

Regional Partnership Board

Annual Report

2023/2024

“Working together for a Healthier Gwent for the right care and support, in the right place, at the right time”.



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1. Foreword

Ann Lloyd, CBE – Gwent Regional Partnership Board Chair



The Regional Partnership Board Annual Report provides RPB partners with the opportunity to highlight progress over the last year and to set out case studies where innovation and good practice have been developed through partnership working.

The progress highlighted in this annual report is significant when considering the challenges and demands placed on partners following the Covid-19 pandemic, the workforce challenges, and difficulties in recruitment, as well as the recent cost of living increases and cuts to budgets. The increase in demand replicated across the whole of health and social care services has been unprecedented. The challenges highlighted set out the need for partners to collaborate effectively more than ever, to create synergy across services and reduce duplication. The RPB is central to creating a partnership environment to tackle these challenges and we have developed a new Area Plan which sets out how we intend to work together, pool resources and transform services.

We have also undertaken a significant review into governance and working practices for the RPB to ensure we remain as effective as possible. This annual report sets out progress made throughout the previous Area Plan and also how we made steps to deliver the 'Further, Faster' ambition set by Welsh Government.

We have to improve and create the best health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Gwent. We work closely with our communities to co-produce care and support services and enable people and their families to feel supported and listened to; and I am pleased to include perspectives from our citizen network, third sector and provider partners within this annual report.

As RPB Chair I feel it is important to ensure the RPB recognises the hard work of all partners and identifies innovation and good practice to develop further; this report aims to recognise the improvements to care, and outcomes delivered in partnership through considerable efforts of all staff, volunteers, providers, and unpaid carers.

1. Partnership Perspectives

Lorraine Morgan, Citizen Network Champion

When I was a health and social care professional, I talked like a care professional, I thought like a professional, I behaved like a professional. Now I am a retired citizen, I put away the ways of professionals. I think like a citizen; a citizen with knowledge and experience to share and influence. The policy innovation of Welsh Government has given rise to two Acts which enable citizen knowledge, skills, experiences, and opinions to be taken much more seriously. Has anyone heard about Arnstein's ladder of Citizen participation? The ladder is a guide to seeing who has power when important decisions are being made. It has survived for so long because people continue to confront processes that refuse to consider anything above the bottom rungs of non-participation. The top rungs are Partnership, Delegation and Citizen Control. During the Decisions Made Together event in May, we talked passionately about Co-Production, and where Citizens are within a long-term engagement model that progresses towards Transformative Community Participation. This is where we, the citizens are becoming equal partners in the wide-ranging visioning and production for all our diverse communities. As Champion of the Citizen Network, I have attended most of the RPB meetings, and I have seen a significant shift in how care and support services are being attempted to be redesigned. My own comments to discussions and issues discussed are based on my experiences as a carer for three family members. These experiences are mirrored in what we hear at our Citizen Network luncheons. Every carer has individual experiences, worries, and roles, and we are core to supporting our loved ones, saving public services millions of pounds. We are a conduit for information to flow to and from the RPB. I believe that carers' contributions and experiences to our region are embedded in how public services think about what is important for health and social care services in Gwent. So far, I have seen a significant shift in how public servants are now perceiving what we have to say and are actively listening. I think it's more constructive to talk about what we want to create not prevent - wellbeing and flourishing lives. I would like to emphasize that the citizen voice is crucial, particularly in public services. We are not at the horizon yet, but we are at the crossroads. Let's make sure we keep the momentum going, choose the right road and continue to make decisions together.

Tanya Evans, Interim Director Social Services, Blaenau Gwent

Having taken up the chair of the Leadership Group within the last 12 months, I have seen a genuine commitment from all partners around the table to improve outcomes for children and adults who live within Gwent.

The independent review of the governance surrounding the Regional Partnership Board resulted in bringing a much sharper focus to the way the RPB and its supporting partnerships deliver its business.

An increase in the frequency of meetings and face to face workshops of the RPB has served to build better working relationships and a greater understanding of each partners roles and responsibilities. This can only be seen as a positive when working together to meet the needs of the population of Gwent.

The RPB and the supporting partnerships need to keep asking the "so what" question to identify the difference we have made. A programme of evaluating the impact of the Regional Integration Funded Projects is underway, which will go a long way to enable this question to be answered and I look forward to seeing this evidence during 24/25

Tracy Daszkiewicz, Executive Director of Public Health & Strategic Partnerships, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

This year has seen a great deal of energy surrounding, prevention, food security, community involvement and engagement, health, and care services, tackling inequalities, and increasing equity. This all directly links back to our commitment to delivering the findings of the **Marmot Report** and towards **building a Fairer Gwent**. One significant achievement this year has been the development of a [Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment](#). This provides us with a picture of Gwent, and brings key data and intelligence into one space to provide a single version of the truth. This is enabling the extension of conversations around health and wellbeing to think about the causes of the causes, and the imperative of understanding the wider determinants of health, the importance of safe, warm homes, education, employment opportunities, tackling domestic abuse, how we can address preventable premature mortality and deliver the very best start in life for every child. What is emerging, is not just the need to have a Fairer Gwent, but also a safer, stronger, healthier place, to live, work and visit.

Stephen Tiley, Chief Executive Officer, GAVO

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact services provided by the public sector and has continued also to impact much of the Third Sector and its services within the community. Collaboration is now more crucial than ever for the benefit of the Gwent region's residents. GAVO, working across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, and Newport have been diligently ensuring the continuity of services during these challenging times, which have included providing support, monetary and advisory, and strategic connections to the sector.

Fortunately, we have established strong relationships with partners around the Regional Partnership Board, allowing us to address and resolve issues affecting the sector across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board footprint. Collaborative working remains at the core of our partnership work, and this continues to evolve for the benefit of our communities. Our work in supporting the ambitions of the Regional Integration Fund monies has brought many positive changes and will continue to do so in the coming years. Our collective commitment to working together has enabled us to navigate these changes successfully.

Speaking on behalf of GAVO, I am excited to continue contributing to the positive work of the partnership on behalf of the Third Sector.

Melanie Minty- Policy Adviser for South West and South East Wales, Care Forum Wales.

In the last annual report, I spoke about the opportunities to strengthen the voice of regulated care services, across third and private sectors. This has become increasingly necessary as the impact of budget constraints are felt increasingly across all sectors and we need to remember the value of working together, as we did before and during the pandemic. That includes reviving and repurposing some of the ways we engage, so I am really pleased that providers, the Health Board and Local Authorities are setting up a working group to shape a new Gwent care home provider forum, that will enable us to share information and best practice, and take forward some of the more thorny issues in a spirit of partnership.

2. Executive Summary

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) published their Area Plan in 2023 in response to core themes identified within the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) April 2022. The Area Plan sets out how the RPB will deliver the regional priorities identified by partners and communities, within the PNA, and forms the work programme for the strategic partnerships that support the RPB.

Working in partnership and creating synergy across our services is fundamental, the RPB provides a forum to develop the solutions required whilst ensuring the focus is on the difference made to lives and outcomes. The continued focus on coproduction with citizens is key, as well as working side by side with our third sector and independent providers.

We have the opportunity through the '**Further Faster**' agenda to further invest in our community services, as the pressure on hospitals is not only a health board challenge, but system wide. The RPB and partners need to ensure we help people to remain well at home, but also return home quickly and safely from hospital, following treatment. Winter planning is still a continuous year-round process and the strain on front line workers will require close monitoring, given the pressures they have worked under over the previous years. Yet again it is testament to the passion and commitment of all RPB partners and their staff, that we have been able to continue with the delivery of priorities in the Area Plan.

Key successes include:

- **The Adult Strategic Partnership** has continued to support the coordinated effort to deliver a *Winter Plan programme* with regards to admission avoidance, discharge to assess and community resourcing. The partnership has been key to the development, monitoring, evaluation, and delivery of the national '**1000 beds**' aim during 2022/23 and have applied the learning to **2023/24**; and has continued to work closely with local care homes and domiciliary care providers to support sustainable services, through a regional commissioning programme.
- **The Carers Strategic Partnership** has developed ways to enable carers to be supported in the hospital discharge processes, in line with National priorities; as well as delivering the other Welsh Government National priorities for carers of all ages. **Information and support to carers during Carers Week and Carers Rights Day** has been highlighted across partners. Administering of the Carer's Small Grant Scheme has continued, as well as the commitment to supporting young carers in education.
- **The Children and Families Strategic Partnership** are continuing to deliver the **NYTH/NEST** Framework planning tool to ensure a '**whole system**' approach for developing mental health, well-being and support services for children and young people, as well as developing residential solutions to reduce the number of out of county placements.
- **The Dementia Strategic Partnership** have continued to implement the All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards, with dedicated subgroups and workstream leads. People living with dementia, their carers, and families play a crucial role in supporting this work, and engagement continues within our communities, to help coproduce services. We have continued to lead and further develop the Dementia Friendly Gwent programme of work and have over **270** partners supporting this programme, raising awareness of dementia and the importance of social inclusion and connected communities.
- **The Health & Housing Strategic Partnership** has focused on the development of the rapid rehousing requirements. Members have continued to implement Capital Projects and improve existing resources, particularly around the use of digital technology. Key priorities have been identified through the Area Plan, which members continue to deliver against, as well as developing a Strategic Capital Plan for the Gwent region.
- **The Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership** have continued to develop and improve access to, and awareness of, approved mental wellbeing self-help

information, resources, and the workforce training programme. The Coproduction steering group continues to work with people with lived experience and we now have **8** new lived experience members on the Mental health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership, to help develop, shape, and evaluate mental health and learning disability provision across Gwent.

- **Autism and Neurodivergence Strategic Partnership** have been evaluating the impact of implementing the **Autism Code of Practice** in Gwent and supporting the Welsh Government evaluation. Through the Neurodivergence Improvement Fund, the partnership is supporting challenges in the system around assessment and diagnosis, pre and post assessment support and multi-agency workforce development around awareness, understanding and acceptance.

3. Engagement: At The Heart of Our Work

The Gwent RPB want to ensure we hear the voices of our citizens, so we can work as partners to help improve the quality and delivery of health and social care services across Gwent.

We are committed to understanding the needs of our different communities and working with people to build on existing practices, as well as seeking opportunities for innovation and change. We take forward engagement with our communities across the RPB's strategic partnerships, throughout each year, and also work with our multi-agency partners to share learning and avoid duplication of engagement across the region.

Gwent Citizen's Network

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) sets out through coproduction principles the need for partners, including citizens to work together. Citizen Network Champions, including a representative for Unpaid Carers, attends the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) meetings and provides feedback on topics raised by network members.

Following the Covid19 pandemic, the formally named **Gwent Citizen Panel** had been facilitated through virtual meetings, with an introduction of hybrid meetings commencing in **2023**. During the pandemic, network members and engagement dropped, resulting in a need to reinvigorate meetings to support engagement and coproduction.

As a result, the former panel has now evolved into a virtual network of over **100** members, who we engage and coproduce with regularly to support the priorities of the RPB.

Members also receive [weekly information bursts](#) (**Annexe 3**) to support our offer of information and advice within the community, and we are continuing to grow this network and raise awareness of the group.


“ I wanted to contact you and thank you for sending me this, I have not visited the Rugby Surgery for about 3 years, and I have never spoken to the doctors in the practice, however, because of you, I attended a health fayre. The outcome was that a doctor referred me. He diagnosed me with a possible irregular heartbeat, which I was totally unaware of. Thank you once again!”

– Quote from Gwent Citizen Network member having received information via the weekly information burst.

Coproduction Luncheons

As well as our virtual network we are developing a roadshow series of in person events called '**Coproduction Luncheons**' in each Local Authority area.


Gwent Regional Partnership Board



Co Production Luncheon

Co Production means working together. By combining efforts, everyone contributes to make things better for everyone else. Co-production enables people providing and people receiving services to share power and responsibility, and to work together in equal, reciprocal and caring relationships.

Thursday 29th February
10:00 - 14:00
Cwmbrân Library
NP44 1XQ



Agenda:

- Welcome and Introduction
- Overview of Co-Production
- Roundtable Discussions
- Networking Opportunities
- Luncheon

These events provide the RPB and citizens of Gwent with the opportunity to network and connect, improving the way we engage and coproduce with citizens, and raising awareness of opportunities to get involved with the work of the RPB. These events are also an opportunity for citizens to tell their stories and experiences of care and support, and share with us what has gone well, where they would like to see improvements made and importantly, '**what matters**' to them.

A Citizen Network planning group has been established to co-design these events with citizens, with the first taking place in **February 2024** and further dates now planned throughout the year. Following each Coproduction Luncheon network members receive a [newsletter](#), with a roundup of the event including key themes and next steps.

These events also provide us with an opportunity to consult on key documents such as the **Gwent Citizen Charter**, RPB **Communications and Engagement Strategy** and Welsh Government consultations.

