



Members of the Senedd and Welsh MPs

1 August 2023

Dear Colleagues

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

In addition, I am pleased to inform you we recently launched the **national campaign to promote NHS 111 Wales Press 2** as the go to option for accessing urgent mental health services.

The service is available for people of all ages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in all areas of Wales to ensure those in need of support can access it quickly when they need it most. If you need to talk to someone urgently about your mental health, or you're concerned about a family member, call NHS 111 and select option 2 to be placed in direct contact with a mental health worker in your area.

The number is free to call from a landline or mobile, even if you have no credit left.

Please find below the highlights from each organisation:

### **Aneurin Bevan University Health Board**

- **Person Centred Value Based Health Care**

The Person-Centred Value-Based Healthcare (PCVBHC) Training & Development Programme has been developed for ABUHB by the VBHC team and global healthcare leaders 'Sprink'. The health board held a two-day event with over 65 staff members from across ABUHB.

The event provided an opportunity to learn from renowned international experts with the Value Based Healthcare and Innovation team providing an overview of the ABUHB value journey and successes to date. The focus was on the accredited tools developed and available for implementing a value-based approach to patient outcomes and pathway improvement.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

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.

The event described how patient outcomes were considered essential for clinical service design at the UHB and were captured and used extensively for decision making by the cancer centre team. The Boards innovative nurse-led heart failure service was also showcased as an exemplar of a person-centred VBHC care project.

Over the next 12 months there is a comprehensive programme to support staff and groups adopting the VBHC framework.

- **Tyleri Ward Community Resource Team (CRT) Rapid Response Direct Admission Model Launched**

A Rapid Response Direct Admission Model has been launched at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan in Ebbw Vale.

The new model means a large cohort of frail and/or elderly patients with health and social care needs can remain at their usual residence if they have access to additional support in the community.

The primary purpose of the new pathway is to provide the most suitable clinical environment to deliver safe and effective care, tailored to meet the needs of individuals within Blaenau Gwent.

The Rapid Response Direct Admission Model will provide medical and nursing treatment and timely multidisciplinary intervention, and/or provide a solution for a critical social issue. It will also support the discharge of patients back to their usual place of residence.

### **Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board**

- **Hospital ward opens dementia café for patients and relatives to visit**

Patients on Wrexham Maelor Hospital's older person's ward can now pop out for tea and cake with their families.

The café, which opened this month, is free to all patients and their visitors. The UHB have also created a 'bus stop' outside the café with a timetable to give patients the feeling of going out with fellow patients or to see their visitors.

The café is recognised as a calming facility for patients who are living with dementia when they are in hospital in an unfamiliar environment.

- **Additional activity helps reduce outpatient waiting times**

The health board has increased the amount of outpatient activity it is undertaking by utilising additional resource that has seen levels of activity consistently exceed pre-COVID levels. As a result, this has meant the outpatient waiting list over 52 weeks has reduced by 47% since the end of December 2022 and is 57% lower than the high of August 2022.

- **Use of Artificial Intelligence to diagnose cancer**

The UHB has led the way in using AI software to help diagnose prostate cancer, and is now utilising the software into what has been termed "computational pathology" to help diagnose breast cancers.

The application, called the Galen platform and developed by Ibex Medical Analytics, has been piloted within the health board and the team is the first in the UK to use it clinically to assist in breast cancer diagnosis.

In the previous trial, when it was used as a prostate cancer diagnostic tool, the programme looked at 1,600 biopsies and diagnosed 13% more cancers than without the AI help.

The real difference in this clinical setting is they are not only looking for the diagnostic cancer markers but also the prognosis markers, which will show which treatments or combinations of treatments will be effective for patients. This will aid faster diagnosis of which specific cancers patients are suffering from, which in turn could inform treatment decisions more quickly.

In the prostate cancer tests it yielded 100% reliability. When it indicated there were cancerous cells, there were, shortening the diagnostic process but, more importantly, giving assurance to pathologists they were catching as many cases as possible.

Streamlining the system of diagnosis is paramount for the team because of the various kinds of breast cancer, which require a variety of treatments.

The Galen platform gains knowledge as it goes. Pathologists will check the suspected results for accuracy and the system learns from their input for future tests.

### **Cardiff and Vale University Health Board**

- **Celebrating the work of the Normothermic Regional Perfusion Team**

The UHB is celebrating the pioneering work of its organ retrieval team, which has improved the viability of donated organs through the use of Normothermic Regional Perfusion (NRP) technology. This revolutionary technique restores oxygenated blood to donated organs after a person has passed away, significantly improving their quality for transplant and leading to better outcomes for transplant recipients.

