



Welsh NHS Confederation  
Confederasiwn GIG Cymru

Briefing

# Placing the patient at the centre of care

This briefing highlights examples from NHS organisations across Wales which have supported patients to take charge of their health and care, while providing patient-focused services

April 2022

# Introduction

The NHS in Wales continues to face extreme pressures in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Health and care staff are rising to the challenges across the system, working to ensure patients receive high standards of care

During this time, NHS staff have made every effort to place patients at the centre of everything the service does and aims to do. This briefing highlights examples of this.

To deliver on transformative projects, the service is often supported by the communities it serves. In Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, community fundraising efforts have supported the creation of a breast cancer centre which provides a peaceful environment in which patients can receive the care they need.

Other initiatives, such as the Stroke Improvement programme in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, are ensuring that patients are supported at home where possible through the introduction of an Early Supported Discharge service. Such support can lead to increased independence for patients.

Other organisations are seeking to give patients more control over their health and wellbeing, with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board introducing innovations in outpatients such as patient-initiated follow-up. Hywel Dda University Health Board is also piloting a health coach programme to support lifestyle changes, with a focus on support for those seeking help with alcohol, smoking, vaping, healthy eating, and physical activity.

The service is also working to ensure access to all, with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board supporting an optometry service for the homeless. Through initiatives such as this and others, the NHS is continuing to strive to offer the best service and care to all communities across Wales.

This briefing highlights examples from NHS organisations across Wales which have supported patients to take charge of their health and care, while providing patient-focused services.

## Community spirit at the heart of new breast centre

- Community fundraising provides additional amenities to centre
- Funding will support the creation of calm and dignified environment for patients

Construction of the new breast cancer 'centre of excellence' at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr is expected to be completed in February 2023. The overwhelming fundraising efforts of local communities have resulted in £215,000 for the health board to provide additional amenities at the centre, alongside the £11m investment from Welsh Government for the construction of the facility.

This vital additional money will be used to ensure that breast care patients - both male and female - are provided with a calm and dignified environment, where they and their families can come to terms with their diagnosis and treatment.

This will include artwork, lighting and furniture to create a calm and comfortable waiting room; a bespoke prosthesis room designed to give women the time and dignity to choose the correct fitting after mastectomy; sensitively-designed counselling rooms for patients to discuss their diagnosis with the clinical team in a non-clinical, holistic environment; and a children's activity space to support parents attending clinical appointments.

## Multi-million-pound programme to improve stroke prevention, diagnosis and rehabilitation

- Three new rehabilitation centres to open across north Wales
- Programme to include discharge services, reducing time spent in hospital by 37 per cent

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is launching a Stroke Improvement Programme which includes opening three stroke rehabilitation centres for patients who no longer need specialist medical care in acute hospitals, but require rehabilitation that **cannot be delivered at home**. The first centre is planned to open in Ysbyty Eryri in early spring, with another two centres planned for central and east north Wales.

The programme also includes a new preventative service, where stroke specialists will work with GPs to screen patients who are showing signs that they may have a stroke in the future. The prevention service will include improving atrial fibrillation (AF) **detection and robust** monitoring of people with the condition. According to the Stroke Association, AF contributes to just under 20 per cent of all strokes in the UK. The health board is working with Stroke Association and Stroke Survivors group to develop the new improvement programme.

The programme will also start an Early Supported Discharge service, the first in north Wales. The service will provide specialist stroke recovery support at home, reducing time spent in hospital by 37 per cent for current stroke patients, leading to an increased independence and improved recovery.

## Optometry support service for homeless citizens

- 11 homeless patients seen during first session of pilot scheme
- Patients have access to additional services through collaborative stakeholder approach

The pilot scheme supporting homeless citizens was inspired by Vision Care for Homeless People, and local optometrists and dispensing opticians volunteered their time to provide clinical sessions for patients who may not be accessing the healthcare they need.

Taking place at a multidisciplinary centre in the heart of the city, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board provided specialist optometry equipment to the newly refurbished clinical assessment room, ensuring optometrists and patients have a suitable space to undertake examinations.

Led by optometrist Vikki Ann Baker, the first session saw 11 homeless patients receive a clinical examination at the centre, with the majority of them requiring spectacles for further support. The collaborative approach between all stakeholders involved ensures the patients have access to spectacles and any additional referrals or intervention through the service.



## Innovations in outpatients

- Services to give patients more control over appointments
- Innovations could reduce number of appointments which do not add clinical benefit

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board are transforming Outpatient Services to improve access and the health of its communities.

In order to give patients more control over their own care, free up capacity to see patients when they most need to be seen, and reduce the number of appointments which do not add clinical benefit for patients, the health board has launched SOS (See on Symptom) and Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU).

