



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Senedd Members and Welsh MPs

28 March 2022

Dear Colleagues

I would like to share with you a number of case studies from NHS organisations on what they are proud of. These are shared at our monthly NHS Wales Leadership Board.

Below are the highlights and attached is further information about each area from February.

- **Aneurin Bevan** is due to begin construction of a new breast cancer 'centre of excellence' at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr in Ystrad Mynach and it is expected to be completed in February 2023. The centre will bring together the Health Boards breast cancer services into a sole unit, create additional capacity and will be a calm and dignified environment where patients and their families can come to terms with their diagnosis and treatment.
- **Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board** is launching a Stroke Improvement Programme which includes opening three stroke rehabilitation centres and new prevention, diagnosis and monitoring services. The purpose of the new specialist community in-patient rehabilitation centres is to bridge the current gap in post-stroke care giving people who have suffered a stroke maximum opportunity to recover and adapt in the best possible environment.
- **Cardiff and Vale University Health Board** are contributing to ground-breaking research into the effects of long Covid-19 on patients' lungs. The EXPLAIN study, which involves teams in Oxford, Sheffield, Cardiff and Manchester, is using hyperpolarised xenon MRI scans to investigate possible lung damage in long Covid-19 patients who have not been hospitalised with Covid-19 but who continue to experience breathlessness.
- **Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board** have begun a series of tree planting events across the Health Board. CTM's green network is supporting the planting of 85 tree saplings across 22 of their sites linked to the Queen's Canopy with free trees from NHS forests.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- **Digital Health and Care Wales** have awarded new GP IT System Contracts. The new five-year Framework Agreement is available to all GP practices in Wales as their current GP IT arrangements expire.
- **Health Education and Improvement Wales** and Social Care Wales are working together to develop a workforce plan for the Welsh Government's 'Together for Mental Health delivery plan 2019/2022'. The consultation welcomes contributions from individuals, representatives, groups and organisations and is open until 28 March 2022. You can view it [here](#).
- **Hywel Dda University Health Board** is gaining positive momentum in its collaborative focus towards delivering its business case strategy 'Making Malnutrition Matter'. The new post of Malnutrition strategic lead has been tasked with, and is focussed on, building on the good practice already present, and also ensuring equity and consistency across all areas of the HB, towards delivering the Malnutrition Business case aims and objective.
- **NHS Wales Shared Services Partnerships** Once for Wales Concerns Management Systems team have been shortlisted for a HSJ award. It has been shortlisted in the 'Most Effective Contribution to Patient Safety' category. The development of the new system was initiated as NHS Wales required national shared learning to improve services and reduce harm, with a consistent patient experience across the country. The goal was to ultimately provide a single system with unified data for the whole of Wales that brought together disparate systems for the consistent handling of incidents, complaints, claims, redress cases, risk registers, safeguarding referrals and mortality review records.
- **Public Health Wales** have published a paper on '[Associations between adverse childhood experiences, attitudes towards COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine hesitancy: a cross-sectional study](#)' was published with an associated press release in the open access journal British Medical Journal (BMJ) Open. The research was conducted by survey with adults in Wales and was a collaboration between Public Health Wales and Bangor University. The findings reveal that while most individuals surveyed, including those with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), supported and followed COVID-19 restrictions, individuals with a history of childhood adversity had less trust in NHS COVID-19 information and were more likely to favour removal of control measures. Also, that 1 in 13 individuals surveyed reported vaccine hesitancy but this increased around fourfold between those with no ACEs and those with four or more.
- **Swansea Bay** have launched a new one-stop shop to improve access to fertility treatment which will make it easier for people to access fertility treatment.

Yours sincerely



Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Promoting Excellence: What NHS Wales is proud of – February 2022

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

1. Community Spirit at the Heart of New Breast Centre

Construction of the new breast cancer 'centre of excellence' at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr is due to begin this month and is expected to be completed in February 2023.

Along with the £11 million investment from Welsh Government for the construction of this state-of-the-art facility, the overwhelming fundraising efforts of local communities have resulted in a further £215,000 of funding in order for the Health Board to provide additional amenities at the centre.

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 calming 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.

This simply wouldn't have been possible without the support and generosity of our local communities and our staff. From cake sales, Turn It Pink days, sponsored head shaves, runs and walks, everyone who has played a part in these fundraising efforts - no matter how big or small - has contributed to this fantastic total. Every penny of the money raised will go towards improving the experiences of our patients, and we are so grateful to all those who have supported this incredibly important cause.

For more information about the new Unit, [visit the Turn it Pink website](#)

2. NHS Staff Volunteer to Keep the Royal Gwent Tidy

The Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport is the first hospital in Wales to become a [#LitterFreeZone](#) in a new initiative by Keep Wales Tidy.

On Wednesday 26th January 2022, a number of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board staff, along with members of the local Biffa depot, volunteered to spend 10 minutes of their lunch break litter picking around the Royal Gwent Hospital site. The litter pick offered an opportunity to clean up the hospital grounds and also brought some much needed fresh air to a busy day.

Chris Davies, Environmental Manager for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, said: "Litter is an increasing problem across all our hospital sites. During the litter pick the team of volunteers collected an amazing 17 bags of rubbish, recycling and even a car seat!"

