**Gwent** Regional Innovation Coordination Hub

# Annual Report 2023-24

A regional approach to coordinate health and social care innovation





Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



# Gwent Regional Innovation Hub: Foreword



Reflecting on the past year, I am proud of the progress we have made together at the Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub (GRICH). The hard work has laid the foundation for innovation in our community and supported meaningful change across health and social care in Gwent.

Thanks to these efforts, the Rapid Innovation Initiative has successfully launched, supporting projects that have already begun to show positive outcomes for our citizens. From enhancing living conditions in vulnerable communities to advancing

assistive technologies and helping our ageing population, the contributions of the GRICH have supported improved community health and well-being.

As we continue to innovate, I am confident that together, we will continue to play a small part in making a big difference to lives across Gwent.

Thank you for being a part of this journey to build a healthier, more innovative Gwent.

# Jo Williams

Chair, Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub & Head of Adult Services, Caerphilly CC



As we release this annual report, I am pleased to reflect on the positive progress and achievements of the past year within the GRICH. My dual role as Chair of the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) gives me a unique perspective on the intersection of innovation, health, and social care within our region. This year has been full of significant challenges and transformations.

GRICH has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, effectively supporting our strategic objectives to enhance community health and well-being by supporting innovative ideas identified by partners through Integrated Service Partnership Boards (ISPBs). Innovation through partnership working has played a key role in supporting improved community health and well-being.

Highlights from this year include:

- The successful delivery of the Rapid Innovation Initiative.
- The implementation of several pioneering health projects.
- Strengthened collaborations across sectors.

These efforts have addressed immediate community needs and provided a foundation for innovation across Gwent. We remain focused on continuing to develop innovation by working together as a strategic partnership. The challenges are significant, yet the opportunities to make meaningful change are even greater.

Thank you to all our stakeholders for your support, collaboration, and commitment to our shared vision. Together, we are shaping a more resilient and healthy community for all.

# Ann Lloyd

Chair, Gwent Regional Partnership Board & Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

# Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub: 2023-24 Highlights

Key highlights and achievements of the Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub (GRICH) for the 2023-24 period include:

- **1. Establishment of GRICH:** Successfully launched the Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub with new branding and dedicated web pages to enhance visibility and accessibility.
- 2. Collaborative Partnership Model: Established a partnership model between the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) that manages operations efficiently without additional staffing, thereby maximising innovation investment.
- **3. Formation of the Innovation Committee:** Developed a collaborative Innovation Committee across health and social care sectors to provide oversight and strategic guidance, ensuring alignment with regional needs and priorities.
- **4. Launch of the Rapid Innovation Initiative:** Introduced the Rapid Innovation Initiative, specifically designed to fund and support innovative projects addressing key health and social care challenges
- **5. Significant Project Support:** Within three months, successfully supported nine innovative projects, with a total of £150,000 allocated, demonstrating rapid deployment and effective use of resources.



A regional approach to coordinating health and social care innovation.

# Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub: Executive Summary

This annual report outlines the GRICH achievements from 2023-24. Established under the Welsh Government's Innovation, Technology & Partnership programme, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, in partnership with the Gwent Regional Innovation Board, developed the GRICH to stimulate research, innovation, and improvement across health and social care in Gwent. Over the past year, the GRICH has laid a foundation for improved health and well-being across Gwent by establishing robust governance, launching the Rapid Innovation Fund, and carefully selecting and supporting various projects across the public, private and third sector.

GRICH was conceived following discussions within the Gwent Regional Leadership Group, with the vision of fostering innovation to improve outcomes for citizens across Gwent. A formal proposal, approved by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board in March 2023, set the stage for GRICH's launch and operational blueprint.

#### What we set out to achieve:

- **Foster Innovation:** Promote a culture of innovation in Gwent to encourage the development and adopting of new ideas, processes, and technologies.
- Enhance Collaboration: Promote collaboration, co-production with citizens and networking across different organisations and sectors to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.
- **Improve Service Delivery:** Elevate the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, particularly in health and social care, to better address community needs.
- **Support Evidence-Based Adoption:** Advocate for the adoption and adaptation of evidence-based innovation activities across health and social care in Gwent, ensuring ongoing evaluation, learning, and refinement for continual advancement.

# **Governance Structure:**

The Gwent Regional Innovation Hub's governance provides an integrated and collaborative approach to coordination innovation in Gwent. The Gwent Regional Innovation Hub is supported by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Joint Leads ensure strategic alignment and operational efficiency, promoting a unified effort in regional innovation.



# Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub: Committee

# Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

- Director of Finance & Innovation lead
- Head of Business Development
- Research & Development Director

# Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

• Director of Social Services

# **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

• Head of Adult Services

# **Gwent Regional Partnership Board**

• Head of Regional Partnership Team

# **Monmouthshire County Council**

- Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding & Health
- People Management Lead

# **Newport City Council**

• Strategic Director: Social Services

# Torfaen County Borough Council

• Strategic Director for Social Care & Housing

# Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub: The Rapid Innovation Initiative

The Gwent Rapid Innovation Initiative is our flagship programme aimed at fostering innovation within health and social care across Gwent. Throughout 2023-24, the initiative has successfully promoted the development and adoption of innovative solutions that are enhancing service delivery and community well-being. With a budget of up to £150,000, the initiative funded projects that demonstrated potential for high impact, scalability, and alignment with the strategic health priorities of the Welsh Government and the Gwent Regional Partnership Board. This year's focus on evidence-based and value-driven innovation has set the foundations for sustainable growth in the upcoming years.

A selection process was implemented, involving careful review of proposals against innovation criteria, potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with regional priorities. This process ensured the optimal allocation of resources to projects with the greatest promise.

GRICH provided support and project management guidance, stakeholder engagement strategies, and evaluation frameworks to ensure the success and sustainability of funded projects.





**Project Title:** To Promote the ECO4 Flex Initiative to Combat Fuel Poverty and Improve Health and Well-Being During Winter

Lead Organisation: Monmouthshire County Council

Funding: E40,000

# Introduction:

This project proposes a strategic initiative aimed at improving the living conditions of vulnerable households with ECO Flex 4 qualifying medical conditions living in Monmouthshire. The initiative is part of Gwent's broader commitment as a Marmot Region to tackle health inequities and improve the social determinants of health. This project is designed to be a pilot that could be replicated across other local authorities within the Aneurin Bevan administrative area.

