



Community spirit and resilience to support the response to COVID-19

THE WELSH NHS CONFEDERATION
CONFFEDERASIWN GIG CYMRU



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to transform the way we live, work and socialise in Wales. It affects all of us and our ability to live our lives “normally”. Our thoughts are with everyone who has been affected.

No sector or public life has been immune to the wholesale and essential changes that the pandemic has brought about – particularly the health and social care sector, which has been implementing innovative ways of partnership working to manage and respond to the virus. Clearly, there is still a long way to go until we can fully evaluate the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak and the impact that it has had on our health and social care system and on the people of Wales. However, among the challenges, we have an opportunity to recognise the overwhelming and inspirational displays of community spirit and resilience that have supported the health and social care system throughout this time.

Many people have endured and overcome extreme challenges since the outbreak, not just as a direct result of COVID-19 but also indirectly as the normal day-to-day interactions that play such an important role in keeping us active and healthy have been scaled back. The NHS in Wales is incredibly grateful for the sacrifices that staff and the public have made during this time. Without that support, our health and care service would have been under even more pressure and many more lives would have been put at risk.

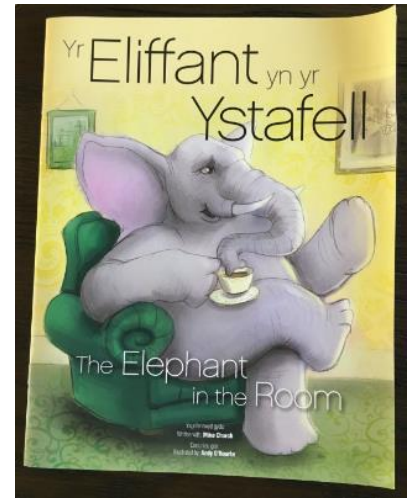
The NHS is grateful too for all the support, donations, fundraising initiatives, public displays of gratitude and pride towards the health and social care workforce that serve to protect the health and wellbeing of the nation. From all the people who come out at 8pm every Thursday evening to clap for carers, to donations of PPE from small businesses, and all the voluntary groups that have worked together to help the NHS and support vulnerable communities, Wales can be as proud of its community response to COVID-19 as we can of our NHS and social care staff.

This briefing showcases how community groups, schools, businesses, charities and members of the public have come together to support the NHS and social care at this exceptional time.

**Aneurin Bevan
 University Health
 Board**

‘Elephant in the Room’ to support children’s emotional health and helping them to adapt to changes

Through the Health Board’s ‘Ffrind i Mi’ service, Aneurin Bevan UHB have made copies of the book ‘Elephant in the Room’ free for all residents experiencing the loss of a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic. ‘Elephant in the Room’ is a picture book, originally developed at the end of 2019 by pupils at Georgetown Primary School in association with St David’s Hospice. The book explores how adults can best support children to manage feelings of loss and adapt to significant changes in a childhood.

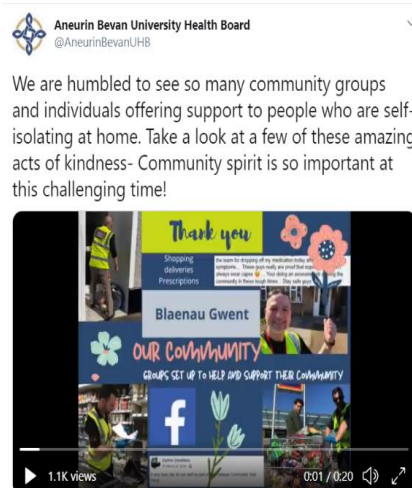


Donation of mobile phones by Tesco is supporting families to stay in contact

Health Boards across Wales recognise that supporting patients to keep in contact with their families and loved ones during hospital admission is key to supporting overall patient experience. Our members recognise also that this has been made more difficult since the necessary restrictions on hospital visits. However, thanks to Tesco Ebbw Vale’s generous donation of mobile phones, patients at Aneurin Bevan UHB, who otherwise have no other means of communication, are now able to speak with their families and loved ones.



Collective effort by businesses, community groups, small enterprise and others to support the NHS and vulnerable groups across South East Wales



Community groups and small enterprises across the Aneurin Bevan UHB area have come together to support people who are self-isolating. This includes: a hardware manufacturing company, [Motion29](#), producing vital ventilator connectors in Caerphilly; the delivery of over 2,500 food parcels by 60 self-organised [community groups](#) in Monmouthshire; and the donation of polythene by [Capital Valley Plastics](#), based in Torfaen, to wrap up all contaminated personal protective equipment (PPE) before disposal.