"Thank you to everyone involved in this first litter pick, which we hope will be the first of many to come! I'd particularly like to thank the NHS workers at the Royal Gwent who gave up some of their hard-earned break time to keep the environment tidy for all to enjoy."

Christina Ogden, Biffa's South Wales Regional Account Manager, said: "The Royal Gwent Hospital is a wonderful place that has continued to provide a lifeline for many local people through these difficult times."

"Some parts of the hospital grounds were identified as needing a litter pick, so a group of volunteers from the local Biffa depot were only too happy to join our friends from the Health Board to give the area a bit of a spring clean so it remains a welcoming environment for patients, staff and visitors."

"Meeting some new faces and working as a team in the fresh air for the good of the local community felt great for our physical and mental wellbeing."



Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

1. Multi-million-pound programme to improve stroke prevention, diagnosis and rehabilitation in North Wales



Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is launching a Stroke Improvement Programme which includes opening three stroke rehabilitation centres and new prevention, diagnosis and monitoring services.

The programme has received over £3million in funding, and will open three new rehabilitation centres across North Wales, for patients who no longer need specialist medical care in acute hospitals, but still require stroke rehabilitation that cannot be delivered at home.

The purpose of the new specialist community in-patient rehabilitation centres is to bridge the current gap in post-stroke care giving people who have suffered a stroke maximum opportunity to recover and adapt in the best possible modern environment.

Rob Smith, Stroke Improvement Programme Director, said: “This is a fantastic programme and a really important development in stroke care for the people of North Wales. The new developments will build on the existing services provided by our specialist hospital stroke staff.

“This a multi-phased project with the new services to be launched as the programme is rolled out.”

Specialist rehabilitation is widely recognised as an essential part of recovery after stroke, providing significant health and social care benefits for patients over the longer term. The first centre is planned to open in Ysbyty Eryri, Caernarfon, in early spring, with another two centres planned for Central and East North Wales.

The programme also includes a new preventative service, where newly recruited stroke specialists will work with GPs to screen patients who may be showing signs that they may have a stroke in the future.

Gareth Bowdler, Medical Director (East), said: “Ever since the Interstroke study in 2016 was carried out we have known that about 90% of strokes are attributable to 10 modifiable risk factors, and working collaboratively with GPs we will aim to reduce the incidence of stroke by focussing on these risk factors.”

The prevention service will include improving atrial fibrillation (AF) detection, an abnormal heart rhythm in patients, and robust monitoring of people with the condition, as according to the Stroke Association AF contributes to just under 20% 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, which will help patients recover at home, rather than in hospital or a clinical setting. The service will provide specialist stroke recovery support at home, reducing time spent in hospital by 37% of current stroke patients, leading to an increased independence and improved recovery.

Find more information on the Stroke Improvement Programme [here](#).

2. Ysbyty Gwynedd successfully performs its first Laparoscopic Nephrectomy Surgery



A Wrexham woman has praised her surgical team at Ysbyty Gwynedd after they successfully removed her cancerous kidney using keyhole surgery.

Until recently, Laparoscopic Nephrectomy Surgery was only performed at Glan Clwyd Hospital due to capacity issues. This service has now been extended to Ysbyty Gwynedd for patients across North Wales who require this procedure.

A Laparoscopic Nephrectomy is performed under a general anaesthetic. Three small 'key-hole' incisions are made in the abdomen to provide access for surgical

instruments that are used to detach the kidney, ligate blood vessels and remove the kidney through a small surgical wound.

The advantages of this technique over traditional open surgery include a shorter hospital stay and faster recovery time, less pain and bleeding after the operation and reduced scarring.

The majority of patients across North Wales would have previously been sent to hospitals in the North West of England and London for a Laparoscopic Nephrectomy.

Marie Leach, from Wrexham, was the first patient to undergo the surgery at Ysbyty Gwynedd.

The 56-year-old initially visited her GP after she was experiencing severe stomach pain and was referred for a scan at Wrexham Maelor Hospital. The scan showed an abnormal mass on her kidney and her surgeon, Mr Mohamed Abdulmajed, recommended surgery for this to be removed.

She said: “At the time of the scan I was told it was possible I’d need to go to London to have the surgery so I was really pleased when I was told I could have it in North Wales.

“Even though I live in Wrexham, it was much closer going to Bangor and not too far for my husband to collect me. It’s brilliant that this surgery has now been expanded to another hospital so more patients can receive it in North Wales.”



Consultant Urological and Pelvic Oncology Surgeon, Mr Abdulmajed, who successfully re-introduced the radical cystectomy (surgery to remove the urinary bladder due to cancer) service in North Wales in 2020, said: “We have been developing our Urology services across North Wales and re-introducing major bladder cancer surgery at Ysbyty Gwynedd was a major step forward and a proven success.

“We also see around 15 to 20 patients a year requiring Laparoscopic Nephrectomy who are sent to London to have their surgery.

“Now we are able to offer this surgery at another one of our hospitals and this means more patients are now able to have their surgery closer to their home and have access to the same specialist team who carried out that operation for their follow-ups and continued care.

“This surgery is currently under a period of direct mentorship, and I was pleased to be joined by Professor Philip Cornford from Royal Liverpool Hospitals who is there to assist if required.

“Laparoscopic and minimally-invasive surgery provides many benefits including shorter stay in hospital and ability to return to normal activities quicker and in Marie’s case this was certainly beneficial as she wanted to get back to running her busy café as soon as possible.”

