

 <p> GIG CYMRU NHS WALES </p> <p> Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales </p>	<p> Name of Meeting Knowledge, Research and Information Committee </p> <p> Date of Meeting 16 June 2026 </p> <p> Agenda item: 4.1 </p>
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<h2>Update on the Implementation of the Research and Evaluation Strategy</h2>				
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Author:		Elen de Lacy, Research, Development and Strategy Lead Alisha Davies, Head of Research and Evaluation		
Approval/Scrutiny route:		Iain Bell, Director of Research, Data and Digital		
Purpose				
The purpose of the paper is to provide an update to KRIC on the progress and implementation of the PHW Research and Evaluation Strategy, 2023-2026.				
Recommendation:				
APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSIDER <input 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"> note the contents of this paper and take assurance on progress on the implementation of the organisational Research and Evaluation Strategy. 				
Link to PHW Strategic Plan				
PHW has an agreed strategic plan, which has identified six strategic priorities and well-being objectives.				
This report contributes to the following:				
Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives			
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Strategic Priority/Well-being Objective	All Strategic Priorities/Well-being Objectives
Summary impact analysis	
Equality and Health Impact Assessment	No Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been undertaken as a decision is not required by the Committee.
Risk and Assurance	Not identified as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register or Board Assurance Framework.
Health and Care Standards	This report supports and/or takes into account the Health and Care Standards for NHS Wales Quality Themes
	All themes
	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.
Financial implications	None
People implications	The process applies to all staff undertaking research and evaluation.

1. Purpose / situation

The [Research and Evaluation \(R&E\) Strategy \(2023-2026\)](#), ensures that PHW is building and strengthening R&E excellence across the organisation and in collaboration with partners. To support the implementation and oversight of the strategy, the R&E Strategic Oversight Group (RESOG) meets monthly to coordinate work aligned to a co-produced implementation plan. RESOG is the cross-organisational senior leadership group responsible for developing and supporting R&E in line with Public Health Wales priorities and the organisational R&E Strategy.

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



Reports on Public Health Wales progress in the implementation of the strategy, including monitoring and assurance of delivery, are provided to the Knowledge, Research and Information Board Committee on a bi-annual basis.

This report provides an update on progress over the period December 2025 to June 2026.

2. Description/Assessment

An implementation plan for the R&E Strategy agreed by RESOG, focuses on the following key areas:

- a. **Developing and implementing R&E standards** to strengthen and support the development and production of R&E by the organisation.
- b. **Developing R&E capacity and capability** to support staff to develop and apply R&E specialist skills to increase workforce capacity and capability and contribute towards creating a learning organisation.



- c. **Developing and establishing effective strategic research partnerships** with higher educational institutes, health boards, local authorities and others to support the development and delivery of public health R&E.
- d. **Developing effective communications and engagement** for R&E across the organisation and externally.

Progress against these four areas of focus over the period December 2025 to June 2026 is summarised below.

2.1 Developing and implementing R&E standards

PHW is strengthening research governance through the implementation of a coordinated set of R&E standards to improve consistency, quality and organisational assurance.

2.1.1 2.1 Strengthening research governance across the organisation

Over the past 6 months there has been cross organisational focus on the following

- NHS R&D Finance Policy 2026: A gap analysis confirms that key financial governance processes are in place in PHW, including use of AcoRD, clear identification of income at study set-up, and joint working between research and finance teams. Further work is required to achieve full alignment, particularly in relation to costing consistency, financial reporting, invoicing oversight and tracking of research income and savings. An implementation plan is being developed with Finance to address these gaps areas through strengthened procedures and governance.
- NHS Intellectual Property policy : Work is underway to align research activity with the refreshed NHS Intellectual Property policy, with initial analysis highlighting the need for clearer governance routes and earlier consideration of IP within project set-up.
- Survey Quality and Governance : Following a review of PHW surveys we are exploring options to ensure more consistent application of standards, improve methodological quality and strengthen alignment with organisational priorities and public value principles.
- Research Misconduct : The PHW Policy has been updated to reflect current organisational and regulatory frameworks.

