

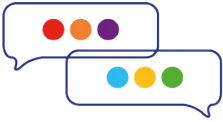
GIG
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

A conversation *for a* healthy future

THE NEXT 10 YEARS





sgwrs er mwyn
dyfodol iach

a **conversation** for a
healthy future



We are currently starting to develop a **10-year plan** for healthcare in Gwent.

We recognise we don't have all the solutions to improve our healthcare system – and we need **your help** and input to understand what areas we need to focus on. As part of this conversation we would like to explore our values and behaviours as an essential part of how we provide services.

Please read the following information, which explains the challenges we are facing at the moment, the factors affecting people's health in Gwent, and how we hope to improve things for the future...

Our Population

The population across Gwent continues to change. We have seen a rapid aging of our population since 2011 and **there are now 20% more people over the age of 65.**



We want people to live as long as possible in good health, but sadly we know this isn't the reality across all of Gwent. For example, **the average healthy life expectancy of women living in Blaenau Gwent is just 55.3 years, whereas in Monmouthshire it is 69.3 years.** This is known as inequality, and the effects of the pandemic have made this worse for our population – but together we can change that.



We all need to take action now. If things don't change, the number of people needing the Health Board's services could completely overwhelm the resources we have to offer, which could bring the NHS to breaking point. But there is hope – a large number of conditions and diseases experienced by people across Gwent are actually preventable. Let's take a look at a few examples:



Cancer: 38% of all cancers are preventable – this number increases to 70% in cancers such as lung, skin and cervical cancer.

Liver Disease: Now the most common cause of death in the UK of people aged between 35-49 (deaths from liver disease have doubled in the past 20 years). Excessive alcohol drinking and obesity remain the common causes of liver disease.

Heart Disease: Currently impacts around 63,000 people in Gwent, with obesity being the key risk factor. Only 29.3% of working age adults in Gwent were reported as having a healthy weight in 2021/22.



So how do we prevent these things?

Small changes to the way we live our lives can help and supporting people to live well can make a huge difference in preventing ill health. We know that healthcare can only affect 20% of factors that contribute to people's health and therefore we need to change the focus to prevention and helping our communities to live well for as long as possible.

It's about more than healthcare – it's about employment, access to good food, green spaces like parks and playgrounds, affordable housing, and socialising with our friends and family. All these things contribute to our ability to live well and live long.



Our Workforce



As described overleaf, there are now more people over the age of 65 living in Gwent than ever before – and there are fewer young people too! This pattern is set to continue in the future, with the Office for National Statistics forecasting that **by 2035 there will be 18% less 18-year-olds entering the workforce.**



The majority of people who work for the Health Board also live in the Gwent area, so with less 18-year-olds starting work by 2035 there will be less younger people starting their career in healthcare.

At the moment, just 15% of our staff are aged between 21 and 30, while 36% are over the age of 50. The Health Board is already facing staffing challenges,

with job vacancies now common in the care sector.

In the future we will not have enough people to continue to deliver services in the way we currently do. Already 50% of medical graduates are from overseas and we need a more stable position for the future.



Working in care is also changing, with new technology, advances in medicine, and the way we work being different than it used to be. So as an employer, we need to ensure we change too.

Our Performance



While we know that many of our patients receive brilliant care, we also know there is more work to do to improve our services. At the start of 2024, more than 35,000 people were waiting longer than 36 weeks for planned appointments and treatments.



Even though improvements have been made in our emergency care system, we know that waiting times for ambulances are too long and we are not meeting the target of emergency and urgent patients being seen, treated and discharged within 4 hours. In fact, we only meet this around 75% of the time.

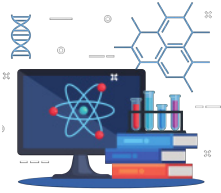
We also know that people are spending too long in our hospitals. We regularly have around 200 people who have received treatment and are ready to go home, but cannot do so because of support needed at home not being available. This means people can be in hospital for 3 weeks longer than they need to be, which is not good for their health and wellbeing. For example, for every 10 days of bed rest in hospital, a person over the age of 80 will experience 10 years of muscle aging.



We frequently hear stories of the challenges people face getting GP appointments and support in the community, and whilst there is much being done to improve this situation, we know there is still much more to do.



Technology and Science



The way we live is changing because of new **technology**. Most people now own smart devices such as mobile phones and iPads and use them daily. **Technologies like remote monitoring, assistive technology, and artificial intelligence (AI) were once seen as future ideas, but they are already part of our lives.** AI reads x-rays, remote monitors offer peace of mind to caregivers, and pacemakers can be adjusted remotely. Advances in genetics make curing diseases possible, and new treatments like cell therapies tackle cancers that were once considered untreatable.



The climate is changing, and healthcare consumes a lot of gas and electricity while also generating significant waste. **Health services need to start using cleaner energy sources, produce less pollution, and find ways to reduce waste.**

Our Resources



The healthcare system is using a growing amount of our public money and workforce. Currently, the Health Board's budget is £1.7 billion, which makes up 7.5% of the total budget for the Welsh Government.

The changes in our population show that our current system won't be affordable unless we make changes. It's crucial for services to manage within their budgets and to spend money where it can help people the most. Right now, most of the healthcare money goes to hospitals and urgent care, but studies suggest it would be better to spend it on preventing illnesses and in Primary Care services such as GPs, Pharmacies, Dental and Opticians. We also know that by combining specialist services in one place, we can have more sustainable services, save money and have more staff working in the community.



We know that only 20% of what keeps us healthy is related to going to the GP or hospital. So, it's important to focus more on preventing health issues and helping communities live healthier lives. If we spend less money on healthcare and more on things like cleaning up the environment, improving education, and supporting communities, everyone can be healthier.



What are we already doing?

As a Health Board, we're not waiting for a new strategy to start making the improvements needed for better services.

We've already made a lot of progress through our previous plan – the Clinical Futures Strategy:

- **We opened the Grange University Hospital four months ahead of schedule and within budget.** This early opening helped us implement better infection prevention measures during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **We have opened new community facilities in Tredegar and a new Breast Centre in Ystrad Mynach.**
- **We set up new urgent care services such as Same Day Emergency Care,** allowing patients to access urgent appointments more quickly.
- **We are working with local authorities to improve the connection between health and social care,** by creating joint services.
- **We quickly established mass vaccination, testing, and tracing services during the pandemic,** ensuring that everyone had access to these services.
- **We have a decarbonisation programme in place** to guide work to make our healthcare services more green, efficient, save resources, and to reduce waste.

Question:

We recognise we don't have all the solutions to improve our system. We need your help and input to understand what areas we need to focus on.

We need to design the future together, so:



'What's important for you to feel healthy?'

This booklet was produced by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

Please contact us if you would like to access this information in a different format or language.

For more detailed information, please visit our website at <https://abuhb.nhs.wales/>