Decisions Made Together Event: Inclusion and Experience

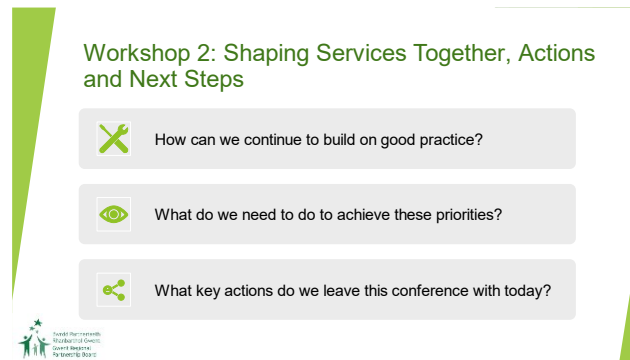
In **May 2024** we held an exciting and thought-provoking event in Newport, focusing on people's stories and the small things that can make a big impact in people's lives. The event highlighted the importance of *making decisions together* and the importance of *co-production*, in the delivery of care and support.



Workshop 1:
Co-Production is a journey

- What does 'citizen voice' mean to you and how can we ensure it is respected and heard by others?
- How can we develop better, more positive relationships between practitioners and the people they work with?
- What are the challenges to coproducing care and support, what does good look?





We had over **150** attendees from across Gwent, including multi agency partners and citizens, with guest speakers who had received support across health and social care for themselves, or as carers. They shared personal experiences highlighting where things had gone well but also where services and processes need to be improved, to help inform and shape future services.

There were a variety of engaging presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities, including **30** partner information stands from across various sectors. We also discussed as part of the workshops, how we can further develop and create an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes collaboration, to improve health and social care in Gwent.

A report is being finalised and will be reviewed and discussed within each of the relevant strategic partnerships, and the RPB, so we can look to develop this work further over the coming months.

Engagement With Other Partners

We work with a range of partners as part of our board, including leads from ABUHB, LA, Third Sector lead representatives (TVA and GAVO) and provider leads. We also ensure we align to other partnerships, networks and forums to ensure a whole system approach to improving health and social care, working in collaboration to support the priorities of the RPB and aligning Welsh Government policies.



5. Overview of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Role and Priorities

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) was established as part of the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act (SSWB) to:

- **To improve care and support, ensuring people have more say and control.**
- **To improve outcomes and health and wellbeing for people across the region**
- **Provide co-ordinated, person-centred care and support.**
- **Make more effective use of resources, skills, and expertise across partners.**

As a partnership we work together on an agreed shared vision for service development and integration of health, care aligning to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and A Healthier Wales, specifically the four themes of:

- **Improved population health and wellbeing**
- **Better quality and more accessible health and social care services**
- **Higher value health and social care, and**
- **A motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce**

To deliver the RPB priorities and the objectives of the Area Plan, the RPB have established 7 strategic integrated partnerships, which also have oversight of the relevant programmes of work and projects within the new Regional Integration Fund (RIF). These sub partnerships report to the RPB and update on progress against Area Plan priorities and challenges:

- **Carers Strategic Partnership**
- **Children and Families Strategic Partnership**
- **Dementia Strategic Partnership**
- **Gwent Adult Strategic Partnership**
- **Health, Housing and Social Care Strategic Partnership**
- **Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership**
- **Autism and Neurodiversity Strategic Partnership**

The thematic partnerships each deliver on sections of the Area Plan, as part of a strategic work programme, which is also translated at a local level via the Integrated Partnership Boards and Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs).

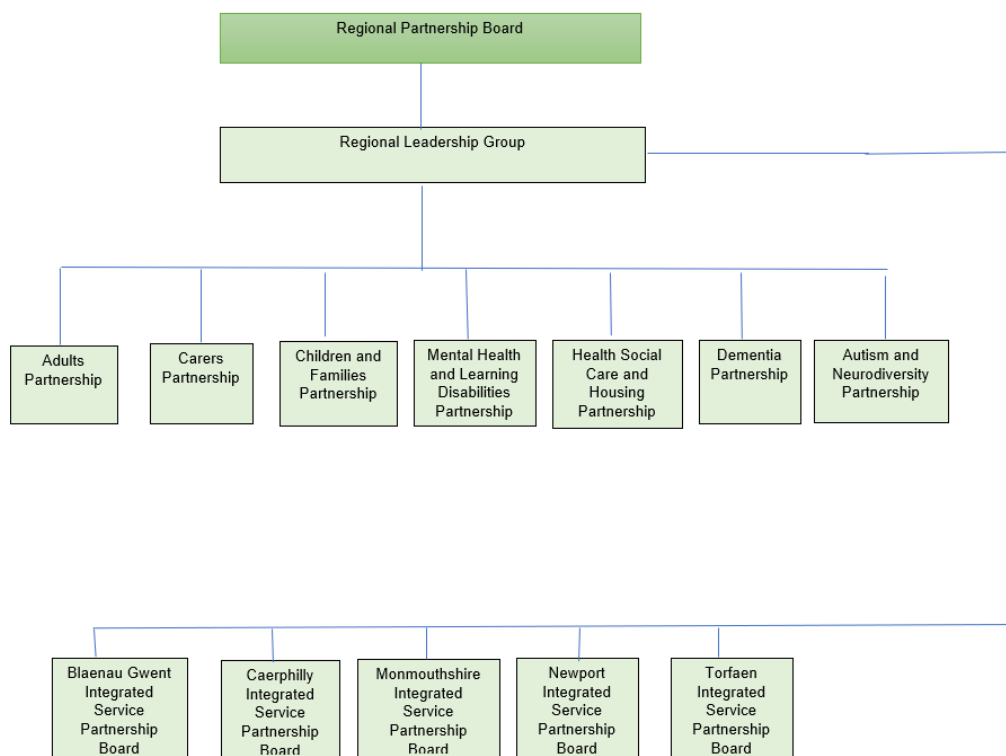
The RPB has also established enabling and supporting partnerships as part of the requirements set out in the SSWB Act and this includes:

- The regional citizens network (including carers), with two champion representatives to sit on the Board.
- The Value-Based provider and third sector forum, to connect to the RPB directly – having two elected representatives to sit on the Board.
- A regional Joint Commissioning group
- A regional Workforce Development Board
- A regional Gwent Assistive Technology Network

Membership and Partnership Governance

Full membership as at May 2024 is detailed in (*Annexe 1*).

RPB Structure



Population Needs Assessment (PNA)

The Gwent RPB developed its second PNA for the region with citizens and partners in 2022. This assessment is the foundation for our planning of future service provision, across Health and Social Care, identifying the range and level of services required, to ensure we are meeting the needs of the population. The PNA was developed via citizen engagement through the RPB and partner organisations alongside a collection of data sets, in order to effectively shape services to meet future demands. Our engagement is ongoing with citizens, to ensure we are always addressing current needs and highlighting emerging priorities to the RPB.

Area Plan

The [Gwent Area Plan](#) was reviewed and published last year and details the priority areas for integration of services between health and social care and the direction of our Gwent board.

It is ambitious, and it sets a clear road map for the delivery of an integrated model of health care and wellbeing across Gwent. The RPB provides leadership and oversight on the delivery of the plan, supported by appropriate governance and performance management systems.

The Plan is structured around the statutory core themes identified in the PNA which are **older adults, children and young people, carers, autism and neurodivergence, mental health and learning disabilities, housing, workforce, and commissioning**. All work programmes align and report into the above RPB structure, which comprises of strategic partnerships, 5 integrated boards, and the locality models known as Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCN's).

Market Stability Report (MSR)

This Market Stability Report (MSR) links with the findings of the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) which sets out current and projected need and demand for care in local communities and the range and type of services that will be required to meet that demand. This MSR has been produced in partnership with each of the 6 commissioning organisations that make up the Gwent Regional Partnership Board: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board; and covers regulated services as well as independent, private and third sector provision. The MSR and PNA documents complement each other and provide a comprehensive picture of current and projected demand and supply.

The MSR is a useful tool for providers and potential providers of regulated services to enable a better understanding of the region and help to inform their own strategic thinking about future investment. It will also be of interest to local communities, as it provides transparency about the use of resources and how decisions about service provision are made.

6. Key Partnership Developments 2023/2024



Carers Annual Report:

- Projects were developed to support carers with hospital discharge across the region, with **1,626** carers accessing support.
- **226** individuals received a small grant between April and June 2024
- The Young Carers in Schools Programme extended its remit to offer support to schools for transition days.
- **3,145** carers received a short break from their caring role, supporting wellbeing and positive caring relationships.
- Projects delivered community support, providing information, advice, and assistance (IAA), activities, individual and peer support to **3,389** carers.



Dewis

- Detailed views of resources have increased by **2,728**. This is the number of times someone has searched for something on Dewis and then clicked to find more information. In March 2022 there was **31,227** clicks and in March 2023 there was **40,795**.
- Expired resources have reduced from **966** to **852** showing that currency of the directory is improving. More information can be found in **Annex 2**.



Dementia Friendly Gwent Network

- There are now over **270** multi agency networks members, including both paid professionals, volunteers, carers, and people living with dementia.
- **55** network members joined us for the 2023 Dementia Friendly Gwent coffee morning, to celebrate the hard work of organisations across Gwent.
- **4,305 Dementia Friends** have been made across **152** sessions during **2023 – 2024**, to help raise awareness and understanding across the region.



Workforce and College Consortium

A regional work placement scheme was launched in September 2022 to support students to apply for local authority work placements and to support social care teams to adequately prepare to accept these placements. **92** work placement applications were received for the **23/24** academic year, with a total of **30** work placements facilitated by LA social care teams. Future efforts will focus on converting placements to paid work opportunities. The RPB have continued to engage with members of **Coleg Gwent** to promote careers across health and social care and how to design course content to promote the sector.

Access to Medicine Course

There has been a continued shortage of Welsh students seeking to pursue a career in medicine, particularly those from socially disadvantaged areas. Developed with Professor Paul Edwards (ABUHB) this course, prepares local students for a Medical Pathway Degree and is designed to support talented individuals who have traditionally faced barriers in entering the field of medicine, it is the **first of its kind** in Wales. The first cohort of students were recruited in September **2023**, and it is anticipated that the course will expand in the new academic year.

Clinical Placement Programme

Initially launched in September 2022 this initiative provides second-year students with **100** hours of clinical placement in hospital settings such as The Royal Gwent, Nevill Hall, and Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr. Building on this success the program has been expanded to include placements at The Grange university hospital and Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan. **38** students across Coleg Gwent have secured placements this year. Two students have recently secured substantive posts as Healthcare Support Workers within the health board. The remaining **36** students are currently on track to complete their qualifications this year and are poised to advance into university or employment within the sector.

Micro Care

Following an initial 12-month Micro Care pilot in 2022-23, exploring if micro carers could support local care capacity and delivery, providing an alternative to traditional domiciliary care provision Micro Care Monmouthshire continues to support local citizens to become self-employed care workers. There is a total of **25** micro carers on Monmouthshire's Micro Care Directory to date. Further funding for the development of a digital, self-service portal via the Regional Innovation Co-ordination (RIC) Hub has also been secured. Implementation of the portal spanned from January - April 2024 and includes features to ensure training compliance, document collection, and secure data handling. The portal will help to streamline the onboarding process, providing an easy access platform that will help the project's future resilience and longevity.

Recognising the need for region-specific solutions, the Gwent Regional Partnership Team established a Micro Care Community of Practice in Wales in July 2023. The bi-monthly meetings aim to address barriers specific to Wales and foster the growth of micro care services.



Citizen Engagement

- Since its relaunch, we have expanded the Gwent Citizen Network to over **100** members.
- A Gwent wide Coproduction and Engagement event, '**Decisions Made Together: Inclusion and Experience**' was attended by over **150** professionals and citizens.
- Coproduction Luncheons are taking place across Gwent to enable us to connect and engage with citizens to influence and support development of our strategic priorities and service delivery.



AskSARA

All metrics (users, new users, sessions, reports, bounce rate) have **increased**. The user/report percentage and bounce rate remain at very positive levels, indicating users are interacting well with the site. Good variety of referral sources. **90% of users would recommend AskSARA, 71% were helped to find a solution or equipment.**

7. Joint Commissioning and Pooling of Funds

It's important that people receive the right services, at the right time, and in the right place. To do this, we must ensure funding is directed to meet the needs of our communities in Gwent.

The Regional Joint Commissioning Group (RCG) has developed a regional Market Position Statement (MPS) as set out under Section 144B of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and an action plan to deliver the identified priorities for care homes, domiciliary care, community services, advocacy and ensuring effective links with provider groups.

The RCG has a cross-cutting function across the regional strategic partnerships and has undertaken work on their behalf. The group is also an information and good practice sharing forum across the regional partnerships, as well as specialist technical advice to partners on commissioning related activity.

The focus over the next 12 months is to continue to support the domiciliary care and care home sectors, as they face crisis in recruitment and retention. This works links closely to that of the Workforce Development Board and its regional workforce strategy.

Progress made in 2023/24:

Providers of care are experiencing considerable challenges but despite this, good progress had been made against Part 9 requirements and the revised regional Area Plan for commissioning, this includes:

- Section 33 Pooled Fund Arrangement, signed by all parties.
- A review has taken place of the previously agreed regional contract for care homes for older people.
- Reconvened the working group with care homes regarding a regional fee methodology with reasonable progress being made despite considerable budgetary constraints.
- Development work underway to establish a common joint contract monitoring framework for care homes for older people.
- Development work underway to establish a common joint contract monitoring framework for domiciliary care services.
- The Section 16 Forum has been relaunched and an event took place in March 2024. The Section 16 Forum represents a pivotal step towards a collaborative synergy and driving positive change across Gwent. It is committed to inclusivity, innovation, and transparency, and champions citizen voices and empowering stakeholders to effect meaningful outcomes.
- Development of a commissioning approach to mental health and learning disabilities commissioned services within ABUHB remains under review by ABUHB.
- A discussion took place regarding pooled funds opportunities in Gwent – no further pooled funds were identified at this time.
- A review of direct payments in Gwent took place with further work being taken forward.
- Establishment of a monthly webinar for care homes in Gwent will be further developed to become the Gwent Care Homes Engagement Forum. This will be a collaborative ongoing process.

