



Welsh NHS Confederation
Confederasiwn GIG Cymru

Briefing

Whole system response to meet increasing demand

This briefing highlights examples of innovative practice which have taken place in recent months across NHS Wales to help respond to demand, support the population and plan for the future.

November 2021

Introduction

The NHS in Wales is continuing to face significant pressure due to high levels of demand, the ongoing challenges of responding to COVID-19, a growing backlog of planned care, increasing demand for urgent and emergency care and pressures within social care. We must understand this is a whole system issue if it is to be effectively addressed.

This briefing highlights just some of the new ways of working NHS organisations have deployed to help respond to the demand, improve outcomes for patients and also plan for the future. It's important that such innovations are learnt from and taken forward as the system recovers.

Staff are the most important part of the NHS and we thank them for all they've done and continue to do for us. Workforce and recruitment continue to be an issue for the system and this briefing highlights Health Education and Improvement Wales's (HEIW) work on the new free-to-use platform, Careersville, which enables people considering their career prospects to easily access information about the health and care sectors.

This briefing also features examples of action being taken within primary care, which is also having to cope with an increase in demand. These include a new audiology service in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, which is expected to release 22,000 GP appointments each year, and a new service aimed at helping those with complex health and wellbeing issues in Swansea Bay University Health Board.

Prevention is also a key part of how we create a sustainable service well into the future, and NHS organisations have been active in creating initiatives which aim to prevent harm and support population wellbeing. The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust has taken a holistic approach to preventing and educating around falls, the leading cause for calls to the service. Powys Teaching Health Board has also been supporting people's wellbeing through the award-winning Ecotherapy Programme.

Partnership working continues to bring about innovations within the NHS, such as a new technology which allows clinicians to monitor heart patients remotely. This was produced through a partnership between Hywel Dda University Health Board and Delta Wellbeing.

Although demand and pressures on the system remains extremely high, the health service in Wales continues to innovate and work across sectors to support and care for patients, ensuring the NHS rises to current challenges, improving patient outcomes and creating a sustainable future for the service.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

New respiratory service to reduce hospital admissions

- Respiratory Ambulatory Care Unit is an “exciting development” in respiratory care
- New service aims to reduce hospital admissions by providing same-day care for low-risk respiratory patients

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board has introduced a new service at the Royal Gwent Hospital to care for respiratory patients. The Respiratory Ambulatory Care Unit (RACU) aims to reduce hospital admissions by providing same-day care for low-risk respiratory patients who are not COVID-19 positive.

Health Board staff can refer patients into the new unit if clinicians decide they are suitable for the same-day service. Patients will receive treatment and a management plan before being allowed to recover in the comfort of their own home. Follow-up care will be available for those who require it.



Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

New audiology service will provide specialist care, closer to home

- Introduction of Advanced Audiology Practitioners will release 22,000 GP appointments every year
- 35,000 people have already benefitted from the service

Over the next three years, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board will introduce Advanced Audiology Practitioners (APAs) into GP surgeries across the region. Their introduction will ensure more people with hearing, tinnitus and balance difficulties can receive specialist care sooner and closer to home, while releasing up to 22,000 GP appointments every year.

Hearing difficulties are thought to affect around 130,000 people in North Wales, including seven in ten people over the age of 70. If left unmanaged, hearing, tinnitus and balance difficulties can have a significant impact on people's quality of life.

APAs have already been put in place across 36 GP practices, supporting around 25% of the region's population. Over the past three years, more than 35,000 people have benefited from the APA service in GP practices in which it has been piloted.

As part of a staged approach, APAs will be introduced to remaining practices over the next three years. Once established, APAs will also oversee the delivery of an earwax removal service, supporting the 4% of the population who suffer from problematic earwax.



Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Delivering an accelerated cluster model

- Cluster model reduces emergency admissions to hospital by 16% in over-75s
- Cost analysis indicates a benefit of £4.76p return for every £1 spent

The Cardiff South West (SW) cluster cares for 67,000 people in areas of high deprivation. Using an innovative approach, which follows the Compassionate Communities Model, support is being offered to people with complex needs through four main elements, each of which has a focus on linking people to support in their local community. The four elements are:

- A multidisciplinary team, with partners across health, care and third sector
- An integrated care hub
- Community Development including a team of wellbeing connectors
- Advance Care Planning training offered to all within the community

Results so far have shown a reduction in admissions to hospital in the Cardiff SW cluster in comparison to other clusters in Cardiff and Vale. In the 12 months leading up to the first COVID-19 national lockdown, the Cardiff SW cluster reduced emergency admissions to hospitals by 16% in the over 75 cohort. This effect was replicated in the whole adult population but on a lower level, with a reduction of 4% in all adults. Economic cost benefit analysis carried out by Professor Ceri Phillips showed this reduction in bed days translated to a benefit of £4.76p return for every £1 spent on the project.

The work has demonstrated real tangible improvements in supporting people to stay in the community, and as part of the response to the unscheduled care demands, plans are in place to roll this model out to other clusters.



Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

First Health Board in Wales to tackle mental health stigma in the workplace

- Cwm Taf Morgannwg is the first Health Board to pilot the new training module
- The aim is to roll-out training more widely to all Health Boards

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board are the first Health Board in Wales to pilot a new training module with Time to Change Wales, which aims to effectively address mental health stigma in health and social care settings. Mental health leads have been working closely with [Time to Change Wales](#) to develop a series of films and training materials.

Aimed at shaping future mental health training for healthcare staff, the module has been designed to equip staff to improve the lived experiences and outcomes for individuals affected by mental health by better identifying how, and where, experiences of mental health stigma can happen in the workplace.

The training includes evaluation with delegates to measure the impact of the training and its effectiveness at improving patient and staff experiences across healthcare settings and services.

Time to Change Wales aims to support a future roll-out of the training more widely to all Health Boards across Wales.



Digital Health and Care Wales

Master's programme to boost digital healthcare skills in Wales

- New master's programme is a first for Wales
- The programme is a key driver to enhance the digital workforce

A new master's programme provided by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) has been established aiming to upskill health and social care staff.

It is a first for Wales and is the result of a strategic collaboration developed with the Wales Institute of Digital Information, a partnership between UWTSD, University of South Wales and Digital Health and Care Wales.

The partnership is seen as a key driver for enhancing the digital workforce for the health and care sector within Wales, with many roles and opportunities available in digital health and care.



Health Education and Improvement Wales

Virtual village created to explore different health and care careers

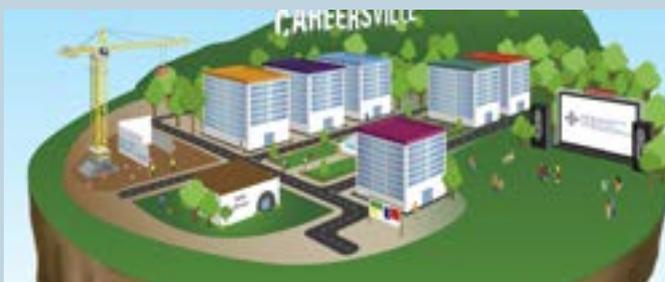
- Free-to-use online platform launched and to expand to all ages
- Professional areas and information being added over coming months

An innovative, fully bilingual online platform which showcases the wide range of career opportunities available across health and social care in Wales has been launched by Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW). 'Careersville' currently targets learners and young people aged 14-16, but will expand to appeal to all ages as it develops.

With more than 350 different roles available, health and care has something to offer at all stages of someone's career – particularly if they had only thought of the more obvious roles such as medicine and nursing. They may also assume they need to go to university or have misconceptions about roles and what they involve.

The free-to-use platform is available for learners, teachers, parents or guardians, and careers advisors. It houses different elements of health and care delivery and the associated careers available. It was launched in both English and Welsh simultaneously.

The development of Careersville will be an ongoing process, with professional areas and information being continually added over the coming months. HEIW's ultimate aim is for Careersville to become an all-age platform and allow visitors to create an avatar.



Hywel Dda University Health Board

Innovative technology pilot to monitor heart patients remotely from their homes

- New technology allows clinicians to monitor health and recovery from home
- Patients using technology reported to be taking their readings more regularly

Heart patients across west Wales are piloting innovative new technology that allows clinicians to monitor their health and recovery from the comfort of their home.

