

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

ISSUE 9: Summer 2025

Welcome to issue nine of our quarterly newsletter.



We're delighted to share the latest news, updates and highlights from Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board area.

This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date with the fantastic work happening within our communities, showcasing the innovative initiatives, partnerships and achievements that are making a real difference to people's lives.

From upcoming events and inspiring stories to exciting new developments, our aim is to help you stay connected and engaged.

We hope you enjoy this edition and that it offers an informative and inspiring snapshot of the excellent work taking place across our communities.

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](mailto: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 between 40,000 and 60,000 people.

Each NCN brings together a broad range of expertise, including General Practitioners (GPs), Dentists, Optometrists, Pharmacists, Community Nurses, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and Social Care specialists.

By working in partnership, NCNs strengthen care coordination, support a clearer understanding of local population needs, help prioritise service improvements, and develop tailored solutions to enhance the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.



## Blaenau Gwent

### Successful Launch of Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent Marks a New Chapter in Community Wellbeing



The Tabor Centre in Brynmawr was full of energy on the afternoon of 17th July, as the Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent project was officially launched to an enthusiastic and packed audience. The live event, which celebrated community, connection, and wellbeing, was hailed as a huge success, drawing stakeholders from across the region and beyond.

Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent is a pioneering initiative designed to enhance health and wellbeing through social prescribing. It aligns fully with the six components of the National Framework for Social Prescribing, supporting the vision of a compassionate, connected, and collaborative community. The project represents a bold, people-first approach to health, empowering individuals to access support and local resources when they need them most.

Built on strong partnerships between health and social care professionals, community groups and the third sector, the launch showcased the collaborative spirit driving this transformative project.

Speaking at the event, Aimee Clement-Rees, Assistant Head of Service for Blaenau Gwent, said: "I am extremely proud of my team. This is more than just a health initiative. It's about empowering people to live well, with support from their community."

### Year 7 Immersion Day Promotes Wellbeing

Blaenau Gwent Integrated Wellbeing Network worked with partners Aneurin Leisure and Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Coaches in July to host an Immersion Day at the Bevan Centre for Year 7 pupils from Tredegar Comprehensive School.

The theme focused on health and wellbeing and the actions needed to keep healthy.

They explored the 5 Ways to Wellbeing, discussing each step and sharing ideas for activities that could support them.

### Medication Review at Home Project Improves Quality of Life for Housebound Patients

A new Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN) project in Blaenau Gwent is transforming support for some of the area's most vulnerable residents.

The initiative takes pharmacy medication reviews directly into patients' homes, ensuring housebound individuals receive the same level of care usually provided in GP surgeries or care homes.

Tracy, an experienced prescribing Pharmacist, carries out detailed medication reviews alongside wider wellbeing checks. She also links patients with services such as home eye tests, befriending support and nail-cutting.

One patient's safety and mobility were greatly improved after Tracy arranged changes to his medication, repaired his emergency alarm and referred him for foot care.

This innovative approach shows how extending pharmacy services into the community can boost patient safety, independence and overall quality of life.





## Caerphilly

### Redwood Unit Blossoms with Garden Project



“Move it May” has sparked a new, ongoing initiative at the Redwood Inpatient Unit in Caerphilly, where patients are taking part in a garden care project to support both physical and mental wellbeing.

Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy staff are weaving horticultural activities into patient care, from propagating plants in rooms to transferring them into the garden once established. Even those unable to leave their beds can still take part.

With help from patients, therapy staff and the Caerphilly Management Team, the garden has been cleaned and prepared as a safe, welcoming space. The project not only boosts mobility and rehabilitation but also fosters community spirit and a sense of achievement.

The 12-bed unit has embraced the initiative, which is set to grow into a wider programme of therapeutic activities in the future.

### ABUHB Staff Recognition Awards

The 2025 Awards were a brilliant celebration of our colleagues’ hard work and dedication.

🌟 Winner – Stella Montgomery won the Employee Health and Wellbeing award for her inspirational Zen Den, offering free massage and wellbeing support to staff across Caerphilly.