Since introducing NRP technology in 2022, the team has become the third-largest NRP program in the UK and was nominated for national recognition for Excellence in Organ and Tissue Retrieval. The team's dedication to improving transplant outcomes has positively impacted local patients and a number of patients in other parts of the country. The team, which consists of eight experienced retrieval surgeons and eight scrub practitioners, is dedicated to moving boundaries and it is already expanding to meet growing demand.

Recently the NRP team performed 4 NRP retrievals in one week and helped to save the lives of 6 kidney and one liver transplant recipients.

Funding from the Welsh government helped establish the NRP program in Cardiff.

- **Newly launched 'QuicDNA' liquid biopsy clinical trial aims to improve the diagnostic journey for lung cancer patients**

A new clinical trial has been launched which will evaluate the benefits of an innovative liquid biopsy test in people with suspected lung cancer.

Made possible through the All-Wales Medical Genomics Service (AWMGS), Illumina Technology, Life Sciences Hub Wales, and multiple partner organisations, this new study will look at how the use of the liquid biopsy blood test earlier in the diagnostic process can improve and speed up diagnosis, reduce the time between diagnosis and treatment, and eventually inform how this technology can be used for other types of cancer.

## **Cwm Taf University Health Board**

- **Advanced practice role helps improve cancer pathways and waiting times for radiology patients.**

A new advanced practice Radiography Cancer Navigator role in the UHB has reduced waiting times and improved cancer pathways for radiology patients – scanning almost 400 more patients in the eight months since it began.

The role was introduced in August 2022 at the Princess of Wales Hospital, thanks to funding by Welsh Government through the Bevan Commission's Planned Care Innovation Programme. The Radiology Pathway Navigation project aimed to significantly reduce delays between diagnosis and treatment for cancer patients – leading to better outcomes and higher rates of survival.

The Navigator acts as a guide for patients, explaining radiology examinations and procedures, as well as combining several tests into one visit to the Radiology Department. The Navigator is also a crucial link between radiology and the clinical teams, as a point of contact and attendance at multidisciplinary team meetings to escalate patients through the pathway and assist with onward referrals.

Initial steps involved changing the referral and authorisation process allowing a quick reduction from five days to one day for urgent suspected cancer referrals. The project concentrated on lung and bowel cancers, with significant improvements made including a reduced waiting time for CT staging scans, following a positive chest x-ray or positive colonoscopy.

As a result of the Navigator role being implemented, twelve and a half hours of radiology staff time per week has been saved.

This new role has not only been an exciting new venture for all those involved but has already proved within its first six months, that it is highly regarded and has improved the way Radiology services are delivered for cancer patients in the Bridgend area.

There is further scope to expand the role throughout the Health Board and to potentially build a team of Radiology Navigators throughout Wales.

- **First in Wales Secondary Breast Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist joins Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board**

Macmillan's first Secondary Breast Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) in Wales has joined the University Health Board.

Secondary breast cancer is when cancer cells from a cancer that started in the breast spread to other parts of the body. It can also be called metastatic breast cancer and advanced breast cancer.

Secondary breast cancer can be controlled, often for many years, but it cannot be cured. New and improved treatments mean that women and men with secondary breast cancer are living for longer, but it is a complex diagnosis where patients can be affected by a number of health problems, but often a major concern for the patient is facing cancer again. This role will bring cancer expertise and provide skilled and personalised care, improving the experience of both cancer patients and cancer workforce colleagues.

## **Hywel Dda University Health Board**

- **Delta Wellbeing and Hywel Dda Health Board win ‘Partnerships in TEC’ award for telehealth project.**

A telehealth project which is supporting patients across west Wales to manage their health and make sure they are fit for surgery has won an industry award for its innovation.

Llesiant Delta Wellbeing and the University Health Board has received the Partnerships in TEC award at the ITEC Awards 2023. The telehealth project was launched to support patients across the region to monitor cardiac, lung function, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease remotely from their own homes using a range of health equipment paired to a mobile phone app.

It was expanded further to include orthopaedic patients awaiting surgery following the COVID pandemic, which had caused significant delays on the delivery of planned care, affecting patients’ physical and psychological wellbeing, and increasing the burden on healthcare services.

Delta Wellbeing worked closely with the health board and other partners to deliver a cost-effective, safe, and effective pre-habilitation service with multiple digital solutions to support and optimise patients’ health and wellbeing whilst they are awaiting surgery. This has resulted in fewer cancelled operations, a reduction in hospital length of stay at the point of the procedure; and has improved patients’ general health and wellbeing.