- Establishment of a monthly webinar for domiciliary care services in Gwent remains.
- The Gwent RPB continues to look for new opportunities to use the flexibility afforded by pooled budgets and the current pooled funds supporting care homes. Torfaen County Borough Council hosts the pooled fund manager under a Section 33 Agreement.
- The regional commissioning work program will ensure that pooled funds remain a 'live issue' and is routinely considered as an option when discussing, devising, and developing joint commissioning arrangements. The existing regional pooled fund arrangement under the Section 33 Agreement 'Accommodation Arrangements for Care Homes for Older people in Gwent' remains in place. A report is presented to the RPB annually.

8. Achievements Aligning to the Area Plan

The Area Plan outcomes are delivered and monitored through the 7 strategic Partnerships, with the following priority areas:

- **children and young people with complex needs**
- **unpaid carers.**
- **older people, with specific reference to supporting people living with dementia.**
- **People with physical disabilities.**
- **People with learning disabilities.**
- **Autism and Neurodevelopmental Conditions.**
- **People with poor mental health and/or emotional support needs.**
- **People with sensory impairment.**
- **People experiencing VAWDASV or homelessness and the secure estate (as set out in the Code of Practice)**

In addition to the above statutory themes, the RPB have also included a focus on housing.

Working in collaboration with strategic partnerships is key to creating synergy across the region and avoid duplication of efforts; and the RPB also links closely with the Area Planning Board, who lead on substance misuse issues and also the Safeguarding Boards. At a strategic level the RPB links closely with the regional Public Service Board to ensure there is a collaborative approach to the delivery of the Area Plan and regional Wellbeing Plan, VAWDASV agenda, as well as delivering the ambitions of a Marmot region.

This section of the annual report sets out key work taken forward through each of the partnerships under the RPB and key outcomes delivering the Regional Area Plan.

Gwent Adults Strategic Partnership (GASP)

Area Plan Priority

- To improve emotional well-being for older people by reducing loneliness and social isolation, with earlier intervention and community resilience.
- To support older people to live, or return following a period of hospitalisation, to their own homes and communities, through early intervention, integrated care models and a whole system approach.
- To mitigate the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic through, especially reducing waiting lists and times to access support, appointments, and medical procedures.

Partnership Progress:

- **Community Connectors** is a community-based service that provides information, advice, and assistance (IAA) to help people connect with resources and support in their community. These projects focus on improving well-being, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness, and connecting people with appropriate resources and support. The four Community Connector projects are delivered in Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen, with each project tailored to the needs of each local authority area.



- **Community Car Scheme & Befriending Service Project:** This service has recently achieved success in increasing social connections and reducing isolation amongst its participants. These outcomes are crucial for enhancing the overall well-being of socially isolated individuals in a County with significant rural areas. The service successfully links isolated individuals with befriending services, addressing critical needs for social interaction and support. By utilising a flexible service model, the project has met its objectives to provide tailored support to vulnerable populations, particularly older people, and isolated residents. In 23/24, the scheme arranged **2,270** journeys with a total of **32,902** miles.

**“WHAT
MATTERS
TO YOU?”**

- **Improving System Flow: Home from Hospital:** There are **18** projects under this programme, supported via ABUHB, LA and Third Sector. The projects help people return home from hospital quickly to recover, rehabilitate, and regain as much independence as possible. Over **60,000** people were supported through this programme in **2023/24**.
- **SMART/Assistive Technology Spaces:** Four innovative SMART spaces in Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen, have been established across Gwent over the last few years. The spaces offer residents and staff hands-on experiences with AT products designed to enhance preventative care and support for individuals, enabling them to stay well at home for longer. The Monmouthshire NCN have teamed up with Monmouthshire County Council to provide two Assistive Technology rooms within Chepstow Community Hospital to demonstrate AT to patients, their relatives, staff, and the wider community. This innovative project will be tested and evaluated before potential roll out in other areas of the region. More information on the SMART/AT spaces across the region can be found on the ABUHB website [here](#).

Children & Families Strategic Partnership

Area Plan Priorities:

- To improve outcomes for children and young people with complex needs through earlier intervention, community-based support, and placements closer to home.
- To ensure good mental health and emotional well-being for children and young people through effective partnership working especially mitigating the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

Partnership Progress:

- The five LAs with colleagues in ABUHB, continue to develop residential solutions for children in the region following development of Windmill Farm in Newport, using Capital grant funding. Windmill Farm is a four bedroomed children's home accommodating a safe space and trauma informed environment, whilst partners work with the family to establish the best care in the longer term. An end of year review is currently in progress as part of the first phase of the evaluation.
- Coproduction work is ongoing with parents and children, ABUHB, Parents Voices in Wales and the wider partnership. The group has led to a number of changes within the Neuro-developmental Pathway for children and young people including: a re-design of the referral pathway and its accessibility, a new document developed to help parents understand the process, a re-designed information leaflet for families entering the pathway, and creation of a pathway animation specifically targeted for children entering the neuro-developmental pathway to explain what to expect in a child friendly way. This work won the NHS Wales award in 2023 for ***Empowering People to Co-produce Their Care***.

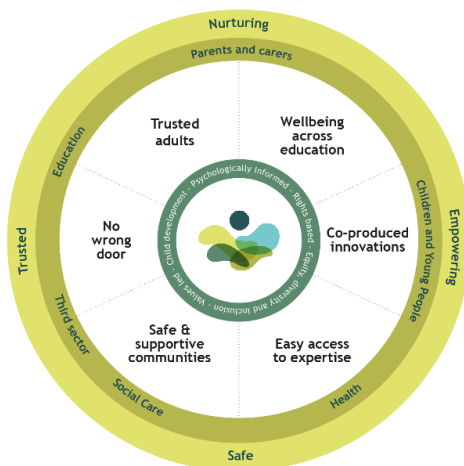


- Children's Centre Psychology (formerly Helping Hands) is structured to integrate seamlessly into three children's centres in Gwent. The project team, comprising of psychologists and allied health professionals such as occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, delivers accessible psychological support. Services include counselling, workshops, and direct therapeutic interventions for both children and their caregivers, facilitated through self-referral routes that connect directly to SPACE Wellbeing and the Integrated Services for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN) panel.
- ISCAN operates through a multi-disciplinary team of health, social care, and educational professionals who coordinate comprehensive support for children with additional needs. The project is structured around regular coordination meetings that ensure all aspects of a child's care are integrated and managed collectively. ISCAN has effectively coordinated support for children with additional needs by integrating services across health, education, and social care. The project has successfully facilitated transitions for children between these services, ensuring that children receive timely and appropriate support tailored to their needs.

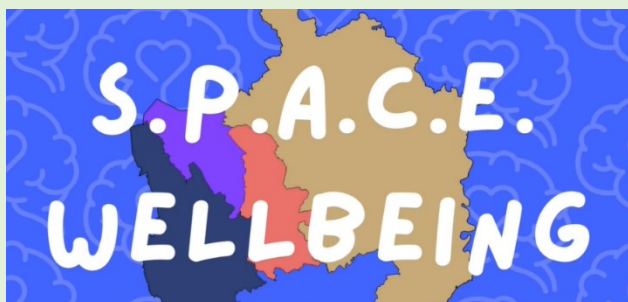
- The ISCAN Care Co-ordination team have continued to support families of children with complex needs across the five Gwent Local Authorities. It has been a challenging year due to elevated levels of sickness absence within the team over the past 18 months. However recruitment is taking place, and a full team is anticipated by September 2024. Development work has been ongoing, and focus has been on reducing the current waiting list which was introduced due to low staffing levels. This does mean that by empowering families to support with their child's needs, the ISCAN Care Co-ordination team can ensure that their work is directed to the child's needs.
- Digital applications in the form of the referral form and supporting questionnaires have been set up for parents to access via a QR code and the introduction of electronic case files has led to a more efficient, streamlined service. The **ISCAN animation** went live in February 2024 to give a clear explanation to families about the ISCAN process and benefits. ISCAN will be circulating an online evaluation form in the first quarter of 2024/2025 to ensure that the processes continue to work for families.
- Family Intervention Team (FIT) utilises a clinical psychology led service offering an early intervention mental health service through a brief intervention of 12 sessions (with an optional two top-up sessions within a year of ending). It is structured as a whole Gwent service, embedded in communities to meet children where they live their lives.

"I can see things from different perspectives now and that's been helpful. I think about what I can control and what I can't, like my own emotions and how I act. I've realised it's not very helpful to hold on to grudges, so I've been letting things go a bit more."

- Platform 4YP brings together young people aged 14–18 to empower them through peer support and community involvement. The project structures its support by enabling young people to choose their areas of focus in wellbeing discussions and peer interactions.
- The partnership continues to work closely with Welsh Government and partners to raise awareness and roll out the NEST/NYTH model on a multi-agency level.



Case Study: The SPACE-Wellbeing programme



The Gwent Single Point of Access for Children’s Emotional (SPACE) Wellbeing Service has been embedded successfully across the five local authorities in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board since 2019.

The process was developed to reduce the distress faced by families and referrers for accessing support to children and young people and to reduce the workload on services in processing ‘inappropriate referrals. There was a need for agencies to work together, in a collaborative manner, without bouncing referrals between services. The SPACE-Wellbeing model is driven by the ‘no wrong door’ approach and operates in line with the Single Front Door principle of the NEST/NYTH model. It enables children, young people, and families to access the right service at the right time. It is recognised as an example of good practice in Wales.

SPACE Wellbeing is a process through which professionals and families can seek early help and support for a range of difficulties in children and young people’s emotional well-being, behaviours, parenting, access to facilities as well as activity-based input.

The improved system has eliminated the need to screen referrals in silo. The children and young people identified as having mental health needs are discussed in the multi-agency panel and can be accepted and offered clinical appointments in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This is now a well-established system with good co-ordination between services that offer a timely response. The panel accept self-referrals and offer one point of contact; a valuable support to families.

Over **34,000** referrals have been processed in the **5-year period**. Specialist CAMHS no longer screen referrals in isolation. Parents can self-refer for their child’s well-being needs without the need to seek professional consultation.

There is equity in the provision of care. The services are working in harmony as a whole-system approach and benefit from learning from each other by using shared language, goals and outcomes.

“Every child’s needs can be addressed in a timely way.”

Evaluation and informal feedback highlighted that:

- Children and families are getting the right help, first time.
- Reduced duplication and improved co-ordination between services (of referrals, assessment, and interventions)
- Improved access to consultation and advice from ABUHB staff for Local Authority (LA) and Third Sector staff
- A straightforward pathway for referrers

"I am most proud of seeing how services/professionals work together to support the families and young people and in our role as co-ordinator, we help facilitate this support to provide the best possible outcome for our families"
– SPACE well-being coordinator.

"Thank you for making SPACE Wellbeing work, you have no idea how much relief it has brought to GPs!"

The role of the peripatetic SPACE Wellbeing Co-ordinator has been invaluable in offering sustainable services and has meant that, in the past 12 months, **50 SPACE** Wellbeing panel meetings and discussion of **800 referrals** went ahead.

The SPACE Wellbeing Helpline supports the families by giving general advice and support.

Engagement with Children and Families:

The RPB continues to engage with the **Regional Youth Forum** around a Mental Health Campaign following the completion of the national UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark survey.



Tracy Daszkiewicz, Director of Public Health published the Gwent report **'Our Future, our voice: babies, children and young people of Gwent 2023/2024'**, to share the personal experiences from children and inspire thought on what we can do to make Gwent a place where our babies, children and young people can flourish. This report provides us with the views of young people and what they need from us when we are planning support and services that impact their lives. (Full report can be found in **Annexe 5**).

Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership

Area Plan Priorities:

- Increased understanding and awareness of mental health amongst the public to reduce stigma and help people to seek support earlier.
- To improve emotional well-being and mental health for adults and children through early intervention and community support.
- To support people with learning disabilities to live independently with access to early intervention services in the community; and greater public awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities needs.

Partnership Progress:

Foundation Tier Work

The Gwent Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Foundation Tier Programme is funded through the RIF and focuses on a number of distinct but complementary projects, which set out to improve access to, and awareness of, approved mental health resources – Gwent Connect 5, Suicide First Aid, Specialist Suicide Bereavement Support and Services in Gwent and Melo Cymru.

Melo Cymru



Since its launch in January **2021** there have been over **100,000** New Users to our local [Melo Cymru website](#), with the majority originating from the Gwent area and falling within younger age brackets. Melo has been developed by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's Public Health Team and supported by regional partners. The site acts as a repository for approved self-help resources and information on mental wellbeing.

The site displays over **34** different topics which have been co-produced with topic experts, including people with lived experience and houses **over 370** available resources and over **60** courses that are available both online and face to face.