Marie, who runs the Fresh and Tasty Café in Gresford, said she was delighted with her recovery following the operation.

“My recovery time has been fantastic. Within two weeks, I was back at work on light duties and now back to full time following the Christmas break.

“I can’t thank the team at Ysbyty Gwynedd enough for their fantastic work, I felt in very safe hands the whole time I was there,” she added.

Mr Kyriacos Alexandrou, Clinical Lead for Urology for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, said: “I welcome the introduction of this service to Ysbyty Gwynedd, and would like to thank Mr Abdulmajed who, through his persistence and determination, has set up this local service which will improve cancer care for the whole of the North Wales population.”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

1. Lung abnormalities found in long COVID patients with breathlessness

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board are contributing to ground-breaking research into the effects of long COVID on patients’ lungs.

The EXPLAIN study, which involves teams in Oxford, Sheffield, Cardiff and Manchester, is using hyperpolarised xenon MRI scans to investigate possible lung damage in long COVID patients who have not been hospitalised with COVID-19 but who continue to experience breathlessness.

The full EXPLAIN study will recruit 200 long COVID patients with breathlessness, along with 50 patients who have had COVID-19 but now have no symptoms at all; 50 patients who have no breathlessness, but do have other long COVID symptoms, such as ‘brain fog’; and 50 people who have never had long COVID who will act as controls for comparison.

The study’s Chief Investigator, Fergus Gleeson, Professor of Radiology at the University of Oxford and Consultant Radiologist at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We knew from our post-hospital COVID study that xenon could detect abnormalities when the CT scan and other lung function tests

are normal. What we've found now is that, even though their CT scans are normal, the xenon MRI scans have detected similar abnormalities in patients with long COVID. These patients have never been in hospital and did not have an acute severe illness when they had their COVID-19 infection. Some of them have been experiencing their symptoms for a year after contracting COVID-19.

"There are now important questions to answer. Such as, how many patients with long COVID will have abnormal scans, the significance of the abnormality we've detected, the cause of the abnormality, and its longer-term consequences. Once we understand the mechanisms driving these symptoms, we will be better placed to develop more effective treatments."

Professor Nick Lemoine, Chair of NIHR's Long-COVID funding committee and Medical Director of the NIHR Clinical Research Network, said: "More than a million people in the UK continue to experience symptoms months after having COVID-19, with breathlessness one of the most commonly-reported symptoms. This early research is an important example of both the committed effort the UK research community is taking to understand this new phenomenon, and the world-leading expertise that community contains."

2. Caesarean Section Pathways Transformed to Improve Patient Experience and Care



Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) Midwifery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department is pleased to bring to fruition increased capacity for elective caesarean sections at University Hospital of Wales (UHW). The unit at UHW is the largest in Wales and our staff care for patients with some of the most complex maternal health needs regionally. The new elective caesarean section list capacity will allow patients to be divided into two streams, one for emergency care and one for planned care.

The new system has been developed in collaboration with staff, as well as using valuable patient feedback. It has been endorsed by a number of professional organisations including Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Royal College of Anaesthetists that this is a preferred model of care. Other NHS organisations have also successfully implemented similar models which have significantly improved the experience of patients.

As part of the previous model, planned care could often be disrupted by emergency care which needed to take priority. The new system will alleviate these

pressures and delays. Elective capacity will be increased to twice a week with a view to increase this further to 4 days per week in the coming months. The phased approach will allow for a smooth transition into the new pathways.

What does this mean for patients in our care?

- A more controlled environment which improves patient experience
- Elective care less likely to be interrupted by emergency cases
- Designated pathway for emergency care offering improved access

Suzanne Hardacre, Head of Midwifery, said: “Staff have worked incredibly hard to establish our two brand-new pathways which will transform patient care. We are really excited to be able to launch the new pathways and know that this will have a significant impact on the experience of the patients who come through our doors. Thank you to everyone involved in increasing our elective caesarean section capacity and establishing the pathways which will allow us to continue to provide high-quality, safe and effective care.”

The new model has been made possible via capital funding from Welsh Government.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

1. Tree Planting for Wellness

Tuesday February 15, 2022 sees the start of a series of tree planting events across Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

Our Green CTM network is supporting the planting of 85 tree saplings across 22 of our sites linked to the [Queen's Canopy](#) with free trees from [NHS forests](#). This is part of a wider NHS Wales pledge to support the Queen's Canopy work, with every health board in Wales engaged in planting trees sustainably.

This initiative will see Health Board staff work with patients, community partners and volunteers who are keen to help us create green spaces for wellbeing. This also highlights our commitment to decarbonisation and the need to offset our carbon outputs in ways that benefit patients and planet.

As part of the Queen's Canopy initiative, we will be joining a UK wide network of community projects and organisations, 'Planting a tree for the Jubilee', all of whom are using this opportunity to champion their commitment to sustainability. Once the trees have been planted they will added to a [UK map of Queens Canopy Trees](#).

The trees provided by NHS Forests will also be a part of another UK wide initiative coordinated by the [Centre for Sustainable Healthcare](#), which aims to maximise the benefits of environmental practices for health and wellbeing.