Through remote monitoring of patients, the clinical team is able to identify patients suffering from high blood pressure whilst on the waiting list and through early identification and signposting to primary care, these patients can manage their health, reducing the cancellation of procedures later on. By monitoring self-reported symptoms on the platform, the clinical team can identify any support the patient may need and escalate to the surgical team if needed.

Delta Wellbeing is a Local Authority Trading Company, owned by Carmarthenshire County Council, which uses innovative technology to provide a range of solutions in the health and social care sector supporting older and vulnerable people to live more independently.

- **New cancer clinic aims to improve patient care**

A new service has been launched in the UHB for those who have had a probable cancer diagnosed but it is unclear exactly what kind of cancer it is, and where the cancer started.

Malignancy of Unknown Origin (MUO) service will allow patients with a secondary cancer diagnosis to undergo further investigations to try and determine the source of the cancer and receive the most appropriate treatment and care. Working closely with colleagues at Swansea Bay University Health Board, Hywel Dda UHB will offer patients appointments within two weeks of referral from their GP and contact from the MUO team within 48 hours to a patient that is already in hospital.

Based in the Pembrokeshire Haematology and Oncology Day Unit at Withybush Hospital, patients referred by their GP will be assessed and reviewed by a doctor and have an oncology clinical nurse specialist assigned as their key worker. The oncology clinical nurse will help co-ordinate their care and support them through their journey.

## **Powys Teaching Health Board**

- **Reablement beds open at Knighton Hospital**

Four reablement rooms have opened at Knighton Hospital to provide more care closer to home for East Radnorshire residents.

Panpwnton Ward at Knighton Hospital was temporarily closed at the start of the COVID pandemic as part of the COVID response model in Powys, with staffing consolidated to Llandrindod Wells Hospital to help ensure a dignified, robust and resilient response to the challenges to come.

As we began to take steps from pandemic to endemic, the health board worked on a plan to re-open the ward. However, registered nurse staffing at the hospital had already been challenging pre-pandemic with a heavy reliance on bank and agency, and sadly repeated efforts to secure safe staffing levels were not successful.

With the ward remaining closed, and also with significant challenges facing the domiciliary care sector in mid Powys, it became clear that there were local needs that could be met in a different way. This led to us looking differently at interim options for Knighton Hospital and we were able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the co-located Cottage View residential care home. Four reablement rooms have therefore been developed to provide step down care within the local community whilst a supportive package of home care is put in place. One of the rooms can accommodate two people so that spouses/partners with similar needs can be supported together.

The reablement beds opened in May following approval from Care Inspectorate Wales. Whilst this remains a temporary measure given the challenges in recruiting and retaining registered nurses, it provides an important opportunity to review and evaluate different options for meeting rural health and care needs.

- **£15m Ysbyty Bro Ddyfi refurbishment**

New facilities opened at the end of April following the redevelopment of Ysbyty Bro Ddyfi in Machynlleth. Patients are now starting to use the redeveloped facilities at the Community Hospital thanks to £15m of Welsh Government funding.

At the end of April local GP practice Dyfi Valley Health moved into the new hospital building and they are now operating from their new home.

The redevelopment also offers a new home for Powys Teaching Health Board's midwifery staff and health visitors along with a new Adult Mental Health unit and clinics for the Podiatry and Community Dentistry teams.

Community wellbeing is central to the project with the health board working together with the voluntary sector to provide wellbeing services within the building. The funding has also allowed the health board to address a number of building maintenance issues at the Machynlleth hospital as well as install electric vehicle charging points.

## **Swansea Bay University Health Board**

- **Why talking about end-of-life wishes is a positive thing to do**

Discussing the final months, weeks and eventually moments of your life is a topic many prefer to avoid, but a Swansea Bay team is encouraging people to have that conversation now - before it is too late.

For patients who have a chronic condition that is life-limiting, the importance of talking to loved ones and healthcare professionals about what they want for their final days and when they die can't be underestimated.

Having frank and honest conversations in the months and weeks leading up to the end of their life offers people a safe opportunity to share their requests for the last stage of their life. That could focus on the treatment options that might be best for that individual, or it may be centred around religious, spiritual or social needs.

It can lead to an improvement in the end of life care provided and reduce the burden on families or close friends. It often relieves anxiety - as relatives won't have to make decisions on behalf of their loved one, worrying about what to do for the best. It can also avoid unwanted or futile invasive treatments, offering people a more peaceful way to die.

This year, the health board's End of Life Care team is focussing on 'Advance and Future Care Planning'.

This involves recognising patients who are coming to the end of their life at the earliest possible stage, and generating conversations earlier so their wishes are discussed, recorded and respected.

