

## **Minutes of the Cross Party Group on Medical Research**

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2022, 12.15pm**

Held online via Microsoft Teams

### **In attendance**

Russell George MS

Vaughan Gething, Minister for Economy

Altaf Hussain MS

David Rees MS

Greg Pycroft, Cancer Research Wales

Charlotte Morgan, British Heart Foundation Cymru

Gemma Roberts, British Heart Foundation Cymru

James Black, Fraser of Allander Institute

Ellis Smith, Office of Russell George MS

Rachel Burr, Diabetes UK Cymru

Kate Roberts, The Brain Tumour Charity

Rachel MacManus, British Heart Foundation Cymru

Teresa Karran, Cancer Research UK

Ryland Doyle, Member Support Staff

Jonathan Roden, British Heart Foundation Scotland

Andy Glyde, Cancer Research UK

Keith Lloyd, Swansea University

Delyth Morgan, ESNR – Industrial Transformation Division

Rhodri Davies, Cancer Research Wales

Joe Kirwin, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness

Rohan Bundell, Association of Medical Research Charities

Mike Larvin, Bangor University

Rebecca Miller, RCGP

Christopher George, Swansea University

Jonathan Moore, Bangor University

Lynne Grundy, Research and Development Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Charlotte Chambers, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Angie Contestabile, Tenovus Cancer Care

Andrew Godkin, Cardiff University

Dr Lee Campbell, Cancer Research Wales

Dan Rose, Office of Carolyn Thomas MS

Michael Bowdery, Health and Care Research Wales

Steve Gill, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Katie Till, Cancer Research UK

Mathew Norman, Diabetes UK Cymru

Hannah O'Mahoney, Tenovus Cancer Care

Carys Thomas, Health and Care Research Wales

Matthew O'Grady, Stroke Association

Pushpinder Mangat, Health Education and Improvement Wales

### **Item 1 Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair, Russell George MS welcomed attendees and speakers to the meeting.

He gave a short introduction to the agenda that addressed the theme [The economic impact of charity funded medical research in Wales](#) and commented on the report's relationship to the current and upcoming work of the CPG.

He informed everyone that the Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS would join the meeting and contribute, and attendees would have an opportunity to contribute questions to all the speakers.

### **Item 2 Presentation: The economic impact of charity funded medical research in Wales**

**James Black, Knowledge Exchange Fellow  
The Fraser of Allander Institute, Strathclyde University**

The Chair introduced the first speaker, James Black (JB), Knowledge Exchange Fellow at the Fraser of Allander Institute and invited James to give his presentation (the presentation slides will be shared separately).

### **Item 3 Presentation: How Welsh Government can reap the economic benefits of medical research in Wales**

**Gemma Roberts, Policy and Public Affairs Manager  
British Heart Foundation Cymru (BHF Cymru)**

The Chair welcomed the second speaker, Gemma Roberts (GR) of BHF Cymru and invited Gemma to give her presentation (the presentation slides will be shared separately).

**Item 4 Q&A**

Since the Minister's arrival faced a slight delay, the Chair brought forward the Q&A and invited attendees to ask their questions.

Professor Keith Lloyd (Executive Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Medicine, Health & Life Science, Swansea University) asked about the time period covered by the impact report and commented about the impact report's methodology and different ways of measuring impact that might lead to different values being calculated – Swansea University utilises the Treasury's Green Book guidance.

JB said that due to the availability of data 2019 was the year chosen for this piece of work.

The Chair asked a question concerning the missing dataset mentioned by JB in his presentation.

JB informed everyone that the missing dataset was an economic input/output table that all the nations other than Wales produced. He understands that the Welsh Government are looking into the issue. The Chair said the CPG would follow up the issue with the Welsh Government following the meeting.

Professor Andrew Godkin (Cardiff University) expressed his concerns that medical research in Wales is unattractive to funders and lacks competitive advantages, eg a biomedical research centre. Cannot understand why Universities in Wales are not using their influence to make case to Welsh Government and leverage additional funds.

**Item 5 Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS**

The Chair welcomed the Minister to the meeting and invited him to respond on behalf of the Welsh Government.

The Minister noted that as well as the economy, his portfolio also covered life sciences, research and innovation, he welcomed the invite to speak to the CPG.

The Minister's remarks concerned a range of issues concerning medical research; research and development; and increasing impact – in economic and public health terms, post-pandemic.

He stressed that the question of maintaining universities as research engines is one that the Welsh Government is keen to address.

He wants to apply research and realise economic value for the nation. Hope there are opportunities for working with medical research charities.

Welsh Government wants more R&D activity across Wales, and highlighted [the 2020 KMPG report into the impact and value of research activity within NHS Wales](#).

The Minister also drew attention to the activity undertaken to promote Welsh research at a UK level, including efforts lobbying the UK Government.

The Chair thanked the Minister for his remarks, and invited questions and comments from attendees.

Gemma Roberts (BHF Cymru) asked a question about funding for research in Wales, what's the viability of securing upfront investment?

Professor Keith Lloyd (Swansea University) asked about the steps the Minister is taking to lobby colleagues within Welsh Government?

Dr Lee Campbell (Cancer Research Wales) commented upon the impediments to conducting research in Wales, that make a seemingly attractive nation, small and compact, unviable. Having to negotiate and sign off service contracts and clinical trials, with multiple health boards, rather than once for Wales is an example of processes impeding progress.

The Minister responded to questions and the comments. In response to Dr Campbell he agreed that processes needed to be looked at purposefully, no-one wanted to stand in the way of research happening or being attracted to Wales.

In response to the two questions, he felt that the issue of investment was linked to leveraging in more funding, and how to achieve that. He informed the CPG that Welsh Government, across multiple portfolios, including the Economy, and Health & Social Services, are reviewing the Research and Innovation Strategy with an intention to consult. The Minister said he would provide a note to the Chair when the draft Strategy is available for the CPG to respond and contribute their thoughts.

The Chair thanks the Minister for his remarks and responding. The Minister thanked the Chair and contributors before having to leave the meeting.

## **Item 6    Actions & Next Steps**

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions, and welcomed final thoughts from attendees, including any questions the CPG should ask the Minister, and Welsh Government, alongside a copy of the meeting minute that's due to be produced by the Secretariat and circulated.

Gemma Roberts (BHF Cymru) suggested asking the Minister whether the new Research and Innovation Strategy will come with additional funding?

Altaf Hussain MS expressed his concern at the difficulty he faced developing a surgical innovation, and wanted to know what support was available to help individuals to do so.

Matt Norman (Diabetes UK) suggested asking the Minister for additional information and details concerning the discussions he and his department has had with the UK Government concerning support for research in Wales.

The Chair said he would formally write to other relevant portfolio committees circulating the minute and information concerning this meeting and raise awareness of the up and coming draft Research and Innovation Strategy.

The Chair added that future CPG meetings will be required to canvas views concerning the draft Strategy as and when that's available to comment upon.

The Chair thanked attendees and drew the meeting to a close.

Meeting ended at 1.15pm