

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 6: April 2025

Professor Tom Connor Visits The Gambia

In February 2025, Public Health Wales, Head of Public Health Genomics, Professor Tom Connor, working with collaborators including Professor Nick Loman (University of Birmingham) and Professor Andrew Rambaut (University of Edinburgh), as part of CLIMB BIG DATA, visited the Medical Research Unit (MRC) unit in The Gambia to provide training and support efforts to develop cloud computing capacity in Africa.



Prof. Connor with members of the Gambian National Public Health Laboratory

Pathogen genomics, which sees the examination of the genome (effectively the blueprint) of pathogens, enables a range of healthcare services. The visit was intended to support efforts to deal with gaps in specialist staff and infrastructure by providing training and running a Cloud Computing in Africa workshop. The event involved approximately fifty participants from more than ten different African countries.

The visit kicked off with two days of genomics training for thirty young African researchers and public health staff, delivered by the ARTIC network and CLIMB

BIG DATA teams. This was followed by a two-day meeting to consider current cloud computing infrastructure in Africa for pathogen genomics, featuring representation from across the continent. The visit was rounded off with a trip to the National Public Health Laboratory, where Professor Connor introduced the genomics work that is ongoing in PHW, and then participated in a roundtable discussion focused on opportunities and issues for the implementation of genomics in public health in The Gambia. Further meetings and activities are now being planned, to build on the momentum developed.

'CARE FOR ALL' Project for Refugees with Epilepsy

Dora Niteka is an MSc Student at Bangor University studying Public Health and Health Promotion, is a practicing medical doctor 2008–2024.

Dora is also the Co-founder and Chairperson of Bridge of Solidarity, providing support and care for refugees suffering with, epilepsy, surgery, mental health, albinism and livelihoods. The organisation also supports victims of torture and sexual violence.

an average of 120 individuals with epilepsy during each visit. Reaching out to people with epilepsy has led to significant progress in seizure control, with more than half experiencing improved cognition. It has also provided relief to parents and caregivers, who no longer witness frequent seizures.

Moreover, epilepsy education and awareness efforts are helping to reduce stigma, improve medication adherence, and encourage those who have never sought medical support to seek proper care.



Since 2022, Bridge of Solidarity's CARE FOR ALL project has been addressing healthcare challenges in Nakivale refugee settlement located in Southwest Uganda.

This settlement hosts more than 222,000 refugees meaning a possible 5,000 could suffer from epilepsy. Due to language barriers, a lack of awareness about epilepsy (7 in 10 individuals are unaware that they have the condition), limited epilepsy education, and frequent medicine shortages in the settlement, refugees with epilepsy face a poor quality of life.

The CARE FOR ALL project brings together volunteers, including doctors, nurses, counsellors, translators, and other partners, to conduct quarterly outreach programs in the camp. These sessions provide consultations, medications, EEG tests, and epilepsy education, supporting

There have been numerous challenges, including securing funding for medicines and outreach programs, as well as addressing the complex socio-economic and environmental difficulties that impact refugees' quality of life and seizure outcomes.

Despite these ongoing challenges, the CARE FOR ALL project remains committed to improving healthcare access for refugees with epilepsy. Addressing funding gaps and socio-economic barriers will be essential to sustaining and expanding its impact. By continuing to provide medical support, education, and outreach, the project aims to ensure that more refugees receive the care they need to manage epilepsy effectively.

If you'd like to hear more about this work, Dora will be presenting at Public Health Wales' next International Health Forum on the 14th May 2025.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (WFG) Act at Public Health Wales – One Decade On

2025 marks the tenth anniversary of Wales' Wellbeing of Future Generations (WFG) Act, which embeds sustainability in public sector decision-making. The Health and Sustainability Hub reflects on progress made in embedding the Act within Public Health Wales (PHW). PHW is focused on improving healthy life expectancy and reducing inequalities, with the WFG Act enabling sustainable change.



Our recent report, [*Investing in a Healthier Wales: Prioritising Prevention*](#), highlights the importance of prevention to improve health outcomes, reduce inequalities, and ease the financial burden on the health system. PHW has made strides in fostering long-term thinking, along with training programmes for staff. Our partnership with the Future Generations Team has strengthened, aligning with the five missions of Cymru Can. The WFG Champions Group has been established to support our partnership and to drive integration and collaboration.

