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Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN) News

ISSUE 12: Spring/Summer 2026

Welcome to issue twelve of our quarterly newsletter.



As we move into summer, we're pleased to share the latest updates from Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area.

This newsletter highlights the great work taking place in our communities, celebrating the strong partnerships, creative approaches and dedication that continue to support people's health and wellbeing. It's an opportunity to stay connected and recognise the impact being made locally.

In this edition, you'll find news on upcoming events, inspiring stories and updates on new developments from across the region. We hope it helps you feel informed, involved and proud of the progress we're making together.

We hope you enjoy this spring/summer edition and find it both useful and inspiring.

For further information about the NCN programme, please visit [Neighbourhood Care Networks \(NCNs\) - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare/neighbourhood-care-networks/), or please email: abb.strategicchangeteam@wales.nhs.uk



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What is a Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN)?

Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) bring together local health and care services within a defined area, typically serving populations of around 40,000 to 60,000 people.

Each network includes a broad mix of professionals such as GPs, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, community nurses, allied health professionals and social care teams.

By working closely together, NCNs help to improve coordination of care, develop a better understanding of local needs, and focus on priorities that matter most to communities creating more joined-up, responsive services that support people's health and wellbeing.



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Blaenau Gwent

Move it May at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Hospital

The Blaenau Gwent NCN team arranged a visit from Scott of Aneurin Leisure, to encourage staff and patients at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Hospital to participate in 'Move It May'. It was lovely to see some of the patients and staff meet at the day rooms and have fun while encouraging physical activity to prevent deconditioning, as well as the social interaction to improve participants wellbeing. Many thanks to Scott for his visit – we had fun, laughs and best of all we all participated in some gentle exercise.



Community Engagement Continues Across Blaenau Gwent

The Blaenau Gwent Integrated Wellbeing Network (IWN) has been out and about this month, working with local partners to connect with communities and raise awareness of available services.

One of the highlights was a multi-agency Information Pop-Up event held at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Abertillery. The team also took part in the launch of the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Family Hub at Bedwellty House and Park in Tredegar, hosting an outdoor "room with a view" to engage with families and visitors.

BG IWN focuses on helping people understand what support is available in their local area and making it easier to access services. By working closely with partner organisations, the network brings information directly into communities in a friendly and approachable way.

If you are part of a group or community setting and would like to host a BG IWN engagement session, you can get in touch by emailing Rosalin Williams at Rosalin.williams@wales.nhs.uk.

Encouraging drop in child weight rates in Blaenau Gwent

New data from the Child Measurement Programme (2024–2025) shows a positive trend for children in Blaenau Gwent.

The programme measures the height and weight of children aged 4–5. This year's results show that levels of overweight and obesity have fallen again locally, continuing a steady decline since the peak seen in 2020–2021.

This is particularly encouraging as it goes against the wider picture in Wales, where rates are increasing in some areas. For the first time this decade, Blaenau Gwent is also now below the Welsh average for overweight and obesity in this age group.

These results highlight the strong work taking place across early years services and local communities.

From support for families, to healthy eating initiatives led by the Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership, and opportunities for children to be active, partners across the system are working together to make a real difference.

This is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved.

To view the data, visit:

<https://publichealthwales.shinyapps.io/ChildMeasurementProgrammeDashboard/> (click on the Prevalence tab, then select Blaenau Gwent).



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Caerphilly

Community Growth Flourishes as Nature Wellbeing Project Takes Root in Ystrad Mynach

A community-led wellbeing initiative in Ystrad Mynach is beginning to flourish, with raised beds at the Vicarage Allotments showing promising early progress thanks to local volunteers.

The Caerphilly Nature Wellbeing Programme recently recruited a group of volunteers who have worked together to establish the growing space. Over recent weeks, they have successfully planted a range of vegetables, which are now developing well ahead of the growing season.

Part of a wider initiative linking nature-based activities with health and wellbeing, the allotments have become more than just a gardening project. The space offers opportunities for people to connect, learn new skills and enjoy the benefits of spending time outdoors.



The group's efforts have helped create a welcoming environment while fostering a sense of community ownership and pride. With crops continuing to establish, volunteers are now looking forward to a late summer and early autumn harvest.

The Vicarage Allotments project is a positive example of how community action and nature-based activities can support wellbeing and strengthen local connections.

Additional Community Physiotherapist Strengthens Support Across Caerphilly NCN

Caerphilly Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN) has supported the appointment of an additional locum Community Physiotherapist in response to the high level of demand on community therapy services across the area. Increasing referrals and growing pressure on existing teams clearly identified the need for additional capacity to support patients more quickly and effectively.

The role was introduced with an initial focus on falls prevention and targeted work within care homes, with the aim of reducing physiotherapy waiting lists and improving timely access to interventions. By addressing demand in these priority areas, the additional physiotherapy support has helped to promote safer mobility, reduce the risk of falls, and support independence for some of the most vulnerable residents.