🌟 Nominations –

- Eira Turner – recognised in the Leadership category.
- Huw Rees – nominated for Patient Care and Wellbeing for his nature prescribing work, including the Dicky Tickers group.
- Caerphilly Locality & Blaenau Gwent – runners-up in Partnership Working for the 2–3 flu programme.
- Caerphilly NCNs & Community Wellbeing Connectors – nominated for partnership work supporting adults and families.
- Heather Manson & Xela DafaucéBouzo – recognised for the Equality Health CVD study.

A huge congratulations to all

### Welcoming Kate Williams Caerphilly IWN Lead

Kate Williams has now been in post as the Caerphilly IWN lead for one month. Throughout this time, she has been meeting up with partner organisations, stakeholders, charities, professionals and community members that the IWN work collaboratively with to gain knowledge of the amazing assets that we have in Caerphilly Borough.





## Monmouthshire

### Ministry of Defence Event at Beachley Barracks



We would like to thank Dr Annabelle Holtam, Monmouthshire South NCN Lead, for her dedicated support to children and families temporarily housed at Beachley Barracks and congratulate her on being awarded a military coin in recognition of her service.

From November 2023, Beachley Barracks supported Afghan nationals with the legal right to remain in the UK. The health team worked alongside primary care, Public Health, local authorities and voluntary agencies to deliver health screening, GP registrations, vaccinations and trauma-informed care.

Over 15 months, more than 2,300 people were supported, including 45 pregnant women, 170 children and 150 adults vaccinated, over 1,100 hours of GP contact and 3,000 nursing hours provided.

Trish Edwards, Head of Service for Monmouthshire said “We are honoured to have such dedicated and compassionate teams in Monmouthshire and Gloucester”.

### A Lifeline Through Connection: C & M’s Story

When C heard about the Wellbeing Links service from a friend, she decided to self-refer. A small step that made a huge difference. At her first appointment, C learned about the support available for both herself and her husband, M, who is living with dementia. They began by joining the local Carers Group and, eight months on, they rarely miss a session.

In May, a Wellbeing Links Advisor noticed that C seemed overwhelmed. A gentle chat revealed she was struggling without nearby family support. A follow-up appointment was arranged, and referrals were made to:

- Carers Services for a full assessment
- Day Services, enabling M to attend a local centre once a week
- Alzheimer’s Society for tailored advice and guidance

Now, M has a Social Worker, is preparing to attend a familiar Day Centre, and both he and C are linked with a Dementia Advisor.

Most importantly, C feels supported and no longer alone.

This story shows how Wellbeing Links is more than signposting. It’s about being a trusted, consistent presence, offering connection when it’s needed most.

### Recognition for Prison Nursing Healthcare Team

Congratulations to Heidi Desmond and the Prison Nursing Healthcare Team, winners of the Alice Mildred and Jack Margetts Scholarship for Outstanding Care of the Older Person at the ABUHB Nursing, Midwifery & SCPHN Conference 2025.

Working across both a Victorian and an Open Prison, the team provides high-quality, patient-centred care for an ageing prison population, many living with complex health needs. They champion vaccination, screening and health promotion, while ensuring care is equivalent to that available in the wider community. The team has been praised for innovative projects such as boosting bowel cancer screening uptake and leading targeted vaccination programmes. Their swift, collaborative response to a recent flu outbreak was also highlighted during an inspection by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons.

Heidi’s leadership and the team’s dedication make a real difference to some of society’s most vulnerable people - a truly well-deserved award.



## Newport

### RSPB Nature Prescriptions Launches in Newport



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is proud to announce the launch of RSPB Nature Prescriptions in Newport – the first time this innovative wellbeing initiative has been available in Wales.

Developed with RSPB Cymru, Nature Prescriptions encourage people to improve their health through simple, self-led activities that help build a stronger connection with nature. They can be offered by trained professionals including GPs, social prescribers, wellbeing connectors and therapists, making them a flexible addition to existing health services.

Evidence shows that connecting with nature reduces stress, eases anxiety and supports physical activity. Thanks to funding from the People's Postcode Lottery, this initiative builds on successful rollouts in Scotland and England and is now available in Newport.