Hywel Dda University Health Board has been working in partnership with Delta Wellbeing to support people with heart problems using the new phone app, called MyMobile. This new digital approach allows people to record their symptoms and vital signs, which will be reviewed by the clinician and feedback to the patient to record progress and flag any concerns.

The technology allows patients to have consultations by video, helping to avoid unnecessary visits to clinics or hospitals. Additionally, some patients using the technology said they found monitoring their own health had become a part of their normal daily routine and they would take their readings more regularly.

As part of the pilot, patients receive equipment to take readings, including a blood pressure cuff, weighing scales and a pulse oximeter. Cardiology specialist nurses will be able to remotely monitor each patient's symptoms and progress, and conduct video consultations when needed to address any concerns. When required, hospital visits will be arranged for further treatment and consultation.



Powys Teaching Health Board

Pioneering ecotherapy programme wins national award

- Programme has around 50 people aged 12-75 involved each week
- Programme attendance is at 80% following referral from primary and secondary care

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust's trailblazing health and wellbeing project, Wild Skills Wild Spaces (WSWS), has attracted national acclaim with a prestigious NHS Forest 2021 Award for Engaging People with Nature. Funded by the Welsh Government, WSWS launched in June 2021 and already has around 50 people aged 12-75 involved each week.

The programme caught the attention of NHS Forest, a project researching links between health and the environment, because it empowers young people and adults who wouldn't typically engage with prescribed therapeutic interventions or outdoor activities.

The ecotherapy programme is a partnership between Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Powys Teaching Health Board and Cardiff Metropolitan University, and is designed to improve people's mental health and wellbeing by reconnecting them with nature and their environment.

Participants are referred from primary and secondary healthcare providers, such as GPs and mental health services, and programme attendance is at 80%. The project is currently funded up to 2023 and, if it's as successful as hoped, it could pave the way for similar schemes to be rolled out across Wales.



Public Health Wales NHS Trust

New toolkit enables health to be build into future planning

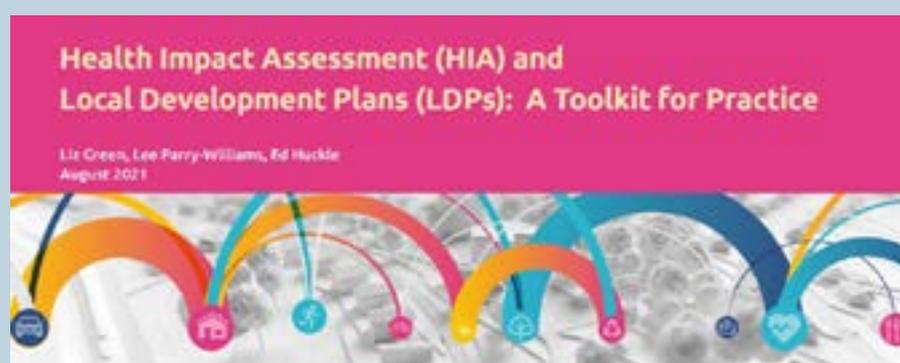
- New toolkit aims to support collaboration between planning and public health sectors
- It could secure more locally joined-up working and integration of practice

Public Health Wales has created a practical Health Impact Assessment (HIA) toolkit that will enable planners to easily integrate health into their development plans for the future.

The resource aims to maximise positive health and wellbeing outcomes through land use planning policies that create healthy, equitable and cohesive communities.

The HIA Toolkit for Practice is focused on the preparation of Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Supplementary Planning Guidance, but could equally inform and support the development of Strategic Development Plans and reviews of LDPs.

The resource is aimed primarily at public health and local authority land use planning policy officers. Equally, those working within local Health Boards, additional local government departments, environmental health officers, the third sector and other built environment professions may find it useful to secure more locally joined-up working and integration of practice.



Swansea Bay University Health Board

Cluster's new health and wellbeing initiative in wake of Covid

- Cwmtawe cluster is one of the first in Wales to have a social prescribing worker
- Referrals can be made from anyone in the cluster multi-disciplinary team

The Cwmtawe cluster – a group of three GP practices in the Lower Swansea Valley – is introducing a new service aimed at helping those with complex health and wellbeing issues, made more urgent by the pandemic. Specifically, the project will support individuals where there are two or more of the following support needs: mental health/wellbeing, problematic substance use, and domestic abuse (including sexual violence).