Led by Monmouthshire County Council in collaboration with the ABUHB Public Health team, a key element of the initiative is to leverage the trusted brands of Monmouthshire CC and ABUHB. This approach aims to overcome community scepticism about the validity of the ECO4 Flex scheme and their ability to receive free energy efficiency measures, which could improve their health outcomes. The project also considers findings from Sheffield Hallam University's evaluation of the Warm Homes Prescription programme, which demonstrated the health and well-being benefits associated with maintaining warm homes during the winter period.

The initiative aligns with the Marmot principles by addressing immediate needs and contributing to long-term health and well-being improvements for Monmouthshire's residents. It provides a model that is both replicable and scalable across the Gwent area, reinforcing Gwent's commitment to health equity and the well-being of future generations.

**Data-Enabled Insights for Improved Living Conditions.** The key elements of this project were as follows:

- Identify households who have an energy performance certificate of D or below who have respiratory or mobility conditions that have been admitted to hospital.
- Analyse the data to develop a targeted communications strategy to promote the ECO4 Flex scheme and their potential pathways leveraging the trusted reputations of the key partners.

#### Achievements

The project was not able to progress as quickly as intended, however there have already been some key outcomes:

- A communications strategy has been developed and agreed by the partners. This includes the provision of a joint letter from MCC and ABUHB that will be sent to the identified cohort accompanied by a leaflet which provides potential applicants with information about the scheme and how to access it.
- The public health scientists have experienced a number of challenges with the sharing of health data with the local authority. ABUHB has worked closely with their information governance team to link and share the data. Information governance and data sharing are likely to be recurring themes if the project is replicated in other areas in Gwent. The work undertaken on this project will enable the processes, systems, and any other lessons learned to be applied to any other partners wishing to access the ABUHB data.
- Data has been collected and using Power BI, the team can interrogated to ascertain the number of households in Monmouthshire who meet the ECO4 Route 3 eligibility criteria and have been admitted to hospital as a result of a respiratory or mobility issue.
- **300 households have been identified** who will be targeted using the communications strategy to make them aware that they may be eligible for free energy efficiency installations. There will be periodic reminders sent to households who do not make applications.
- Each household identified through this project will be monitored to establish if they apply and the level of interventions that are installed. ABUHB will also track the individuals to establish if there is a consequential reduction in secondary care demand.

# **Outcomes and Impact:**

#### Short-Term Outcomes:

- Creation of a dataset to enable effective data analysis to target communications at eligible vulnerable households.
- Communications strategy and supporting materials a joint leaflet for ABUHB and MCC has been created which will be used to support targeted campaigns and can be used for wider social media engagement. The materials can be easily adapted for use by other Local Authorities as the project is rolled out across the wider ABUHB footprint.
- Collaborative framework agreements These relate to information governance and data sharing agreements. These can be replicated as other partners are onboarded.

# Long-Term Outcomes:

- Reduction in the number of households living in fuel poverty.
- Reduction in health problems specifically a reduction in winter related health issues for Monmouthshire residents who have had installed measures through the ECO4 Flex scheme.
- Increased uptake of ECO4 Flex for residents of Monmouthshire
- Improvement in energy efficiency An increase in the number of residential properties in Monmouthshire achieving an EPC rating of C or above.
- Adoption of the project on a local or national scale.

# **Unexpected Outcomes:**

• Due to the project's preliminary phase focusing on establishing foundational strategies, unexpected outcomes are not yet observable.

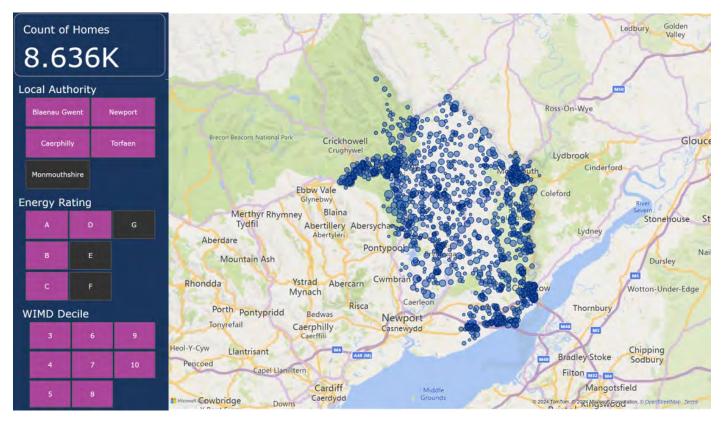
# **Beneficiaries:**

The project has provided the stakeholders with access to data that will have wider application beyond the scope of the project. As the project moves into delivery through the launch of the targeted communications campaign, Monmouthshire residents have the opportunity to benefit from ECO4 Flex interventions. Currently circa 300 Monmouthshire households have been identified that have been admitted to hospital with respiratory or mobility conditions and live in a property with an EPC rating of D or below. These householders will be targeted in phase 1 of the communications campaign. Further data analysis will be undertaken to broaden the health eligibility criteria for phase 2.

# Challenges and Innovations:

**Challenges:** Data sharing has been the biggest challenge faced by the project. Delays have been experienced in the sharing of data and agreeing data sharing protocols. The health data was the key data set as it provided the information on the households that may meet the route 3 criteria and have accessed secondary care. Protocols and procedures have been put in place as a result of the learning that can be replicated reducing the impact of any delays in further roll outs. The agreed solution for ensuring compliance with GDPR was for ABUHB to host the data via a SharePoint folder and access to the folder to be limited to those with the required permissions. This also creates an audit trail should it be required.

**Innovations:** ABUHB Public Health scientist have developed a bespoke dataset that derives information from a variety of sources that when combined enable the effective targeting of households based on their attendance at secondary health settings, health conditions, Energy performance assessment and multiple index of deprivation. This enables targeted communications to the households that would benefit most from the ECO4 Flex scheme.



