 <p> <b>GIG</b>      CYMRU  <b>NHS</b>      WALES   </p> <p>     Iechyd Cyhoeddus      Cymru      Public Health      Wales   </p>	<p> <b>Name of Meeting</b>        Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee  <b>Date of Meeting</b>        04.06.2026  <b>Agenda item:</b>        4.2     </p>
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<b>Engagement – Update</b>	
<b>Executive lead:</b>	Claire Birchall, Executive Director, Nursing, Quality and Integrated Governance
<b>Author:</b>	Amy Burgess, Engagement & Collaboration Manager, Nursing, Quality and Integrated Governance

<b>Approval/Scrutiny route:</b>	Business Executive Team - 15 April 2026
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<b>Purpose</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee (QSIC) with an update on the short-term actions taken to strengthen Public Health Wales’ approach to engagement following the baseline assessment findings presented to the Executive Team in June 2025.</li> <li>To highlight the increasing alignment between engagement &amp; involvement with wider organisational priorities to reduce health inequalities whilst supporting delivery of duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</li> <li>Note that BET has agreed the evolving role of the Engagement and Collaboration Team within NQIG, with a transition toward an Equalities, Involvement and People’s Experience (EIPE) function, reflecting the need to strengthen organisational leadership, coordination and assurance in relation to equality and diversity statutory compliance</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation:</b>				
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"> <li>Take <b>assurance</b> on the progress made to date in strengthening Public Health Wales’ approach to engagement with people and communities since the baseline assessment findings were presented at Strategic BET in June 2025.</li> </ul>				



- **Note** the actions taken to improve capability and partnership working across the organisation within current organisational arrangements
- **Note** that the Engagement and Collaboration Team within NQIG will be transitioning toward an Equalities, Involvement and People’s Experience (EIPE) function, to support organisational compliance in relation to our equality’s duties.

**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:

<b>Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective</b>	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives
<b>Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective</b>	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives
<b>Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective</b>	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives

**Summary impact analysis**

<b>Equality and Health Impact Assessment</b>	A full Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for this paper as it provides an update on engagement activity rather than introducing a new policy or decision. However, strengthening engagement with people and communities is closely aligned with Public Health Wales’ duties under the Equality Act 2010 and supports the organisation’s work to better understand and address health inequalities.
<b>Risk and Assurance</b>	Current arrangements for engagement across PHW remain fragmented, which limits the organisation’s ability to consistently evidence how it meets its statutory duties and strategic commitments relating to engagement, involvement and reducing inequalities. The actions outlined in this paper represent steps taken to strengthen coordination and partnership working. They provide greater assurance that progress is being made within current organisational arrangements. Wider Executive-level discussions would need to be revisited to change organisational approach and infrastructure required to embed engagement more consistently across PHW.
<b>Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act</b>	The Act places a duty on NHS bodies in Wales to promote engagement with people and communities in relation to the planning and delivery of health services.



	<p>The actions outlined in this paper support progress towards strengthening Public Health Wales' organisational approach to engagement, following the baseline assessment, and improving the organisation's ability to demonstrate how it meets these duties.</p>
<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>The work outlined in this paper is being progressed within existing resources. The short-term actions focus on strengthening coordination, partnerships and support for engagement activity across PHW within current organisational arrangements. Any future decisions regarding the longer-term organisational approach or infrastructure required to support engagement would be subject to further consideration of potential resource implications.</p>
<b>People implications</b>	<p>The work outlined in this paper supports staff across PHW who undertake engagement activity by improving access to tools, guidance and support, and by strengthening opportunities for shared learning and collaboration. It also contributes to building engagement capability and confidence across the organisation. Any future organisational changes relating to engagement functions or responsibilities would be considered through appropriate organisational and workforce processes.</p> <p>The shift in the team's role to take on responsibilities relating to equalities will strengthen organisational leadership, governance and capability in relation to equalities, involvement and people's experience. This is while recognising that, as the team takes on additional responsibilities relating to equalities compliance and assurance, expectations will need to be managed around the pace and scale of engagement and involvement activity which will need to be prioritised and delivered proportionately.</p>



## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to:

- **Provide an update** on the short-term actions taken to strengthen Public Health Wales' approach to engagement following the baseline assessment findings presented to the Executive Team in June 2025, while wider discussions continue regarding the future organisational approach to engagement
- **Highlight the increasing alignment** between engagement, involvement and wider organisational priorities, including reducing health inequalities and supporting delivery of duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- **Note** that BET has agreed the evolving role of the Engagement and Collaboration Team within NQIG, with a transition toward an Equalities, Involvement and People's Experience (EIPE) function, reflecting the need to strengthen organisational leadership, coordination and assurance in relation to equality and diversity statutory compliance

## 2. Background

Engagement with people and communities is a key requirement for NHS organisations in Wales to meet duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty, Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is also central to Public Health Wales' own strategic commitments. The Long-Term Strategy commits to placing engagement "at the heart of everything we do", the Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP) recognises that insight from engagement is critical to delivering strategic priorities, and the Strategic Equality Plan emphasises the importance of engaging with people and communities as part of the organisation's approach to reducing inequalities.

