



Ymchwil Iechyd
a Gofal **Cymru**
Health and Care
Research **Wales**



Health and Care Research Wales

Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020

Vision

Our vision is for Wales to be internationally recognised for its excellent health and social care research that has a positive impact on the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the people in Wales.

Strategic Aims

To achieve our vision we will:

1. Ensure public involvement and engagement is central to what we do and visible in all elements of it.
2. Ensure our work is aligned to Welsh Government policy and has real impact.
3. Fully integrate our infrastructure and programmes across health and social care.
4. Invest in areas in which Wales excels and is unique.
5. Increase capacity in health and social care research in Wales.
6. Develop systems that ensure excellent delivery and maximise the use of resources.

By achieving our vision, Wales will have a thriving research community that works closely with the public and other stakeholders to co-produce research that leads to new knowledge that is translated into policy and practice. All our work will map on to the inter-related themes of public benefit, increased research awareness, research and economic impact.

Introduction

The central role research and development (R&D) plays in improving health and wellbeing, effectiveness of services and wealth generation, and hence the policy agenda of the Welsh Government, has been emphasised in a number of key documents¹⁻¹². Multiple, often overlapping, reasons are given for this.

Improving health and wellbeing - Numerous ground-breaking discoveries through research have resulted in novel and innovative ways of preventing and treating illness that have greatly improved health and wellbeing. Basing more health and social care decisions on evidence about what works allows resources to be focused where they will be most effective, through both appropriate investment and disinvestment. Providing the means to tackle the major challenges of health and wellbeing, ill health and inequalities through effective R&D is key to improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Improving effectiveness of services - The appropriate implementation of R&D findings allows services to embrace new ways of working and opportunities to improve care, quality, productivity and outcomes. The ability to transform services through high quality research facilitates the achievement of excellence in health and social care. A dynamic and innovative R&D culture has been shown to support effectiveness and improvement work and to create a better environment for social care and health professionals to work and develop in. This has the potential to increase the calibre and retention of staff working in and attracted to work in the NHS, social care, universities and other related sectors in Wales.

Wealth generation - Innovative R&D is associated with significant income generation. In addition to the development and exploitation of intellectual property, having a strong health science and social care research base fully integrated with the NHS and social services provides a platform to attract major investment from the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and other industries.

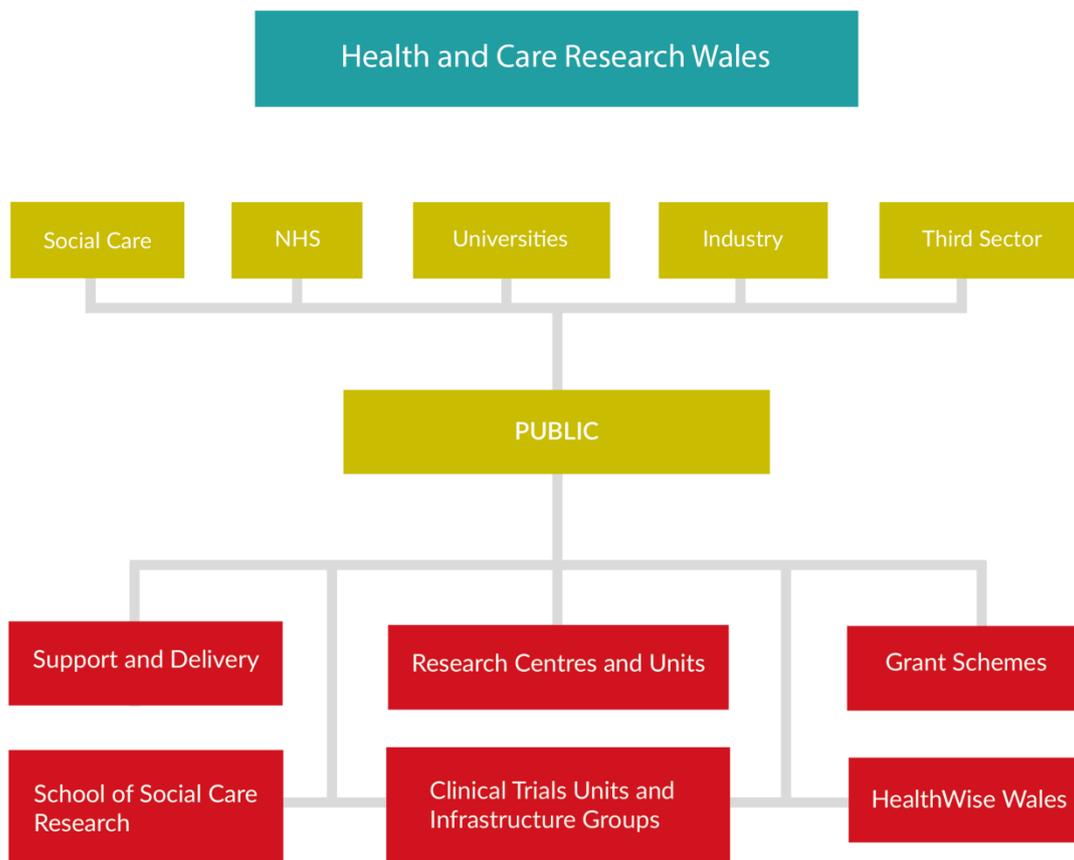
The Welsh Government's Research and Development Division sits within the Health and Social Services Group and leads on strategy, policy, commissioning, funding, contract management and governance of health and social care R&D in Wales. The Research and Development Division has key relationships within Welsh Government with the Department for Economy, Science and Transport's Life Sciences and Innovation teams, the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales and the Department for Education and Skills. The Research and Development Division also works very closely with colleagues with similar roles in the other UK nations, the UK research councils, other research funders and the European Commission.