The images above features a screen-shot of the bespoke dashboard that integrates respiratory health data with housing energy performance for each of the Local Authorities to target interventions strategically

# Lessons Learnt:

- Early engagement with data holders access to the data has delayed the project.
- Data sharing agreements standardised protocols and data hosting arrangements would reduce delays in disseminating the data to stakeholders.
- Resources ensuring there is sufficient resources to manage the on-going communications with installers, applicants and undertake the targeted communications campaign to capture the outcome of the applications and the impact of the interventions.
- Potential to capture email addresses from individuals which will reduce the need for letters generating savings in time, financial and environmental.
- The project will result in interventions to the applicant's residential property. There is a risk that the householder with the medical condition will subsequently move and currently there is no mechanism in place to track this or understand the impact on their health.
- Hospital admission data is limited and dependent on the information recorded. Access to primary health data such as the asthma register would provide more granular detail and increase the number of potential applicants.

# Sustainability and Future Steps:

Monmouthshire will undertake the targeted communications with the identified households via the De-carbonisation team. They will monitor the households to ascertain if applications are received and the measures installed. There will be periodic reminders for those who do not engage with the opportunity to undertake the works.

**Potential for Scaling:** The project has been devised as a pilot that is both replicable and scalable. The data sets can be applied over the wider ABUHB footprint and local authorities can be allocated access to the data for their communities. The learning from the project will enable successor projects to mitigate the delays from data sharing protocols and accessing data by adopting standardised protocols and agreements. The communications strategy can be adapted to reflect the relevant local authority with minimal cost implications.

#### **Collaborative Efforts:**

The project has been a collaborative approach from its inception with officers from ABUHB and Monmouthshire developing the concept and its agreed outcomes.

#### Stakeholder Engagement:

There have been weekly meetings with stakeholders to discuss progress, barriers, and project outcomes. This group has been supplemented as required e.g. communications teams to develop content and Health Data professionals to provide support analysing the data.

#### Partnership Impact:

The project would not be achievable without the partnership, as the data aspect has been driven by ABHUB and the ECO4 Flex scheme, which is being led by Monmouthshire CC. The outcomes will be felt by community members which should improve their health and well-being, economic activity and community participation and reduce the demand on healthcare settings.

#### Next Steps:

The targeted campaign will be undertaken in May and following this, a project review will be conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of the campaign in creating ECO4 Flex applications and gather feedback from householders on the material received. The intention is to roll the project out to the wider Gwent area, utilising the data already collected and the protocols and processes implemented to deliver this project.

Phase 2 of the proposal is intended to disrupt the installer aspect of the process. There is concern that installers are targeting properties that will yield the highest profit margins, e.g. large properties with high-value interventions, whilst vulnerable individuals in smaller or rented properties are not able to access the scheme due to installer capacity or interest. Initial discussions have been undertaken to explore the development of a mechanism that can package applications and measures so that all installers have to undertake a combination of high and low-value schemes to ensure scheme accessibility for all households.

Discussions to date have been high level and detailed due diligence and legal advice will be required to progress this proposal to ensure that it is legally compliant and that there is an appropriate mechanism to funnel applications. The mechanism will need to sit across the ABUHB region to have sufficient applications to justify and fund the intervention.

This initiative aligns with Gwent's commitment as a Marmot Region to promote fair employment for all. By ensuring equitable access to the ECO4 Flex scheme and creating a balanced approach to installer engagement, the project aims to not only improve living conditions but also provide local employment opportunities within Gwent. If successful, this project will not only enhance the health and well-being of residents but also contribute to economic growth by creating jobs and supporting fair employment for Gwent.



"There is £2 billion + available across the UK from large energy suppliers to help people improve the heating efficiency of their homes. Affordable warmth improves family economics and health. In some situation's it can save life.

Finding a delivery mechanism that can be taken forward at scale and that gives confidence to residents is key. Our goal is to lift living standards through affordable fuel bills. Getting the data to target support is never straightforward but we are getting there. Done well, this programme will positively impact the lives of vulnerable citizens."

## **Paul Matthews**

Chief Executive, Monmouthshire County Council



"Each winter, when people are unable to heat their homes, we see unnecessary declines in health. The rise and energy prices and the costs of living crisis has meant there are more people living in cold homes. Living in a cold home and being fuel poor can contribute to adverse physical and mental wellbeing. Energy efficient interventions are the simplest way of tackling fuel poverty and preventing associated negative health and wellbeing. The warmer homes project gives us the opportunity to focus existing funding to target those most in need to improve health and wellbeing outcomes."

# **Prof. Tracy Daszkiewicz**

Executive Director of Public Health and Strategic Partnerships, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



The images above features promotional content for the Monmouthshire ECO4 Flex scheme campaign, aiming to raise awareness of funding opportunities for households in dealing with high energy costs and living with respiratory conditions.

Project Title: Microcare Portal

Lead Organisation: Monmouthshire CC

Funding: £50,000

# Introduction

The Microcare Portal initiative, led by Monmouthshire CC, has been developed to streamline the process of registering and managing Microcarers in Monmouthshire. This digital selfservice platform was designed to replace the previously labour-intensive process conducted via email, with the aim of reducing the administrative burden and enhancing the efficiency and flexibility of care services in the local community.

# Objectives

The primary objectives of the Microcare Portal are to:

- Reduce the administrative tasks associated with on-boarding Microcarers.
- Accelerate the recruitment process across Monmouthshire.
- Support the foundational economy by facilitating flexible, local employment.
- Enhance the quality and choice of care services through a mixed economy model.
- Improve oversight and compliance within the micro care sector.
- Implementation

The project spanned from January 2024 to April 2024. Development involved input from existing Microcarers and the Microcare coordinator, with technical execution by the Monmouthshire digital and innovation team. Key features implemented include automated alerts for document completion and training compliance, a secure data handling framework, and user-friendly interface accessible across various devices.

# Outcomes and Impact Short-Term Outcomes:

- Significant reduction in the administrative workload.
- Increased capacity to on-board new Microcarers, thus expanding care availability.
- Reduction in the wait times for care services and direct payments.

# Long-Term Outcomes:

- The portal provides a scalable model that can be adopted by other regions within the Gwent area, promoting a standardised approach to micro care.
- Enhanced ability to meet ongoing and growing demands for care, improving community health outcomes.

# **Unexpected Outcomes:**

- The portal's ease of use and security features have led to a marked increase in the registration of Microcarers.
- Potential for expansion of the portal's use to other departments, improving overall organisational efficiency.