Collectively, this programme of work will provide a more robust, consistent and transparent framework for research governance, supporting high-quality R&E and strengthening organisational assurance.

2.2 Developing Research Capacity and Capability

PHW is continuing to build an organisational culture that values research and evaluation and supports staff to develop and apply specialist skills to strengthen capacity, capability and evidence-informed practice.

Over the past six months we have made considerable progress in this area. Highlights are provided below:

2.2.1 Research Mentorship Programme and Health and Care Research Wales Faculty Awards

PHW is taking forward the third year of its Research Mentorship Programme in partnership with the Health and Care Research Wales Faculty, building on the approach established to support staff development through the Faculty personal award schemes. An expression of interest is being issued to PHW staff to identify ambitious researchers from across the organisation who have viable research ideas and the support needed to develop competitive applications. The programme will support a mentored cohort to prepare for the Health and Care Research Wales Faculty personal award schemes, which open in September 2026, and is intended to strengthen research capacity and capability across PHW by supporting progression at different career stages.

2.2.2 Increasing research capacity in Strategically aligned areas: Climate Change, Gambling and Health inequalities Policy Modelling

PHW is progressing recruitment through the UKRI Policy Fellowships scheme to host three policy fellows in the priority areas of climate change, gambling and policy modelling. These fellowships will strengthen research capacity in areas of strategic importance to the organisation, while also supporting closer links between policy development, academic expertise and applied public health research. Subject to the UKRI recruitment process, the fellows are expected to be hosted by PHW from May 2027.

2.2.5 Research funding awards

Over the last 6 months, PHW has developed its capacity and capability through securing successful research bids for external competitive funding.

Progress against KPIs: FYs 2023 - 2026

Financial Year	Total Successful Awards (n)	PHW CI/PI (n)	Different Funders (n)	Income to PHW (£)	Total value to Wales (£)
2023/24	29	3	10	485,000	1,964,368



2024/25	21	4	17	849,989	8,406,370
2025/26	12	9	10	2,541,068	17,341,742

Successful research funding awards during the period include:

1. Open Access Mental Health Support in Wales (successful in February 2026; NIHR funded, total award £5.6m, including £14,775 to PHW),
2. HEARD – Hearing Every Voice, The Learned Society of Wales funded, (£3,000 to PHW),
3. VPAG Branded Medicines, HCRW funded, (£100,171.92 to PHW),
4. Obesity Pathway Innovation Programme (OPIP) Strand 2 Pan-Wales bid, INNOVATE UK funded, (total award £7.99m, including £1.66m to PHW).

Together, these awards reflect continued growth in PHW’s ability to secure and contribute to strategically important research funding.

2.3 Developing Evaluation Capacity and Capability

2.3.1 Evaluation Delivery

PHW’s evaluation programme is focused on understanding what works, for whom and under what circumstances, with a strong emphasis on inequalities and equitable access to public health interventions. Current evaluation activity spans a range of priority programmes, including diabetes prevention, healthy schools, climate change, screening, smoking cessation and health equity, using process and outcome evaluation to support learning, improvement and impact.

2.3.2 Evaluation Community of Practice

The Evaluation Community of Practice continues to be a key mechanism for building capability across PHW, with 527 members and a programme of shared learning focused on strengthening evaluation methods and practice. Over the past six months, activity has included webinars, practical guidance and resources to support more consistent and high-quality evaluation across the organisation.

2.3.3 Evaluation Champions

The pilot Evaluation Champions programme was launched in January 2026 to strengthen confidence, consistency and visibility of evaluation across teams. Early feedback has highlighted strong commitment to evaluation, alongside common challenges relating to capacity, data access and governance, and has reinforced the need to embed evaluation earlier in service and programme design.

2.3.4 Evaluation Clinics

Evaluation Drop-in Clinics continue to provide practical one-to-one support to PHW staff on evaluation design, planning and the application of PHW Evaluation Standards. Since launch, the clinics have supported 58 evaluation discussions across a wide range of programmes, helping to strengthen evaluation quality and build confidence across the organisation.

