

March 2026 Insight & Intelligence

During March 2026, the Health Board's Engagement team visited **21** venues across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen and spoke to a total of **222** people (**141** Females and **81** Males). The team interacted with residents across various settings, including community venues and groups, informational talks, and sheltered accommodation complexes.

What did we hear this month?

- Awareness of the Pharmacy Common Ailment Service (CAS) remains low, yet once understood it is highly valued, particularly by parents, people on low incomes and those who struggle to access GP appointments.
- Access to NHS dental care remains a significant challenge. A number of people shared that they have been unable to see an NHS dentist for several years, with concerns raised about practices reducing NHS capacity or moving to private-only care. We signposted several people to the Dental Access Portal.
- Many people reported long waits on GP phone lines when trying to book appointments; and lengthy waits for routine appointments however, clinical care is frequently praised once patients are seen.
- Some community services and self-management resources were praised, but delayed test results, cancelled appointments and inconsistent communication continue to undermine trust and confidence in services.
- Positive feedback was shared about:
 - Children's Emergency Assessment Unit, with praise for staff care and professionalism.
 - Nursing staff, who were frequently described as kind, supportive, and doing their best despite system pressures.
 - Improved care once patients were admitted for surgery or specialist treatment.
- People valued clear signposting, such as access to maternity unit videos, self-referral support, and prehabilitation advice.



What next?

Over the coming months, the team will continue to share information on:

- How Gwent residents can access **Cancer Screening Services** and **Women's Health support for menstrual health, contraception and menopause services**

The team will also support Coleg Gwent at their Health and Well-being Fairs for 2026 and speak to students and staff about accessing healthcare.

All feedback received is logged and reviewed to identify key themes and trends. We share what we have heard with the teams responsible for those services and with senior leaders. The insights help shape service improvements, planning decisions and policies. We also aim to close the loop by sharing updates with communities so people can see how their feedback has helped influence change. For more information about community engagement please visit our website:

www.abuhb.nhs.wales/about-us/public-engagement-consultation/community-engagement/