It acts as a central point of digital access for mental wellbeing resources, providing access to up to date, approved self-help information, advice, and free courses/resources to help people look after and improve their emotional and mental wellbeing.

It is an accessible, bilingual resource, and the Reach Deck tool enables text to speech and reading and translation of text into over **100** languages. This makes online content more accessible for people with dyslexia, low literacy levels, mild visual impairments and those who speak English as a second language.

As well as being used by members of the public, Melo is routinely used by our partners including the NHS 111 Press 2 and ABUHBs Psychological Health Practitioner Service. Feedback from our 'Melo Users' has been overwhelmingly positive. Melo is promoted across various social media channels and regional partners and there is a continued increase in followers across these platforms. Melo has been recognised Nationally as a beneficial resource, and discussions continue to take place regarding possible roll out of the website as a national wellbeing resource.

There are also more resources on Melo that are downloadable/printable, that can be printed off for people who are digitally excluded or can be given out by GPs and other partners. In addition, the promotion of Melo continues to be part of ABUHBs Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner programme's staff induction training and an integral part of the Gwent Connect 5 training.

Gwent Connect 5 Training Programme



Gwent Connect 5 is a mental wellbeing workforce training programme, supplying contemporary evidence-based tools and techniques, which can be applied within everyday life and working practice.

The programme is managed by the Public Health team within ABUHB who work in partnership with organisations across Gwent, with the aim of improving population mental wellbeing, by changing the way our frontline workforce has conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

Since its launch in **2020**, over **600** Gwent Connect 5 training modules have been delivered. Gwent Connect 5 is available online or face to face and is delivered by experienced local Mental Health Third Sector partners. Training has been provided to over **40** partners including the Gwent Regional Partnership Team, South Wales Fire & Rescue service, Gwent Police, Department of Work and Pensions, Diverse Cymru, South-East Wales Carers Trust, ABUHB and Local Authority staff. Over **25** trainers are currently delivering the Gwent Connect 5 training across Gwent. Most trainers are delivering in-house, whilst **5** local trainers from Third/Not-for-Profit organisations are commissioned to deliver to organisations who do not have access to an in-house trainer.

Data shows that Gwent Connect 5 participants report an improvement in their own mental health and wellbeing, as well as feeling more knowledgeable, skilled, confident, and motivated to have an effective mental wellbeing conversation.

In **2023**, a second external evaluation of the training programme, using Most Significant Change Methodology, increased confidence in its effectiveness and impact. Powerful and moving '**Change Stories**' were gathered from training participants.

"It gives you a toolkit you can use (unlike other training). I have a physical workbook now I can take out to people. It allows us to follow a process. Process is important to me. I want to get people thinking for themselves and arm them for the future".

"Now I feel more positive. It's like a 'shining light has come across me'!"

Specialist Suicide Bereavement Support and Services in Gwent

Specialist suicide bereavement support services are essential to support grieving and help reduce the risk of further deaths by suicide. Research indicates that families and friends bereaved by suicide are at greater risk of mental health and emotional problems and are also at higher risk of suicide themselves.

Since 2020, anyone in Gwent affected by a death by suicide have had access to free specialist suicide bereavement support services. As there is no National suicide bereavement service, we have been extremely fortunate to have had access to a 'gold standard' service locally provided by two charities: 2wish and the Jacob Abraham Foundation.



From **September 2020 to March 2023**, 2wish provided support for anyone affected by a sudden and unexpected death, including death by suicide of someone of any age. This was in addition to 2wish's national offer of providing support to anyone affected by a sudden and expected death of someone aged 25 and under across Wales. 2wish provided this all-age service in Gwent thanks to WG and ABUHB funding.

From **April 2023**, Jacob Abraham Foundation have provided a specialist support service for those affected by a death by suicide in Gwent of someone aged 25 and over. Support is provided to anyone who needs the support regardless of when the death occurred.

Current funding for the Jacob Abraham Foundation service continues and has been secured from the WG RIF Gwent Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Foundation Tier Programme but is only sufficient to fund the service until the end of **September 2024**. Further funding is being sought as a priority.

Suicide First Aid



Over **100** fully funded suicide awareness training courses: 'Suicide First Aid' have been delivered across Gwent since 2021. We are extremely fortunate in Gwent that our local workforces and volunteers have been able to access Suicide First Aid training for free.

Five experienced trainers from our local Mental Health Third Sector organisations are trained to deliver the Suicide First Aid (SFA) courses. Our Trainers deliver three SFA courses, both online and in person. You can choose from a half day course, a one-day course or a course specifically for professionals working with secondary school aged children. Feedback has been overwhelming positive with participants reporting an increase in their knowledge, skills, and confidence to have a 'suicide conversation'.

In 2023, local charity Ted Senior Foundation, provided funding enabling our local Trainers to deliver another **60** SFA courses. If attendees do not have the time to attend a full course, there is also a suite of free Zero Suicide Alliance online courses starting from 20 minutes that can be accessed via Melo.

"I found the course very informative and useful. It has given me more confidence to talk to a family member who has attempted suicide many times. I was pleased to learn how to phrase things and to repeat back to them what they have told me"

"Excellent training. I have done suicide training before, and this is the best by far".

Case Study: A Journey at Growing Space

'No More Barriers' is an outcome focused, employment programme that supports individuals with a learning disability, autism, or mental ill health along a bespoke employability pathway towards employment opportunities.

An individual attended the Blackwood Growing Space location in **2023** after being referred by Mind. Initially, she was hesitant but sought to improve her mental health and social interactions after experiencing medical setbacks. She started as a participant in arts and crafts sessions and eventually became a volunteer, contributing to the shop floor operations one day a week. Her gradual involvement in the programme worked well, allowing her to build confidence and skills at her own pace, finding comfort in the non-judgmental environment and the shared goals of improving mental health.

"I've tried everything else for my mental health and nothing has helped... I may as well give it a try."

Her participation and enjoyment increased which were clear indicators of success. Her transition from a quiet attendee to an active volunteer illustrates significant personal growth.

"Growing Space is the best thing I've done for my mental health and has really helped me".

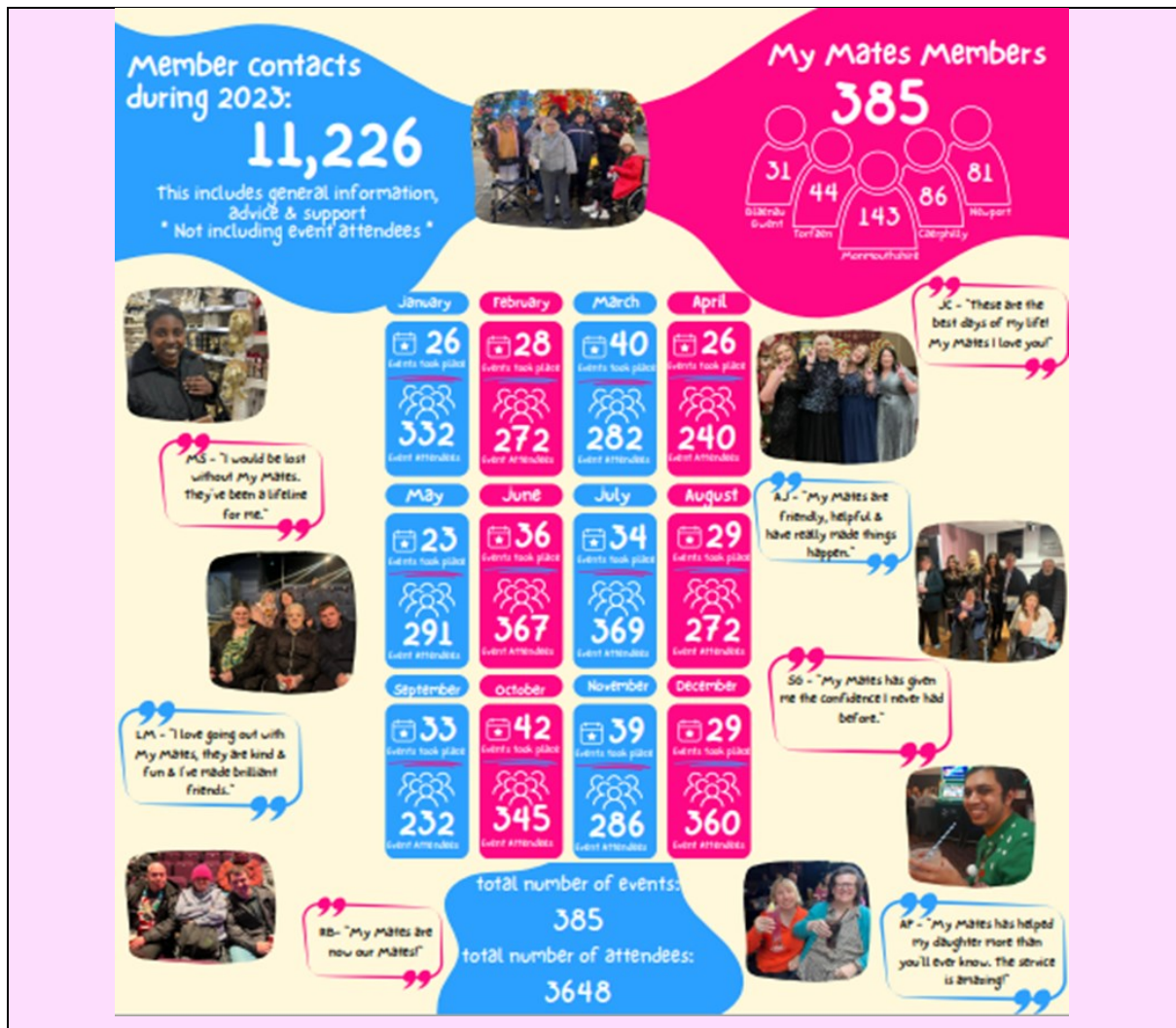
Her mental health improved significantly as she became more involved with Growing Space, not only gaining confidence but also acquiring practical skills and qualifications in mental health awareness, budgeting, and customer service. Her experience at Growing Space demonstrates the profound impact of inclusive, supportive community programmes on mental health and personal development. Her journey from a hesitant participant to a confident volunteer highlights the importance of providing opportunities for skill development and social engagement.

"I didn't know there were other people like me here... It feels great to finally be in a place which understands me."

My Mates

My Mates supports those with a learning disability to access a variety of social events, on request, individuals can be supported to develop a relationship by finding a date and are offered advice and information.

Whilst My Mates emphasis is upon unpaid friendships and relationships, they adapt to meet needs and demand. As members grow in confidence and develop friendships and relationships, they embrace an individual's journey, encompassing the 'whole' person; this may include areas such as crisis prevention, housing, finance management, care and appearance, health and sexuality and anything else required to enable each member to live their best, self-directed life.



Case Study: Acer House – Redevelopment

United Welsh purchased the former Brynmawr Clinic site from ABUHB in 2019. In 2020, the Welsh Government Land and Buildings Development Fund (formerly known as the Land Release Fund), provided funding to demolish the buildings in June 2020. The ICF programme supported the development with £596,516.

The land was redeveloped to create a bespoke supported living scheme for people with complex needs. The intention of the project was to provide a safe, therapeutic, and homely environment for young females with complex mental health needs transitioning from children's services into adult services, providing an opportunity to move from secure placements into the community with 24/7 support.

The building is made up of large communal spaces, staff space and 5 individual bedsits. Once the physical building had been completed it was important to ensure that it was furnished in a therapeutic and homely way and that there was equipment available for individuals to experience different activities to help with their wellbeing. As a result, in 2023, financial assistance was secured via the HCF Minor projects programme, in order to create a homely environment. The project has been delivered in partnership with ABUHB.

The aim of the supported accommodation developed on the Brynmawr Clinic site is to provide an innovative and alternative model of support for young females with complex mental health needs having experienced significant trauma and been placed in placements that have been restrictive and institutional in nature. It was important to create an

environment that was therapeutic and safe for these individuals and that it would be supportive of creating a relational service where staff could build genuine relationships with the individuals, supporting them on a different pathway with the aim of full transition into independent accommodation and discharge from services altogether.

Most recently, one of the residents who moved into the project from a secure placement, has successfully secured employment.

“it’s amazing to wake up in the morning without a nurse at the end of my bed. I am slowly getting my life back on track.”



Engagement with Citizens

The Mental Health & Learning Disability Strategic partnership have engaged with people within mental health and learning disability services to develop a **Coproduction Steering Group**.

Extensive engagement was also completed to develop the Regional Engagement and Involvement Strategy for Gwent, which was coproduced with people, to help transform future services.

In 2023 **8 new lived experience members** were recruited to join the Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership and training and support is ongoing to aid meaningful engagement and participation in these roles. Our new partners are working with us providing their views and expertise to coproduce support and service provision across Gwent.

Autism and Neurodivergence Strategic Partnership:

Area Plan Priorities:

- To provide more timely assessments of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information and advice.
- Increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity across the region and recognise the varying individual support needs; via training to health, social care and wider RPB partners, as well as the wider public.
- Increase opportunities and practical support for learning, training, volunteering, and paid employment, to support independent living.

Partnership Progress:

A Gwent Autism and Neurodivergence(ND) Strategic Group has been established that is Co-Chaired by individuals with lived experience and carers. The membership is currently under review as the partners now also oversee the Neurodivergence Improvement Fund and are evaluating the impact on the implementation of the Autism Code of Practice in Gwent.