In addition to direct clinical work, community physiotherapists have begun attending local multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings. This has strengthened collaborative working across health and care services and enabled physiotherapists to contribute specialist input to shared decision-making. Attendance at MDTs has also made it easier to highlight individuals who are frequently referred or where there are emerging concerns, allowing for earlier intervention and more coordinated, person-centred care.

Overall, the initiative has demonstrated how targeted investment in community therapy services can help manage high demand, reduce pressures on waiting lists, and improve outcomes through closer partnership working.



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Monmouthshire

Successful Launch of Welsh Wobblers Brings Vital Tremor Support to Chepstow

A new tremor support group has launched successfully at Chepstow Community Hospital, bringing together people from across Wales affected by tremor conditions.

The first few meetings of the Welsh Wobblers, held at the Community Cabin in May and June and led by Amy Rees, exceeded expectations, with attendees sharing experiences, support and practical advice.

Part of the National Tremor Foundation, the group provides a welcoming space for people living with tremors to connect, learn from one another and build friendships. The launch was supported by volunteer group leaders from Salisbury and the West Midlands. Discussions highlighted common challenges, including isolation, embarrassment and difficulties accessing a diagnosis, while members also shared practical tips on managing daily life and explored assistive gadgets designed to improve independence. The Welsh Wobblers are a valuable new addition to the local community, providing support, friendship and reassurance that no one has to face tremors alone

For further information contact: welshwobblers@btinternet.com

Celebrating International Nurses Day on Casgwent Ward

Staff on Casgwent Ward marked International Nurses Day with a heartfelt celebration recognising the dedication and compassion of nursing teams.

The ward was filled with smiles as colleagues came together to enjoy cake, tea, and a warm sense of appreciation for the vital work they do every day. A thoughtful touch came in the form of handmade knitted dolls, gifted to each member of staff as a token of thanks. The celebrations were organised by Healthcare Support Worker Karen Gandy, who leads on fundraising and events for the ward. Her efforts helped create a meaningful moment for staff to pause, reflect, and celebrate their contributions to patient care.

International Nurses Day is an opportunity to recognise the incredible impact nurses and healthcare teams have across the health service.

On Casgwent Ward, the occasion was marked not only with treats and gifts, but with a strong sense of community and appreciation.



Dementia Awareness Week

Cas-Gwent Ward at Chepstow Community Hospital celebrated Dementia Awareness Week with a range of activities designed to support patients, families and staff while raising awareness of dementia care.

Patients enjoyed games, a spa day, Tai Chi, music sessions, sing-alongs and dancing, with a visiting choir providing a special highlight. Information boards and leaflets were also displayed throughout the week to promote understanding of dementia and the support available.

Staff showed their support by wearing purple dementia awareness t-shirts featuring the dementia daisy, demonstrating their commitment to compassionate, person-centred care.

The week was a great success, highlighting the importance of community, wellbeing and inclusion in supporting people living with dementia.



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Newport

Community Sessions Flourish at 19 Hills

19 Hills Health & Wellbeing Centre continues to be a welcoming hub for health, wellbeing and community support, with a range of successful sessions bringing people together to access advice, information and peer support.

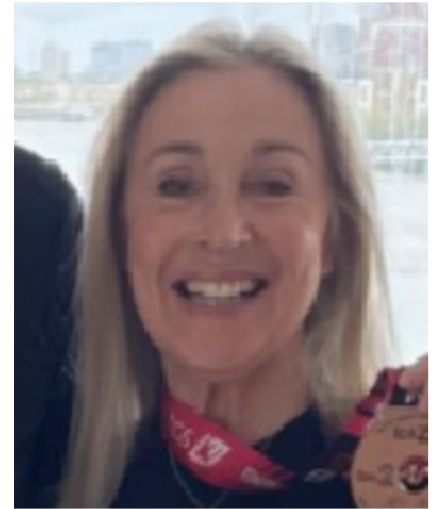
Over recent months, a variety of events have been held in the wellbeing room, offering opportunities for local people to learn new skills, connect with others and access specialist support.

One popular session focused on pain management, delivered by Arthritis UK, which provided practical advice and guidance to help people better understand and manage persistent pain in their daily lives.

The centre also marked Dementia Action Week with a special coffee morning attended by organisations including Newport Dementia Hub, Age Friendly Communities and Gwent Carers Hub. Visitors were able to access information, advice and support for those living with dementia, as well as family members and carers.

In addition, 19 Hills launched a new Cancer Café, creating a friendly and relaxed space for anyone affected by cancer. The monthly café welcomes patients, carers and family members, offering an opportunity to share experiences, meet others who understand the challenges of cancer, and build supportive connections.

These sessions highlight the growing role of 19 Hills as a community wellbeing venue, bringing together local services and residents in a supportive environment. With a varied programme of activities and events, the centre continues to provide valuable opportunities for people to access help, information and companionship close to home.



Susan Thomas - NCN Lead Announcement

It is with sadness and warmth we are writing to advise that Sue Thomas has chosen to step down from her role as NCN Lead for Newport West.