Clinicians will advise if a patient is suitable for transfer to an SOS pathway, rather than regular follow up appointments scheduled by the hospital. This is to allow for a defined period of time within which a condition is expected to improve. If any issues are experienced during this time period, advice/support can be requested from the referring clinician. If a follow-up is not required during the SOS duration, then the patient will be automatically discharged back to the care of their GP.

Patient Initiated Follow-up (PIFU) puts patients in control of making an appointment or getting advice when they need it the most as attending regular outpatient appointments scheduled by the hospital can cause unnecessary anxiety and conditions can flare up between appointments.

A patient will stay on a PIFU pathway for the duration of their condition and will not be discharged back to the care of their GP.

# Digital Health and Care Wales

## **New hospital pharmacy system available nationally**

- Implementation completed in 12 months over 28 sites
- System has nearly 2,500 users

A new digital hospital pharmacy system is available nationally, with implementation completed over 12 months in 28 sites across seven health boards and one trust in Wales.

The system is designed to improve accuracy of computerised dispensing and medicines stock management. It will also improve the clarity of data recorded, ensuring further compliance with national governance, meaning safer and more consistent care.

The consistency of one national system brings many benefits, including standard labels on hospital medications to help give patients a better experience. The consistency also helps to put patients at ease, and can make things less stressful for them.

The system, developed by CareFlow Medicines Management (formerly WellSky), has nearly 2,500 users across Wales and offers a more efficient and consistent way of working across hospitals. It links medication dispensing and usage data by using nationally recognised standards, allowing for a more comprehensive, real-time view of information.

This marks the first step in the journey to implement national electronic prescribing and medicines administration.

# Health Education and Improvement Wales

## New strategic workforce planning resources available for healthcare professionals

- Toolkits developed to support effective workforce planning
- Resources available for primary and wider healthcare

Health Education and Improvement Wales has shared a suite of newly developed resources to support strategic workforce planning for both primary care and wider healthcare across Wales. The resources include an interactive toolkit that offers a guide through strategic workforce planning based on the Skills for Health Six Step approach.

The toolkits will support effective workforce planning at all levels of organisations and help them create a sustainable workforce, prepare for future changes, identify and plan for any workforce gaps, whilst managing risk and exploring new innovative workforce opportunities.

For primary care, the resources have been designed specifically to support cluster-based workforce planning. For wider healthcare, the resources include a toolkit and guidance together with a set of resources and templates to support the development of strategic workforce plans.

In addition to the workforce planning resources, a Workforce Planning Capability Self-Assessment Tool has been developed in collaboration with the NHS Wales Workforce Planning Network.



# Hywel Dda University Health Board

## Health coach pilot launched in Carmarthenshire

- New pilot supports patients to make healthy lifestyle choices
- Nine Carmarthenshire GPs trialling pilot

Hywel Dda University Health Board has launched a new health coach pilot to support healthy lifestyle change within its communities.

The pilot focuses on intervening to support patients who are seeking help with alcohol, smoking, vaping, healthy eating, and physical activity. Contact will be made with a health coach if a patient is keen to see one after screening by GPs and practice nurses.

The health coach will use motivational interview and brief intervention techniques to support the patient to make small changes to support people to self-care. Each patient who attends with a health coach will receive support to develop a lifestyle improvement plan and will engage with the coach over several weeks. The health coach can also refer patients to more specialised services such as Dyfed Drug and Alcohol Service (DDAS) if appropriate.

Nine GP surgeries across Carmarthenshire are currently implementing or trialling this pilot, with the next phase intending to roll out to Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

# Powys Teaching Health Board

## Free exercise classes for people with arthritis

- Classes aimed and designed to help those with arthritis
- Scheme highlighted as part of the Help Us Help You campaign

In a bid to keep people moving, a national charity is offering free exercise classes for people in Powys living with arthritis and other conditions.

Organised by Cymru Versus Arthritis - as part of its Welsh Government funded CWTCH project - a six-week course in Pilates will be held online, designed for those with arthritis as well as musculoskeletal conditions or related issues such as gout, fibromyalgia, hypermobility and lupus.

The classes are being highlighted by the Welsh Government's Help Us Help You campaign, aiming to encourage everybody to make small and easy-to-achieve lifestyle changes which can make a big difference to our health and wellbeing.



# Public Health Wales NHS Trust

## Pandemic gives opportunities for collaborative approach to plan for health and wellbeing

- Public Health Wales report shows opportunities to think differently about places to improve wellbeing
- The report states engagement with the public is vital in the development of spatial planning

A new report from Public Health Wales shows that collaboration in spatial planning between policy makers and colleagues in health is vital to maximise health and wellbeing opportunities in the recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.