## **Challenges and Innovations**

The project faced minimal challenges, thanks to proactive planning and collaboration. Innovations include a centralised information system that significantly streamlines the registration and management process for Microcarers, ensuring compliance and facilitating quick access to necessary documents.

# **Financial Report**

The total funding of £50,000 was allocated across various phases:

- Design: £14,000
- Build: £15,500
- Testing: £3,500
- Training & Implementation: £9,000
- Communications & Marketing: £8,000

# Sustainability and Future Steps

The portal is designed to be low-maintenance, with future enhancements and expansions planned to be handled by the in-house digital team. Plans include scaling the Microcare Portal both within Monmouthshire and potentially to other local authorities in Gwent, enhancing the overall impact of the micro care model on regional care services.

#### Acknowledgment

Special thanks to the digital team at Monmouthshire Council, the Microcare coordinator, and all stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the Microcare Portal. Their dedication and input have been vital to the project's success.

# Conclusion

The Microcare Portal project has successfully demonstrated how digital innovation can significantly enhance the efficiency and scalability of social care services. With its successful implementation, the portal is set to transform the micro care landscape in Monmouthshire and beyond, providing a replicable model for other regions looking to optimise their care services through technological solutions. The ongoing commitment to enhancing and adapting the portal ensures that it will continue to meet the evolving needs of the community and care providers.



"We are really pleased to launch the portal and we are delighted with the initial feedback from our micros at a recent launch event.

The micro care portal will play a crucial role in enhancing the micro care experience by streamlining the admin processes and proving a safe and secure environment for all micro carer care documents. In summary it optimizes the operational efficiency of our scheme. We are looking to further expand our scheme and could not do this without the portal."

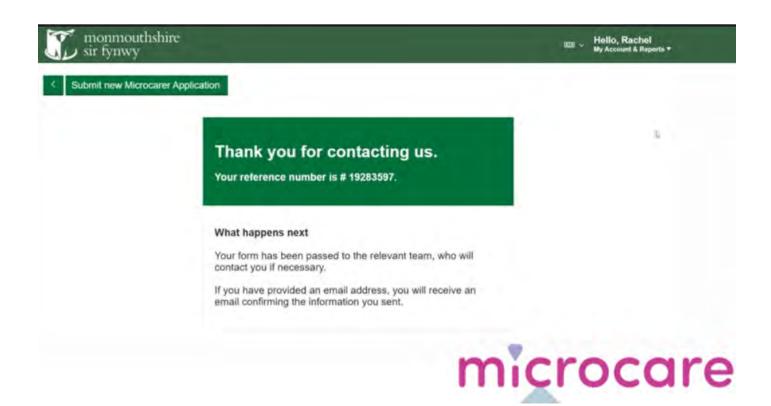
# Clare Morgan

Service Manager, Monmouthshire County Council



Monmouthshire MicroCare - YouTube

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**Project Title:** Assistive Technology App **Lead Organisation:** Monmouthshire CC **Funding:** £15,000

# Introduction

Monmouthshire County Council initiated the Assistive Technology Diagnostic Tool project to develop a mobile application that enhances the integration of Assistive and Smart Technologies (A&ST) within health and social care services across Gwent. This tool aims to facilitate a transformation in front-line practices, helping vulnerable individuals live independently by providing health and social care staff with a comprehensive resource to improve decision-making and implementation of A&ST.

# Objectives

- Integrating A&ST into standard care assessments.
- Empowering users by involving them in technology selection that supports independence.
- Streamlining the acquisition process through an online referral system.
- Building a network of stakeholders across Gwent to support A&ST implementation.

# Implementation

The project commenced on January 19, 2024, and concluded on March 29, 2024. Key phases included:

- Collaborative discussions with digital teams to select the appropriate platform.
- Comprehensive reviews and assessments of current technologies.
- Drafting and developing the diagnostic tool, with iterative evaluations involving key stakeholders.

# **Outcomes and Impact**

#### Short-Term Outcomes:

- Immediate accessibility of product features and benefits to social care professionals.
- Integration of a Professional Referral Form within the tool, enhancing referral efficiency.

#### Long-Term Outcomes:

Shift towards a preventative care model, reducing traditional care packages. Potential reduction in hospital admissions and expedited discharges, aiming for broader regional adoption.

# **Challenges and Innovations**

# **Challenges:**

- Inclusion of a pricing structure for A&ST in the app, resolved through collaborative discussions.
- Security concerns related to the app's sharing within the authority, which were adequately addressed.

# Innovations:

- The diagnostic tool format was designed to be adaptable for other departments within the authority.
- This project marked the first collaboration between Housing, Social Care & Health (SC&H), and the Digital Team.

# **Financial Report**

# Expenses were distributed across multiple phases:

- Design: £6,500
- Build: £7,500
- Testing: £2,000

# Sustainability and Future Steps

The app will continue to be maintained and updated by existing staff, incorporating new products and ideas. Further development will focus on enhancing the tool's capabilities, such as adding multimedia explanations for product usage.

# Acknowledgment

Special thanks to the digital team, SC&H professionals, and all partners involved. Their expertise and collaborative effort were crucial to the project's success.

# Conclusion

The Assistive Technology Diagnostic Tool represents a significant advancement in integrating smart technology into health and social care in Gwent. Its development not only supports current care practices but also sets a foundation for future enhancements that could benefit other local authorities and potentially set a standard for care management innovations. This tool promises to play a pivotal role in transforming care delivery through informed, technology-supported decisions that enable better care outcomes and greater independence for service users.



**Project Title:** Gwent Assistive Technology Video Showcase and Virtual House Enhancement **Lead Organisation:** Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Funding: £20,000

# Introduction

The Gwent Assistive Technology Video Showcase and Virtual House Enhancement project was developed to address the critical need to increased awareness and understanding of assistive technology within the Gwent region. Recognising the complex offer across local authority areas, this initiative aimed to facilitate greater adoption of life-enhancing technologies through engaging and informative digital content.

# Objectives

- To produce high-quality video content showcasing the practical benefits of assistive technologies across Gwent.
- To enhance a virtual house tool, incorporating interactive features that demonstrate assistive technologies in a user-friendly manner.
- To increase public awareness and understanding of assistive technologies.
- To encourage the adoption of assistive technologies by demonstrating their impact on improving independence and quality of life.

