



The NHS Wales COVID-19 Innovation and Transformation Study

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Our Partners:



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Study objectives

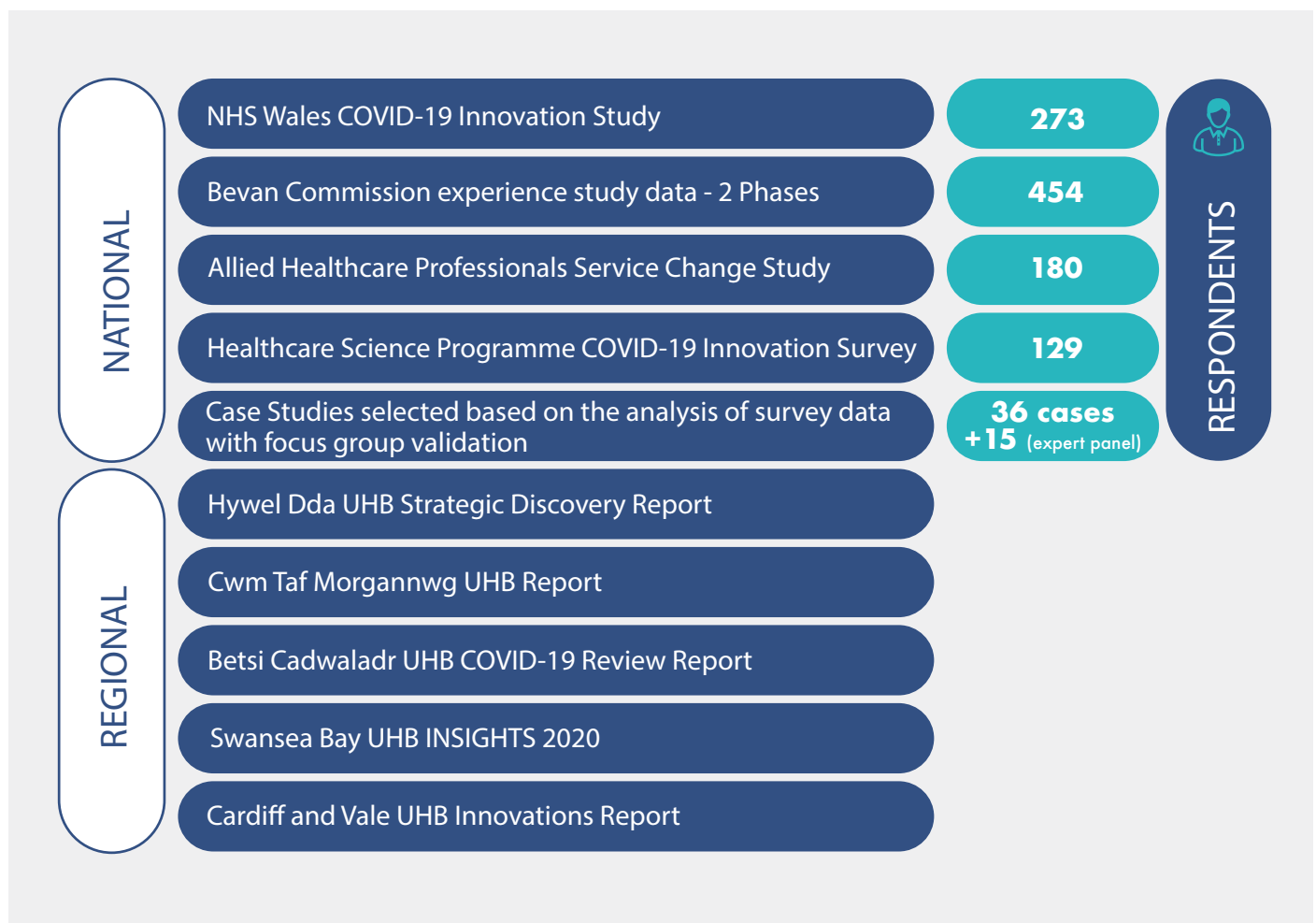
The aim of the study is to capture the key learning and share the novel and innovative practice that has emerged as a result of COVID-19 in NHS Wales.

The key objectives of the full research study are to:

- capture key learning to understand the reasons why NHS Wales organisations and staff could or did innovate;
- share a set of case studies that detail examples of innovation;
- produce a set of emerging themes originating from key findings;
- provide an evidence base that can sustain the adoption of innovative practice and transformative ways of working;
- inform future policy-making from the evidence.

The evidence base

This report has been created using a broad range of qualitative evidence sources generated during the past 12 months, as shown in the table below:





Emerging themes and next steps

Our analysis of the broad range of qualitative data revealed **seven emerging themes**, which we have explored further with case studies:

More agile use of resource

- Significant reallocation of resources took place, some reported this was very easy, others said it was process heavy (informal vs formal arrangements)
- Barriers were identified in redeploying staff to priority areas at pace
- Access to funding for innovative and transformative ideas was readily available to some colleagues but not others.

Staff wellbeing

- Interventions introduced to support the emotional and mental health of colleagues were reported, and were positively received
- The impacts of these interventions have varied across a wide and diverse workforce highlighting the need for a wider range of interventions (in partnership with other organisations)
- Frontline colleagues have reported a need for different support, provided in more accessible ways.
- Clear communication was highlighted as an essential element of staff well-being

Working together

- A sense of real pride in the way staff pulled together through a difficult, high pressure time was clear from the responses
- Staff reported feeling empowered and valued through being able to design and implement new innovation and transformation projects
- Multi-Disciplinary Teams and networked approaches were used more widely to make the most of varied skills to tackle new challenges
- Positive community spirit, cohesion and resilience reported, involving third sector colleagues and organisations

Accelerated decision-making

- Due to revised governance arrangements, many staff reported that decisions were made at a faster pace (described as “reductions in red tape”). This made a big impact and was welcomed
- Staff felt empowered to make decisions based on their knowledge and experience
- This enabled staff in some areas to try new and different

things, leading to shifts and changes in service provision

- Staff views highlighted a real need to capitalise on this momentum to change and transform ‘the way we do business going forward’
- Many staff fear a return to old ways of working, where they are not able to make the changes to services they feel are needed

Sustaining the pace of innovation and change

- A feeling of confidence and ability to try new things and provide services in new ways was a major theme
- As well as improving the service, this had a positive effect on staff morale and patient outcomes
- Strong views that NHS Wales needs to capitalise upon the ‘COVID-19 platform’ and current change receptive state to make changes to services, based on what has worked so far

Digital access and confidence

- Effective uptake and use of digital technologies by staff, both in providing patient services and internal working and communication
- Digital technology provided more choice and control to patients over service use and self treatment
- The question of ‘digital by default’ vs ‘digital by choice’ needs to be addressed to ensure digital inclusion

Embracing new technology

- The systematic (rapid) acceptance and adoption of technologies has been critical in responding to the pandemic
- It is clear that the use of technology is considered essential in responding to the stabilisation and reconstruction of services

In addition, the following **wider themes** emerged:

- COVID-19 provides a platform for us to change and transform our services
- NHS Wales has a significant role to play in carbon reduction, particularly through the use of technology. The environmental impact of service change should be measured

The **full report**, which contains the full analysis, a set of supporting case studies and recommendations to take forward the key findings will follow.

This will serve as a springboard for further evaluation, policy development and action by stakeholders across NHS Wales.



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