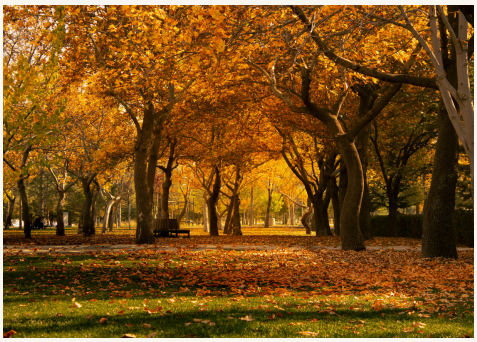
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

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

ISSUE 13: Autumn 2026

## Welcome to issue twelve of our quarterly newsletter.



**Welcome to our autumn update, where we share the latest news and developments from Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area.**

This newsletter highlights the incredible work taking place in our communities and the strong partnerships that are helping people live healthier, happier lives.

Inside, you'll find inspiring stories, updates on local projects and details of upcoming events. We hope it keeps you connected to the work happening across the region and showcases the positive impact we're making together.

We hope you enjoy this autumn 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), 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.

# Blaenau Gwent

## First community breathlessness hub launched in Blaenau Gwent

People living with chronic breathlessness in Blaenau Gwent are set to benefit from a new community-based service that will provide more coordinated support closer to home.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is the first Health Board in Wales to introduce a Community Breathlessness Hub, bringing together healthcare professionals to support people with conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart failure and other respiratory or cardiac conditions.

The hub offers a joined-up approach to care, ensuring patients can access the right support at the right time to help manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

Lorraine Rowlands, Directorate Manager for Additional Services, Primary Care and Community Services, said:

"We are delighted to be the first health board in Wales to operationalise a Community Breathlessness Hub. Chronic breathlessness can have a significant impact on people's daily lives, affecting their confidence, independence and wellbeing.

"This pilot will provide a more joined-up approach to care, helping people access specialist support closer to home and improve their overall experience of care."

The hub is currently being piloted in Blaenau Gwent, with learning from the project helping to shape future service development across the health board and beyond.

## Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent Cool Noon Event

The Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent team recently offered the community a lovely free summer event at the Brynmawr Market Hall cinema.

Everyone was treated to a showing of the hit movie - Mamma Mia, with free ice lollies and cold drinks.

It was a great feel-good fun event and well attended by all ages of the community.

Working in partnership with Gavo, we were able to fund this lovely community event.

Thank you to our BG team for coordinating, singing, dancing and making everyone feel welcome.





## Blaenau Gwent Community Litter pick

Some of our Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent wellbeing coaches organised a community litter pick at Sirhowy Community Garden, Tredegar.

The event was well attended with members of Tredegar Town Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and members of the community.

16 bags of litter and large items were collected between us all.

# Caerphilly

## Community Wellbeing Connectors named finalist in two Wales awards

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Community Wellbeing Connectors service has been named a finalist in two categories at the Mental Health & Wellbeing Wales Awards 2026.

The service has been shortlisted for Best Wellbeing Service and Impact in the Community, recognising its work to improve wellbeing, support independence and help residents stay connected.

Community Wellbeing Connectors provides personalised support for adults facing challenges such as loneliness, poor mental health, bereavement, financial difficulties, housing concerns and social isolation. Through 'What Matters' conversations, the team helps residents identify their needs and access relevant support and community services.

In 2025-26, the service supported 888 residents, delivered more than 450 outreach sessions in GP practices and carried out 338 home visits.

Working closely with GP practices, housing services, voluntary organisations and community groups, the team helps people access support early, reducing the risk of issues escalating.

Cllr Teresa Heron, Cabinet Member for Social Care, said: "This is fantastic recognition for the Community Wellbeing Connectors team and the difference their compassionate, practical support makes to residents across the county borough."

The winners will be announced in October.

## Memorial Garden Unveiled in Honour of Beloved Riverside Medical Practice Manager

Staff and colleagues gathered at Riverside Medical Practice to honour the life and legacy of a much-loved Practice Manager who sadly passed away in August 2025.

During a moving ceremony, a memorial garden created in her memory was officially unveiled. The project had originally been started by her and colleague Mari Burland, and was completed by the NCN Team as a lasting tribute to her dedication, kindness and commitment to the wellbeing of others.

The garden now provides a peaceful wellbeing space for staff to step away from the pressures of the working day, reflect and recharge. As part of the event, Lloyd Hambridge, Divisional Director, also unveiled a commemorative plaque recognising the lasting impact she had on the practice and the many lives she touched throughout her career.