## Implementation

- Commissioning a professional videographer for the production of video content.
- Coordinating with local authorities and assistive technology properties for video shoots.
- Enhancing the virtual house tool to reflect updated assistive technology options and interactive elements.
- Implementing a comprehensive promotional campaign across social media, public engagement sessions, and collaboration with local stakeholders.

#### Short-Term Outcomes:

- Immediate increase in engagement with the newly developed video content and virtual house tool.
- Positive feedback from initial viewers and stakeholders on the clarity and usefulness of the information provided.

#### Long-Term Outcomes:

- Sustained use of the video content and virtual house as educational tools for individuals, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.
- Incremental increase in the adoption of assistive technologies as a result of improved understanding and visibility.

#### **Unexpected Outcomes:**

Greater understanding of what is available across each of the Gwent Local Authorities.

# Challenges:

The challenge encountered during the project was meeting the deadlines set for the reporting period. Despite our diligent efforts to produce the content internally, we experienced significant delays due to issues with translation processes and technical difficulties in accessing specific 360-degree video software. These obstacles prevented us from launching a comprehensive communications campaign within the planned time frame. As a result, several video segments are still in draft form. To address these delays and provide a demonstration of potential outcomes, we focused our immediate efforts on Monmouthshire, using it as a pilot area to showcase the end product's look and feel. Moving forward, we are committed to finalising the remaining video content and will collaborate closely with our Local Authority communications teams to ensure effective dissemination across the region.

#### **Innovations:**

- Integration of real-time user feedback into the virtual house tool for continuous improvement.
- Use of targeted social media strategies to reach a broader demographic effectively.

#### **Financial Report**

- Videographer & Virtual House Production: £15,000
- Promotional Activities: £5,000

# Sustainability and Future Steps

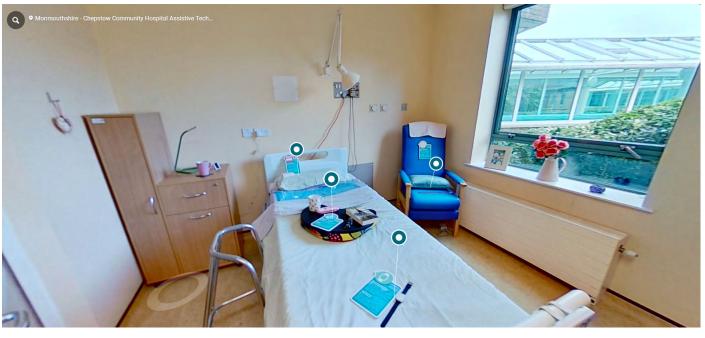
As we move forward, our focus will be on completing the remaining videos and working with our local authority communication teams to promote the Assistive Technology opportunities across Gwent.

# Acknowledgment

Special thanks to all project team members, local authority partners, and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Communications team for support this work.

# Conclusion

Despite facing significant challenges that delayed our full-scale launch, the project team remains dedicated to The Gwent Assistive Technology Video Showcase and Virtual House Enhancement project. We hope the content we have developed will support and educate citizens that will be reshape perceptions of assistive technology in Gwent. Through innovative digital showcases and an interactive virtual house, this initiative has laid a foundation for increasing technology adoption and enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in the region.





Monmouthshire Assistive Technology Virtual Tour



A regional approach to coordinating health and social care innovation.

# Assistive Tech Videos:

#### Blaenau Gwent:

| English: | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949593020/00becbbfd0 |
|----------|---|
| Welsh:   | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949591592/4622ffdb10 |

#### Monmouthshire:

| English: | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949594043/c79f33e988 |
|----------|---|
| Welsh:   | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949593887/98afb4e978 |

#### Newport Smart Hub:

| English: | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949594733/91aa83aa91 |
|----------|---|
| Welsh:   | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949594215/c5fc9c7463 |

#### Torfaen Smart Flat:

| English: | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949595576/97db0d015b |
|----------|---|
| Welsh:   | https://vimeo.com/user171670239/review/949595122/09ee29b1f0 |

## **Assistive Tech Virtual Videos**

- Blaenau Gwent: <u>https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=vFCB7FVnbJd</u>
- Torfaen Smart Flat: <u>https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=nUdCCWZQeDe</u>
- Newport Smart Hub: <u>https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=SGqUajN7Xr1</u>



Project Title: Digital Parenting in Gwent: Navigating Safety, Wellbeing, and Resilience Together

Lead Organisation: Monmouthshire CC

Funding: £5,000

#### Introduction

The "Digital Parenting in Gwent" project, led by WISE KIDS, aimed to empower parents and carers across Gwent with the knowledge and resources needed to effectively guide their children through the complexities of the digital world. The initiative focused on conducting consultations to gather parent and carer insights and developing a comprehensive webinar and resource web page to address their needs.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- Gather insights on the digital parenting needs and concerns of parents and carers in Gwent.
- Develop and disseminate educational content through a webinar that addresses the needs identified in the consultations.
- Enhance digital parenting skills, promoting safer and more positive online experiences for children.

#### Implementation

The project was implemented in two main phases:

- Conducting consultations with parents and carers to identify their needs and concerns regarding digital parenting.
- Developing and hosting a 75-minute webinar titled "Promoting Safety, Wellbeing, and Resilience for Children and Young People," which was widely promoted and attended by 282 registered participants, with 87 attending live.

#### Short-Term Outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding and awareness of digital parenting challenges among participants.
- Distribution of practical advice and resources that empowered parents and carers to better support their children online.

# Long-Term Outcomes:

- Improved digital literacy and online safety for children and young people in Gwent through educated and empowered parents and carers.
- Strengthened parent-child relationships through enhanced communication about digital topics.

## **Unexpected Outcomes:**

Broad dissemination of webinar knowledge to professionals in children's services, which may foster new partnerships and collaborative opportunities.

# **Challenges and Innovations**

# **Challenges:**

Delivering the project within a condensed time frame of six weeks, which required efficient planning and execution.

# **Innovations:**

- Engaging directly with parents and carers to tailor the webinar content to their expressed needs, enhancing relevance and impact.
- Recording the webinar for ongoing access, extending the project's reach and lifespan.