Neurodivergence (ND) Improvement Fund

We have been working closely with clinical leads, partners and the Gwent Autism and ND Strategic Partnership, to ensure full use of the Neurodivergence Improvement Fund. This has been utilised to increase children’s additional support sessions, increase assessment

capacity, increase post diagnostic support and to produce digital material for individuals and their families, whilst awaiting assessment.

The third sector allocation of ND funding 2023/24 aimed to build on the success of the pilots delivered within 2022/23 and was utilised in Gwent to raise greater awareness, provide local community support for families, support parents with a child awaiting an ND assessment via CAMHS and individuals awaiting an ASD/ADHD assessment. Five third sector organisations were successful in gaining funding, Hope GB, Torfaen Opportunity Group (TOGS), The ADHD Sisterhood, Growing Space and Autistic Minds.

The projects have supported a total of **460** individuals through phone and online support, provided signposting opportunities and resources to **209** of those individuals. It has provided support to **75** individuals via coffee mornings and supported **116** individuals via one-to-one visits. A total of **1240** individuals have received support through the projects delivered within this programme. Learning and feedback from the projects, is now being used to help inform some of the detail in the Autism Code of Practice Action plan for Gwent.

Child and Family Support

72 hours of 1:1 parent carer support was delivered, and coffee mornings hosted to facilitate community support. Engagement in coffee mornings and the direct feedback from families highlight the project's impact on supporting families through the assessment process.

Autism Reality Experience

A multi-agency experience was provided across Gwent to help improve understanding and acceptance of autism among frontline staff. **19** training days were conducted and were attended by **387** people and **5** conference sessions with **330** attendees, focusing on autism awareness and empathy building. High engagement and positive feedback indicate that **93%** of the attendees rated the experience as excellent, evidencing effective delivery towards the project's objectives.

Adult ADHD Services

From July **2023** the adult ADHD service became a stand-alone service under the Primary Care Mental Health Directorate. This service covers Gwent with a focus on developing assessment and treatment pathways. In line with NICE guidelines and the ND improvement programme, the service began taking direct referrals in January **2024**, meaning referrals no longer go through the individual community mental health teams. Individuals being referred now are sent an electronic booklet to complete so that triage can take place to ensure individuals are not waiting unnecessarily and are signposted correctly. The booklet will replace the initial assessment/ triage appointment currently offered and should result in additional diagnostic assessment being offered in the future.

Post Diagnostic Support

A social media survey was carried out in September 2023 that invited individuals diagnosed and undiagnosed to tell us what would be helpful from an ADHD psychoeducation group. We received **216** responses and used this information to build an eight-week psychoeducation programme. The next stage will be holding some service user focus groups to discuss the content with the hope to run the first group this year. We will be sharing this with the national neurodivergence team and other health boards.

Training and Collaborative Working

The ADHD and Integrated Autism Service clinicians have attended joint training and held a workshop to discuss and plan a pilot due February 2024 that looks at joint ADHD/ASD assessments for those requiring both. We have also developed pathways of moving individuals between services should this be required.

Engagement with Citizens

There is lots of ongoing engagement led by Child Therapy and Transformation leads and parents awaiting an assessment for their child, to develop solutions on how support can be improved for those on the waiting list for assessments.

We also have members with lived experience on the Autism and ND Strategic Partnership and have regular meetings to monitor the Area Plan priorities and programme of work.

Carers

Area Plan Priorities:

- Support unpaid carers to care through flexible respite, access to accurate information, peer to peer support, effective care planning and through increased public understanding.
- Improve well-being of young carers and young adult carers and mitigate against the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

Partnership Progress:

We continue to deliver programmes aligned to the four Welsh Government National priorities for unpaid carers.

- **Carers Hub and Spoke Model** provides a range of Gwent wide services to support unpaid carers with practical help and Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) as guided by carer need. This includes hosting specialist services such as a free legal advice clinic, and group meetings for carers to obtain respite from their caring role in a friendly and supportive environment. 'Spoke' sessions are also held in communities across Gwent, working with partners to ensure carers get the support they need. During 2023/24:
 - **1,501** Carers accessed the service, **360** of which were newly identified unpaid carers.
 - **5473** contacts were made with carers, **1216** carers received IAA.
 - **58** carers received intensive support.
 - **227** Hub and Spoke surgeries were held.
- **HUG by LAUGH (HUG)** is a therapy device developed by design researchers, engineers, and health professionals from Cardiff Metropolitan University. In the evaluation study, it was found that HUG **improved the quality** of life for **87%** of people who used HUG for a period of six months. HUG devices are now being piloted with unpaid carers. During 2023 a total of **59** HUGs were distributed to unpaid carers across Gwent.
- Coleg Gwent has achieved an Advanced **Carer Friendly Accreditation**, a carers employment initiative developed for all public and private workplaces and communities to become more Carer Friendly. To date **19** services have been awarded Carer Friendly status and 1 employer.
- **The Young Carers in School Programme (YCiSP)** aims to support young carers in education settings through an accreditation programme. The programme aims to integrate support for young carers into the school environment, ensuring they receive the necessary recognition and assistance directly in their educational settings. This approach helps in creating a supportive school culture that acknowledges and addresses the unique needs of young carers.
 - A total of **89** schools in Gwent are engaging with the programme and a total of **562** young carers have been identified and supported in school.
 - Events took place during the first quarter of 2023 across the **5** Local Authorities for pupils transitioning either from primary schools to secondary or secondary to Coleg Gwent.

Training

Since April 2023, **579** participants have attended virtual / face to face training. The digital training which has been provided has seen **58** staff complete the training and evaluate the session. The training was 'Young Carers: Identifying Us' training.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Number of virtual staff training sessions	4	2	3	2	11
Number of face-to-face staff training sessions	9	4	8	5	26
Number of digital attendees	0	0	58	0	58
Number of attendees	119	106	223	131	579

- In 2023/24 a total of **433** carers received small grants via the **Small Grants Scheme**. These grants are a lifeline for many and are awarded on a case-by-case basis through a partnership panel to ensure every carer who applies to the scheme receives the best possible outcome for their needs, applicants are also referred to the Gwent Carers Hub, Local Authorities and to other services where needed.

“Thank you for the Carers Grant for giving me back some precious time with my husband after so much was taken from us as a result of his Cancer diagnosis and treatments. You gifted us time away with family” – Unpaid Carer

Following a ministerial Inquiry, the funding eligibility for carers in 2023/24 focusses on supporting carers with hospital discharge processes; an area identified as key to enable improvement across Wales. To ensure a robust delivery we:

- Set up a Discharge Working group, including representative of carers, LA's, HB and Third sector.
- Developed pilot initiatives which were endorsed through the Integrated Discharge Improvement Board and Gwent Carers Strategic Partnership Board and endorsed via the Regional Partnership Board.
- Identified resources and agreed on pilot project ward areas that had potential to deliver impact across a range of disciplines.
- Arranged carer awareness training to all staff involved in the pilot areas and offered all pilot wards/service areas the opportunity to become Carer Friendly Accredited.

Pilot Project - Gwent Carers Information and Advice Service (GCIAAS)

Delivered by our Third sector partner Adferiad, this model is an extension of The Gwent Carers Café model (delivered in our Older Adult mental health services). By having a staff member present on a ward to which unpaid carers can be signposted, carers are supported and feel better equipped with the necessary information and advice to support their caring role upon discharge of the person they care for. In addition, carers are able to consider their own needs and be referred for carers assessments. The following pilot ward areas were identified:

- Acute Medical Unit – The Grange Hospital – This will identify carers from point of admission in a short turnaround setting.
- Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan - Ebbw Vale hospital - Care of the Elderly /Rehabilitation ward.
- Paediatrics – The Grange Hospital – To identify parent and young sibling carers.
- Trauma and Orthopaedics at Royal Gwent Hospital – step down and C7W elective.

Key Findings

- 68 GCIASS sessions were held across the 4 areas.
- 196 carers supported.
- 176 carers received IAA.
- 77 carers reported they felt they influenced the decisions that affect them.
- Carers would welcome a place where they could be signposted to within hospital settings.
- Location of accessing support services was found to be key.
- Training ward staff was challenging due to shift working patterns and release of staff.

Case Study:

A carer said she was struggling with her own mental health due to her caring role. She talked about what relaxes her and what she does for self-care. She enjoys reading to unwind and goes for walks when she can. The carer was aware of her right to a carers assessment and spoke to social services. She talked about respite and what that looks like for her and said, ***“I would love just to have a day out with my children and make it as fun as possible”***. The Amser grant was mentioned, and an application submitted for the carer to go to Legoland for her son’s birthday, as a treat for them. This has been actioned and the carer says she is ***“over the moon”***. ***“Thank you so much I am so grateful” – unpaid carer***

Carers Short Breaks: Bridging the Gap Gwent and Local Short Breaks – NEWCIS, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Monmouthshire CC, Newport CC, and Torfaen CBC

The Carers Short Breaks projects provide carers with the opportunity for a short break from their caring role, supporting wellbeing and positive caring relationships. This includes the Bridging the Gap Gwent (BTGG) project that operates a voucher system, giving eligible carers a voucher to spend over 6 months with approved providers. In addition, local authorities have provided local short breaks for carers, including individual, group and family breaks.

BTGG recently supported a young carer in accessing swimming lessons, offering them a valuable respite from their caring responsibilities, an opportunity to acquire a new life skill, and a chance to socialise. Initially, Newport Live, the swimming lesson provider, was not part of the BTGG scheme. However, after discussions they agreed to sign up, expanding respite opportunities not only for this young carer but also for others in the future.

BTGG has also played a pivotal role in establishing an after-school club at a special educational needs school, addressing the lack of options for children to interact beyond school hours. Through collaborative efforts among the Local Authority Carer Lead, Social Worker, and school staff, the club was successfully launched. It provides respite for parents and carers while offering enriching activities for children and young people. BTGG's flexibility allowed respite opportunities to cater to the specific needs of carers with five families currently benefitting from the after-school club. Its success has prompted plans for expansion to accommodate more children, thereby providing additional respite for carers.

The local short breaks across the local authorities have provided various short breaks opportunities, including trips, pantomime, and cinema visits and much more. The Carers Short Breaks Scheme in Monmouthshire has provided much-needed respite for young carers and carers, allowing them time away from their caring responsibilities. Reflecting on the recent young carers trip to Folly Farm, one participant shared,

"The staff are so supportive and amazing, and we are forever grateful as supporting and caring for family can be hard going and it's nice to go out as a family. Thank you."

We continue to work to deliver services to our unpaid carers in the most appropriate way. Hospital discharge remains the core theme for delivery for 2024/25. Whilst we recognise the increased need to reach carers in more innovative ways, balanced with adverse challenges of having enough resources to maintain delivery of the carer's priorities, we remain steadfast in our commitment. We will use the outcomes of the pilots to continue to support the discharge pathway and also take forward delivery against the core National priorities as specified in the Welsh Government National Carers Strategy, making sure that "caring becomes everybody's business". For further information, see **Annexe 6 and 7**.

Engagement with Citizens:

We have a Gwent Citizen Network Champion who is an unpaid carer and is the identified RPB carers member. Unpaid carers sit on the Gwent Carers Strategic Partnership and provide a voice for carers across the region. The partnership also links to established carers groups and coordinators in each of the 5 local authority areas and ABUHB.

Dementia

Area Plan Outcomes identified through the Population Needs Assessment:

- To improve outcomes for people living with dementia and their carers

Partnership Progress:

- ABUHB have adopted and embedded the '***Dementia Friendly Hospital Charter***' for Wales. It provides a set of principles and indicators that focus on the needs of people with dementia and their families, carers, and supporters, and offers an improvement guide to assist hospitals in their self-assessment against the dementia friendly principles. Importantly, the Charter informs people of what to expect when they receive care and visit a hospital. The following animation has been created to further raise awareness of the charter and its aims: English <https://youtu.be/KudreUFNZ-E/> / Welsh <https://youtu.be/8qu4AB5VFLM>
- Feedback about people's lived experience of dementia care when they are in hospital has been used to influence, shape, and improve dementia care across our hospital wards. Our Hospital Dementia Action Plan has been significantly revised based on feedback and what matters to people.
- The Dementia Strategic Partnership continues to support the implementation of the '***All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards***' and workstream leads continue to take forward work plans through the various subgroups. Significant engagement has been undertaken across all areas of Gwent to find out '***what matters***' to people around dementia care.
- Improving the experience of people living with dementia whilst in hospital, through providing meaningful activities and Dementia Volunteer Companions.
- Our Dementia Friendly Gwent network now has over **270** partners championing dementia awareness, inclusion, and support across Gwent.
- We have continued to work with schools, colleges, charities, community groups and partners across Gwent, providing online and in person Dementia Friends sessions and

supporting online connections with communities. **4,305** Dementia Friends have been made across **152** sessions during 2023/2024.

Free Digital Skills Training to Help People Living with Dementia

As part of **Dementia Action Week 2023** Dementia Friendly Gwent worked in partnership with Digital Community Wales, to offer free online training sessions for people living with dementia, their family, friends, carers, and professionals. A [blog](#) post was also produced with DCW to highlight the partnership, Dementia Action Week and the training.