Colleagues reflected on her warmth, professionalism and unwavering commitment, while members of the NCN Team said they were honoured to help bring her vision to life.

The ceremony gave staff an opportunity to share memories and celebrate her life. The memorial garden and plaque will serve as lasting reminders of her dedication, friendship and the difference she made to patients and colleagues alike.





# Monmouthshire

## Stepping Up for Safety: Cas-Gwent Ward's Falls Awareness Coffee Afternoon a Great Success

Cas-Gwent Ward at Chepstow Community Hospital recently welcomed patients, families, staff and visitors to a Falls Awareness Coffee Afternoon to promote safety, wellbeing and independence.
The event provided a relaxed opportunity to share practical advice on reducing the risk of falls, raise awareness of available support, and encourage conversations about staying active and confident.
Staff were on hand to offer guidance and answer questions, helping patients and families learn more about preventing falls both in hospital and at home.
A huge thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event, and to the Cas-Gwent Ward team for organising such a positive initiative.
Caroline Morgan, Deputy Head of Nursing, said:
"Brilliant effort and fabulous photos. Well done to everyone involved in making the Falls Awareness Coffee Afternoon such a success. Events like these make a real difference in promoting patient safety, encouraging conversations and supporting our patients and communities."

## Celebrating a Lifeline for Our Communities

A powerful new video showcases the impact of the Bridges Community Car Scheme, with passengers sharing how it provides more than just transport. For many people across Monmouthshire, it offers independence, connection and a way to stay active in their communities.
Supported by volunteer drivers and coordinators, the scheme helps people attend appointments, access support and stay socially connected.
One passenger said: “I don't like having dementia, but I always think to myself, I am lucky to get out and about, go to classes and see friends."
With more than 1,600 registered passengers and 100 volunteer drivers, the scheme continues to reduce isolation and support independent living.
Bridge Car Scheme



## Growing Together: Volunteers Help Transform Dementia Garden at Monnow Vale

Volunteers from Semperian Group Ltd joined forces with Keep Wales Tidy, Growing Space and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to transform the therapeutic garden at Monnow Vale Health and Social Care Facility.
Working in challenging heat, the team installed raised beds, fencing, a compost bin, bench and a new polytunnel base, helping create an expanded outdoor space for people living with dementia.
The gardening group, facilitated by Growing Space and supported by Health Board staff, provides opportunities for participants to enjoy nature, socialise and experience the wellbeing benefits of gardening.
Thanks to the support of all partners involved, the enhanced garden is now ready to provide even more opportunities for people living with dementia to grow, connect and thrive.

# Newport

## Community Connectors making a difference in Newport

New case studies from Newport's Place Based Care Community Connector service highlight the difference early intervention and personalised support can make to people's lives.

Working closely with patients, families and partner organisations, Community Connectors help people overcome challenges that can affect their health and wellbeing, including housing issues, financial hardship, loneliness, bereavement and caring responsibilities.

One case involved a young adult experiencing poor mental health, financial difficulties and homelessness. The Community Connector helped them navigate complex support systems, arranged referrals for housing and financial advice, and provided practical support to attend appointments. As a result, the individual re-engaged with services and began receiving help to address their housing and financial situation.

In another case, a patient referred for loneliness was found to be struggling primarily with grief following the loss of her husband. By identifying bereavement as the root cause of her distress, the Community Connector was able to connect her with specialist bereavement and befriending services that better met her needs.

A third case demonstrated the value of a whole-family approach. A 96-year-old patient living with dementia and their 75-year-old unpaid carer were both experiencing significant challenges. The Community Connector coordinated support across health, social care and voluntary services, helping to address issues including falls, personal care, medication access, loneliness and carer strain.

These examples show how Community Connectors provide person-centred support, improve access to services and reduce the burden on individuals and families by helping them get the right support at the right time.

## Newport NCN West Lead – Appointment

It is with pleasure we share the news that Dr Brenda Ferrao has been successful in being appointed as the new NCN Lead for Newport West.

Brenda has a wealth of experience working out of St David's Clinic in Newport West.

Welcome to the team!




## Health and Wellbeing Teams Reach Thousands of Families at Newport Summer Events

Teams from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's Newport Integrated Wellbeing Network, Community Dental Oral Health Improvement Service, Corporate Communications Team and Newport Locality Team have been engaging with families across Newport this summer, promoting health and wellbeing initiatives at community events.