# **Financial Report**

- The budget of £5,000 was allocated to various components:
- Consultation sessions and analysis: £1,550
- Webinar creation and evaluation: £2,400
- Resource web page development and maintenance: £1,050

# Sustainability and Future Steps

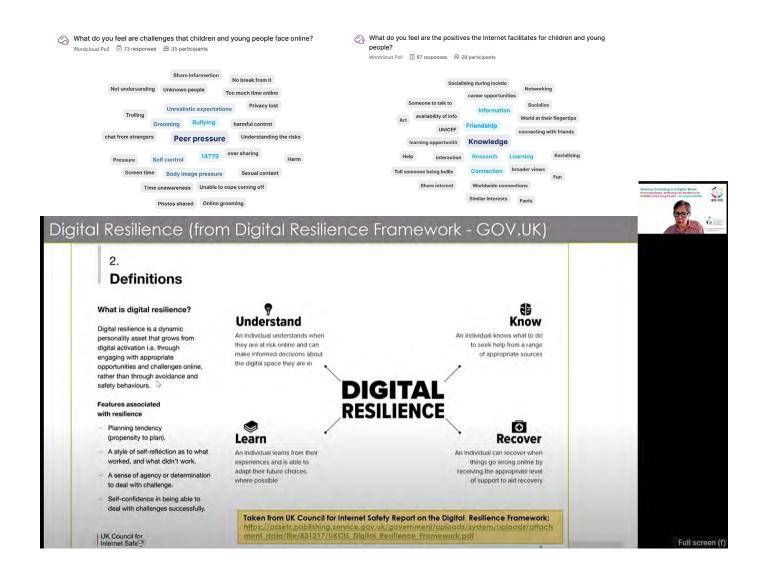
The webinar and resources will continue to be accessible on the WISE KIDS e-learning platform for at least a year, with ongoing promotion through partner networks. Plans are underway to secure additional funding for further themed webinars to continue supporting digital parenting across Gwent.

# Acknowledgment

Thanks are extended to all funding bodies, partners, and team members who contributed significantly to the project's success, sharing insights and resources that have enriched the digital parenting landscape in Gwent.

# Conclusion

The "Digital Parenting in Gwent" project has significantly contributed to the empowerment of parents and carers, equipping them with essential tools and knowledge to manage and enhance their children's online experiences. The positive feedback and substantial engagement from the community highlight the project's success and the ongoing need for resources in digital parenting. As the project moves forward, the foundation laid by this initiative will continue to support and enrich the lives of families in Gwent.





"Dr Bhullar was very knowledgeable"

"I would love to know if there are any extra classes/ after school clubs for teaching my son about the digital world and technology. I don't have time or the knowledge anymore as tech advances so quickly."



"Thank you. I feel this needs to be shared far and wide. In particular to youth workers and all teachers as well as parents. It would be interesting to explore how a holistic approach based on these ideas could be shared between parents, teachers and youth workers."



"I'd really like further guidance on how to go about an agreement for digital use between parents and children. Also how to protect my child from gaming addiction. I'd like suggestions of activities to do online and offline with my child to support their digital literacy and educate them about staying safe online"



"Thank you for hosting today. Session factual and full of good links and advice. Sound quality played up a little at times but was not a major issue. Look forward to receiving resources from today's session."



"So grateful for this, and that it's free! Much appreciated. Excellent presentation."



**Project Title:** Balanced Lives - Building Resilience in Partnership with Older Adults

Lead Organisation: Action For Elders

Funding: E4,680

#### Introduction

Action for Elders Trust's "Balanced Lives" project is focused on enhancing the wellbeing of older adults in Newport and Abergavenny through a holistic programme integrating physical, mental, and social health. This initiative aims to improve mobility, reduce isolation, and provide a comprehensive support system for older adults.

# Objectives

The project's objectives were to:

- Deliver a 10-week community-based programme focusing on physical health to build trust and rapport with participants.
- Integrate mental and social health components to provide a rounded approach to wellness.
- Foster digital inclusion and access to technology among older adults.

#### Implementation

The project was implemented over a 10-week period, delivering weekly sessions that focused on strength, balance, endurance, flexibility, and sustainability. These sessions were tailored to reduce frailty and prevent falls, directly addressing the physical challenges faced by older adults.

#### Short-Term Outcomes:

- Participants reported a significant improvement in mobility and physical activity, with 76% noting increased physical engagement.
- Mental and social health enhancements were evident, with notable increases in happiness, reduced anxiety, and improved social connectedness.

# Long-Term Outcomes:

- The project aims to sustain improved quality of life through continuous physical, mental, and social health support.
- Digital training initiatives are expected to enhance participants' independence and connectivity, ensuring long-term benefits.

# **Unexpected Outcomes:**

The project has seen unexpected benefits in digital inclusion, with older adults embracing technology more readily than anticipated, enhancing their ability to stay informed and connected.

# Challenges:

- Engaging older adults initially proved challenging, especially those isolated or unfamiliar with group activities.
- Bridging the digital literacy gap among participants was also a significant hurdle.

# Solutions:

- Personalised outreach and the use of peer ambassadors were effective in encouraging participation.
- Structured digital literacy workshops tailored to the participants' needs helped overcome technology barriers.

**Innovations:** The Balanced Lives program's holistic approach and the integration of the Senses Framework were innovative, enhancing personalization and community belonging.

Financial Report: The total funding was allocated as follows:

- Physical Facilitator for weekly sessions: £1,900
- Group Wellbeing Coordinator: £1,650
- Venue Hire: £750
- Volunteer Expenses: £380

# Sustainability and Future Steps

The project is designed to be integrated into community settings for sustainability. Plans for future scaling include:

- Expansion of the digital inclusion component.
- Replication of the Balanced Lives model in other communities.
- Acknowledgment
- Thanks to all team members, partners, and funders whose collaboration and support have been crucial to the project's success.

# Conclusion

The Balanced Lives project has significantly contributed to the wellbeing of older adults in Newport and Abergavenny, demonstrating a successful model for community-based health improvement programs. The holistic approach adopted by the project ensures that the physical, mental, and social needs of older adults are met, providing a blueprint for similar initiatives elsewhere.

The feedback below highlights the significant influence that Action for Elders' 10-week community-based programme has had on its participants. Here is an overview of the positive outcomes as expressed by the members:

#### Improved Social Connections and Happiness:

Participants express joy in socialising with like-minded people, which has significantly boosted their happiness and helped renew their confidence.