On behalf of the Health Board and the wider NCN community, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Sue for everything she has contributed to Newport West over the past eight years. Her leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment have had, and will continue to have, a profound impact not only on the population of Newport West, but also on wider communities across the Health Board.

Sue will be greatly missed in the role. While she is stepping away from the NCN Lead position, her legacy both in the systems she helped build and the culture she fostered, will continue to be felt for many years to come.



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Torfaen

Empowering Young Minds: Mental Health Awareness Project - Torfaen

Empowering Young Minds is a six-week pilot programme led by Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and funded by the Integrated Wellbeing Network, helping parents and carers build the skills and confidence to support their children's emotional wellbeing.

Delivered in partnership with Pengarn Primary School, Llantarnam Primary School and Nant Celyn Primary School, the programme brings together families, schools and specialist services to promote early intervention and mental health awareness.

Through parent workshops, resilience and emotional regulation sessions, physical activity, peer support and Mental Health First Aid awareness, families gain practical tools to recognise signs of distress, start supportive conversations and access appropriate services.

Early feedback has shown strong engagement and highlights the growing need for preventative, family-centred mental health support. By combining emotional wellbeing, physical activity and community connection, Empowering Young Minds is creating a sustainable model that helps children and families thrive.

New Weekly Wellbeing Hub at Cwmbran Library

A new Wellbeing Session takes place every Thursday from 2:15pm to 4:15pm at Cwmbran Library. The Wellbeing Hub is run by Bright Futures, a local charity dedicated to promoting and protecting mental health through counselling, emotional support, peer support, therapeutic activities, and wellbeing services.

Visitors are welcomed by friendly "Befrienders" who help create a relaxed and supportive environment, starting with a cup of tea and a chat. Each week, a different guest speaker or representative from one of the many activities and community groups available across Torfaen joins the session to share information and opportunities for involvement.

The session concludes with a mindfulness activity, helping participants leave feeling calm, supported, and connected.

If you are interested in joining in pop along any Thursday afternoon and a warm welcome will be waiting for you. The cost of the sessions is £2.

Welcoming Kate Morgan to the Torfaen CRT and District Nursing Teams

We are delighted to welcome Kate Morgan to the CRT and District Nursing Team in Torfaen. With more than 20 years' experience in district nursing, Kate brings a wealth of knowledge, leadership and passion for community care.

Having worked across Newport District Nursing teams throughout her career, Kate has extensive experience delivering compassionate care in patients' homes and has recently supported the rollout of Restorative Clinical Supervision for registered nurses across Wales.

Kate joins Torfaen as a Senior Nurse, where she is keen to support staff development and continue improving care for patients in the community.

We are excited to have Kate on board and look forward to the valuable contribution she will make to colleagues, patients and services across Torfaen. Welcome to the team, Kate!



Other News...

ABUHB Optometry Professional Collaboratives showcased in national publication

Work led by the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Optometry Professional Collaborative has been featured in the June - July 2026 edition of Optometry Today.

The article highlights how optometry teams across Wales are supporting prevention-focused care by helping patients access wider health and wellbeing services alongside routine eye care.

Within ABUHB, the collaborative brings practitioners together to share expertise and improve services, with increased referrals into areas such as smoking cessation and community wellbeing support.

This national recognition highlights the valuable role optometry teams play in prevention, partnership working and improving outcomes for communities across Gwent.

The link to the full article can be found here: [A focus on prevention in Wales](#)

Cervical Screening Awareness Week

To mark Cervical Screening Awareness Week in June, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board shared Rachel's story to highlight the life-saving importance of attending cervical screening appointments.

Despite being fit, healthy and having no symptoms, Rachel was diagnosed with early-stage cervical cancer following routine screening. After treatment and surgery, she was thankfully given the all clear.

Her experience is a reminder that cervical screening can detect changes before symptoms develop, helping to identify cancer at an early and more treatable stage.

Rachel's message is simple: when you're invited for cervical screening, please attend – it could save your life. For more information, visit the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board website: [Cervical Cancer - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board](#)

The 2% Club – smart ideas, big savings

Colleagues across Primary Care, Community Services and Complex and Long-Term Care are being encouraged to join the 2% Club – a divisional campaign focused on finding small improvements that can make a big difference.

The initiative aims to help the Division achieve a 2% reduction in spending through practical, everyday changes such as reducing waste, avoiding duplication, reusing equipment and using resources more efficiently.

Divisional Director Lloyd Hambridge said: "The 2% Club is a collective improvement initiative, asking every team and every role to look at how small, realistic changes can add up to a big impact."

By sharing ideas and highlighting successful initiatives, the campaign will help protect frontline services while empowering staff to improve the way work is done.

If you or your team have identified a way to save money or work more efficiently, we'd love to hear from you. Small changes can deliver significant benefits for patients, staff and services.



All editions of our quarterly newsletter are available on the [ABUHB website](#). If you would like more information about any of the featured stories or wish to be added to our mailing list to receive this newsletter, please email lisa.orford@wales.nhs.uk.