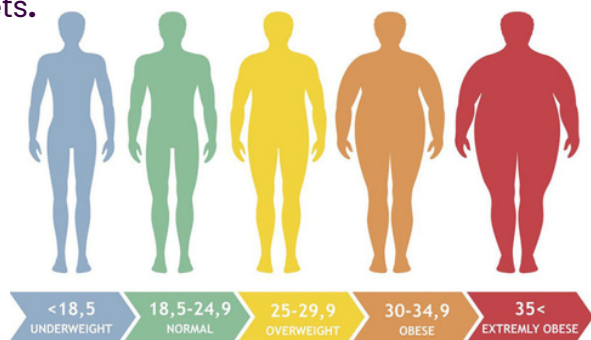
PHW hosted a week of activities from 31 March to 4 April 2025, focusing on the Five Ways of Working: collaboration, long-term, involvement, prevention, and integration. Key highlights included a session with the Future Generations Commissioner, sharing of resources, stories and case studies reflecting on the progress made and insights on improving staff involvement. The week concluded with a blog from Chair Pippa Britton, highlighting the importance of integrating the Act into our work.

PHW will continue to embrace the WFG Act, focusing on long-term prevention, public involvement, and collaboration to address current and future challenges. The Health and Sustainability Hub will support staff in embedding sustainability and the 5 Ways of Working into everyday actions, aligned with the legislation to drive meaningful change.

New Publications

Fiscal Levers to Address Obesity

The latest International Horizon Scanning and Learning Report from the Policy and International Health WHOCC Directorate at Public Health Wales looks at Fiscal Levers to Address Obesity. The report examines financial policies such as price increases and subsidies on specific food and beverage groups, and the extent to which these policies promote healthier diets.



The Social Value of Investing in Public Health across the Life Course: a systematic scoping review WHO Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being (WHOCC)

This review maps an overview of the application of Social Return on Investment (SROI) and Social Cost-Benefit Analysis (SCBA) in existing literature to identify the social value of public health interventions at individual stages of the life course.



Global Priorities in HIA (Health Impact Assessment) Research: a new agenda for the next decade

HIA advances Health in All Policies by identifying impacts of proposed actions on health and equity and recommending changes to address these impacts. Since the Gothenburg Consensus Statement in 1999, HIA has been applied to policies, plans, programmes and projects in multiple sectors and settings across the world. This paper presents a research agenda for the field of HIA.

Click [here](#) to access the report.

Analysing the Value, Benefits and Barriers to Stakeholder and Community Participation in HIAs in Wales from 2005 to 2020

Stakeholder and community participation is central to the impact assessment process. This research explores the experiences of stakeholders and community members who participated in HIA workshops in Wales between 2005 and 2020. These findings have the potential to be transferable to other types of impact assessments, and other forms of community and stakeholder participation.

Click [here](#) to access the report.

Toward an Economy of Wellbeing: the Economic Impact of the Welsh Healthcare Sector

This paper explores the economic importance of the healthcare sector to the Welsh economy. A large number of data sources for the UK and Welsh economy were used to derive an economic model for 2017.

This economic modelling aims to quantify the contribution of the healthcare sector (the National Health Service, NHS) to the wider economy in Wales, looking at the economic output, population income, value added imports, and employment. Results suggest that the healthcare sector has an above average contribution in four explored economic aspects of the Welsh economy (output, income, employment, value-added), according to its impact on the surrounding economic ecosystem. A summary of the report has been developed which is particularly useful for those working in relation to the Foundational Economy, Social Value and Wellbeing Impacts and Value-Based Health.

Click **here** to access the full and summary report.



The Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA) is delighted to have been awarded the bronze award for the youth quality mark.

Being assessed for the youth mark involves a rigorous assessment process including an evidence report and a week of interviews and observations. The assessors described WCIA's work with IHCC as "inspirational and innovative", with one of the assessors requesting meetings after the process so we can develop our partnerships with their company. Partners described the work taking place as a "hugely valuable contribution" to global citizenship in Wales and welcomed the opportunity for more shared work.

Amber Demetrius, Head of Global Learning WCIA, described the experience as *"something that has really helped me see the impact of the work that we do. It can be easy when you're inside an organisation to feel that you're not making a difference. This process allowed me to see the effect of the work we do. And to see what we want to do next!"*

EuroHealthNet

Tackling Ultra-Processed Food for a Healthier and Just Food System

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) have become central to the European public health debate due to their increased (over)consumption and the health problems linked to it. The consumption of UPFs varies significantly across the European region.

Click [here](#) for more information.

The EuroHealthNet 2025 Policy and Strategy Meeting took place online on 13 February 2025.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Partnership's policy priorities for the year ahead in light of the renewed agendas of the European Commission and WHO Europe.

Click [here](#) to read the report.

EuroHealthNet is developing a comprehensive report on social inequalities in health, examining trends, challenges, and policy responses across Europe.

This report will show insights into how inequalities in health have evolved and showcase effective strategies for reducing them.

Click [here](#) to read the report.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Mental Health Related Interventions: a scoping review WHOCC



Ischyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Canolfan Gydwethredol Sefydliad
Iechyd y Byd ar Ffioedd
a'r gyfwr Iechyd a Llesiant



World Health Organization
Collaborating Centre on Investment
for Health and Well-being

Investing in mental health:

A scoping review of the social value of mental health related interventions

Purpose:
The Policy and International Health Directorate, a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being (WHO CC) at Public Health Wales has conducted a series of systematic scoping reviews of peer-reviewed and grey literature to collate evidence on the **social value of mental health and well-being interventions**.