Linda Prosser, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation said;

“This is a fantastic time for us to be planting these trees and marking our own commitment to growing and maturing into a greener, more environmentally responsible Health Board. I couldn't be prouder that we are working with community partners and volunteers to help plant the trees as it demonstrates the important role

collaboration will play in us reducing our carbon footprint, creating green spaces for wellness and sustaining our future.

“Tree planting may seem like a small step in a much bigger picture, but when you bring each of these actions together, we show that collectively, we can all help improve the way we care for our people and our planet”.

2. “Everyone has their own Everest to climb”

Ramblers Cymru is encouraging people to put their best foot forward and get outdoors to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Supporting the Welsh Government and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) *Help Us Help You* Campaign, the organisation urges residents of Aberdare, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, and surrounding areas to explore the picturesque paths, forests, coastal routes, and valleys that connect the region.

Ramblers Cymru Engagement and Communications Manager Brân Devey hopes people will join one of several local walking groups or meet safely outside with friends and family to combat isolation.

“Being active every day has been tough during this period, and for some it is a case of starting again, building confidence and literally putting one foot in front of the other,” he said.

“With the NHS under increased strain during the winter months it is important to be extra careful when out walking, to wear the correct footwear, wrap up warm and take the necessary equipment – know your limitations.

“And from a mindfulness and mental health perspective it is vital we keep active; going for a walk does the world of good and you can do so from your front door. It costs nothing and everyone has their own Everest, whether it’s a local mountain, a national park or coastal path.”

Originally from Bethesda, Snowdonia, but now based in Cardiff, Brân added:

“Walking side by side with others where possible is a great way to share any problems you might have, to ask people how they’re doing and show you care, which could be crucial at the present time.

“All of this will help ease some of that pressure on our hospitals and GPs, but it doesn’t have to mean over-exertion. Enjoying the sights and sounds of the local area - the peace and tranquillity - will all play a part in helping you to relax.

“And in the CTMUHB area there are so many amazing places to visit, from the Coast Path to the Brecon Beacons, and the popular Bunny Walks in Llantrisant we helped set up with the Community Council and Taff Ely Ramblers group volunteers.

“As an organisation we have seen so many benefits, with people venturing outside with their family or ‘bubble’ to take a walk when they might not previously have done so. That’s one habit we hope to see continue because it does make a huge difference to health and mindfulness.”

Brian Morgan, chair of Taff Ely (Llantrisant) Ramblers reinforced the message and said: “There is no downside to going out and having a good walk, except perhaps the cold weather at this time of year!

“Our group is primarily made up of people over 60 but we have a few younger members and the enthusiasm to get back together and out rambling again after lockdown was incredible, we all could not wait to do so and welcomed some new people as well.”

He added: “Walking is good for you physically and mentally, you can make new friends, see amazing parts of this region and there are endless benefits.”

Paul Mears, Chief Executive of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board echoed those words and said: “Even a short walk or physical activity outdoors can make a big difference in improving our wellbeing.

“Across this region we have so many beautiful walks of varying lengths and difficulty levels, so there is something for everyone. And as Brân says, taking a stroll will do the world of good in clearing the mind and introducing feelings of positivity while also having a positive impact on the heart, blood pressure and in supporting healthy weight management.

“It’s the perfect way to self-care and has been a lifeline for many families and individuals throughout the pandemic.”

Visit www.ramblers.org.uk/wales for more news and information from Ramblers Cymru, as well as details of walking groups and routes in your area.

Digital Health and Care Wales

1. Wales awards new GP IT System Contracts

Three GP IT suppliers have been awarded onto a new Framework Agreement to supply IT systems and Services for primary care in Wales.

Digital Health and Care Wales have appointed Cegedim Healthcare Solutions, EMIS Health and TPP.

The new five-year Framework Agreement is available to all GP practices in Wales as their current GP IT arrangements expire.

The fully compliant procurement procedure supported by Digital Health and Care Wales was led by the GMS IM&T Board and involved GPs, GP Practice Managers, Health Board Directors of Primary Care and the DHCW Primary Care Team.

Martin Dickinson, DHCW Head of Primary Care Services, said: “We look forward to working with the suppliers to deliver the next generation of IT systems for Welsh GP practices. I’d like to thank everyone who was involved for their work in ensuring the procurement was delivered successfully.”

1. Data Infrastructure Transition Completes

Transition of the data infrastructure held in NHS Wales Data Centre One to a hybrid of a new data centre location and cloud services has been achieved.

Establishment of the new locations mean that data is kept more resilient – providing a safe place for patient data to be held and accessed.

Following the procurement of the replacement data centre, the DHCW ‘Data Centre Transition (DCT) Project Team’ worked collaboratively with various third-parties to ensure the safe and secure transition without greatly impacting NHS Wales national services.

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

1. Securing travel expense reimbursement for medical and dental trainees in Wales

Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) in collaboration with BMA Cymru Wales, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) and trainee representatives have updated the relocation reimbursement policy for junior doctors and dentists in Wales.

The policy was originally designed to protect junior doctors from shouldering the financial burden of travelling extra distances, or completely relocating, as a result of their rotations to new workplaces for their training, often at great expense to themselves.