2.4 Developing and Establishing Effective Strategic Partnerships for R&E

We are developing our approach to strengthen the development of effective strategic partnerships for public health research. Over the past 6 months there has been progress across two key areas of focus:

2.4.1 Vision for Academic Public Health Research in Wales – 2026

Public Health Wales has led the co-development of a shared Vision for Academic Public Health Research in Wales, informed by the 2025 review of the research landscape and engagement with partners across higher education, the NHS, local government and the third sector. The vision sets out shared aims and principles to strengthen coordination, capability, collaboration and impact, and will provide a national framework for a more connected and future-focused academic public health research system in Wales.

Next steps: Public Health Wales will work with the Chief Medical Officer, Welsh Government and wider partners to establish a Wales and UK steering group to provide shared leadership and oversee implementation of the actions set out in the vision.

2.4.2 Developing effective partnerships with Academia

Cardiff University: A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Cardiff University in April 2026 to provide a stronger strategic framework for joint working in public health research. The partnership is being taken forward through governance and management arrangements, with thematic work focused on genomics, behavioural science, pandemic preparedness, and climate change and health, alongside cross-cutting themes of skills and workforce development, policy and knowledge mobilisation, and digital and AI infrastructure. Early implementation is underway, with management arrangements established and a formal launch planned for July 2026.

Bangor University: Early discussions are underway to develop a multidisciplinary Memorandum of Understanding with Bangor University. This is expected to focus on a Wales-wide wastewater surveillance programme, including genomics, policy

translation, behavioural insights and One Health perspectives, alongside opportunities to develop collaborative PhD activity and wider areas of shared interest such as health economics.

2.5 Communications and engagement for R&E.

A core aim of the R&E Strategy is to strengthen how research priorities, opportunities and impacts are communicated, to support greater engagement across the organisation and with external partners.

2.5.1. External communication

As part of the development of the new PHW website, work is underway to improve the coordination and visibility of research activity across the organisation.

Public Involvement and Engagement

Public involvement and engagement is also being strengthened through the HEARD initiative, a collaborative project between PHW, Cardiff University and Greener Voices focused on climate change and health. HEARD is designed to improve inclusion and diversity in research by identifying barriers to involvement, supporting meaningful engagement with people with lived experience, and co-producing outputs that can inform wider research culture and practice across Wales.

2.6 R&E strategy extension to 2028/29

As the current R&E Strategy concludes in 2026, PHW will develop a focused Delivery Plan to extend this work to 2028/29.

The plan will build on progress to date, with a focus on system leadership for academic public health research in Wales, strengthening career development, targeting strategic funding opportunities, and expanding priority research programmes in areas of organisational strength.

Key actions will include:

- consolidating delivery across the four strategic areas of the current R&E Strategy,
- targeting R&D Office support to a smaller number of priority themes,
- strengthening the systematic capture of impact on policy, services, practice and population health outcomes.

Subject to agreement through RESOG, these priority themes are likely to include genomics, climate and health, behavioural science, and selected areas of commercial and data-enabled research.

The Delivery Plan will be developed during 2026/27 and overseen through existing governance arrangements.

3. Monitoring and Assurance

Monitoring and assurance of delivery of the R&E Strategy is supported through established organisational reporting and oversight arrangements.

- Quarterly reporting to the PHW Executive Team through the Research, Data and Digital Directorate report.
- Biannual reporting to KRIC on progress against implementation of the R&E Strategy.
- Annual reporting to Health and Care Research Wales.
- Ongoing development of approaches to capture longer-term impact, including follow-up at project close and at defined intervals after completion.

The R&D Office also produces an annual research highlights report (2025-26 in development) to showcase research activity and impact across the organisation and with partners. Through RESOG, a co-produced implementation plan continues to support monitoring of progress across the strategy, including collaborative bids, strategic partnerships, research priorities, and communications and engagement activity.

4. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

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