



WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR

Status: Information

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Title: Population Health Management

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Action by:

Chief Executives, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Planning, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Finance, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Public Health, Health Boards/Trusts
Medical Directors, Health Boards/Trusts
Directors of Primary Care, Health Boards/Trusts
Nurse Executive Directors, Health Boards/Trusts

Required by: N/A

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Enclosures:

Appendix 1: Benefits of PHM

Dear Colleagues,

Population Health Management

I am writing to you today to set out the purpose of population health management (PHM), its potential benefits and an agreed definition to support planning and delivery in Wales.

Purpose and benefits of PHM

In Wales prevention and early intervention are key in our strive towards health equity and reducing health inequalities as is our 'health in all policies' approach. This is embedded throughout our legislative frameworks such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2017, the Socio-economic duty, and the Health Impact Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2025.

Similarly, our strategic framework '*A Healthier Wales*', our long-term vision for health and social care has prevention and addressing health inequalities at its heart, as does the planned work under Community by Design.

Despite the intent set out in our legislative and strategic framework we have not seen a shift in the outcomes for our population; recent reports and data show widening inequalities in health and wellbeing outcomes and healthy life expectancy.¹

In this context, PHM is a critical enabler, helping the health and care system use the best available data (including linked data where possible) to support the move towards upstream prevention, early detection and proactive management, focussing on interventions and outcomes which matter to people.^{2,3} A "data-informed" approach to planning recognises the additional importance of qualitative data alongside quantitative data. Meaningful stakeholder engagement, for example through co-production, capturing lived experience, and understanding local factors influencing health and wellbeing are also key components to support delivery.

Agreed Definition - Population Health Management

The agreed definition following the work of a PHM Task and Finish Group is set out below:

"PHM is an approach that improves population health by data-informed planning and delivery of proactive care to achieve maximum impact for the health and wellbeing of the population."

¹ Office for National Statistics. 2024. Healthy life expectancy in England and Wales: between 2011 to 2013 and 2021 to 2023. Available from:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/healthstatalifeexpectanciesuk/between2011to2013and2021to2023> [accessed 17/10/25]

² Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System. (2022). *Population Health Management Roadmap 2022-2027*. Available from: <https://www.happyhealthylives.uk/download/clientfiles/files/PAK%20%20PAPERS%20FOR%20ICB%20BOARD%2020TH%20JULY%202022.pdf> Accessed 17.10.25

³ McShane, M. and Kirkham, K. 2020. "Making it personal – population health management and the NHS", *Journal of Integrated Care*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 243-252. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JICA-01-2020-0002>

Linked datasets are used to segment, stratify, and model the local “at risk” and “rising risk” population groups that in turn are used to design, target and personalise interventions to deliver proactive care and proportionate universalism to reduce health inequalities”.

Intelligence techniques such as population segmentation and risk stratification tools may be applied independently or in combination with PHM to provide a more holistic understanding of population need to plan and develop interventions.

- **Segmentation** divides a population into similar groups based on specific criteria. Detailed analysis enables identification of specific characteristics within a segment that may contribute to high service utilisation or poor outcomes. Segments with these characteristics (or at risk of their development) can then be identified prior to their arrival at front-line services.
- **Risk stratification** groups individuals according to their risk of experiencing an adverse event, such as a health or well-being outcome or healthcare utilisation.

PHM can support the identification of interventions that will work for specific population groups. To deploy these resources for effective delivery and tracking will be required to identify what to stop, refine and accelerate to achieve the required outcomes.

Adoption

A PHM approach is an integral part of the Community by Design programme aimed at accelerating the delivery of integrated services in the community and securing of improvements in health outcomes in Wales.

It is envisaged that Clinicians (such as GPs, nurses, allied health professionals), planners, commissioners, analysts, public health practitioners, local authorities, health boards, wider NHS organisations (such as Public Health Wales), and wider public sector bodies will apply PHM approaches in their work.

The sharing of the agreed definition and purpose is to support NHS planning and current and future developments across the system. The Community by Design programme, led by the Chief Medical Officer is considering the national approach and expectations for prevention including the use of PHM as an integral part of community health services. This includes identifying key actions to address barriers including to the lawful and necessary sharing of data across systems.

It will also be important to share learning including the tracking of interventions to identify what works to build confidence in the use of PHM across the whole system,

and across the wider determinants of health, and support skills and expertise development.

I am looking forward to seeing further advancements in the use of PHM as this work continues to develop and grow.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Dr Keith Reid, consisting of stylized initials 'KR' followed by a surname.

Dr Keith Reid
Deputy Chief Medical Officer (Public Health)

Handwritten signature of Sioned Rees, written in a cursive style.

Sioned Rees
Director, Public Health

