

Cross Party Group on Medical Research:

Call for written Evidence

Overview

In January 2017 the Welsh Government commissioned Professor Graeme Reid and a panel to investigate Government-funded research and innovation in Wales which [reported in June 2018](#) with three recommendations regarding Welsh Government's future investment in research. These recommendations were:

- a new Welsh Research and Innovation Office in London to increase the visibility and influence of Welsh research;
- an additional fund of £30m a year, to incentivise researchers to win greater funding from business and from outside Wales; and
- a single overarching brand for its research and innovation funding to increase the visibility, coherence and impact of Welsh Government-funded research and innovation in Wales.

Previously, [the Diamond Review](#) made recommendations regarding QR (quality related) research funding, and these recommendations formed part of the terms of reference of the Reid Review.

The [Cross Party Group on Medical Research](#) was formed in November 2018 and wrote to the Welsh Government to understand how they were progressing with the Reid Review's recommendations from July 2018. With two of the three recommendations requiring further large investment from Government, the CPG wanted to consider whether there were policy recommendations which could better support medical research to ensure that the post-Brexit landscape is as robust as possible for the research community and might ensure the best possible innovation and collaboration.

The Cross Party Group has also identified that there are many areas of research which need to be considered within "medical research" from traditional university led research to healthcare settings and has heard from many the issues which are still facing those undertaking research in its three meetings to date.

The Inquiry Terms of Reference

Following on from Professor Reid's review into research in Wales and with a view that recommendation 2 and 3 are dependent on UK Government replacing EU structural funds with adequate funds from the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Cross Party Group on Medical Research is aiming to hold an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

- to invite and take evidence from each sector involved in medical or health research currently engaged in projects with the potential to be translated into life-saving treatments;
- to understand what can be done in a post-Brexit environment on issues facing Researchers such as funding environments, recruitment and retention, access to students who can assist projects and available resources within individual institutions;
- to understand what opportunities may be available with the forthcoming Post Compulsory Education, Training and Research Bill (PCETR) and Research and Innovation Wales (RIW);
- to review each sector's aspirations for the future of medical research in Wales;
- and to make recommendations to Government based on this evidence.

Timeline

Over the course of the previous three meetings, the group has already heard from researchers in working in *universities, social research, healthcare settings* and *industry*. These presentations may be investigated further to contribute to the inquiry, however it is proposed that the following three meetings will take place as evidence sessions.

The call for written evidence, published today, Friday 4 October will be sent out widely to give the opportunity for those working in Wales; within Welsh research, as well as those outside of Wales working with the Welsh research sectors to contribute.

The deadline for this written evidence will be **Monday, 27th January 2020**.

Date	Action	Further information
4 th October 2019	Call for written evidence	
Mid-November 2019	AGM and first evidence session	19 November 2019 12-1.30pm, Conference Room A
27 th January 2020	Consultation/written evidence deadline	
Mid-February 2020	Second evidence session	
Late April, early May 2020	Third evidence session	
September/October 2020	Launch of inquiry's findings	

What is Medical Research?

It is evident from our work so far that medical research is a very broad term which covers many different types of research from “blue skies” research, basic research and translational, clinical and applied research. It is also clear that the settings in which this research takes place are wide and varied, and we invite anyone and all organisations or institutions who undertake or facilitate this research to reply to this call for evidence.

Ideas for evidence

Therefore, the below questions are to be used as starting points for your evidence; they are not exhaustive, and we would welcome your thoughts on anything that has not been covered below.

We would like to invite individuals and groups to submit evidence, and to directly address issues that affect the research you undertake.

Theme: Welsh initiatives

Are you working with or part of the Sêr Cymru programme? How do you think the research community in Wales could work with you in the future?

- Have you worked with Health and Care Research Wales? How do you think the research community in Wales could work with HCRW in the future?
- Do you have any comments on the forthcoming Post-Compulsory Education Training and Research (PCETR) Bill and the creation of Research and Innovation Wales?

Theme: QR and other funding

- How is QR funding allocated in your institution?
- How are you leveraging funding from non-university sources, including research councils, industry and third sector?
- How does access to QR funding support you to attract additional funding from other sources?
- What support do you think could be offered by Welsh Government to help you attract funding from other sources?
- Are there any improvements you believe could be made to QR funding in Wales?
- Do you perceive any risk to QR funding in the current climate?
- What is the university’s mechanism for paying for direct funds?
- How are you leveraging other sector funds?
- Are your researchers turning down funds because they can’t access indirect funds?
- Are you aware of, and do you use the Charity Research Support Fund?

