



# Stepping up to the challenges of the pandemic

Bevan Exemplar Cohort 5 Evaluation Summary

Professor Nick Rich, University of Swansea



# Comisiwn Bevan Commission

The Bevan Commission, hosted and supported by Swansea University, provides independent, authoritative advice on health and care to the Welsh Government and leaders in NHS Wales, the UK and beyond.

As Wales' leading health and care think tank, its role is to observe, interpret, analyse, scrutinise and comment on health and health related issues.

The Commission is chaired by Professor Sir Mansel Aylward and draws its expertise from members based in Wales, the UK and internationally.

It was established in 2008 and focuses on how Wales may achieve its ambition of building healthcare services to meet the needs of the population and matching the best comparable systems elsewhere in the world.

The concept of prudent healthcare, pioneered by the Bevan Commission, is a cornerstone of Welsh Government policy, and its influence stretches beyond Wales to health and care systems across the world.

Its global reach is demonstrated by the firm links it has with national governments, academia and national health systems in Australasia, Europe and North America.

One of its key aims is to work with people to transform health and care services to ensure that Wales has a prudent health and care system that is fit for the future.

The Commission is translating its thinking into action by supporting health and care professionals across NHS Wales, called Bevan Exemplars, to try out and test out their own innovative and prudent ideas.

The Exemplar programme was launched in 2015 with over 250 projects completed to date so far. This year's projects have demonstrated a completion success rate of 69%, and have improved health outcomes, patient experiences and service delivery.



## The author

Professor Nick Rich is a world-renowned expert in High Performance (quality) and Highly Reliable Organizational Safety) design.

Nick is a polymath which means he has two areas of specialism that focus on his manufacturing and services research (high performance) and his research with health and care providers, nuclear facilities and transportation systems.

Nick has written over 100 publications, he is an adviser to multiple governments, he has written 10 books, and he holds the Toyota Motor Corporation Fellowship of Japan. He was the Chief Industrial Engineer at the Royal Mint for the production of the Olympic and Paralympic Games medals (London 2012).

Nick is the Postgraduate Research Director at the School of Management and Nick is a very active supervisor of students at the school and also with colleagues in the Schools of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences and ESRI Energy research centre.

He is also a lead for the CEIC Green Public Services Programme and a lead for the Awen Institute which explores solutions to problems of an ageing society.



*I am really grateful for all the opportunities being a Bevan Exemplar has provided. Being part of this programme really supported the project.*

**Marianne Seabright, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board**

# Foreword

The term 'unprecedented' has been used on a daily basis since the pandemic began and the fifth Bevan Exemplar Programme Cohort was conducted in these 'unprecedented' times.

This cohort is not the same as any other in the previous five years of deploying health and care improvements in Wales using the Bevan Commission's prudent methodology.

The staff employed during this cohort faced the most adversity of any group so far.

At the beginning of this cohort, the NHS was under 'normal' pressures for innovation and improvement but as the programme started, and the cohort commenced their learning journeys, the 72-year old Welsh NHS experienced its most challenging year since its inception.

It is not melodramatic to say that this period combined fear, charged emotions, confusion, unconceivable risks, public admiration, and staff redeployment on a scale that was equivalent to the conditions of any global war.

The conditions of 2020 certainly impacted and constrained Cohort Five of the Bevan Exemplars. Continuing innovative projects during times of turmoil has a number of challenges; staff were being redeployed to the frontline and homeworking, the ability to convince staff to continue with projects during these conditions was difficult and the probability that all projects

would stop was high. The "high bar", set by previous cohorts under normal NHS conditions, implied that 80% of projects would be a success.

Under these conditions no one would have argued against the view that 80% would fail – if not all of the projects. The reality is 69% of projects were successful in these conditions. This is an amazing result and a great effort by the health and care staff (as well as industrial partners) involved. It is worth remembering these conditions as the details of this evaluation are presented.

Resilience of this scale is also a reflection on the employer organisations and Health Boards involved as sponsors of the Bevan Exemplar programme.

These organisations deserve a special recognition for continuing to endorse innovation, improvement, a constancy of purpose and resilience in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.



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# Executive Summary



*This cohort is a particularly 'special' one. It is a cohort that has 'stepped up' and has been joined by new support structures in employer organisations and industry partners that have done their best to help despite major upheaval to their own business models. There is much to applaud for the efforts and achievements of this cohort and their resilience.*

## Professor Nick Rich

The total quality management guru Dr W. Edwards Deming, so revered by the NHS, once stated that *"The most valuable 'currency' of any organization is the initiative and creativity of its members. Every leader has the solemn moral responsibility to develop these to the maximum... This is the leader's highest priority."*

The proof of great leadership is to achieve this goal amidst a national crisis. Such organisational resilience and commitment to improvement means that this cohort has achieved incredible results despite the onset of a national pandemic.

### The evaluation team finds that:

- A 69% success rate for Bevan Exemplar Cohort 5 projects is an astonishingly good result in the face of a global pandemic and with all projects launching on time.
  - There have been a number of major benefits of the projects undertaken including a wide range of process and service benefits (process safety, staff engagement, service performance and public engagement).
  - 88% of projects were considered to somewhat or strongly support the Prudent Principles, of which 76% strongly agreed their projects were great examples of how prudent principles can be used to improve health and care processes.
  - The Exemplars have added new skills to their repertoire including the confidence in creating business cases, using the Bevan methodology and models for success whilst, in many instances, not being physically present in the workplace (due to remote working and online service provision).
  - The Bevan Exemplar programme has benefitted from greater organisational support from employer organisations especially the mentors and executive levels.
  - The Bevan Commission has also undergone significant change and modification to the manner in which the learning and networking events have been successfully delivered. Furthermore, the Commissioners themselves have 'stepped up' in this time period and provided even more support to the Exemplars than in previous years.
  - Many of the Exemplar programmes are still yet to complete and this is reflected in the reluctance to make claims of savings but the interview process and submission of project report documents prove they are there and that the pandemic has delayed the realisation of these benefits and has not prevented them.
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