**Betsi Cadwaladr
 University Health
 Board**

Donations from veterinary surgeries are supporting Betsi Cadwaladr UHB to provide PPE to staff

Two veterinary surgeries in North Wales – Prospect House Clinic and Hospital in Colwyn Bay and Murphy and Co in Llandudno – have supported colleagues at Betsi Cadwaladr UHB by donating vital PPE to frontline staff. These donations are in addition to a further donation by ‘[Vets 4 Pets](#)’ in Bangor, who have also provided PPE to Health Board staff.



Members of the community are producing handmade vital equipment to support NHS colleagues

Members of the community in North Wales have been supporting the NHS by producing and donating basic but vital equipment of their own, such as laundry bags. Radio One and Radio Cymru DJ Sian Eleri is among those supporting the effort.



Staff returning to work to support vulnerable people and fight COVID-19



In addition to the thousands of students that are supporting the NHS Wales workforce, over 2,000 former NHS and social care workers are also returning to work to support the system. Mandy Coxhead, a recently-retired physiotherapist, is one such example, returning to work in Chirk Community Hospital to support elderly residents.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy are currently waving any membership fees for members of staff returning from retirement to support the NHS.

**Cardiff and
 Vale
 University
 Health Board**

Community volunteers are delivering the Chatter Line service to support people in self-isolation

Maintaining social relationships with friends and family during the COVID-19 pandemic is key to supporting mental health and wellbeing. To support this effort, volunteers have been signing up to the Volunteer Chatter Line, developed by Cardiff and Vale UHB’s Patient Experience Team, to support people who feel lonely during the current pandemic.



A brother and sister fundraising effort through Taekwondo



A brother and sister team in Cardiff have been fundraising for the Lansdowne Ward at St David’s Hospital. Both keen Taekwondo students, they are side-kicking the length of their home driveway until both have side-kicked over a mile each. At the time of writing, the brother and sister team have raised nearly £700.

‘Feed the Heath’ initiative provides hot and nutritious meals for frontline staff

Cardiff-based businesses Spiros Cardiff, Milkwood and the Juboraj Group are among the restaurateurs providing hot meals for NHS staff at the University Hospital of Wales and Llandough Hospital. The ‘Feed the Heath’ effort is being done in partnership with the Cardiff and Vale UHB Health Charity.



Originally brought together by Kasim Ali, owner of Cardiff-based teahouse Waterloo Tea, over 23,000 meals have now been served to frontline staff and around 25 Cardiff-based businesses are now involved. Such has been the expansion of the initiative, ‘Feed the Heath’ was recently featured in the [Daily Mirror](#).

**Cwm Taf
Morgannwg
University
Health Board**

A demonstration of support, respect and community from one Health Board team to another

While individual Health Boards are adopting their own service transformations to address COVID-19, this pandemic is an all-Wales challenge that requires a collaborative effort and mutual support. Staff at Prince Charles Hospital recently showed their support and respect for fellow NHS staff at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr in Caerphilly.



A ‘thank you’ in free match tickets for NHS staff by Cardiff Blues



Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB is among two Health Boards to be offered free tickets to see the Cardiff Blues rugby team in action at Cardiff Arms Park. A number of staff at the club are also directly employed by the NHS in Wales, and the Blues have made clear their gratitude to NHS staff. At least 5,000 complimentary tickets have been pledged.

Donation of vital PPE by the USW Clinical Simulation Centre

University of South Wales’ Clinical Simulation Centre (CSC) is set up to replicate an acute care NHS environment, providing realistic clinical facilities for Nursing and Midwifery students and qualified healthcare professionals. Staff at the CSC have been supporting Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB staff with a donation of vital PPE.



**Health
Education and
Improvement
Wales
(HEIW)**

Return to Practice Hub for professionals returning to work to support the COVID-19 response

Pharmacists in acute and community settings are on the frontline in the NHS response to COVID-19. Not only are they on hand to provide timely, effective services to members of the public who may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, they also have invaluable, first-hand experience and knowledge of the availability of vital PPE and medicines in the community setting.

This means they also have a key role to play in supporting people to conform with the Welsh Government's advice to stay at home and self-isolate whenever possible.