The Cwmtawe Pathway Service is funded by the cluster, initially for two years, and is being supported by Swansea Council for Voluntary Service. Swansea University has been asked to evaluate the project.

Referrals can be made from anyone in the Cwmtawe cluster multi-disciplinary team. Some patients may also be referred from the virtual ward that the Cwmtawe cluster has developed. The Cwmtawe cluster was also one of the first in Wales to have a social prescribing worker who could 'prescribe' activities for patients who need social help rather than medical treatment.

It is hoped that Swansea Bay University Health Board's other seven clusters will also invest in the role if it proves successful.



Velindre University NHS Trust

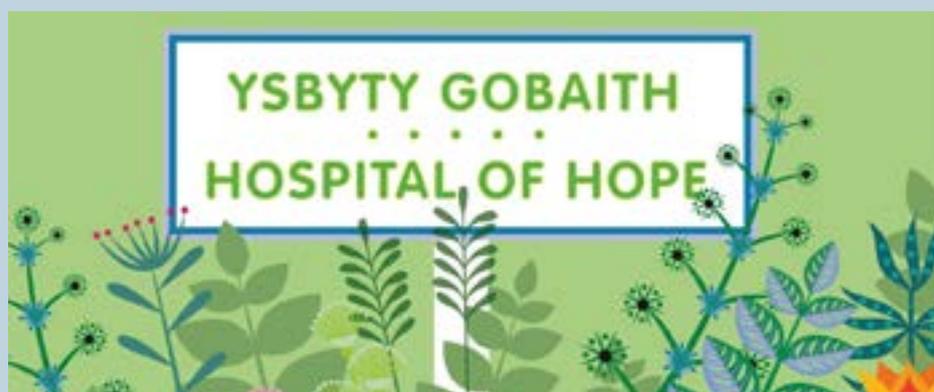
How a patient conversation improved patient and staff experience at Velindre Cancer Centre

- Velindre patient develops full wall art visual for reception area
- Piece carried on a 'Hospital of Hope' theme and aimed to inject positivity into the space

Chris Carpenter has been undergoing treatment for the last two years and, due to the support he has received from Velindre, decided he wanted to show his thanks in a visual way. A chance encounter and conversation with a triage colleague and fundraising ambassador, whilst collecting in the car park one day, led on to discussions about how some positivity might be injected into the reception area.

Firstly, Chris and his wife Suzanne hand painted a winter scene to create a feel of hope and celebration just before Christmas, which was very well received. This became a catalyst for further discussions around how the look and feel of public spaces can be transformed and refreshed through art.

Chris and Suzanne came up with a design that would develop into a full wall art visual for the reception and main entrance, to ensure the first impression when entering the hospital was memorable, carrying on the theme of 'Hospital of Hope' which is the centre piece of the design.



Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

Falls awareness and prevention

- WAST have adopted a holistic approach to people vulnerable to falling
- Partnership working utilised to address an issue which has resulted in 35,000 calls since January

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) has introduced initiatives as part of a holistic approach to help people vulnerable to falling. It includes a paramedic-physiotherapist collaboration to attend more complex falls, as well as partnerships with local Health Board and local council colleagues to develop 'pathways' which improve the patient's care and experience.

Almost 35,000 calls have been made to the WAST since January by people who have fallen. It is the number one reason people in Wales have called for an ambulance this year so far.

The Trust has also worked with St John Ambulance Cymru to introduce Falls Assistants across Wales. An education package is also being delivered to student paramedics to help them better understand why falls occur and how to seek assistance from wider health and social care teams to support people to remain at home.

In addition, colleagues in the Trust's Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service, which takes patients to and from their routine hospital appointments, have been trained to look out for potential falls hazards in a patient's home and make referrals to the appropriate agencies, such as Care and Repair.



The Welsh NHS Confederation is the only national membership body representing all the organisations making up the NHS in Wales. We represent the seven local Health Boards, three NHS trusts, Health Education and Improvement Wales and Digital Health and Care Wales. We are part of the NHS Confederation and host NHS Wales Employers. We support our members by acting as a driving force for positive change through strong representation, facilitating system leadership and our proactive policy, influencing, communications, events and engagement work.

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