It shows that early involvement and joined up working across multiple disciplines can help to address the interconnected challenges that have emerged and deepened since the pandemic, and that this approach should be implemented on an all-Wales basis.

The report reiterates that public engagement in the development of plans from the early stages is essential and that planners and local authorities have a responsibility to continue to encourage the engagement and involvement in planning decisions.

In addition, it states the pandemic has provided an opportunity for planners to think differently about places – by exploring environmental and economic challenges and improving the impact that they have on health, wellbeing and equality. The report states that good quality housing should be developed within vibrant, cohesive places, and that minimum standards for space should be set to accommodate future needs.

# Swansea Bay University Health Board

## Team praised for caring approach to patients during pandemic

- Neath Port Talbot Acute Clinical Team adapted during pandemic to provide care to older patients
- Team supported seven care homes, providing care to 96 residents very ill with Covid-19

The Neath Port Talbot Acute Clinical Team provides medical and nursing care for adults in the community. The service prevents unnecessary acute admissions and can help speed up the process of being discharged from hospital. The team brings traditionally hospital-based assessments, treatments and investigations into the community.

Before the pandemic, the nurse practitioner-led service would accept referrals from GPs, paramedics and care home staff. But once the pandemic arrived, the team began calling care homes directly to check if any of them needed medical attention.

The team visited several care homes and treated patients who had Covid-19 where it wasn't appropriate or necessary for them to go into hospital. The team was involved with seven care homes and collected data to look at the outcomes of the patients they were involved with. In the seven homes, they found 190 residents were positive with Covid. 96 of them were very ill and received treatment from the team, with just 3 per cent of those going to hospital.



## Velindre Cancer Centre expanding provision of services

- The expansion of services is forecast to drive a 20 per cent decrease in in-patient admissions
- Velindre to expand Ambulatory Care services, which has seen over 800 patients since opening

Velindre has received over £1.2m to expand and enhance its Ambulatory Care Unit (ACU) and Patient Support Unit (PSU) provision.

Opened in October 2020, the ACU provides crucial interventions in patients' care, such as blood and iron transfusions, replacement of electrolytes and management of IV access as outpatient services. Similarly, the PSU, which opened in June 2019, was established to provide a range of same day, proactive and emergency interventions. The unit provides care such as feeding tube insertion, assessment of speech and swallowing, and advice on nutrition and supplementation.

Since opening, the ACU has seen over 800 patients and provided over 400 blood transfusions. Staffed by a team of nurses from the cancer centre, the unit provides same-day interventions to treat conditions that can often arise in patients who are living with cancer. The funding will help ensure that the centre is future-proofed to meet growing demand and increasing treatment complexities, which is partly due to the suppressed demand and late diagnosis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. A further £830k will also allow it to employ a dedicated team, working alongside ambulatory care, to deal specifically with patients experiencing toxicities arising from immunotherapy.

Welsh Government funding has provided an opportunity for increased hours of working and future plans will see hours extended to weekends and from 8am to 8pm on weekdays. This will allow the service to provide extra care to patients when needed. It is forecast that expanding these services will drive a 20 per cent decrease in in-patient admissions.

# Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

## Surf life savers dive into #Defibuary campaign

- Surf Life Saving Association Wales to register all their defibrillators on the UK national database
- Database used to source the nearest available defibrillator in an emergency

A group of voluntary life savers are diving into support the Welsh Ambulance Service's #Defibuary campaign and also boost the skills of their teams.

The Surf Life Saving Association Wales (SLSA Wales) have pledged to register all of their defibrillators on the UK national database, [The Circuit](#), so they are available for use by the public in an emergency 24/7 and also add extra defibrillation training to their existing first aid training package.

The Welsh Ambulance Service works in conjunction with The Circuit to have access to a live database that is called upon to source the nearest available defibrillator in an emergency.

The service currently has access to 6,047 registered public access defibrillators across the country and in emergency situations will direct a bystander to the nearest available resource. There are 2,700 defibrillators without a 'Guardian', who is responsible for checking their condition and carrying out tasks such as changing the batteries and pads after use.

#Defibuary is an annual online drive that aims to familiarise the public with the symptoms of heart attack and cardiac arrest and how to treat these two different emergencies, as well as boosting awareness of public access defibrillators and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

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.

Ty Phoenix  
8 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

029 2034 9850  
[www.welshconfed.org](http://www.welshconfed.org)  
@WelshConfed

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please email [info@welshnhsconfed.org](mailto:info@welshnhsconfed.org)

© NHS Confederation 2022. You may copy or distribute this work, but you must give the author credit, you may not use it for commercial purposes, and you may not alter, transform or build upon this work.

Registered charity no. 1090329