#### **Enhanced Physical Health:**

Many have noticed improvements in balance and mobility, with fewer falls and increased flexibility. Exercises such as Tai Chi have been specifically noted for aiding in recovery from physical ailments and improving overall physical health.

#### **Increased Mental Well-being:**

Engagement in group activities and the sense of community have lessened feelings of isolation and positively impacted mental health. Mindfulness practices integrated into activities like Tai Chi have also been beneficial.

#### Greater Engagement and Community Involvement:

Talking to people and participating in group activities has helped members feel more integrated into the community, providing them with a sense of belonging and purpose.

#### Motivation and Forward-Looking Attitude:

The activities and the supportive environment have encouraged participants to plan for the future with a more positive outlook, enhancing their quality of life.

"It has made a significant impact on my life. I feel happy socialising with like-minded people."

"Being able to socialise more is renewing my confidence levels."

"I have got my balance back, more confidence, more movement, something to look forward to." "I feel I have fallen less as I used to fall on a weekly basis."

"It's keeping me mobile. I'm sure my mobility would be less without the exercise."

"Great - I feel better and more flexible. I use my stick more than my walker now."

"It has given me a general boost and encouraged me to plan for the future."

"Talking to people, putting things into perspective. Moving better, feel part of the community. It has got me back into the community."

"Very positive. The tai chi exercise class is invaluable in aiding my recovery from a complex spine problem." "Meeting others and joining in with the group activities have been so enjoyable. I hope to continue for some time." "Improved my quality of life, and given an opportunity to meet new people."

"Action for Elders is essential for wellbeing. I am fitter, stronger, better posture, less isolated, have something to look forward to whatever the situation. My mood improves."

"It's helped me feel less isolated & my mental & physical health have improved. I've made new friends too."

"Action for Elders has given people a chance to reconnect with others and that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing."

"I find Action for Elders very helpful. The Tai Chi is very good for my balance and I enjoy all the aspects of the class, e.g., Mindfulness as well. I have lots of friends in the group."

"Joining a friendly group of people weekly is wonderful. The group leaders always give their best and encourage members to participate at their level. I feel good when I finish the session." Project Title: Children's Trauma Recovery Resource for Schools, Libraries, & Children's Teams

# Lead Organisation: New Pathways

Funding: E3800

# Introduction

The Gwent Rapid Innovation Initiative Project, led by New Pathways, launched a short-term project titled "Children's Trauma Recovery Resource for Schools, Libraries, and Children's Teams" with a focus on distributing a specialised resource for children who have experienced sexual violence trauma. The core of this initiative was supporting the adoption and distribution of the "Helping the Hare Who Hurts" storybook across the Gwent.

# Objectives

The project aimed to enhance the availability of psycho educational resources to assist children in overcoming trauma. The resource distributed was a storybook titled "Helping the Hare Who Hurts," written and illustrated by Lilith Gough, a Welsh art psychotherapist. This storybook is designed to teach children techniques to stabilize their emotions and recognize their current safety, facilitated through a narrative following a hare's journey in a woodland environment.

# Implementation

The initiative successfully distributed a total of 337 copies of the book across various organisations:

- 190 copies to primary schools
- 42 copies to libraries
- 35 copies to Local Authority (LA) Children's Teams
- 35 copies to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Teams
- 35 additional copies to junior schools

The distribution process was strategically planned and executed to ensure that the books reached the intended recipients, including schools, libraries, and mental health teams within a tight time-frame.

# **Outcomes and Impact**

**Short-Term Outcomes:** The immediate impact was noticeable in feedback from school staff and mental health professionals who reported that the book was a valuable resource for working with children affected by trauma. For example, a nurture group leader in Cwmbran noted significant benefits for children interacting with the book, enhancing their trauma coping strategies:

"I know this book will make a huge difference to helping these children through the trauma and will help me to help them with stabilisation. It's fantastic that schools are receiving a copy of this book; it will be a huge benefit to many children and staff alike, so thank you!"

(RR, Cwmbran)

**Long-Term Outcomes:** The project anticipates that children who have access to this book will develop effective strategies to cope with the effects of trauma and receive support from non-specialist staff while awaiting specialist counselling. Adam Edwards from the Forensic CAMHS Team mentioned, *"The CAMHS teams have been delighted to receive them and feel that they will be a very valuable resource for their work."* 

**Unexpected Outcomes:** The distribution also increased awareness about New Pathways' services, potentially driving additional referrals for trauma recovery services. This was evidenced by conversations with partners who helped identify recipients, leading to increased interest from other regions:

"The receipt of this and the Cardiff Council funding has encouraged other commissioners in both Ceredigion and Dyfed Powys to order books for Victim Support and local authority children's teams," shared project staff.

#### **Challenges and Innovations**

One of the main challenges was the short time frame for packaging and distribution. This was overcome by leveraging in-house knowledge and networks to identify and reach key contacts. The project highlighted the importance of such resources in trauma recovery, filling a gap in available materials with the innovative "Helping the Hare Who Hurts" book.

# **Financial Report**

The budget was precisely allocated as follows:

- E2342 for 337 books
- E825 for postage and packaging
- E633 for project management, administration, and delivery
- The project utilized the entirety of its £3800 budget without deviations.

# Sustainability and Future Steps

The outcomes of the project are sustainable as long as the distributed books continue to be used effectively by the recipient organisations. The project's model can be scaled to provide additional books or expand to other regions or languages using Regional Innovation Coordination Hubs across Wales.

#### Acknowledgment

Special thanks are extended to the Gwent Rapid Innovation Team for their support and the New Pathways admin and finance team for their dedication and flexibility in managing the project's demands effectively.

#### Conclusion

The Gwent Rapid Innovation Initiative Project exemplifies how targeted, short-term interventions can have a lasting impact on community resources, particularly in supporting children's trauma recovery. The project serves as a model for similar future initiatives aiming to enhance children's well-being through innovative educational resources.



**Project Title:** BreatheWell Initiative: Harnessing the Power of Breath for Mental Resilience **Lead Organisation:** Thriving Communities CIC **Funding:** £2,495

#### Introduction

The BreatheWell Initiative, led by Dr. Manmeet Kaur, aimed to introduce the local community of Ebbw Vale to mind and body wellness practices focusing on yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and breathwork. A significant highlight was the use of the Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) breathing technique to enhance mental resilience, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being.

