Health Agency of Canada) to deliver the project.

The project commenced in quarter 1 of 2024/25 through the delivery of a workshop in Maputo, (Mozambique) with Public Health Leaders from National Public Health Institutes across the globe.

When submitting the completed report, please include an electronic copy of the following:

- Your current Major Incident /Emergency Plan.
- a copy of your local EPRR risk register where available;
- An organisational chart setting out your organisation's emergency preparedness structure.
- An organisational chart setting out your organisation's emergency response structure. and...
- Any additional information you wish to share which demonstrates your organisation's preparedness for the risks described above.

Whilst organisations are not required to submit Board approved reports, please provide confirmation of the date the report will be considered by your Board within your submission.

Completed and signed report forms with any attachments to be returned by 31st July 2025 by email to:

Sophie.Barrett@wales.nhs.uk