We have explored this and after discussions with trainees and other colleagues we are pleased to announce we may have found a short-term solution to support our trainees. To be backdated from August 2021 to August 2022 we have implemented an additional claims process for those trainees who reach the current annual allowance of £3,700. These trainees will now be able to claim up to an additional £3,700 (up to a max of £7,400 per year). We will continue to collect data from those trainees that reach annual allowance and fully engage with the trainees for whom this becomes relevant. Ultimately, we want to find a long-term sustainable solution for all our trainees so they do not have to be out of pocket because of training rotations. This pilot stage is the start of that goal.

2. Help us shape the future for a sustainable mental health workforce for Wales

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales are working together to develop a workforce plan to realise the Welsh Government's 'Together for Mental Health delivery plan 2019/2022'.

We would like to hear from individuals, representatives, groups and organisations about the key actions that will form the basis of this multi-professional mental health workforce plan for health and social care in Wales.

The consultation welcomes contributions from individuals, representatives, groups, and organisations - from 1 February until 28 March 2022.

Alex Howells, Chief Executive, HEIW, said: *"We were delighted that so many of our colleagues, partners and service users have already shared their ideas about the future mental health workforce, we have undertaken significant engagement, research and analysis, and this has informed the suggested actions included in the consultation document".*

Sue Evans, Chief Executive of Social Care Wales, said: *"This plan will be a vehicle for driving radical change and improvements in how we develop, value and support our mental health workforce. It will also help us develop the skills and knowledge of our general health and social care workforce to better equip them to deal with the mental health needs of the people of Wales.*

"Mental health and well-being is everyone's business, which is why we're keen to hear from people and organisations in all sectors, as well as from people with lived experience, their families and carers, so we can capture their views and reflect them in the final plan."

The final plan will include the generalist and specialist mental health workforce who play a role in mental health services in Wales and aims to provide citizen-led and quality driven care to meet the needs of those accessing mental health services, delivering patient-led and quality driven care.

You can find details about how to take part on the HEIW website [Consultation on the mental health workforce plan for health and social care - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](#), along with information about how to register for virtual workshops to support the consultation.

Hywel Dda University Health Board

1. The Welsh Nursing Care Record

The Welsh Nursing Care Record (WNCR) is a national solution for NHS Wales aiming to digitise and standardise the adult In-Patient nursing record.

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) are one of the first organisations to implement the application and rollout widely across the whole organisation. The application is now live in three Acute Hospital sites and four community hospitals in Hywel Dda University Health Board. The operational teams have engaged positively, with the local Nursing Informatics project team and Information Technology teams to enable the rollout plans to go smoothly and facilitate a transformative transition towards digital ways of working; despite facing unprecedented pandemic pressures.

HDUHB Nursing Informatics project team recognised the need to assess the impact and learning as a consequence of staff adopting WNCR, particularly understanding the cultural changes in practice. The local evaluation aims to gain insight into the impact using the digital solution for staff and patients using qualitative surveys and quantitative data analysis which can be accessed directly from the application system to measure levels of assessment and compliance.

Early results from the staff survey are predominantly positive and can be categorised as follows:

WNCR design

"It is a simple system...It leads you through it. So if you just follow it logically there is no problem whatsoever"

*"I didn't sleep much the night before.. I was dreading the day .. actually we all came in for a 12 hour shift to prepare ourselves.. But nothing it was fine. I couldn't believe it, I really couldn't believe it. **It was great.**"*

*"**Instant access** if I'm on the telephone to somebody I can pull up a record. I haven't got to go out and hunt for notes and bits of paper that are missing, back and forth that sometimes happened before. It's all there in front of me".*

".. that reservation I had was, I think was more personal than professional."

"I think the biggest challenge is some is still on paper and some is electronic."

*"The only negative is that we want **more put on there**"*

Workforce Development:

Technology and Informatics will become an increasingly essential aspect of health care transformation and professional development for nursing and all health care professionals.

The WNCR project team heard many staff prior to the WNCR application going live describe concerns and in some cases anxiety about using digital systems in practice, even to the extent of threatening to resign. The project team conscious of the views aimed to provide reassurance during the preparation and training phase.

Staff interviews are still progressing, but interim results are providing evidence that many of the staff concerns regarding their competency with digital skills were unfounded with the consequence that staff have been retained, now realising many benefits from using such an intuitive application and happy to share their skills with others .

“I was quite surprised how much I could remember from my training to actually doing it. I think your own reservations hold you back.”

“Have developed new skills, realized I am good at teaching others”

Benefits for Patient

The patient survey results are still being collated and aim to identify the impact of the application and new ways of working from the patients perspective. However staff have indicated benefits for patient care and safety during the staff interviews:

*“More accuracy really, you are not struggling to understand people’s writing. And you can decide where you need to go on the WNCR without trawling through notes and nursing records. It is **beneficial for the patient because nothing gets lost, it is there.**”*

2. Making Malnutrition Matter: positive collaboration and future focus

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) is gaining positive momentum in its collaborative focus towards delivering its business case strategy ‘Making Malnutrition Matter’ (July 2019).

This system wide call to action is aimed at embedding good robust nutrition and hydration pathways & best practice as ‘Business as usual’ within the HB. The aim is to reduce nutrition & hydration associated risk across the whole system, & release clinical, social & economic benefits. The new post of Malnutrition strategic lead has been tasked with, and is focussed on, building on the good practice already present, and also ensuring equity and consistency across all areas of the HB, towards delivering the Malnutrition Business case aims and objective.