To enhance this localised support, HEIW have launched a Return to Practice Hub for pharmacy professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The launch of the Hub is a recognition on behalf of HEIW and the wider health and social care system that some professionals returning to work may need to complete some outstanding professional development modules to be competent and confident in their roles. This resource has been developed to support pharmacy professionals to identify and meet their personal learning needs.

The resources listed are comprehensive and not all will be necessary or appropriate for each person – they are intended only as a reference source. HEIW have also made available mentors to provide general support to pharmacy professionals returning to work and guide them through the resources contained in the Return to Practice Hub.

COVID-19



**Hywel Dda
 University
 Health Board**

Rhythwyn Evans raises over £40,000 for Hywel Dda Health Charities while in self-isolation

Inspired by, and in solidarity with, Captain Tom Moore, Hywel Dda UHB resident Rhythwyn Evans has set a personal challenge to walk around his home 91 times in 1 day. Rhythwyn wanted to raise money for Hywel Dda Health Charities and show his appreciation for what he calls the “outstanding work” of the NHS. On 18th April, Rhythwyn’s 91st birthday, he completed the feat just after 5pm. Rhythwyn’s [JustGiving page](#) remains active, and at the time of writing, he has raised over £42,000.



Supporting hand-washing messages thanks to donation of soaps to frontline NHS staff



Celtic Skin Co are a small, family-run cosmetics company based in Haverfordwest. To support NHS staff at Hywel Dda UHB to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene, they have donated a number of handmade Glycerine soaps for patient and staff use.

Logistics support from Aberystwyth University is supporting NHS staff to transform the hospital estate

Aberystwyth University have been supporting Hywel Dda UHB colleagues by storing equipment from Ysbyty Bronglais’ manual handling department on their own estate. This has allowed Health Board staff to get on with transforming and adapting the hospital site to manage increased demand brought about by COVID-19.



Powys Teaching Health Board

Volunteers across Powys come together to support vulnerable groups, community support services and hospital teams

The Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) is co-ordinating formal health and care volunteering opportunities identified by Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board on behalf of the Community Sector Emergency Response Team (C-SERT). Volunteering roles include telephone befriender services, delivery drivers to ensure people in isolated communities receive nutritious hot meals, roles to support community support workers and a range of hospital-based roles like portering, catering and call-handling.



Specialist respiratory training for frontline staff to support the COVID-19 response



Respiratory Practitioner and Specialist Physiotherapist Helen Hathaway has supported frontline staff at Powys Teaching Health Board by providing specialist respiratory training to around 230

people via Skype. The training supports frontline staff who are dealing with an increase in the number of vulnerable patients presenting with respiratory issues.

Powys-based rugby clubs raise money for the Health Board thanks to the 'Pass It On' challenge



Rugby clubs across Powys have been raising money for the Health Board by taking part in the 'Pass It On' challenge. This is an online trend where one rugby club takes part in a fundraising initiative for the NHS, before 'passing it on' to another club to do likewise. The example featured here is being carried out by Llanidloes Rugby Club, who are running and walking 1,400 miles in just 14 days. Other Powys-based rugby clubs who have taken part in 'Pass It On' include Newtown Rugby Club and Welshpool Rugby Club.

**Public Health
 Wales NHS
 Trust**

‘How Are You Doing?’ Campaign

Public Health Wales NHS Trust has launched a new wellbeing campaign to address the negative impact of COVID-19 on the mental, physical and social wellbeing of people in Wales.

The new ‘How are you doing?’ campaign has been created to support the people of Wales to look after their wellbeing and to ensure public health is protected during the isolation period. This follows calls made by many charities and human rights experts warning that emergency isolation measures to tackle COVID-19 will put disabled, vulnerable and older people at risk, as well as having an increased negative impact on the wider public’s mental and physical wellbeing. ‘How are you doing?’ is a behavioural science-based campaign that will take place on Public Health Wales’ social media channels but also on TV and radio.

Public Health Wales has launched a new microsite which hosts a wealth of information offering practical support for people who may be affected by the concerns highlighted in the research. The microsite also provides useful links to charities and support groups for people who are feeling overwhelmed by the current situation.

Further information and resources are available via the [Public Health Wales website](https://phw.nhs.wales/howareyoudoing).



Keeping physically well?
 Taking care of your body helps care for your mind. Making small, gradual changes can have a positive impact on your mental wellbeing.



Staying connected?
 At times of stress, it’s important to draw on your support network – this could be your family, friends, work colleagues or your wider community.



How are you feeling?
 We are living through a difficult time and it is more important than ever to look after your mental health and wellbeing.