Health and Care Research Wales is a national, multi-faceted virtual organisation comprising several distinct elements of infrastructure and funding schemes. It is funded and overseen by the Research and Development Division. Health and Care Research Wales provides an infrastructure to support and increase capacity in R&D, runs a range of responsive funding schemes and manages resources to promote, support and deliver research. It supports translational research with a particular focus on applied and public health research as described in the Cooksey Report⁸. This includes research into the prevention, detection and diagnosis of disease; the development and evaluation of interventions; the provision of health and social care services; and the implementation of research findings into practice.

Between October and November 2013, stakeholders, including public representatives, the NHS, social care organisations, universities, industry, the third sector and other government departments were engaged to review the health and social care research infrastructure and programmes funded by the Welsh Government and help determine what changes should be made. This facilitated the development of a proposal document which was externally peer reviewed and subsequently approved by the Minister for Health and Social Services¹³.

Health and Care Research Wales' innovative infrastructure (see Figure below) and portfolio of funded programmes consolidates, updates and builds on what has been created and delivered to date, placing Wales at the international forefront of health and social care research. The new infrastructure allows a sharper focus on Wales' areas of excellence and emerging areas of excellence. It will ensure that an

integrated, interdisciplinary, interagency, all Wales approach is taken across the translational spectrum. The citizens of Wales will be central to an infrastructure and programmes that lead to major gains in health and wellbeing, effectiveness of services and wealth generation.



Strategic Aims

Our strategic aims will allow us to achieve our vision for Wales to be internationally recognised for its excellent health and social care research that has a positive impact on the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the people in Wales.

1. Public involvement and engagement is central to what we do and visible in all elements of it.

Objectives:

- a. To ensure the public are central to health and social care research in Wales.
- b. To put the citizen at the heart of creating new knowledge and putting new knowledge into practice.

To achieve these objectives we will:

Support the establishment of a more equal relationship between the public and researchers; a relationship underpinned by meaningful public involvement. We will ensure that public involvement is integrated and fully embedded into all aspects of the Health and Care Research Wales infrastructure. We will facilitate this by providing researchers and the public access to the support necessary to enable them to involve and to be involved. We shall also launch a new initiative, *HealthWise Wales*, which is owned and driven by the public through the Health and Care Research Wales Public Delivery Board. *HealthWise Wales* will raise awareness and understanding of the importance of health and social care research, helping increase public involvement and participation. All people in Wales will be invited to participate in research, to contribute their information and become part of a national cohort to better inform new treatments, new services, new products and new processes. This will be driven in a way that creates a new partnership between the population, users and researchers, ensuring effective consent, co-production and a new level of transparency. *HealthWise Wales* will create a strong platform for research, service evaluation and policy development.

2. Our work in health and social care research is aligned to Welsh Government policy and has real impact.

Objectives:

- a. To ensure research evidence is used to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Wales by reducing inappropriate variation and improving consistency and transparency.
- b. To fund research that allows more health and social care decisions to be based on evidence about what works and making the most effective use of skills and resources.
- c. To make sure that research evidence achieves better functioning of NHS and social care organisations in Wales, better service delivery, better care and better health and wellbeing outcomes by doing only what is needed, no more, no less and no harm.
- d. To deliver jobs and growth, and tackle poverty.
- e. To ensure research informs innovation in health and social care in Wales as part of a pathway to disseminate health and social care innovation in Wales at pace and scale.
- f. To achieve health and wellbeing with the public and professionals as equal partners through co-production.