One example of this successful collaboration has been as a result of the pace and success of the roll-out of the digital Welsh Nursing Care Record (WNCR). HDUHB have been one of the first in Wales to implement its application and rollout widely across the whole organisation. This supported the Health Boards success during Octobers 2021, Malnutrition Awareness Week (MAW), the annual UK wide initiative led by the British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN). As part of this national annual survey undertaken during the week, members of the health board’s Nutrition & Dietetic team organised the screening survey on hospital wards and in some community settings. The Health Boards Pembrokeshire acute and community dietetic teams, were named top screeners in the Wales by BAPEN, meaning it completed and collected the highest number of screening surveys on patients. This has meant that as well as contributing to a significant UK wide survey, there is also now meaningful local data for us to use to plan and improve our service around.

Despite the limitations and disruption of the Covid pandemic, there has been an on-going movement to establish the focussed-roles of 'Nursing Nutrition Champion' on wards, from within the current staffing compliment. As a natural progression on from the importance of nutritional screening, these posts are to provide a responsibility and over-arching focus for promoting good nutrition and hydration, as a fundamental of patient care. Robust work between the acute dietetic teams and the Quality Improvement (QI) nursing team has shown an innovative way of embedding and supporting good practice. By following the PDSA cycle, it has allowed the implementing of processes at ward level which have been proven to improve good nutrition and hydration for patients, within protected time. It has involved collecting baseline data of what process' are already in place, a bespoke order of priorities for improvement implementation, and an easy but effective way of demonstrating sustainability eg safety cross. With the gradual easing of Covid pressures, the collation arm of the project can gain further momentum again, and the established education packages for Nutrition Nurse Champions and their Teams can be re-focussed on. The initial scoping exercises for the further roll-out of the model of working for the community hospital teams, for which there was a lot of support and interest, can also continue. This will ensure the realising of many benefits for not just the patients, but the staff and the wider organisation.

With Covid pressures gradually easing it feels appropriate to look towards the middle of March and the UK wide 'Nutrition & Hydration week' (14th-20th March). The theme this year, for its 10th anniversary, is to 'Reinforce, Focus and Energise' with a shared objective to highlight, promote and celebrate improvements in the provision of Nutrition and hydration locally. In order to gain HB wide support all teams, across the Health Board, are being encouraged to raise a 'Pledge' using pledge cards stating how they will continue to support and champion nutrition and hydration for our varied population, as something that is integral to a lot of our work.

NHS Wales Health Collaborative

1. LINC celebrates the First Deployment Order signed for the new LIMS service

The Laboratory Information Network Cymru (LINC) Programme, has reached another landmark event.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has signed the first deployment order for the new Laboratory Information Management service (LIMS). The LIMS will manage over 35 million tests processed by the 21 NHS Wales pathology labs, hospitals, clinics, and GP practices nationwide.

Cardiff and Vale will be the first health board to go live with the service and the aim is to achieve stable operations by September 2023.

The deployment order represents the bulk of the value of the £15.9m contract to future proof pathology services across Wales. This marks the start of the practical development, testing, and validation of the new service and then go live at Cardiff and Vale over the next two years.

Judith Bates, the LINC Programme Director said *“This is a major milestone as it includes the customisation of the Citadel Health LIMS Evolution vLab. Accommodating the needs of NHS Wales and the development of the full end-to-end integration, to the national technical platform, national and local pathology systems, and equipment. It will also put in place the hosting of the new LIMS service, associated service and change management”*.

The new solution has been warmly welcomed by health board chief executives as an example of a patient focused service driven by the pathology clinical community, that will enhance and support the future provision of diagnostic services.

Improvements that the new LIMS will bring include:

- Reduced error rates improving clinical safety.
- Improved turnaround times improving patient outcomes.
- Fewer repeat tests, reducing costs and improving patient safety.
- Patient results are easier to compare with standardised reference ranges.
- Reduced processing time for test requests releasing staff to meet the growing demand.

LINC will continue to engage and partner with the pathology service, Digital Health and Care Wales and the wider NHS, to modernise and transform pathology services in Wales.



NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

1. Once for Wales Concerns Management Systems team shortlisted for HSJ award



The [Once for Wales Concerns Management Systems](#) (OfWCMS) team, in partnership with RLDatix, has been shortlisted in the 'Most Effective Contribution to Patient Safety' category within the prestigious Health Services Journal (HSJ) Partnership Awards.

The OfWCMS team and all contributors across Wales have developed a process and system that drives patient and staff safety, enhances collaboration and shared learning.

The development of the new system was initiated as NHS Wales required national shared learning to improve services and reduce harm, with a consistent patient experience across the country. The goal was to ultimately provide a single system with unified data for the whole of Wales that brought together disparate systems for the consistent handling of incidents, complaints, claims, redress cases, risk registers, safeguarding referrals and mortality review records.

Furthermore, records would be linked to provide a holistic picture by department/ward, by the Health Board and across Wales. Integration with patient and staffing systems ensures data would not be required to be rekeyed by different health bodies, improving the consistency and quality.

All healthcare organisations in Wales, including primary care practices, dental and optometry practices were included in the technology initiative, working with the team from RLDatix. These included the 7 Health Boards; 3 Trusts; 2 Special Health Authorities; the Medical Examiner Service for Wales; Community Health Councils.