# Objectives

- To provide practical tools and techniques for stress and anxiety management.
- To foster a sense of community and support through group wellness activities.
- To introduce effective, evidence-based practices for enhancing mental and physical health.

#### Implementation

The initiative comprised a 2-hour taster session followed by a more intensive 3-day workshop, each session lasting 3 hours. These were conducted in March 2024 at Ebbw Vale, utilising collaborations with local community centres and health groups to facilitate the events.

#### Short-Term Outcomes:

Participants reported immediate improvements in stress management and relaxation. Increased awareness and practice of breathwork and meditation techniques among attendees.

# Long-Term Outcomes:

Participants gained ongoing support through a newly established community group on WhatsApp, encouraging regular practice of the techniques learned.

Regular follow-up sessions via Zoom were planned to reinforce the practices and support continuous improvement.

#### **Unexpected Outcomes:**

- A 90-year-old attendee found significant relief for her stress related to caring for a spouse with dementia.
- Increased demand for continued workshops from participants facing various personal challenges, including PTSD and substance abuse recovery.

#### **Challenges:**

- Tight scheduling and limited time for promotion presented initial hurdles.
- Venue availability issues required last-minute adjustments and additional travel.

#### **Innovations:**

- The project team successfully implemented targeted social media advertising to enhance outreach.
- Collaborative efforts between various local organisations enhanced the workshop's impact and facilitated smooth execution.

#### **Financial Report**

The budget was allocated across various areas including venue hire, facilitator fees, marketing, and participant support materials. A small overspend was managed by adjusting internal resource allocations.

#### Sustainability and Future Steps

The initiative's sustainability is supported by the establishment of an active community group and ongoing virtual sessions. Plans for scaling include extending the programme to other regions and securing additional funding to support broader implementation.

#### Acknowledgment

Special thanks to Dr. Manmeet Kaur, Thriving Communities CIC staff, and all the volunteers and partners who contributed to the success of the BreatheWell Initiative. Their dedication and effort were instrumental in bringing this valuable programme to the Ebbw Vale community.

## Conclusion

The BreatheWell Initiative demonstrated significant potential in using breathwork and meditation to enhance mental resilience. The successful implementation and positive feedback highlight the community's appreciation and need for such wellness programs, ensuring the initiative's continued growth and impact.











"The 3 day workshop has been very enjoyable. I have met lovely people and the tutors are amazing."



"When I feel stressed the breathing techniques are very helpful."



"I have loved this experience and will be putting what I've learned to good use. The breathing is something new to me. It was nice to meet some lovely people and hear their life experiences."



"I enjoyed the welcoming and friendly atmosphere. The tutors were enthusiastic also."

# Project Title: A Citizen Caucus on Reinventing Long-term Care in Wales Funding: £5,000

## Introduction

Jackie's Revolution CIC continues its mission to innovate long-term care in Wales, building on previous projects funded by Innovate UK and the National Lottery Community Funds. This project aims to develop and integrate a sustainable, non-institutional model of care that reflects the desires and needs of the community.

#### Objectives

- To engage local communities in Gwent to gather insights on long-term care expectations.
- To co-create new models of long-term care that reflect contemporary needs and preferences.
- To provide actionable insights to stakeholders to foster innovation in care services.

#### Implementation

The project has been planned to utilise a broad network of supporting organisations to ensure extensive and diverse community engagement. However, due to delays in venue availability and communication challenges, the scheduled events have been postponed to June and September 2024.

#### The Distribution Process:

Planned strategically to ensure maximum participation from schools, libraries, and mental health teams within the revised timeline.

#### **Outcomes and Impact**

**Short-Term Outcomes:** Engagement and data collection activities are anticipated, building on the initial consultation conducted in June 2023.

**Long-Term Outcomes:** Anticipated development of a model for sustainable long-term care, integrating community feedback and strategic health and social care goals.

**Unexpected Outcomes:** Potential insights into deeper concerns about current care models and preferences for home-based solutions are anticipated based on previous engagements.

#### **Challenges and Innovations**

- Significant delays due to venue and communication issues. Adaptive strategies are being developed to enhance future logistics and stakeholder engagement.
- Continued focus on integrating technological, service, and social innovations to redefine long-term care.

# **Financial Report**

Funds are allocated but unspent due to delays. Budgeting remains as initially planned: E3,500 for administration and project management, E1,000 for event facilitation, and E500 for evaluation and reporting.

# Sustainability and Future Steps

The project will incorporate findings from the rescheduled events into a larger strategic plan for long-term care in Wales. Plans include expanding consultations to more demographic groups and refining the model based on community feedback.

# Acknowledgment

Appreciation for the patience and support of the RPB admin team and all partners during these unforeseen delays.

# Conclusion

Despite challenges, Jackie's Revolution CIC is committed to transforming long-term care in Wales. The project's goals remain steadfast, and with rescheduled activities, it aims to lay a robust foundation for future innovations that will enhance the well-being of Wales' aging population. The Gwent Regional innovation Hub will continue to support this project in 2024-25.



# Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub: Conclusion

# Forward-Looking Statements

As GRICH concludes its inaugural year, we reflect on the progress made towards fostering innovation across the Gwent region. The projects supported through the Rapid Innovation Fund exemplify our commitment to addressing critical needs through innovative solutions. Looking ahead, GRICH remains dedicated to building on this foundation, exploring new opportunities for innovation, and continuing our collaborative efforts to improve the lives of citizens across Gwent.

#### **Future Funding**

In recognition of the progress and impactful initiatives facilitated by GRICH, the Welsh Government has extended it's financial support for the 2024-25 fiscal year. In recent correspondence, the Welsh Government has confirmed an allocation of £250,000. This funding extension underscores the government's commitment to sustaining innovation in health and social care within the Gwent region. The extension is a testament to the successful collaboration between GRICH and its strategic partners.

#### Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks to the Gwent Innovation Committee, the Welsh Government, our project partners, and all stakeholders for their unwavering support and collaboration. Together, we are paving the way for a healthier, more innovative Gwent.

Gwent Regional Innovation

# Annual Report 2024-25

A regional approach to coordinate health and social care innovation





Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