The sessions provided an opportunity to increase dementia awareness and understanding within the community and provide people with practical knowledge to help support people to live well with dementia in the community. Six sessions were held with positive feedback given from attendees.

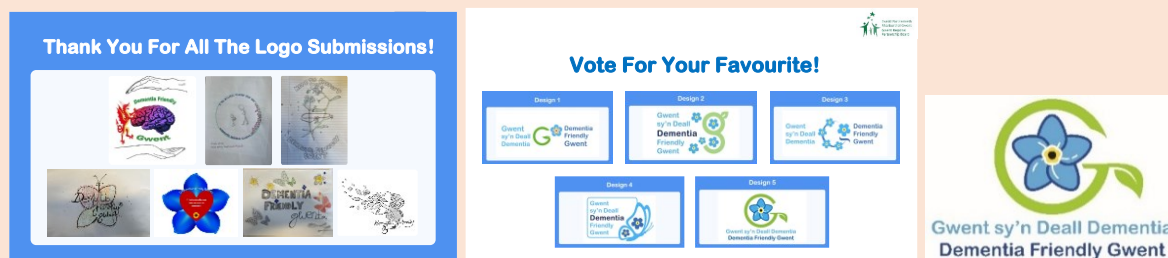
Following the success of these sessions, Dementia Friendly Gwent has since continued its partnership with Digital Communities Wales, offering monthly **Lunch and Learn** sessions throughout **2024**. These cover a variety of topics, all aimed at increasing awareness of digital tools and devices, that can support carers and people living with dementia, to remain independent, provide meaningful activity and improve wellbeing.

Dementia Friendly Gwent Network

A Gwent wide Dementia Friendly Communities group was formed in 2021, merging all the local steering groups, and has since gone from strength to strength. It now consisting of over **270** partners and members of the community, sharing their passion to improve our communities for people living with dementia their families and carer's. This network allows us to streamline our Dementia Friendly Communities work programme and feeds directly into the Dementia Strategic Partnership, allowing partnership working across boroughs. Taking a regional approach has allowed each borough to showcase projects, network and provides opportunities to share learning, raise current challenges and seek support.

This year, following changes made to the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative by the Alzheimer's Society, our network decided to develop its own logo. A design competition was created for network members and the wider community, and we had many submissions from across a number of different groups, including care homes, people living with dementia and schools.

A design team were enlisted to create a set of logos based on all the submissions that we received, resulting in 5 Dementia Friendly Gwent logos inspired by all those who had taken part. The network then voted on their favourite resulting in a completely codesigned and coproduced logo that we are extremely proud of!



Dementia Friendly Gwent Coffee Morning 2024



“It’s lovely to see all the services in Gwent we can refer too, and access!”

55 network members joined us for a Dementia Friendly Gwent coffee morning to celebrate the work of Dementia Friendly Communities across Gwent and mark **Dementia Action Week 2024**. This provided an opportunity for members to network, make connections and learn about various projects supporting those living with dementia and their carers.

The day consisted of a mix of presentations and interactive sessions, including Dragons Rugby Sporting Memories and Love2Move. Our opening address was provided by members of our Experts by Experience group, sharing their journey of dementia so far, what has worked well, and what they wish could have been different.

Attendees also took part in dementia friendly pledges, committing to continue our efforts as a network, to support those living with dementia, and their carers, as well as increase understanding and awareness of dementia.

To end the morning we had a special performance from Age Connects Love to Sing choir, performing their first ever public concert!

“I really enjoyed seeing the amazing work going on in the area, also loved hearing Simon and Lisa’s story!”

Sporting Memories

Sporting Memories has been delivered weekly to older people, and for people living with dementia at Rodney Parade throughout the year. The group has also supported extra activities such as trips and parties, provided new physical activity equipment and grown the number of volunteers to support the facilitation of the club since it began. Some of the members are now attending Dragons Rugby matches and socialising outside of the club.

The weekly club consists of the ‘first half’ being sporting reminiscence and cognitively stimulating games supported by memorabilia and resources such as replay cards, quizzes and the weekly Sporting Pink newspaper but defined by the participant’s sporting interests and preferences. With refreshments served at ‘half time’ the ‘second half’ of the weekly club includes at least 45 minutes of physical activity including indoor curling, boccia, throwing activities and a range of balance and strength exercises. [Newport Sporting Memories in Action](#)



The club works to reduce isolation, improving mental and physical wellbeing and increase connections in the community, having a huge impact on those who attend. Members feel like a family and look forward to seeing each other each week. Members feel comfortable, look out for each other, and feel they are part of something which strengthens their bonds. Overall, we have an average of 20-25 participants attending each week.

**‘If it was not for this group and the people within, I would not be here now!’ –
Sporting Memories Member**

Extra activities such as an intergenerational day have been held, with a local primary school visiting and talk with members, further supporting the outcomes of the project. The members enjoyed talking to the children of the primary school whose pupils speak 34 languages between them. We have also introduced extra support elements within the club such as Local Police Community Officers who visit regularly and provides advice on things like scammers, how to make your home secure and general safety.

We have recruited 4 new volunteers throughout the year to support project facilitation. Volunteers thoroughly enjoy their role, improve their own mental wellbeing in the process.

Below is Ron, who attended Sporting Memories with his wife and carer Julie. Sadly, Ron passed away due to dementia this year. The picture below shows volunteers and club members visiting Ron at home when he was unable to attend the club due to illness, delivering a session from his bedside so he could remain included and connected with members and not miss out.

Following the loss of Ron, Julie became very isolated and after some persuasion came back to the club, now becoming a volunteer at Sporting Memories clubs across Gwent. It has given her a new a new lease of life and a wider support network following the passing of her husband.



Home Based Memory Rehabilitation’ Occupational Therapy (OT) Programme

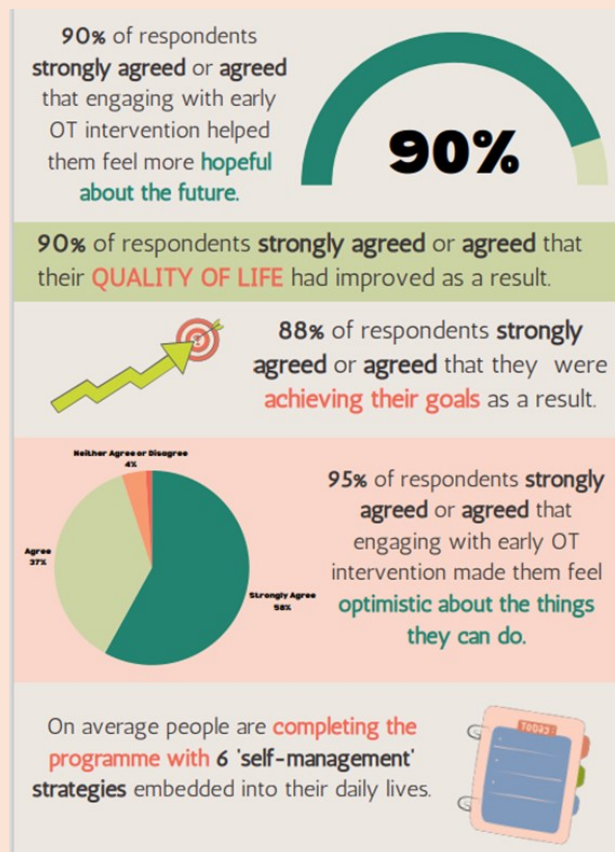
This is a programme for individuals recently referred to memory services and are willing and able, to engage including practicing strategies. The support is delivered one to one in a person's home across six 'themed' sessions (or as needed). The programme introduces memory strategies, memory aids and environmental adaptations at an earlier stage of dementia, whilst the individual still has the ability to learn new habits and routines.

Due to the nature of the person-centred initial assessment, the OT is led by the person's occupational priorities and suited to their unique skills and needs. The family/carer can be involved to support embedding the strategies into daily life, if appropriate. A pilot service took place in Blaenau Gwent and Newport from April 2022 to April 2024.

There are four patient experience themes:

- Orientation Clock (can improve cognitive functioning).
- Range of memory strategies.
- Growth in Confidence.
- Hope for the Future.

Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) were collected, as well as service-user questionnaires. **92** questionnaires were completed. Average experience rating was 9.25, on a scale of 1-10, 10 being excellent.



Engagement with People Living with Dementia

The Dementia Friendly Gwent Network is regularly engaged with to seek their views about services and support and proposed pilot projects. There is also an Engagement workstream as part of the Standards programme that take a multi-agency approach and works to understand what dementia care looks like in Gwent. People with dementia and their carers sit on both the Dementia Friendly Gwent Network and the subgroups under the Dementia Strategic Partnership to help coproduce and shape the dementia care pathway for Gwent.

Work is ongoing through collaboration with partners and communities to provide information and awareness sessions, to raise awareness of dementia, brain health and dementia risk factors, highlight the Dementia Care Standards, and gather people's experiences of dementia care. This engagement includes both virtual and in person visits to groups, organisations, and schools across the community.

We understand the importance of ensuring we are reaching seldom heard voices and have engaged with people with sensory impairment, ethnic minority communities, carers and people who identify as LGBTQ+ to find out '**what matters**' to them and how we can improve dementia care.

Wales Listens Campaign: Improvement Cymru has launched a Wales Listens Campaign, which encourages regions to engage with specific communities and work with those communities to identify what they feel is important to ensuring good dementia care and support. Through our engagement workstream we have developed a communications toolkit to highlight the dementia standards, how people can become involved in our listening campaign, workstream groups, and feedback stories of lived experience by joining our Experts by Experience group.



Health, Social Care & Housing (HSC&H) Strategic Partnership

Area Plan Priorities:

- A multi-agency partnership approach to ensure appropriate housing and accommodation for older people and vulnerable citizens.
- To ensure effective use of Disabled Facilities Grants and appropriate partnership support and available resources.
- Homelessness requiring a collaborative response from public services and partners, especially the non-use of B&B accommodation for young people, and through prevention and early intervention.

Partnership Progress

- The HSC&H Partnership continue to oversee the ICF Capital grant and prepare for the implementation of the new RIF Housing with Care Fund (4-year programme) to support tenanted accommodation for people with complex needs, particularly where affordable housing standards are not appropriate, Intermediate care accommodation (e.g. step up/down, children's residential) and discretionary funding (aids/adaptations, feasibility studies, etc.).

- MCC and TCBC Care and Repair are continuing to deliver the Hospital to Healthier Homes project to support hospital discharge. Every £1 spent on home adaptations to support quicker hospital discharge generates £7.50 saving for health and social care.
- The Partnership continue to provide regional support to individual partners in relation to the homelessness and ending evictions agendas during the pandemic and going forward will coordinate a regional response to the Rapid Rehousing policy.
- Oversight of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme especially in relation to early intervention programmes, housing related support to homelessness services, activity to help people stabilise their housing situation, prevent people from becoming homeless, or people affected by homelessness to find and keep accommodation. This grant also funds several VAWDASV refuges across the Gwent Region.
- A Substance Misuse and Housing task group reporting to both the Area Planning Board and Regional Housing Support Grant Coordination Group developed a specific free online substance misuse training course targeted towards housing staff.

Supporting individuals Using the Housing Support Grant

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is a merge of the Supporting People Wales Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant, and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement. HSG is administered by Local Authority teams and aims to fund an early intervention programme to actively prevent homelessness, help individuals to stabilise their housing situation or help homeless individuals to source and retain accommodation.

The following case study is a powerful testament to unwavering support and the transformative potential of compassion. During the pandemic, a citizen needed support, it took a month to persuade her to open the door of her temporary accommodation to support workers. After two weeks, she came to sit on the doorstep with the worker and two weeks later let them into her home, communicating through minimal words and minimal contact.

There was high risk of failure of tenancy with substance use issues, hoarding and attachment problems. A harm reduction model was implemented, aimed at stabilising her life and reducing her substance use. Staff worked to engage her with NHS professionals and strategies were put in place including involving the South Wales fire inspector to help manage the fire risk in the property.

In late 2022, the citizen started experiencing severe throat problems and through intensive Housing First support she was able to engage with a series of NHS consultations and tests, diagnosing her with terminal throat cancer. The cohesive support of the team was essential to manoeuvre the complex challenges and support the citizen required to get her voice and wishes heard. Staff provided the support she needed to receive radiotherapy. There were many challenges across the complexities of the individual's needs.

As she deteriorated, she trusted staff to assist her in rehoming her dog. She went into a hospice, but she discharged herself after a week and likely would have disengaged from all treatment, but staff persisted, and she returned to the hospice.

Staff supported estranged family connections, contacted the Salvation Army, and secured a grant from Macmillan Cancer Support to make a reunion possible. Her daughter visited her with support for her visit. Staff also facilitated communication and support through the final stages of her life, advocating for her when she could no longer speak to ensure her final wishes were honoured. Sadly the client passed away in 2023, peacefully and surrounded by the care of her support network at a local hospice.

Specialist Long Term Supported Accommodation for Adults with Alcohol Addiction

In 2023-24, the RPB and Welsh Government Ministers approved an application for the delivery of Specialist Long Term supported accommodation for adults with alcohol addiction in an existing Housing Association asset. Funding of **£285,000** was paid in advance to United Welsh Housing Association, with **£239,933** private finance being provided by the Housing Association.