In addition, three new major areas of functionality were developed in partnership with NHS Wales to further support Patient Safety. These were a Safeguarding module, Redress module and the new Medical Examiners platform.

The new system went live on 1 April 2021 with early adoption and phased roll out during 2021.

Project benefits ensured that data is now collected in a uniform way including incidents, complaints, claims and mortality records; all healthcare data can be viewed across between health organisations and analysed in a way that makes sense; healthcare organisations can learn from incidents as they happen/claims are made which has been difficult historically due to the different natures of incidents and claims and how they were recorded; Delivery with the Once for Wales framework ensures a cost-effective solution

Jonathan Webb, Head of Safety & Learning said;

“I am delighted that the partnership between NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership, all 15 health bodies in NHS Wales, Welsh Government and our partners in RLDatix has been recognised in the category ‘Most Effective Contribution to Patient Safety’.”

“The Once for Wales Concerns Management System provides a unique opportunity to enable greater consistency in capturing information about incidents and complaints across the NHS and actively includes community services such as primary care GP services, optometry services and dentists.”

“The fact that this partnership has delivered so much improvement already in spite of the challenges of the pandemic demonstrates the commitment of all staff in the NHS.”

The winners will be announced at the [HSJ awards ceremony](#) which will be held on 24 March 2022.

2. Electrification of HCS Fleet



The investment in electric vehicles for our Health Courier Service continues with a 400% increase in numbers over the last twelve months, such that we now have 30 electric vehicles as part of our HCS fleet. For the time being these vehicles are being used for shorter journeys (< 100 miles) but are still predicted to cover between 250,000 and 500,000 miles in total per year as the additional vehicles are phased in. This represents a minimum of a 275% increase on miles covered by electric vehicles and will lead to a reduction in our carbon footprint of at least 68,000 kgs based on a switch from the current diesel vehicles. The charging infrastructure is being continually enhanced to support both the HCS fleet and to offer charging facilities to NHS Wales staff for their private vehicles. Improved route planning software should also lead to efficiencies which will again help to reduce the overall carbon footprint.

All vehicles are fitted with temperature control, and all are able to be tracked live on the system. Drivers are also provided with hand-held devices that enable alerts to be sent for any traffic or other issues. At the moment electric vehicles are in use in all parts of Wales where HCS delivers the service with the exception of West Wales which will see its first electric vehicles in April of this year.

The HCS service is also currently taking part in a UK Government sponsored trial of electric HGVs. The trial is only just getting underway, but we understand that HCS are the first pilot site, to be closely followed by at least some of the UK's major supermarket chains.

Public Health Wales

1. Report on the Associations Between Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Attitudes Towards COVID-19 Restrictions and Vaccine Hesitancy: A Cross-Sectional Study.

The paper '*Associations between adverse childhood experiences, attitudes towards COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine hesitancy: a cross-sectional study*' was published with an associated press release in the open access journal British Medical Journal (BMJ) Open.

The research was conducted by survey with adults in Wales and was a collaboration between Public Health Wales and Bangor University. The findings reveal that while most individuals surveyed, including those with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), supported and followed COVID-19 restrictions, individuals with a history of childhood adversity had less trust in NHS COVID-19 information and were more likely to favour removal of control measures. Also, that 1 in 13 individuals surveyed reported vaccine hesitancy but this increased around fourfold between those with no ACEs and those with four or more.

The results suggest that ACE-informed and trauma-informed approaches may be an important factor when considering compliance with infection control restrictions and in improving uptake of medical interventions such as COVID-19 vaccination.

The paper has featured and had interest globally.

The paper is available via: [Associations between adverse childhood experiences, attitudes towards COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine hesitancy: a cross-sectional study | BMJ Open](#)

Also at: [Associations between adverse childhood experiences, attitudes towards COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine hesitancy: a cross-sectional study - World Health Organization Collaborating Centre On Investment for Health and Well-being \(phwwhocc.co.uk\)](#)

The associated infographic is available in English ([ACE-Covid-Infographic-English.pdf \(phwwhocc.co.uk\)](#)) and Welsh ([ACE-Covid-Infographic-Cym.pdf \(phwwhocc.co.uk\)](#))

2. Developments in Dental Reform and Epidemiology

In line with recently published Welsh Health Circular, WHC (2021) 032 by the Welsh Government, we are pleased to say that the Dental Public Health team in Public Health Wales has been working with the Welsh Government, health boards, Health Education and Improvement Wales, Community Health Councils, NHS Business Services Authority and other partners to restart the dental reform programme on the 1 April 2022. A programme structure has been put in place with key partners agreeing to be part of the Strategic Oversight Group for the programme and three workstreams have

started their work to support the reform programme. An engagement event is being organised in March 2022 to engage with the dental services and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Dental Public Health team is planning to restart the Dental Epidemiology Programme. We are working closely with the Welsh Government, health boards and Cardiff University to plan and organise Training and Calibration for the dental survey of five year old children in Wales. We have been successful in appointing Professor Paul Brocklehurst as a consultant in Dental Public Health who will be the Public Health Wales lead for this programme.

Swansea Bay University Health Board

1. New one-stop shop will improve access to fertility treatment

Making it easier for people to access fertility treatment is the aim of a new pilot programme in Swansea Bay due to start this spring.