While engagement activity takes place across several teams across PHW, historically there has been no single organisational framework or infrastructure to coordinate this activity. There is opportunity to develop a more unified organisational approach, but there is currently no appetite for the more radical reorganisation of engagement. operational practice.

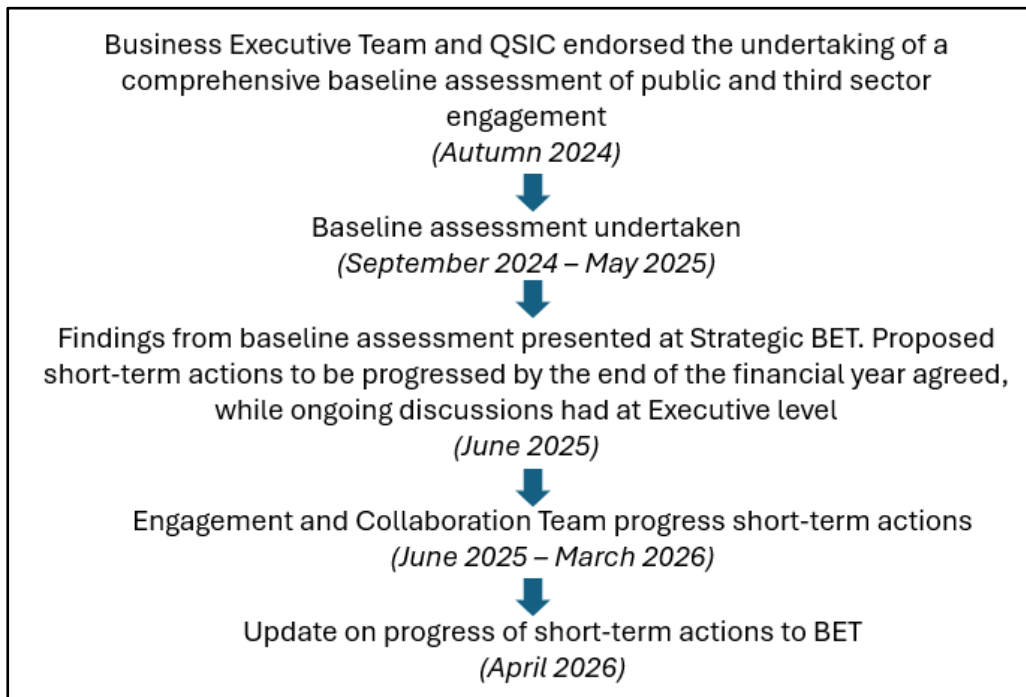
Recognising these challenges, the Business Executive Team and the Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee agreed in 2024 that a different approach was required. As a result, the work shown in Table 1, most notably a comprehensive baseline assessment, was undertaken by the Engagement and Collaboration Team in the Nursing Quality & Integrated Governance Directorate (NQIG).

Key findings of the baseline assessment of engagement included:



- There are examples of strong engagement practice across parts of the organisation however, overall maturity across the assessment areas was found to be largely **embryonic or developing**, indicating that engagement is not consistently embedded at an organisational level.
- There are structural challenges affecting delivery. Engagement functions have developed organically across directorates, resulting in fragmented governance arrangements, different approaches to engagement and limited coordination across the organisation.
- Staff expressed a clear desire for stronger organisational coordination, clearer role expectations and infrastructure to support a more consistent and effective approach to engagement across PHW.

The full findings can be found [here](#).



### Approach and Scope

When the findings of the baseline assessment were presented to the Executive Team in June 2025, there was agreement that the current organisational model for engagement no longer fulfilled the needs of the organisation and that further discussion at Executive level would be required to determine the most appropriate approach for the future.

Recognising that organisational change would take time to consider and implement, several short-term actions were identified to strengthen current engagement practice in the interim, while longer-term structural considerations would continue to be explored.



These actions focus on improving coordination, visibility and support for engagement activity across the organisation and included:

- 1) **Develop an organisational position on reward and recognition**, ensuring that engagement with people and communities is consistently valued and recognised across PHW and implemented consistently
- 2) **Establish a central hub for engagement tools, resources and guidance**, alongside a clearer support offer for teams undertaking engagement activity
- 3) **Develop a partnership agreement with Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)** to strengthen collaboration with the voluntary and community sector and support more coordinated engagement with communities across Wales
- 4) **Improve ways of working with PHW's Communications Team** to better align engagement and communications activity and reduce duplication of effort
- 5) **Review current approaches to engaging with children and young people**, and develop recommendations for a more coordinated organisational approach
- 6) **Explore the viability of establishing a Community of Practice** to support shared learning and collaboration across engagement roles
- 7) **Strengthen relationships with engagement colleagues across sectors** to support partnership working and knowledge sharing

While these actions represent important progress, they do not in themselves address the structural and infrastructure challenges identified through the baseline assessment, and wider organisational discussions are still required to determine the best approach and infrastructure needed to embed engagement more consistently across PHW.