Further support and helping others
 There are services to support you and others you may be worried about. Talking about your worries and problems can make things easier.

**Swansea Bay
 University
 Health Board**

Career-long servant to the NHS continues to support the COVID-19 response by making protective gowns for training

Swansea Bay NHS
 @SwanseaBayNHS

Once part of the NHS family you will always carry your friends and colleagues in your heart. That is certainly the case for retired NHS worker Anne Jones who has been busy sewing gowns at home to help hospital staff during these difficult times. Story tinyurl.com/ycbyp1tq

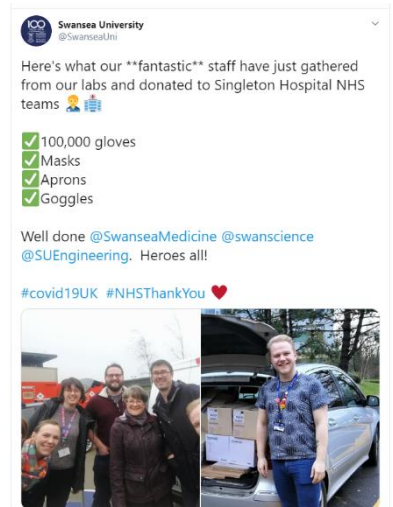


At Swansea Bay UHB, retired NHS worker Anne Jones, who began her career in the 1960s at Morriston Hospital and finished up working in administration at Singleton Hospital’s neonatal department, is continuing to support her NHS colleagues by utilising her sewing skills to make protective gowns. The gowns are being worn primarily by Swansea Bay UHB staff when delivering training sessions, specifically, to practice ‘donning and doffing’ (that is, the

practice of putting on and removing PPE in a manner that ensures the wearer is protected). Health Board staff are reporting that the new PPE is improving their confidence in clinical situations.

Swansea University provides PPE and additional facilities to support staff

Swansea University’s Science, Medicine and Engineering Schools have also played a key part in supporting the Health Board in its COVID-19 response with a donation of over 100,000 gloves, masks, aprons and goggles. In addition, the Swansea University Medical School’s Clinical Skills Suite, which is based at Singleton Hospital and houses the College of Human and Health Sciences, is now at the full disposal of Swansea Bay UHB.



Supporting the elderly and socially isolated through school-led distributions

Ysgol Y Cribarth
 @YsgolY

Community spirit at Ysgol Y Cribarth. Pupils, parents and the community police collecting food for distribution to those in need.



Schools in the Swansea Bay UHB area are not just supporting the Health Board – Ysgol y Cribarth are also supporting local communities by collecting food donations from across the area and distributing them to those in need, particularly the elderly and socially isolated.

**Velindre
 University
 NHS Trust**

Overwhelming community response to Velindre Cancer Centre’s Amazon Wish List

To support the UK Government’s ‘stay at home’ message and reduce human interaction, Velindre Cancer Centre opened an Amazon Wish List to make the experience of patients on the ward that bit more comfortable. Some of the items on the Wish List included toiletries, nightwear and stationary equipment. The appeal to purchase and donate items on the Wish List was met by an overwhelming public response. Within days, the Centre received such a volume of items that staff temporarily paused the Wish List so that they could distribute what had already arrived at the Centre. The List will re-open when more items are required.



Donations of iPads to inpatients by local primary school at Velindre Cancer Centre to enable contact with family and loved ones

The ban on mass gatherings has meant that traditional fundraising projects are currently on hold, but that hasn’t stopped members of the community (in this case, pupils at Ton Yr Ywen primary school) doing their bit to support the Centre. Not only is the school a regular contributor to the Cancer Centre’s Great appeal, they have also donated a number of iPads to enable cancer patients to stay in contact with family



Super job from a few of our KS2 children this morning completing 2 rounds of Joe Wicks P.E workout! Keeping healthy and happy whilst maintaining our social distance! 🙌❤️ Well Done everyone!!



members and loved ones while on cancer wards. Staff at the Cancer Centre are helping to improve patients’ IT skills by introducing them to video platforming services. Ton Yr Ywen school have also been supporting children of key workers to stay active and healthy by providing exercise sessions at the school while maintaining social distance.

**Welsh
 Ambulance
 Services NHS
 Trust (WAST)**

Supporting WAST to clean and decontaminate ambulances in rapid time

Students at Swansea University are working alongside WAST colleagues in an effort to reduce the time it takes to clean and decontaminate an ambulance from 45 minutes to 20 minutes after carrying a patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. This joint-working came about following a challenge from the ambulance service itself, with over 200 solutions proposed by individuals and groups across the UK.