The aim of the project is to deliver a holistic specialist long-term supported accommodation to adults (16+) with emotional and mental wellbeing needs as well as alcohol addiction. The project will enable the refurbishment of an existing property to provide long-term sustainable accommodation for up to 4 individuals with alcohol problems, together with provision for staffing. Potential residents are either:

- currently within a hospital setting (in or out of county) who require a lower level of service or,
- Individuals with long term needs, including care that would require care and support for the foreseeable future, to varying degrees of each with a flexible need-based assessment.

The property will provide benefits for each individual who is currently being referred and refused accommodation due to lack of provision to meet their emotional and mental needs. The property will provide a safe home for individuals to continue living within a community, a part of society, where needs can be met with the potential of stabilising consumption, in some cases reducing it and in others stopping it entirely with a view to move to living more independently.

The property is ideally located with key support staff being located on the street behind, as well as support services in the area for wider services over and above Housing Support. The project is proposing on-site support workers across Housing Support and GDAS/GSSMS to provide ongoing support to access rehabilitation and on-site recovery programmes.

The revenue funding will primarily be provided through Housing Support Grant. There will be other interventions required through partner organisations that are already being funded and will continue to be provided and funded at the scheme. The project is currently on site and should be completed by the end of March 2025.

Engagement with Citizens:

The Health, Social Care and Housing Strategic Partnership recognise that the citizens voice is important in informing how services are designed and delivered. Housing is essential in supporting positive wellbeing, and as a result, the Gwent Region have initiated the Housing Engagement and Learning Panel (**HELP Group**), to better inform services of the issues being experienced by citizens in relation to housing, identifying where services need to be established or improved and identifying where services are working well. Each panel session is scheduled prior to those of the strategic partnerships, to allow citizens to provide their feedback on agenda items and inform the priorities of the strategic partnership.

9. Assistive Technology and Digital Solutions

The Gwent RPB Assistive Technology Programme aims to maximise the use and impact of Assistive Technology (AT) solutions to improve health and well-being outcomes, maintain and enhance independence, and support the development of models of care across Gwent. The programme collaborates with partners across Gwent to optimise the implementation and effectiveness of AT and technology-enabled care (TEC) solutions, enhancing health and well-being outcomes and ensuring consistent delivery across the region. The programme includes regional Better Care projects, a Technology Coach, and a series of AT projects, working with partners to develop the Gwent AT Network to bring partners together across the region. Over the last year, the Network has:

- continued to meet and develop shared resources.
- arranged AT Roadshows within the ABUHB estate.
- invited guests to present the latest technologies.
- shared the latest developments across the membership.

Progress Update

Over the past 12 months the programme has assisted **1,114** people through projects funded via the RIF.

The Gwent RPB has funded a series of Assistive Technology projects to test new interventions and care delivery methods, these include HUG by LAUGH, PainChek, RITA, the Happiness Programme, and the Stay Well at Home pilot.

HUG by LAUGH (HUG): The comfort of a hug when it's needed most!



HUG by LAUGH® is a sensory device designed to bring people pleasure and comfort. The device has been designed by Cardiff Metropolitan University specifically for people living with dementia but can be used by people with various conditions. In Gwent, HUG is being piloted in a range of different settings to test effectiveness. It has weighted arms and legs along with an optional beating heart within its soft body. It can play personalised music that can be changed to a favourite playlist. The HUG "magic box" which provides the heartbeat and music runs from a rechargeable unit which is removed when washing.

The Gwent RPB has to date provided funding for **500** devices, which has benefited people living with dementia, autism, and ND conditions, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, carers and people receiving end-of-life care. It has been a real partnership effort and we have been proud to support the distribution of a product developed here in Wales which is making a real difference to people across our Gwent communities. You can find out all about HUG on our webpage [here](#).

Read all about the Life Sciences Hub HUG by LAUGH launch event at the Senedd here: [The power of a good HUG: supporting care in the community!](#)

PainChek

The Life Science Hub Wales (LSHW) received funding from the Gwent RPB in April 2022 to support the pilot of PainChek, the world's first clinically proven digital pain assessment tool. PainChek uses AI, facial recognition, and smartphone technology to intelligently automate the pain assessment process at the point of care. Care home groups involved in the PainChek pilot have seen benefits, such as upskilling their workforce and effectively managing pain, leading to improved care and better outcomes for residents. As a result of the pilot Shaw Healthcare and Dormy Care Communities are now rolling out PainChek across their Welsh care homes. Additionally, an evaluation by Pobl provided further evidence of PainChek's effectiveness for people with learning disabilities.

This has bolstered PainChek's evidence base and supported further evaluation in North Wales through Cartrefi, a Welsh learning disability group. An evaluation of the Gwent PainChek pilot project, funded by LSHW and delivered by ATIC, is due to be published in **July 2024**.

Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities (RITA)

RITA developed by My Improvement Network, enhances care for older individuals, including those with dementia and mental health conditions. Using a touchscreen device, RITA offers meaningful activities that combine entertainment with therapy, helping patients with memory impairments recall and share past events through music, news, speeches, games, karaoke, and films. Over **260** RITA devices were purchased with Gwent RPB funding between 2020-2022. These devices have been distributed in partnership with ABUHB, local authorities, and third-sector organisations across Gwent, including care homes, hospitals, community venues, and third-sector projects. RITA is also used by mobile teams and has been trialled in complex care settings. More information is available on the Gwent RPB website's [RITA page](#).

Happiness Programme

The Happiness Programme, created by Social Ability, combines interactive sensory light technology with a structured programme, training, and support. Designed for individuals with cognitive and physical care needs, the Happiness Programme provides meaningful and engaging activities through more than 80 interactive options including a variety of interactive games, quizzes, and mindful immersive content.

In 2021/2022, 147 Happiness Programme devices were funded by the Gwent RPB for 2 years. The devices have been distributed across all sectors in the region with organisations reporting positive results. Feedback from organisations using the Happiness Programme indicates a positive impact on both the supported individuals and the staff.



"It's an essential resource for us as we use it in bedrooms for our residents who are less mobile. The ceiling play is really helpful. We'd be lost without it."

Millheath Nursing Home

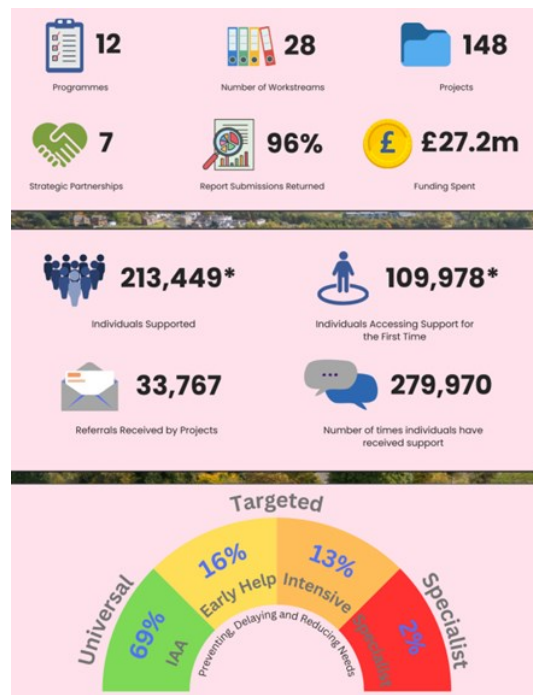
Further information is available on the Gwent RPB website's [Happiness Programme page](#).

10. Supporting Better Integration and Delivery

Regional Integration Fund (RIF)

The Gwent RPB uses its allocations from Welsh Government revenue and capital funds as a key resource to deliver progress against the Area Plan. Welsh Government provided a 5-year commitment of partnership funding at the outset of **2022-23** within the Regional Integration Fund. The RIF revenue portfolio for the Gwent RPB has been delivered via **12** Strategic Programmes, consisting of **28** workstreams and **148** projects.

The projects and services within this programme have been enabled via **£27.2million** of revenue funding provided via the Regional Integration Fund. The full RIF 2023-2024 **Story of Change** report can be viewed in **Annexe 8**. The report focuses on **'story telling'** to highlight difference made to citizens and development activities remain underway to support delivery organisations to improve data quality, accuracy, and consistency for future reporting.



23/24 Snapshot of the RIF Revenue Programme

The Regional Integrated Fund has had significant reach across Gwent supporting more individuals than ever and many for the first time.

Impacts of RIF funded projects:

- 42% of carers felt less isolated following the support they received and 79% felt more confident.
- For our children and families programmes 73% of participants reported feeling less isolated with 75% prevented from an escalation of their level of care.
- Many of the system resilience and winter interventions are in the Gwent Adults Strategic Partnership Programmes where 98% received support which prevented an escalation of the level of their care and 90% reported maintaining or improving their emotional health and wellbeing.
- For our Mental Health and learning disability programmes 80% had their independence maintained or improved.
- 81% of participants in dementia projects felt more confident in accessing services.

These outcomes demonstrate positive impact of the fund. Whilst there is more to do to evaluate and understand the impact of specific programmes there is progress in supporting the population.

National Models of Care

As an intended output of the Regional Integration Fund 5-year programme, regions are being asked to contribute towards learning to help shape National Models of Care, so that citizens of Wales, wherever they live, can be assured of an effective and seamless service in relation to:

- **Community based care – prevention and community coordination**
- **Community based care – complex care closer to home**
- **Promoting good emotional health and well-being**
- **Supporting families to stay together safely and therapeutic support for care experienced children.**
- **Home from hospital**
- **Accommodation based solutions.**

Partners across Gwent have been supporting the Communities of Practice set up by Welsh Government, that align to the models and continue to do so to share national learning and ongoing engagement.

Regional Partnership Capital Programme 2023/24

The Gwent RPB Capital Programme invests in the regions long-term aim of ensuring support is delivered as close to home as possible and is available when people need it, through the transformation of spaces. The Regional Capital Strategy for Gwent was developed in 2023, within which there are 9 key strategic priorities. During 2023-24, the Integrated Capital

Planning Group progressed **23** applications for capital resources in support of our strategic priorities.

The visual below illustrates the volume of activity and associated funding commitment supporting developments in 2023-24.



In addition to bed spaces, a range of aids and adaptations in support of care closer to home and home first priorities were delivered in 2023-24.

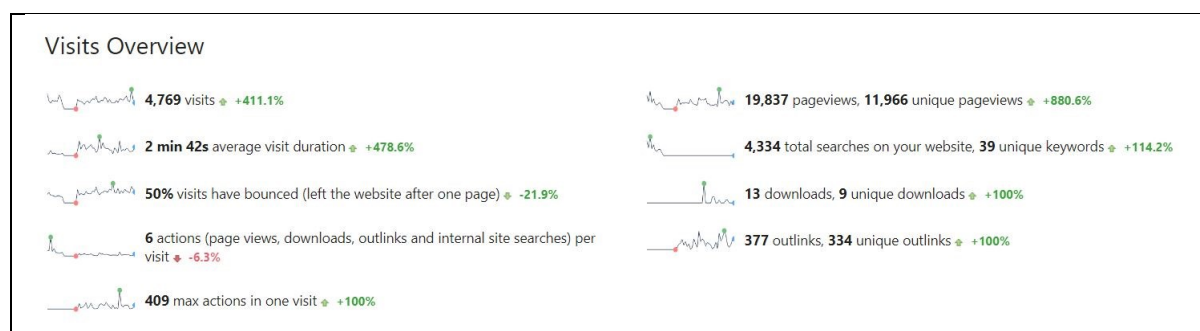
11. Coproduction, Engagement and Social Value

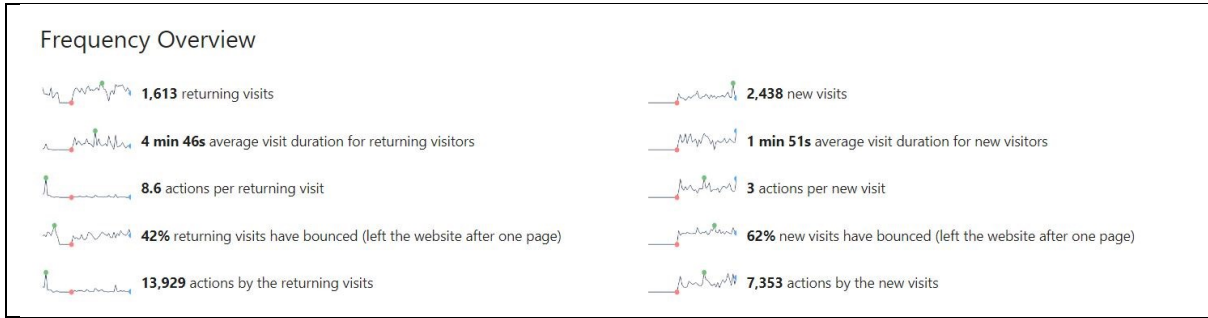
Communication and Engagement Strategy

The RPB is working to refresh its communications and engagement strategic approach, in light of the Rebalancing Care consultation. A newly formed Communications and Engagement (C&E) group has been developed, involving partners from across the RPB landscape, with the aim to provide a golden thread of C&E activity throughout the RPB and align with outside partner activities and workstreams. This group will report to the RPB and provide updates on work and aligns with National and regional priorities, which is under regular review to ensure alignment with individual partner strategies and emerging work such as the Integrated Service Partnership Boards ISPB's) newly created strategy.