### 3. Progress

- 1) **The NQIG Engagement and Collaboration Team have been working with colleagues in Finance and the Board Business Unit to develop a draft reward and recognition policy for PHW.** This is being informed by work already undertaken by NHS Performance and Improvement, as well as other existing policies such as from Health and Care Research Wales. While the team are leading on the coordination required to develop the overall policy, the content is dependent on input from teams with expertise in finance and the operational processes that will underpin the policy. Working This is being progressed with colleagues from Finance. Once the final draft is ready, approval will be sought via the appropriate governance processes – this will include testing and internal consultation.
- 2) **Dedicated engagement intranet pages have been developed and now available** to provide a central place for tools, resources and guidance. The pages have been tested with colleagues across the organisation. Content has been informed by the findings of the baseline assessment and links to relevant work and case studies from across PHW to promote visibility, shared learning and good practice.



- 3) **Partnership agreement now in place with WCVA to strengthen collaboration with the voluntary and community sector.** Two joint workshops held and a formal partnership agreement been developed and approved, subject to some minor amendments, through Business Executive Team and endorsed at Board. A launch event is planned for 21 May 2026 following the pre-election period, alongside joint activity at Gofod3 and further promotion through PHW events, including the Staff Conference and Public Health Conference
- 4) **The NQIG Engagement and Collaboration team has contributed to the development of the refreshed Communications Strategy,** which for the first time has been framed as a Communications and Engagement Strategy. This reflects the importance of closer alignment between communications and engagement activity and supports a more coordinated organisational approach. In addition, a member of the team is currently on secondment to Communications division through the Tackling Diabetes Together programme, supporting closer joint working between the two functions.
- 5) **PHW's approach to engaging with children and young people has been reviewed.** Dr Lisa Cordery joined the Engagement and Collaboration team on a six-month contract to support this work, and the review has now concluded. The work has included proactive engagement with young people, including opportunities for young people to meet directly with the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Nursing, Quality and Integrated Governance to share their perspectives. A planned Board Development Session in the summer will include participation from young people and will support plans to establish a young people's forum.
- 6) **Initial consideration has been given to establishing a Community of Practice** to support collaboration and shared learning across engagement roles. Feedback from engagement colleagues indicated that this would be most effective once a stronger organisational foundation for engagement is in place. The current focus is therefore on building engagement capability and confidence across the organisation, with the potential for a Community of Practice to be revisited as this work progresses.
- 7) **Relationships with colleagues working in engagement and involvement have been strengthened across sectors.** PHW is now participating in the All-Wales Health Board Engagement Leads network and the NHS Performance and Improvement (P&I) Engagement network, alongside maintaining regular contact with Co-production Wales and Llais to support wider collaboration

**To note:** As colleagues from across PHW increasingly come together to explore how engagement and involvement can be strengthened at an organisational level, these discussions have highlighted common challenges and opportunities in how the organisation also evidences and delivers against its duties under the Equality Act 2010, PHW's Our Approach to Health Inequalities and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. There is growing recognition of the strong alignment between these agendas, including the role of involvement as one of the five ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and the importance of meaningful



engagement and co-production in supporting efforts to reduce health inequalities. These priorities are also reflected in the PHW Long Term Strategy route maps, which identify involvement, co-production and reducing inequalities as key areas of focus.

In this context, BET have given their support for the Engagement and Collaboration Team to evolve into an Equalities, Involvement and People's Experience (EIPE) function within NQIG, reflecting both the need to prioritise an area of organisational risk and the intention to deliver change using existing resources. This approach recognises that, in the short to medium term, team capacity will need to be refocused on establishing an equality and diversity function, strengthening governance arrangements, and building the necessary infrastructure to support compliance and assurance. As a result, engagement and involvement activity will need to be prioritised and proportionate to available capacity, focusing on areas of greatest organisational risk, statutory requirement and strategic importance, while maintaining progress toward embedding involvement more consistently across Public Health Wales.

## 6. Recommendation

The Quality, Safety and Improvement Committee is asked to:

- Take **assurance** on the progress made to date in strengthening Public Health Wales' approach to engagement with people and communities since the baseline assessment findings were presented in June 2025.
- **Note** the actions taken to date to improve capability and partnership working across the organisation within the current organisational arrangements.
- **Note** that the Engagement and Collaboration Team within NQIG will be transitioning toward an Equalities, Involvement and People's Experience (EIPE) function, to support organisational compliance in relation to our equality's duties.