Target audience:
public health professionals, public policy makers and commissioners, public finance officers and academia.

What is social value?

Social value is the "quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives" [1]. Social Value can be embedded in:

Procurement and commissioning

Investment and resource/budget prioritisation

Assessment and evaluation

Why is social value important?

- There is growing recognition of the need to expand the traditional 'value for money' approach and find ways to identify and measure organisational wider social, economic and environmental outcomes, impacts and value.
- International challenges such as COVID-19 have exposed the consequences of under-resourcing of public health and highlighted the clear interdependence between population health, societal well-being, and the economy.
- The case for targeted investment in people's well-being, health equity and prevention is stronger than ever.
- There is an opportunity to embed social, economic and environmental outcomes into decision-making and budget prioritisation.

How do we measure social value?

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an outcomes-based measurement framework of principles that can support organisations to understand, capture and quantify the social, environmental and economic value they are creating.

Aim:
This evidence brief outlines a **scoping review of peer-reviewed and grey literature to identify SROI studies of mental health interventions in high- and middle-income countries** [2]. The Krlev et al [3] quality assessment criteria was used to assess the quality of all included studies.

[1] Welsh Government (2019) [Valuing our health](#).
[2] Kraljic et al (2022) [Social Return on Investment \(SROI\) of mental health related interventions - A scoping review](#).
[3] Krlev et al (2013) [Social Return on Investment \(SROI\): State of the Art and Perspectives. A Meta-Analysis of practice in Social Return on Investment \(SROI\) studies published 2004-2012](#).

Social Return on Investment of Physical Activity and Nutrition Interventions: a scoping review



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a'r gyfwr Iechyd a Llesiant



World Health Organization
Collaborating Centre on Investment
for Health and Well-being

Investing in physical activity and nutrition:

A scoping review of the social value of physical activity and nutrition interventions

Purpose:
The Policy and International Health Directorate, a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Investment for Health and Well-being (WHO CC) at Public Health Wales has conducted a series of systematic scoping reviews of peer-reviewed and grey literature to collate evidence on the **social value of physical activity and nutrition interventions**.

Target audience:
public health professionals, public policy makers and commissioners, public finance officers and academia.

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How do we measure social value?

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Aim:
This evidence brief outlines a **scoping review of the social value of interventions which aim to increase levels of physical activity and improve levels of nutrition** [2]. The Krlev et al [3] quality assessment criteria was used to assess the quality of all included studies.

[1] Welsh Government (2019) [Valuing our health](#).
[2] Kraljic et al (2022) [The Social Return on Investment of physical activity and nutrition interventions - A scoping review](#).
[3] Krlev et al (2013) [Social Return on Investment \(SROI\): State of the Art and Perspectives. A Meta-Analysis of practice in Social Return on Investment \(SROI\) studies published 2004-2012](#).

Eurohealth Observatory



Advancing the EU Cancer Mission through Policy Dialogues

This special issue of Eurohealth highlights the European Union's Mission on Cancer and its crucial role in tackling Europe's rising cancer burden.

Through the OBS-D&C4Cancer project and the establishment of National Cancer Mission Hubs, this issue presents insights from key stakeholders on advancing cancer prevention, care, and research across Europe. Featuring diverse perspectives on overcoming challenges and strengthening policies, this edition aims to drive meaningful discussions on cancer control.

Click [here](#) to access the issue.

World Health Organisation Europe Region

Developing the European Programme of Work for 2026–2030 (EPW2)

Advancing health for those living in the WHO European Region requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to face the challenges and opportunities of today's world. EPW2 will be the guiding health framework for the WHO Regional Office for Europe and Member States for the next five years.

Click [here](#) for further information.



Upcoming Events and Conferences

Public Health Wales' International Public Health Forum

The International Health Forum promotes the experiences of colleagues across Public Health Wales and shares their learnings from engaging in international health activities and research and providing time to discuss opportunities for the future to engage in international partnerships working and networks.

14 May 2025 | Online

Click **here** for the meeting link.

European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Observatory Summer School 2025

Does Health System Performance Assessment (HSPA) actually improve performance?
Designing HSPA to enable better policy decision making

20 – 26 July 2025 | Venice, Italy

Applications will be opened until maximum capacity or/by 31 May 2025.

Click **here** for more information.

16th Conference of the European Network for the Promotion of Health-enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA Europe)

17 – 19 September 2025 | Kaunas, Lithuania

Click **here** for more information.

World Health Summit 2025 “Taking Responsibility for Health in a Fragmenting World”

12 – 14 October | Berlin, Germany, Online

Click **here** for more information.



Get in touch

**If you have any stories or international projects
you wish to be featured in our upcoming
newsletters, please email:**

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