To achieve these objectives we will:

Work closely with Welsh Government policy officials to ensure that funding for Health and Care Research Wales contributes to the achievement of the objectives listed in *Programme for Government*¹⁴, *Together for Health*¹ and *Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action*² and the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act*¹⁵ goal of 'a healthier Wales' We will run themed research calls around policy priority areas for Wales and work with the public, policy officials and other stakeholders to facilitate effective knowledge transfer and mobilisation.

3. Our infrastructure and programmes are fully integrated.

Objectives:

- a. To develop research across the translational spectrum with a particular focus on applied and public health research.
- b. To increase research collaboration between the public, NHS, social care, universities, third sector and industry.
- c. To create a structure that is lean and without duplication.
- d. To improve cost effectiveness that allows new investments to be made that will facilitate the realisation of our vision.

To achieve these objectives we will:

Promote and incentivise joined-up working across sectors, promote smarter use of routine data and encourage an open innovation culture. Multi-professional and multi-disciplinary National Research Centres and Units will be central pillars of the infrastructure with responsibility for developing research across the translational spectrum. Where relevant, this will include building partnerships with industry and other research partners to drive a sustainable model of open innovation resulting in joint achievement and shared revenue. The support and delivery service will work closely with Centres, Units, other elements of the infrastructure and researchers, and ensure joined-up working between NHS organisations, the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre and National Workforce to eliminate waste and improve efficiency.

4. We invest in areas in which Wales excels and is unique.

Objectives:

- a. To create an infrastructure that supports the development and delivery of world-class health and social care research.
- b. To generate increasing external funding capture for health and social care research in Wales.
- c. To facilitate the use of routinely collected health and social care data to undertake high-quality research and inform service improvement.

- d. To support activities that allow Centres and Units to bank high quality tissue samples and gain high quality genetics/genomics data to enable a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying disease and adopt a stratified approach to the development of new treatments.

To achieve these objectives we will:

Develop our Centres and Units into internationally recognised entities. We will continue to co-fund UK-wide initiatives with other research funders and develop new strategic partnerships in the UK, Europe and beyond to fully exploit Wales' potential to win major international research funding. We will continue to fund the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank and work with policy colleagues, NHS organisations and General Practices in Wales to maximise recruitment to SAIL and the use of its datasets to support high quality research and service development. We will continue to fund the Wales Gene Park and investigate new strategic initiatives to support the genetic and genomic characterisation of research samples. We will continue to fund high quality Clinical Trials Units across Wales and a national Health Economics Support Service to facilitate high quality research development and delivery.

5. We increase research capacity in health and social care in Wales.

Objectives:

- a. To increase the number of health and social care research studentships and fellowships in Wales.
- b. To increase the number of Chief Investigators and Principal Investigators on Clinical Research Portfolio studies.
- c. To increase the quantity of high-quality commercial and non-commercial research in Wales.

To achieve these objectives we will:

Launch a School of Social Care Research that will have responsibility for capacity building in social care research, and continue to fund the Research Capacity Building Collaboration to increase research capacity in non-medical health professions in

Wales. We will increase the frequency and value of our capacity building funding schemes (including our Research Grant Funding Scheme, Fellowship Funding Scheme and PhD Studentship Funding Scheme) by developing strategic partnerships with other research funders and using Welsh Government funding to leverage additional funding from elsewhere. The frequency of calls will ensure regular opportunities for researchers at different stages of their careers to apply for funding, attract new researchers to Wales, and retain and develop researchers and prospective researchers already based in Wales. Opportunities to grow the number of Chief Investigators and Principal Investigators for commercial and non-commercial research will continue to be embedded in activities such as the NHS allocations and the Clinical Research Time competition.

6. We work in ways that ensure excellent delivery and maximise the use of resources.

Objectives:

- a. To reduce the time taken to approve and commence health and social care research studies.
- b. To facilitate recruitment and retention of participants in high-quality research studies.
- c. To deliver health and social care research studies to time and target.

