

# ***Building a Healthier Wales***

## **Executive summary**

### **1 Introduction**

Whilst life expectancy has increased, we face increasing challenges in relation to how healthy we are as we get older and we continue to have intractable levels of health inequalities across different parts of Wales. Our legislative and policy context is unique. The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act*, the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act*, *A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care* and *Prosperity for All: the national strategy*, provide us with a drive in time to transform our nation to one that is enabling the healthiest generations. They set out a health-in-all-policies and an all-policies-in-health approach that draws cross-Government and cross sector alignment to create a healthier and more sustainable Wales.

We know that the greatest impact on health is through optimising the wider determinants and no one sector can achieve this alone. A significant impact on health is also how in control we feel to make the healthy choices that lead to healthy behaviours. This requires the NHS and social care, other public bodies, academia and the independent and third sector to share assets and work collectively together, and with the public, in order to deliberately, proactively and systematically *build* a healthier Wales. This is now a fundamental requirement as we move into challenging times with the European Union transition process and its potential impact on the health, sustainability and resilience of our population in Wales.

### **2 Proposed priority areas**

We know we are more likely to achieve transformation when we focus on a small number of collective priorities that resonate with us and, where we have knowledge of what works. The opportunity for us to build a healthier Wales through coordinated, focused and aligned efforts has the ability to transform the nation at a critical time. We have a great deal of collective knowledge and wisdom to transform health in Wales. The *Heath and its Determinants* report (Burden of Disease), the Population Needs Assessments undertaken by Regional Partnership Boards (in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being Act) and the Health and Well-being Assessments and Plans produced by Public Services Boards (in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act) all help to identify the current status of health in Wales – both at a local and population level. Similarly, the *Making a Difference* report. Drawing on this evidence, this document therefore proposes a number of evidence-based priority areas that will have the greatest impact on improving population health outcomes and the greatest return on investment for the public.

The priority areas that are proposed are:

#### ***1. Tackling the Wider Determinants***

With a multi-agency focus on health and housing, and employability

#### ***2. Ensuring the Best Start in Life: Optimising our Early Years***

#### ***3. Enabling Healthy Behaviours***

With a multi-agency focus on reducing smoking prevalence, promoting a health weight and increasing physical activity.

#### **4. Minimising the impact of Clinical Risk Factors**

This has a specific focus for the NHS and social care with a focus on normalising blood pressure, blood glucose, body mass index (BMI) and cholesterol.

It is also acknowledged that this is a substantial transformational change for our staff across the NHS, social care and wider public services. We have therefore added a fifth priority area that underpins all of the priorities above, this focuses on the activities required to enable and support the transformational change that is required to achieve this shift.

#### **5. Enabling Transformational Change**

With a multi-agency focus on supporting the cultural, leadership and behaviour change required to deliver this shift in ways of working, delivery models and partnership working. This will include the provision of guidance, evidence-based interventions, support for our staff in the implementation and behaviour change and establishing a measurement and tracking framework.

As we continue the implementation of *A Healthier Wales*, there is an opportunity for us to radically change our approach with partners and align purposeful collective action with a social movement to transform population health outcomes in the form of a ***Building a Healthier Wales Coalition***.