Theme: Project-based nature of awards and careers

- What support do you think is required to help researchers at all points in their careers?
- Is there a need to draw more talent/students to work on projects?
- Do you think that current schemes for retaining talent in Wales are achieving their aims?
- Do you have any suggestions on how we might assist students to develop their careers in Wales?
- If you have worked in Wales, and left, what would have made you stay?

Theme: Collaboration between institutions/ settings

- Does your work involve collaborating with other Welsh or UK universities?
- Can you detail how your work with other institutions takes place?
- Do you collaborate with the NHS? If so, do you encounter any difficulties in collaborating? (e.g. protected clinician time, policies on GDPR etc).
- Is your collaboration with other institutions encouraged?

Theme: Wider Collaboration

EU collaboration

- Do you work with EU colleagues or universities to conduct your research?
- Is your research reliant on EU colleagues/universities?

UK/England collaboration

- Do you carry out research with UK/England institutions?
- How are Welsh interests represented within this collaboration?
- Have you had any engagement with those setting up the Wales Research in London Office (WRILO) as part of the response to Professor Reid's review?
- How do you feel this resource could support your work in the future?

Theme: UKRI

- Do you feel that there is clear training and support how to get UKRI funding?
- Do you have any comments on how Welsh Government could support applications to UKRI funding?
- How do you work with UKRI and are there opportunities to further develop these relationships within Wales?
- Does your Institution incentivise UKRI?
- Has the restructuring of UKRI has had a negative or positive impact on the chances of getting funded within the Wales medical research sector?
- Does your Institution have clear lines of communication with Welsh Government on UKRI policy?

- Do you work with the UKRI Devolved Nations Office, and are you aware of the different funding streams available to you as a researcher in Wales?

Theme: Research informing Welsh policy recommendations

- How do you think your research could be translated into policy or practice in Wales?
- Are you aware of how you might make policy-makers aware of your research?

Theme: Innovation in funding bids

- Have you won funding for research into producing innovative solutions in line with Welsh strategies such as the Future Generations Act etc.?
- Do you think current Welsh Government policy on innovation supports your research?
- Do you work with any research partners such as the Life Sciences Hub, MediWales, Medicines Catapult, or others?

Theme: Research in healthcare settings

- Do you carry out research in clinical settings?
- What type of research do you carry out?
- Who is your research funded by?
- Do you encounter any difficulties with GDPR or information sharing?
- Do you collaborate with industry or education through your work?

Theme: Protected time in clinical roles

- Does your department/hospital ensure you have protected time to carry out your research?
- Has your research enabled changes in practice within your healthcare setting?
- What are the barriers to carrying out research in clinical roles?
- Are there any successes you would like to see rolled out as best practice examples?

Theme: Patient Involvement

- Do you work with patients in your research?
- How do you recruit and involve patients and how do you evaluate their experience of participating?
- What barriers or challenges do you have to working with patients?
- How does working with patients help you to develop your research?

Theme: Industry

- Are there incentives that Wales could develop to facilitate industry working with Welsh research institutions?
- Do you believe it is clear what the national offer of Wales is in terms of more infrastructure, skills and opportunities?
- Are you aware of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) in England and is there a need for a similar fund in Wales?

How to submit evidence

The Cross Party Group welcomes evidence from both individuals and organisations. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide a brief description of the role of your organisation.

Submissions can be made in writing, and we are also able to accept evidence in audio or video format.

The Cross Party Group welcomes contributions in English or Welsh.

If you aren't interested in giving oral evidence/ attending a meeting to discuss further, please tell us this in your response.

Please return your written evidence by 27 January to Emma Henwood, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, BHF Cymru, at henwoode@bhf.org.uk, and if you have any queries please also address them to this email address.

About the Cross Party Group on Medical Research

The Cross Party Group on Medical Research held its first meeting in November 2018, with BHF Cymru elected as the secretariat. More information on the CPG can be found here: <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgOutsideBodyDetails.aspx?ID=532>

The Terms of Reference of the Cross Party Group are:

1. To bring medical research into the National Assembly for Wales to enhance Members' understanding of funded projects in Welsh Universities, further education and healthcare settings which have long-term potential to be translated into life-saving treatments;
2. To explore issues facing Researchers such as funding environments, recruitment and retention, access to students who can assist projects and available resources within individual institutions;
3. To provide a chance to see how research has made a difference to the lives of people living with certain conditions and make the link into timely debate on health issues in Wales;
4. To raise awareness and understand the value of life sciences to the Welsh economy.