The University's solution will see them test a new rapid-release gas treatment for ambulances, which could remove COVID-19 contamination



from surfaces and the air in under twenty minutes, removing human cleaning intervention. Support for the challenge has been provided by the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) and government scientists based at Porton Down. If trials are successful, it could also be rolled out for other blue light services, public transport and hospital wards.

St John Ambulance Cymru is supporting WAST's frontline services



Working with the NHS in Wales, St John Cymru is providing vital ambulance support with their highly trained crews facilitating the transferring of patients to and from hospital settings, freeing up ambulances for emergency calls.

Lee Brooks, Director of Operations at WAST, said: *"St John Cymru is a trusted partner and we have been working with them already as the support provided during winter has been extended for the coming months.*

"We expect to work more closely than ever before as we plan our response to the developing Covid-19 impacts." (See [here](#) for the full press release).

**NHS Wales
 Informatics
 Service
 (NWIS)**

Rolling-out the Welsh Clinical Portal to support the GP workforce

NWIS are playing their part in supporting local communities by providing a more robust support infrastructure to GPs by accelerating the roll-out of the Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP). This enables GPs, who are already adopting a number of innovative ways of working to support people in their own homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, to access vital patient information quickly and effectively.



The portal gives secure access to patient information from secondary care. It means GPs can view discharge summaries, graphable test results and clinical letters from every hospital in Wales, including radiology reports. The WCP improves collaboration between clinicians and improves clinical decision-making by providing access to the right information where and when it's needed. It shares, delivers and displays patient information from a number of sources with a single login, even if that information is spread across Health Boards. With information in one place, clinicians always have access to the most up-to-date and accurate patient records.

New IT system for COVID-19 testing centres to maximise and improve capacity

NWIS have been further supporting this process by launching a separate IT system for use at testing units in Wales. The new system will digitally store all test results and add them to the Welsh Clinical Portal. The system will help to speed up the requesting process in laboratories and will allow for a greater number of samples to be booked in and accurately labelled.

NHS Wales Informatics Service develops IT system for Covid-19 testing



The system also allows clinicians and data analysts to differentiate which COVID-19 tests were requested in community settings and which have been carried out in hospitals for inpatients. This will provide a clearer picture of how the outbreak is being managed across Wales. Test results will be accessible to healthcare professionals via the WCP and the WCP Mobile App, which means clinicians will be able to access their patients' results while on-the-go or at the bedside.

**NHS Wales
 Shared
 Services
 Partnership
 (NWSSP)**

Innovation Portal established to co-ordinate the community and industry response to COVID-19

NHS Wales Shares Services Partnership (NWSSP) has worked in partnership with the Life Sciences Hub Wales and National Procurement Services to develop and establish the [Innovation Portal](#).

Life Sciences Hub Wales has been appointed as the main point of contact for industry by the Welsh Government and is taking the lead for initial engagement. By acting as the single point of contact for all businesses, small enterprises and community groups who might be in a position to help the NHS and social care sector in some way, NWSSP now have greater capacity to follow up the referrals from this exercise and are procuring products more quickly to support frontline health and social care workers.

The portal will identify appropriate businesses who are potentially able to supply items that are on NHS Wales’ critical products list. It allows businesses to register contact details, business information, product information and upload relevant evidence of product regulatory compliance. The online tool also forwards qualified offers of products straight through to NWSSP in the correct format, with the right information to progress offers into the procurement process.



Commenting on the portal launch, Cari-Anne Quinn, CEO of Life Sciences Hub Wales, said: *“Our remit is to facilitate collaboration between industry, health and social care. We are pleased to be working with our procurement colleagues and taking an all-Wales approach in responding to offers of support from industry as we face the demands of Coronavirus and the pressure on our health and care systems.”*

Life Sciences Hub Wales is providing training and portal access to colleagues from NWSSP, National Procurement Services and the Welsh Government’s Economy Skills and Natural Resources (ESNR) Team to increase the number of technology and procurement experts focused on enquiry processing.

How can the Welsh NHS Confederation help you?

The Welsh NHS Confederation is the only national membership body which represents all the organisations that make up the NHS in Wales: the seven Local Health Boards, the three NHS Trusts and Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW).

If you would like more information on this briefing. Please contact our Director, Darren Hughes, Darren.Hughes@welshconfed.org

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