Across Newport City Council's Play in the Park and Newport Live's Sport in the Park events, teams connected with more than thousands of families, providing advice, support and information on topics including oral health, mental wellbeing, cervical screening, sepsis awareness, Help Me Quit and nature prescribing.

The events provided valuable opportunities to bring health information and support directly into communities, helping residents access services and advice in welcoming, familiar settings.

# Torfaen

## Professionals come together for Torfaen Children's Health and Well-being Event

Professionals from health, local authority and third sector organisations came together at Woodland Road Community Hwb in Cwmbran for the Torfaen Children's Health and Wellbeing Event 2026, organised by the Torfaen Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN).

The event brought together partners supporting children, young people and families across Torfaen and Gwent, providing an opportunity to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships and raise awareness of available services.

Attendees heard presentations on a range of topics, including early years support, safeguarding, breastfeeding, neurodevelopmental services, smoking cessation and support for young carers. Updates were also shared on services such as Flying Start, Crystal Pathways, Help Me Quit, Gwent Neurodevelopmental Services and the Best Start in Life Delivery Plan.

A marketplace of information stalls allowed attendees to connect with a wide range of organisations and services supporting families across the region, including Health Visiting, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Family Information Services, Help Me Quit and Gwent Carers.

Eryl Smeethe, Torfaen NCN Lead, said: "It's fantastic to see so many services coming together. The event creates opportunities for networking, encourages collaboration and strengthens the support available for children, young people and families across Torfaen. I would like to thank Claire Stickler, Network Support Officer, Torfaen Locality Office, for organising the event and making it such a success."

## Help Shape Torfaen's New Nature Prescription Programme

The Integrated Wellbeing Network and partners are developing a Nature Prescription Programme for Torfaen and are looking for healthcare professionals, community groups and partners to help shape it.

Nature Prescriptions encourage people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting with nature and local green spaces.

Workshops at Torfaen Museum (NP4 6JH)

- 8 October, 9.30am to 11.30am
- 13 October, 10am to 12pm
- Sign-off session: 27 October, 12.30pm to 2.30pm

For more information, contact Jordan.Royal@wales.nhs.uk

## New Torfaen Wellbeing Opportunities

A new programme of funded nature-based wellbeing activities is available for adults aged 16 to 64 who are not currently working and may be experiencing physical or mental health challenges, social isolation, or low confidence.

The programme aims to improve wellbeing, build confidence, strengthen social connections, and support people towards future employment opportunities.

Activities include:

- Practical conservation sessions at Branches Fork Meadows Nature Reserve, Pontnewydd (every three weeks)
- A six-week Bushcraft and Wellbeing course for women at Pontymoile Basin
- A six-week Bushcraft and Wellbeing course for women and young children at Pontymoile Basin

Local groups, organisations and services are encouraged to refer people who may benefit. Taster sessions can also be arranged.

For more information or to discuss referrals, contact rohagan@gwentwildlife.org.

# Other News...

## New children's book launched to help young people recognise the signs of sepsis

A children's book co-written by pupils from New Inn Primary School has been launched by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to help children understand sepsis and recognise when someone may need urgent medical help.
The Invisible Invader was created as part of the Health Board's Sepsis Awareness Campaign. The book was developed with Year 5 pupils, who helped shape the story after learning about sepsis through educational sessions led by healthcare professionals.
A total of 1,000 copies will be distributed to primary schools and libraries across Gwent.
Speaking at the launch, Chief Executive Nicola Prygodzicz praised the pupils' creativity and enthusiasm, while Medical Director Dr Seema Srivastava highlighted the importance of early recognition of sepsis and the value of creating the resource with children.
To learn more about sepsis, visit the Health Board's intranet or website Sepsis - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board






## New videos launched to help explain WGOS eye care services

New videos have been added to the Optician page on the ABUHB website to help staff and the public learn more about Wales General Ophthalmic Services (WGOS) and the eye care available through local optometrists. The videos highlight how optometrists can provide quick assessment and treatment for many urgent eye conditions, helping people access the right care closer to home and avoid unnecessary visits to other services where appropriate.
Visit the Optician - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to watch the videos and find out more.

## Have your say on a new Endometriosis Podcast Series

We're exploring a new podcast series featuring our Endometriosis Nurse Specialist and other healthcare professionals. The podcasts would offer trusted information, practical advice and answers to common questions about endometriosis.
Whether you've been diagnosed with endometriosis, think you may have it, or support someone who does, we'd love to hear from you.
Please complete our short survey: Endometriosis Podcast Survey – Fill in form
Your feedback will help shape the podcast content, ensuring it covers the topics that matter most to people affected by endometriosis.



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