The [Gwent RPB website](#) has undergone a redesign over recent years, with regular reviews, updates, and promotion, to ensure it is up to date and effective. The new look website will be key to further raising the profile of the RPB, with both the public and professionals. The website acts as platform to share the work of the RPB and partners across Gwent, with the aim to engage citizens in policy decisions and share information, advice, and assistance.

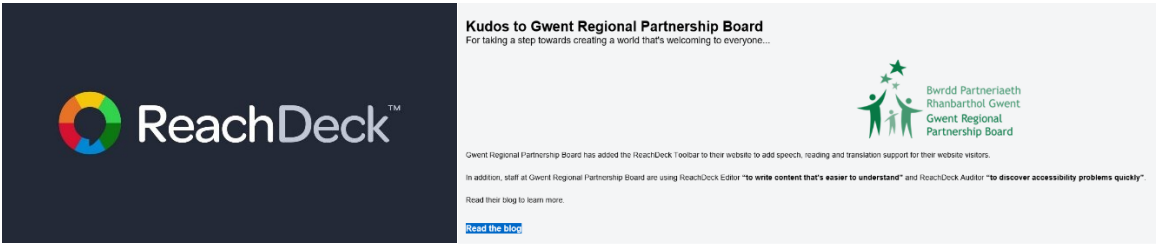
The below data, demonstrates the increase in website usage over the last 12 months.







Accessibility

We are working hard to ensure that our website is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, version 2.1. We are pleased to have added Speech, Reading and Translation support, with the Reach Deck toolbar and our [blog announcement](#) featured in their newsletter.



Kudos to Gwent Regional Partnership Board
For taking a step towards creating a world that's welcoming to everyone...

 ReachDeck™

 Bwrdd Partneriaeth Rhanbarthol Gwent
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Gwent Regional Partnership Board has added the ReachDeck toolbar to their website to add speech, reading and translation support for their website visitors.

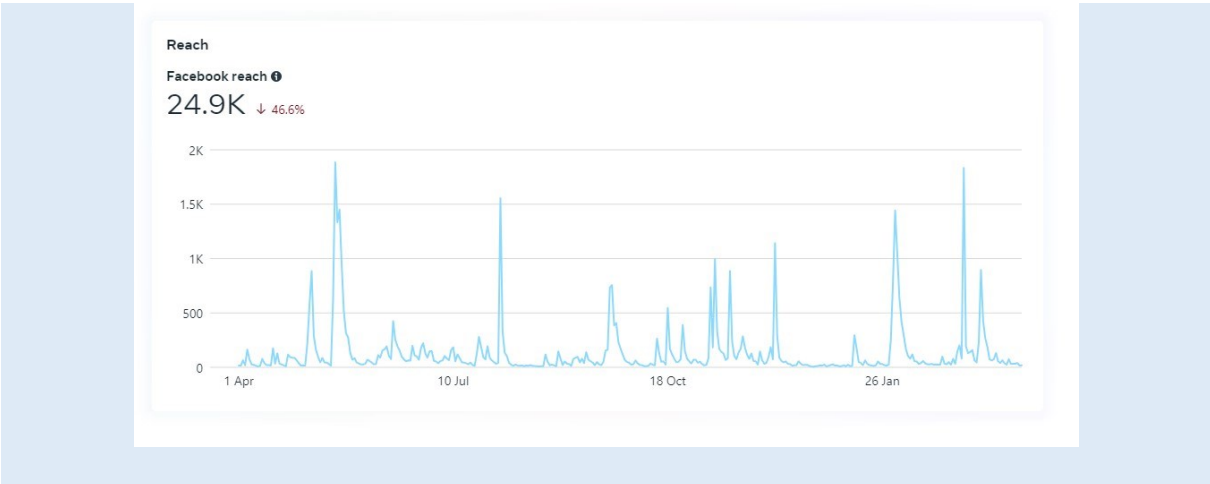
In addition, staff at Gwent Regional Partnership Board are using ReachDeck Editor "to write content that's easier to understand" and ReachDeck Auditor "to discover accessibility problems quickly".

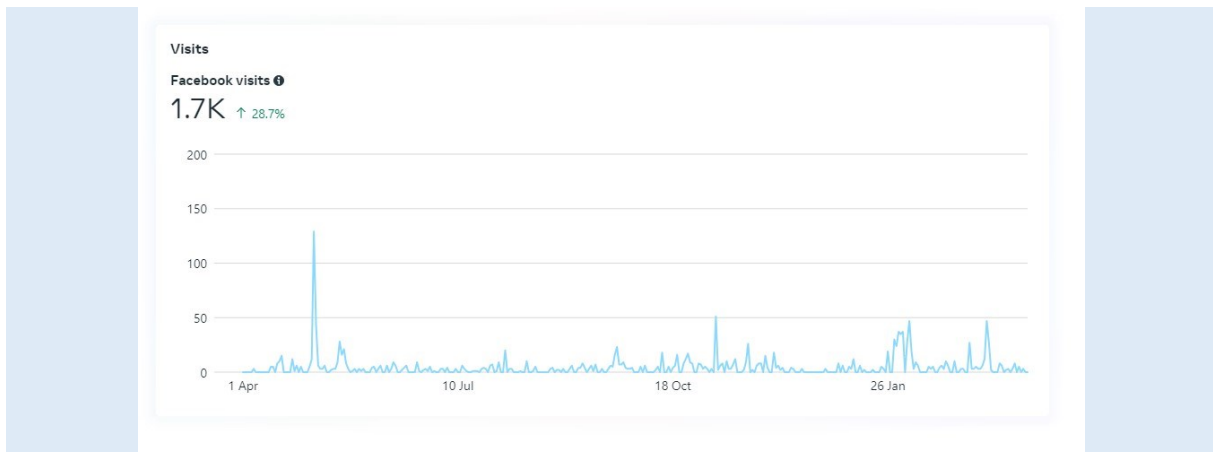
Read their blog to learn more.

[Read the blog](#)

Social Media

The RPB raises awareness of regional and National campaigns through its social media channels, [X](#) and [Facebook](#). We continue to grow our community following and engagement through these channels to help support the reach of our messaging and gain valuable feedback through consultation from the citizens of Gwent. Over the last 12 months we have more than doubled our social media followers on both platforms (Facebook: **490** followers / X: **654** followers).





Social Value Forums

The RPB continues to engage with WCVA and the Wales Cooperative Centre, in adopting a Social Value Forum Toolkit and will look to support the development of social enterprises across the regions, working with our third sector umbrella organisations. We will work at pace during 2023/24 to rebrand our current forums in line with new duties set out in Rebalancing Care reforms and refreshed codes of practice.

The Regional Commissioning Group continue to explore new opportunities linked to RIF and HSG and will provide a renewed focus to further develop the role of third sector Social Value-Based services in the region. This may be linked to day services or supporting hospital discharge, admission avoidance and maintaining low level support in the community.

The Mental Health and Learning Disability Partnership are also exploring a new coproduction approach to commissioning, based on a consortium approach across third sector providers.

Gwent Regional Domiciliary Care Fora

The Gwent Regional Domiciliary care provider fora is a long-established forum led by the Regional Team and ABUHB to provide support to domiciliary care providers in Gwent. Meetings are held monthly collaboratively between the local authorities and ABUHB, and address current issues being experienced by providers.

Gwent Care Homes Engagement Forum

As with third sector and domiciliary care providers, the regional team also engages with care home providers. Support has been provided by ABUHB in partnership with the Regional Partnership Team at monthly care home webinars.

More recent meetings have focussed on the recruitment and retention issues faced by providers, and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on services. Regular engagement with care providers in Gwent, while also ensuring key priorities are addressed by RPB through provider representatives. Providers also engage with ongoing workstreams, such as regional fee methodology and a regional approach to contract monitoring procedures in care services.

This engagement forum is set to evolve once again into a co-productive monthly engagement forum led by the Regional Partnership team, in collaboration with ABUHB and provider representatives.

Gwent Third Sector (including Section 16) Forum

This new forum will replace the existing provider forum and incorporate the duty to have regard to the Third Sector and to promote social enterprises and co-operatives. This work will be a

collaborative, co-productive venture which will place 3rd sector organisations at the heart of the preventative agenda in the region.

12. Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub (GRICH)

To support and develop improved co-ordinating research, innovation and improvement, each region has established a Regional Innovation Co-ordination (RIC) Hub to jointly support health and social care research capacity. The Hubs are expected to:

- **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.

Key Highlights and Achievements (full report in Annexe 4):

- **Established GRICH:** Successfully launched the Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub, with new branding and dedicated web pages to enhance visibility and accessibility.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

13. Looking Ahead

The Area Plan sets out the Gwent RPB's key actions and priorities following the Population Needs Assessment and is reviewed at each strategic partnership meeting. We will continue to monitor, update and support progress of the Area Plan through **2024/25** with a focus on collaborative priorities including:

- Engaging with and coproducing health and social care services with citizens.
- We will improve how we measure impact and difference made to have a stronger evidence base through intelligence-led approaches to data, engagement and future needs. We need to understand the positive impact of the work we do, to improve health and social care, via a mixture of quantitative and qualitative information.
- Reducing length of hospital stays for older people and help return safely back home with sustainable support, through our system resilience planning and delivering the '**Further Faster**' agenda.
- Continue to focus on children with complex needs and children looked after, especially provision and impact of out of county placements, under the 'Eliminate agenda'.
- Continue to look for innovative and supportive solutions to help people who are awaiting an Autism/ND Assessment (pre and post assessment/diagnostic support)
- Continue to support people living with dementia and their carers, especially with community support and earlier intervention such as 'community dementia hubs'.
- Continue to find innovative solutions to long term recruitment and retention issues across health and social care, particularly Domiciliary Care.
- Work in partnership with our Gwent PSB and other partners to reduce isolation, loneliness, and impact on mental health, with a focus on emotional wellbeing.
- Continue to look at respite solutions for carers in a timely and flexible way (formal, informal) especially in crisis situations.
- We will continue to develop and further strengthen our partnerships and provide good governance: ensuring effective and responsible management of the RPB's functions to deliver its objectives.

ANNEXES

Annexe 1: Membership of the Regional Partnership Board

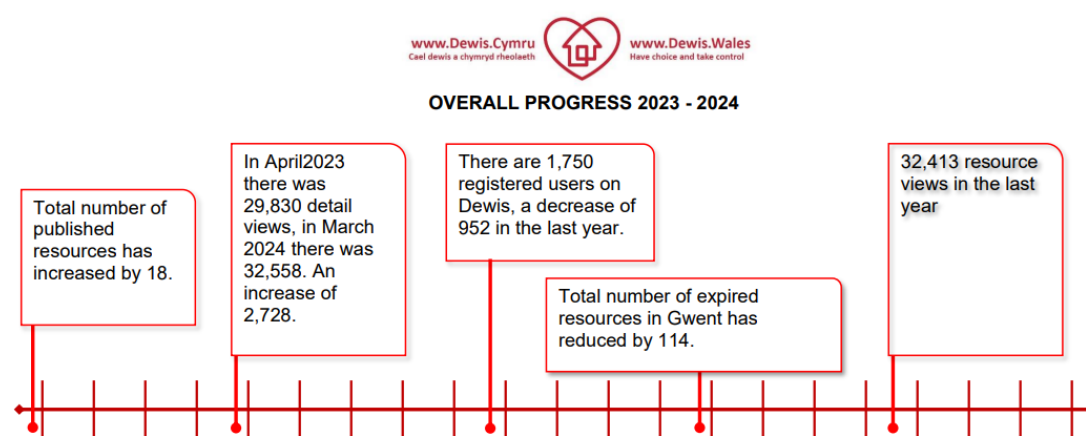
The required membership of the Regional Partnership Board is set out in statutory guidance in Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. The Board also has the flexibility to co-opt additional members should they wish. The current RPB membership as of March 2023 is set out below:



Gwent RPB
Membership 2024.do

Annexe 2: DEWIS Cymru, National Directory of Services

Overall Progress



TOP 3 SUCCESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increased resources.2. Decrease of expired resources.3. Resource detail views have increased.
TOP 3 CHALLENGES
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Re-engaging with expired resources.2. Myth busting that DEWIS resources are out of date if viewable.3. Ensuring DEWIS is developed with/linked to existing/new directories, developing stronger links with partners and organisations.
NEXT STEPS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continue to lead and coordinate Dewis implementation across the region.2. Promote and encourage the use of DEWIS within the community and with providers of support and services throughout Gwent.3. Continue to increase available resources and reduce the number of expired resources.

Dewis Data 2023-2024



Dewis Data
20232024.docx

Annex 3: Citizens Panel Weekly Burst Data 2023 – 2024



Citizens Panel
Weekly Burst Analytic



Citizens Panel
Weekly Burst Analytic

Annexe 4: Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub Annual Report



Draft GRICH Annual
Report 2023-24 v0.10

Annex 5: Our Future Our Voices, Gwent Director of Public Health Report



Our Future Our Voice
Gwent Director of Pub

Annex 6: Carers Week 2023 Annual Reporting



RPB -Carervents
annual Reporting 202

Annex 7: Young Carers in Schools 23-24



TCC Dashboard
Gwent EOY 2023-202

Annex 8: Gwent Regional Integration Fund Year 2023-2024 Story of Change Report



Gwent RPB - Y2 Q4
RIF SoC Report Final \