To ensure a wide range of its workforce is equipped for these decisions, the HB has developed End of Life Care Champions. Staff are trained to recognise when a patient is dying, understand more about end-of-life care and be comfortable having difficult conversations with patients.

- **Specialist team delivers quicker service for mental health patients**

Patients with an urgent mental health need who turn up at the Emergency Department at Morriston Hospital are now being assessed within an hour by a specialist team.

Previously, they would often have to wait hours at a time to be seen because ED staff have to prioritise those with serious injuries and medical conditions.

Unfortunately, the delay could cause some patients with mental health conditions to become distressed, which could trigger abusive, aggressive or even violent behaviour towards staff.

But they are now being assessed by a triage nurse and referred directly to the Department of Liaison Psychiatry team within an hour.

The multi-disciplinary team consists of 36 staff, including consultant psychiatrists, associate specialists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists and technicians, substance misuse nurses, in-reach advisors, a learning disability nurse and administrative staff.

The service has now been awarded a gold standard mental health liaison service accreditation – the only service in Wales to get it.

The standard of care and treatment delivered over the past three years has seen the department meet all standards required to be reaccredited by the Psychiatric Liaison Accreditation Network (PLAN).

The team helps adult patients with a wide range of mental health issues, including dementia, across Morriston, Singleton, Neath Port Talbot and Gorseinon hospitals.

Outside of ED, patients are referred to the Liaison Psychiatry team from any ward for assessment, medication management or for establishing a management plan, which includes whether they need to be referred for admission to a psychiatric unit, home treatment or signposting to primary care.

The service runs every day between 7am-10pm, and has a response time target of one hour for any patient aged 18 or over that has been referred from ED.

Currently, 92 per cent of patients are discharged either home or directed to other agencies for further help. In order to be awarded PLAN accreditation, the team underwent audits while service users gave views on their experience. Staff from liaison teams from health boards around Wales and England also examined the service.

### **Welsh Ambulance Service Trust / Emergency Ambulance Service Committee**

- **Dementia Hero Award for Professional Excellence**

The Welsh Ambulance Service has won another coveted award for its work to support dementia patients. The Trust's Dementia Team won the Dementia Hero Award for Professional Excellence (Organisation) at the Alzheimer's Society Awards 2023.

The Dementia Hero Awards celebrate the involvement and participation of people affected by dementia and the impact they have for others living with the condition.

The Welsh Ambulance Service provides a service to over three million people in Wales, and the World Health Organisation states that dementia continues to be one of the 21st century's biggest healthcare challenges.

Last year, the Dementia Team started piloting 20 Reminiscence Therapy Interactive Activities (RITA) tablets in Wales and were crowned winners of the most innovative use of RITA for 2022 at the RITA User Group Conference and Awards.

And last month, the Trust unveiled new high-tech Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service vehicles, which boast dementia-friendly flooring, blinds and colour schemes to help improve patient experience.

The Welsh Ambulance Service is recognised as a Dementia Friendly Organisation by the Alzheimer's Society.

- **New Control Room Technology Helps WAST to Better Respond to 999 Calls**

The Welsh Ambulance Service has introduced new technology to improve the way it responds to 999 calls.

LifeX is a telephony and communications system that helps control room dispatchers to better communicate with frontline crews and process information in a more streamlined way.



The Trust is the largest ambulance service so far in the UK to go live with the new system, which is designed to manage resources more effectively.

The new solution was delivered in collaboration with partners Frequentis and Ambulance Radio Programme over a three-day period.

## **Digital Health Care Wales**

- **Paediatric inpatient documents to go digital**

A ground-breaking digital system for patient notes is set to move into its third phase with children's inpatient notes to be included in the system.

Two years after the Welsh Nursing Care Record (WNCR) launched in April 2021, the project will now move to the next phase, with documentation for paediatric inpatients now going digital thanks to £1.8m of funding from the Welsh Government's Digital Priorities Investment Fund.

Phase one and two of the project has focused on adult inpatient wards at acute and community hospitals. Traditional paper notes have been replaced with a digital system, transforming the way nurses record, store and access information.

Nurses now spend less time duplicating information on paper forms and more time caring for patients. Access to accurate, up-to-date digital notes allows nurses to make informed decisions about a patient's care, no matter where that care is taking place. These benefits can now extend to paediatric inpatients during phase three of the project.

- **DHCW awarded Gold in health and wellbeing standard**

DHCW has achieved success in the Corporate Health Standard - Gold level - Enhanced Status Check. The award is given to employers who demonstrate excellence in health and wellbeing in the workplace.

The assessors commented: "It was very clear that the ethos and culture of wellbeing at DHCW is exemplary, progressive and comprehensive, having evolved to become fully strategic in approach. It is clear that wellbeing is at the core of the way DHCW operates."

