October 2026 Insight & Intelligence

During October 2026, the Health Board's Communications and Engagement team visited **14** venues across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen and spoke to a total of **316** people (**210** females and **106** males). The team interacted with people across various community settings, workplaces via large employers, events and talks to groups.

What did we hear this month?

- **Access to GP services** remains the most common concern, with repeated reports of long waits for appointments, lengthy telephone queues, difficulties accessing surgeries, and frustrations with online-only booking systems, particularly amongst older residents.
- **Dental access** continues to generate concern. Many people reported being unable to secure NHS dental appointments, travelling long distances for treatment, or moving to private dentistry due to lack of NHS provision. Awareness of the Dental Access Portal is increasing but challenges remain.
- **Women's Health** generated strong engagement, particularly menopause support, the Women's Health Hub, endometriosis information and support for parents discussing periods with children and young people.
- **Mental health support** remains a priority, with concerns raised about anxiety, support for young people affected by the long-term impacts of COVID-19, access to CAMHS services and the need for community-based wellbeing resources.
- **Transport and travel** to healthcare appointments were frequently raised. Residents highlighted the cost of travel, limited parking, difficulties using public transport to hospital sites and concerns about early-morning appointments for patients travelling from rural or outlying areas
- **Digital services** attracted mixed views. Positive feedback was received regarding the NHS Wales App and digital resources such as Melo; however, concerns were raised about digital exclusion, difficulties accessing the NHS App, duplication of communications across letters, text messages and emails, and differences between NHS Wales and NHS England digital services.
- **Waiting times for secondary care services** remain a source of anxiety, particularly for orthopaedic procedures, gynaecology appointments, CAMHS referrals, children's services and receiving test results. Many people sought updates about the status of referrals and treatment pathways



What next?

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

- **Support during Winter, Vaccinations including Flu, RSV and MenB, Sepsis Awareness and Mental health support**
- **Cancer Screening Services** and **Women's Health support for menstrual health, contraception and menopause services**

The team will also continue to engage with Health Board staff across our hospital sites.

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/