

28 October 2014

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Delivering with Less –
the Impact on Environmental
Health Services and Citizens


WELSH AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDIA ACHOMBO CYMRU

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FOOD HYGIENE RATING


0 1 2 3 4 **5**

VERY GOOD



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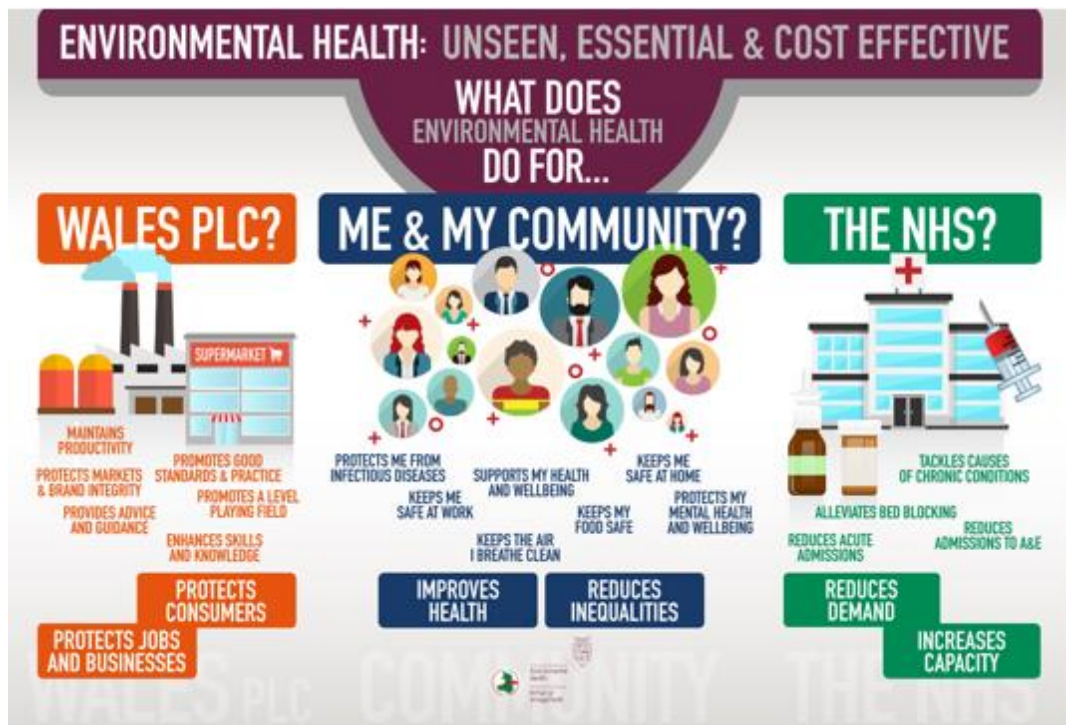


Chief Medical
Officer for Wales
Annual Report 2014-15
Healthier, Happier, Fairer

Environmental Health: Beyond the tipping point.



Environmental Health Services deliver services that impact on individuals, communities, business and public life in Wales.



Where we were

In 2014 Wales Audit Office¹ reported that the Environmental Health service in local government was:

- delivering with significant budgets cuts of 4.3%, and
- significant cuts to staff of between 14.2% and 19.7% and
- in consequence was reaching a tipping point where full service delivery would be impossible.

Where we are now

Despite the warnings contained in the Wales Audit Office 2014 report

- further budget cuts of up to 27.3% have been imposed on Environmental Health departments, and
- across Wales, further cuts of 8.2% to experienced staff have been experienced,
- since 2014, further legislation has been enacted that has or will impose further burdens on already overstretched departments. These include Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013, The Housing (Wales) Acts 2014, The Smoke-free (Private Vehicles) Regulations 2015, The Well-being of Future

¹ Delivering with less – the Impact on Environmental Health Services and Citizens

Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Public Health (Wales) Bill (currently passing through Welsh Government) all of which impose further burdens on overstretched departments,

- the tipping point identified in 2014 has been passed, and a much diminished Environmental Health service is stretched beyond its capacity to effectively deliver.

This view is shared by the Chief Medical Officer, who in her most recent report to the First Minister², notes that

"Environmental Health services are at risk of being unable to effectively deliver their current responsibilities or take on new statutory duties to protect the public and the environment in the future."

The current Environmental Health resource in Wales is now such that there will be detrimental short and long term impacts on the health and well-being of individuals, communities, the economy and the environment of Wales.

The recognised tipping point has been passed. Elements of the service are now being curtailed or withdrawn.

What do we need?

- Current levels of resource in environmental health teams recognised as being base minimum and protected,
- Environmental Health budgets afforded the same protection as Education and Adult Social Services budgets.
- No new statutory functions without the finance necessary to undertake them.
- Adequate resources to ensure a renewed commitment across all levels of Government that the *prevention* of harm (human and environmental) should underpin policy decisions.

² Chief Medical Officer for Wales Annual Report 2014-15 Healthier, Happier, Fairer

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH)

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health is a membership organisation for environmental health professionals living and working in Wales. It ensures the highest standards of professional competence in its members, in the belief that through environmental health action people's health can be improved.

The CIEH remit is to liaison with the Wales Government, local authorities and non-governmental organisations within Wales, promoting and representing the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health policies in a Welsh Context.

Environmental health has an important and unique contribution to make to improving public health and reducing health inequalities. The CIEH campaigns to ensure that government policy addresses the needs of communities and business in achieving and maintaining improvements to health and health protection.

Contact Julie Barratt, Director at j.barratt@cieh.org or on 01633 865533

Wales Heads of Environmental Health Group

The Wales Heads of Environmental Health Group (WHeEHG) represents the professional heads of environmental health services for the 22 local authorities in Wales.

The Group is supported by a number of Expert Groups (generally multi-agency in composition) that focus on key specialisms within environmental health. These include Communicable Disease Control, Health & Safety at Work, Pollution Control, Food Safety, Housing and Licensing.