Fertility Direct will be a one-stop shop where they can be referred by their GP or contact the health board team themselves.

Currently, people having difficulty conceiving will go to their GP and then be referred to the health board's fertility team after going through a series of consultations.

They then face a series of tests which can be time-consuming.

Tests need to be done within a given cycle and sometimes need to be repeated, which can lead to delays in treatment.

Adnan Bunkheila, professor of reproductive medicine and surgery, is introducing the project to help streamline the process.

Professor Bunkheila said: **"It is like an extended specialist arm to primary care and an efficient bridge to specialist care."**

"It will allow patients to access the specialist fertility service in the most efficient way."

“The population that GPs now look after tend to be older so the likelihood of seeing a young person with fertility issues is less common in some GP surgeries.

“Waiting lists become longer because there are more procedures to go through before a decision to be made.

“Covid has made us think about what we do every day and to look at how things can be done differently.

“All fertility patients need to pass through secondary care where we investigate, diagnose and treat 95 per cent of all causes of infertility.

“We can make a decision about the best way forward immediately, either to start medications, perform surgeries or initiate IVF treatment at the Welsh Fertility Institute at Neath Port Talbot Hospital.



“IVF is not the end of the road. The national success rate for IVF is about 30 per cent and those who do not conceive come back to us for further measures.”

Dr Kinza Younas (*below right*), obstetrics and gynaecology consultant, said Fertility Direct will be asking GPs to signpost the service to their patients.

She said: **“When patients contact us directly, we can ask all the relevant questions so we get the necessary and relevant information immediately.**

“All the appropriate tests can then be organised, and an appointment set up so that we have everything we need the first time we see the patient so we can make a decision on the best way forward – in one go, at one appointment.”

Professor Bunkheila’s idea is one of several projects from Swansea Bay staff which have been accepted by the prestigious health organisation, The Bevan Foundation.

They are part of the latest Bevan Exemplars scheme, which promotes and encourages innovative projects that have helped to improve health and care for people across Wales.

It invites healthcare practitioners from all over Wales to submit project ideas which are evaluated before being developed further in practical settings.

The Bevan Commission, which is hosted and supported by Swansea University, is Wales' leading health and care think tank.



It brings together a group of international health and care experts to provide independent, authoritative advice to the Welsh Government and leaders in Wales, the UK and beyond.

It ensures Wales can draw on best healthcare practices from around the world while remaining true to the principles of the NHS as established by Aneurin Bevan.

The design and planning of Fertility Direct is now being discussed with GPs. A pilot is due to start this spring, and it will be evaluated over a 12-month period.

Professor Bunkheila added: **“It’s an idea we’ve been thinking about for a while so it’s great to see the Bevan Exemplar programme encouraging us to look at things from a different angle.**

“Fertility is a fast-evolving and changing speciality. A complete referral would require two to five visits to the GP surgery for each partner.

“GPs can support the patient in so many different ways after accessing fertility services, but how the infertile patient reaches the specialist in the first place is in desperate need of change.

“With Fertility Direct, specialists’ prudent decisions are made more effectively and efficiently.”

2. £4 million operating theatre at Singleton Hospital will tackle eye surgery waits

A multi-million-pound investment has been announced at Swansea’s Singleton Hospital to tackle long waits for eye surgery.

A new operating theatre dedicated to ophthalmology procedures is set to open in the summer of this year – allowing the health board to carry out around 200 additional operations a month.



It's hoped that figure will increase over time, with the possibility of weekend and evening sessions being introduced.

The new modular theatre will be attached to the Day Surgery Unit on the opposite side of Sketty Lane from the main Singleton site.

It is costing £3.3 million, with a further £700,000 investment in new equipment. Additional staff are also being recruited.

Swansea Bay University Health Board has embarked on an ambitious programme called *Changing for the Future*, which will see health services delivered in a new and more efficient way.

Part of the programme includes creating a series of centres of excellence at the health board's main hospitals.

Singleton will become a centre of excellence for a number of specialties, including ophthalmology, which is already located there.

Like many other parts of Wales, Swansea Bay had long waiting times for ophthalmology before Covid. But the pandemic has considerably worsened them – hence the need for action.

Jan Worthing, Singleton Hospital Director, said: **“The reduction in theatre capacity as a result of Covid severely impacted all surgical specialties, but particularly ophthalmology due to the high numbers of patients affected.**

“We now have about 2,500 waiting for eye surgery. About 1,700 of these have waited longer than the 36-week target

“In addition, there are about 2,100 cataract patients waiting more than 26 weeks to be seen as an outpatient, and around 80 per cent of these are likely to need surgery.”

Mrs Worthing said the health board had invested significant amounts of recovery funding to support patients having their surgery at one of three private hospitals.

“However, we are keen to develop additional NHS facilities to reduce the need for this outsourcing in future,” she added.

Groundwork has already started, with the modular theatre expected to be on-site by the end of March.

Jo Williams, Divisional Manager for Ophthalmology, said additional theatre, nursing, medical and support staff were being recruited, with the new theatre expected to become operational by early July.

“It will deliver approximately 200 additional ophthalmology cases a month initially” she added.

“In the longer term we hope we can start doing evening and weekend sessions to meet the needs of the local population for ophthalmology surgery.”