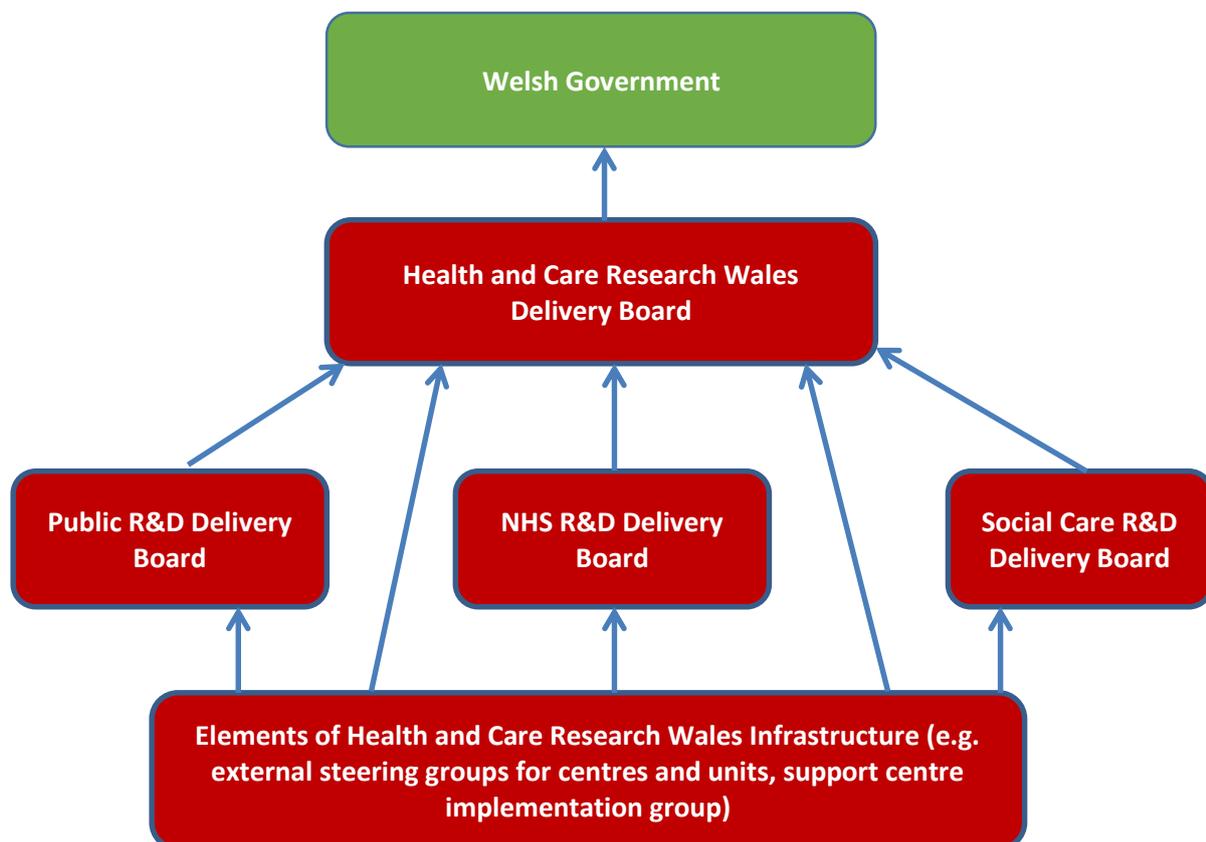
To achieve these objectives we will:

Make excellence, delivery, quality improvement and quality assurance watchwords and have strong, effective leadership and governance systems in place. We will develop an integrated and coordinated R&D support and delivery infrastructure to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness of research support and delivery services, and to increase the international competitiveness of the research environment in Wales. We will ensure resources and services to health and social care researchers are accessible and will continue to support and develop the Permissions Coordinating Unit and Research Ethics Service to review opportunities to make research approvals processes easier and fully aligned to other countries of the United Kingdom. Greater emphasis will be placed on ensuring funding is focused

on supporting research delivery, and making NHS organisations' performance transparent and accountable.

Governance

The Health and Care Research Wales Strategic Plan 2015-2020 will be underpinned by a robust performance management framework and indicators that cover public benefit, research awareness, research and economic impact. Performance will be monitored and managed through Public, NHS and Social Care R&D Delivery Boards that feed in to the Health and Care Research Wales Delivery Board. The Director of Health and Care Research Wales will report through the Chief Medical Officer and Director General of the Welsh Government's Department for Health and Social Services to the Minister for Health and Social Services.



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