The award assessors noted: "The infrastructure for staff wellbeing is well-established and has recently been strengthened further through the work of the health and wellbeing network, who act as wellbeing champions. The ethos of wellbeing is role modelled from leaders across the organisation, including the Chief Executive, who, in her monthly staff briefings, regularly reminds staff to care for their own wellbeing and support others. There is also an acute understanding of the role of line managers in promoting and protecting wellbeing, and considerable resource has been devoted to enhancing the confidence and skills of line managers to bring about an ownership of wellbeing."

DHCW has a three-year health and wellbeing framework in place, and wellbeing objectives are included in its IMTP (Integrated medium-term plan).

## **Health Education Improvement Wales**

- **New national simulation-based education strategy unveiled**

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) has launched a simulation-based education and training (SBET) strategy that will enhance current and future workforce skills using the latest immersive and simulation-based technologies.

The strategy, developed in conjunction with the healthcare simulation community and lay representatives, provides a strategic vision for simulation-based education that will standardise SBET delivery and build on current good practice throughout Wales.

It also further develops collaborative opportunities with key stakeholders relevant to SBET in Wales, such as with the Life Sciences Hub Wales, the other nations of the UK and with international colleagues, to enrich interprofessional learning.

- **New Genomics education programme to improve patient care**

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) with Genomics Partnership Wales have developed flexible eLearning to increase staff understanding of genomics and improve patient care across Wales.

As genome technology advances our understanding of diseases such as cancer and heart disease, we can adapt and modify the care that we give patients leading to better outcomes for them. This new learning aims to encourage staff working in areas including oncology, cardiology and paediatrics to study genomics that relates to their role and use that learning to improve patient care.

The Deputy Director of Education Commissioning & Quality Education, HEIW said: “Developing our current and future workforce is one of our key aims and ensuring that education and learning keeps pace with advancements in health-related technology and literacy is vital.

“This new programme is flexible, bilingual and interactive and offers different levels of study; from introductory level for staff who have no background in genomics to Masters level. It also reflects feedback from staff who want to have a better understanding of how genomics can be applied to their role so they can improve the quality-of-care outcome for patients across Wales.”

The Head of Programmes for [Genomics Partnership Wales](#) said: “The rapid advances in genomics, both in terms of technology and our understanding, provide huge opportunities to improve healthcare. But we recognise that this benefit to our patients cannot be realised without up-skilling and empowering the healthcare workforce to enable the integration of genomics into the patient pathways. These introductory and specialist genomics modules provide the appropriate training, and it is crucial that we widely promote them to our NHS Wales staff to increase awareness of genomics and the opportunities available to improve clinical care for their patients. Engagement and support from senior leaders across the NHS will also be key to ensuring staff are supported to participate in the relevant modules for their clinical area.”

## **National Welsh Shared Services Partnership**

- **External Quality Assessment – Internal Audit**

Every five years, all internal audit providers must have an independent external quality assessment (EQA) to assess whether or not they are complying with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. NWSSP Audit & Assurance Services went through a competitive process and appointed the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to undertake the assessment.

The assessment was undertaken in March 2023 and involved: assessing our own self-assessment and the evidence we provided to support it; a detailed review of documents and files; a review of some 10 audit files; interviews with a number of people; and a survey of Audit Committee Chairs and Board Secretaries.

“CIPFA gave us the highest possible rating possible as the stated in their report that we ‘fully conform’ to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. There were no areas of either partial or non-compliance with the standards and there were no specific recommendations.

We will take the results of the EQA, in particular the survey findings, to support our continued development and improvement over the coming years, and this will coincide with a new set of internal audit standards for the public sector which will be implemented in the next few years.”

The report has been received by NWSSP’s Audit Committee and shared with all Board Secretaries.

- **Welsh Risk Pool – All Wales Consent to Consent & Treatment E learning**

NWSSP Welsh Risk Pool coordinated a launch of the All-Wales Consent to Examination & Treatment e-Learning on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The keynote address was delivered by the Minister for Health & Social Services.

The e-Learning package has been professionally developed with a production company, The Sound Doctor, and all those who have piloted the training have stated how effective the package is and that it is focussed to the needs of busy clinicians.

Research indicates that issues relating to consent are presented as allegations in a large proportion of claims received in NHS Wales and this is a similar picture across the other home nations. Between £10 and £20 million of reimbursements are made each year in respect of claims where issues related to consent are a factor. Clearly, by addressing the causes of claims related to consent, considerable savings can be made in relation to the litigation quantum.

Yours sincerely



**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

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