👉 Find out more: [www.rspb.org.uk/natureprescriptions](http://www.rspb.org.uk/natureprescriptions)

For local registration, contact: [Chloe.A.Cheal@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Chloe.A.Cheal@wales.nhs.uk)

### Red Bag Scheme Now LIVE in Newport

A new initiative to improve hospital admissions and discharge for care home residents is now live across Newport. The Red Bag Scheme, already running in Monmouthshire and Torfaen, ensures vital information and personal items travel with residents when they go into hospital.

Each bag contains essentials such as medications, nightwear, toiletries and comfort items, as well as a red folder with key details, including care plans, contacts, mobility passports and advance care information.

By giving hospital staff immediate access to accurate information, the scheme reduces delays, supports safe discharge and improves continuity of care.

Senior Nurse Mark Ledville-Smith explains:

"The red bag means hospital teams know straight away who the patient is, what their needs are, and who to contact, helping to prevent delays and support early discharge."

This simple idea makes a big difference, ensuring safer, smoother, more person-centred care for residents.

### European network visits 19 Hills Health & Wellbeing Centre

On 21 May, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board welcomed 30 members of the European Regional and Local Health Authorities (EUREGHA) to the new 19 Hills Health & Wellbeing Centre in Ringland, Newport.

The group learned how the centre delivers integrated, community-based care in line with Welsh Government strategy.

Welsh Government's Emma Spear praised the centre as "an excellent example of how we are offering integrated, community-based services to the people of Wales."

Lloyd Hambridge, Divisional Director, added: "It was a privilege to showcase the 19 Hills Health & Wellbeing Centre to our European colleagues. This centre represents a significant step forward in delivering truly integrated, person-centred care in the heart of the community. We're proud to be part of a model that not only supports health and wellbeing but also strengthens collaboration across services to meet the needs of local people both now and for future generations."





## Torfaen

### **New Partnership Helps Respiratory Patients Stay Safe and Independent at Home**

Patients living in Torfaen, with long-term respiratory conditions are set to benefit from a new partnership between Care & Repair and local GP practices, with funding provided by Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA).

The initiative offers tailored advice and practical support to help older adults remain safe, comfortable, and independent in their own homes. Care & Repair, a well-established organisation supporting older people across the UK, provides home visits aimed at improving safety, wellbeing, and quality of life. Since the service began in 2006, over 7,000 people have received home visits, making it a vital resource for ensuring older people are aware of, and can access, the full range of support available to them.

"This is an important way of making sure vulnerable patients are not falling through the cracks," said Ian Stuart, Network & Community Services Manager. "By working collaboratively, we can reach those most in need and help them live more safely and independently."

For more information, please email [Ian.Stuart@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Ian.Stuart@wales.nhs.uk)

### **What are First Contact Practitioners (FCPs)?**

First Contact Practitioners (FCPs) are highly skilled clinicians based within primary care general practice surgeries, working as part of the wider multi-disciplinary team.

They enable patients contacting their GP surgery with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions direct access to a specialist in MSK assessment and management

FCPs have extensive expertise in these MSK conditions which affect bones, joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments. They assess and manage conditions such as osteoarthritis, low back pain and sciatica, carpal tunnel syndrome and shoulder pain. FCP's provide clinical assessment, diagnosis, and individualised management of these MSK conditions. If needed, FCPs will also refer patients onwards for tests or other specialist services to streamline pathways of care.

First Contact Practitioners (FCPs) can be accessed directly by care navigation/reception staff at the GP surgery, however, FCPs are not present in all Practices across ABUHB at this time.

### **SPARKLE's Family Liaison Service Offers Help and Guidance**

Families in Gwent with children or young people who have been diagnosed with a disability or developmental difficulty, or are currently undergoing assessment, are being encouraged to explore the support available through SPARKLE's Gwent Family Liaison Service.

The service is designed to connect families with local resources, services, and activities that can support both the child or young person and their wider family. Whether you're seeking help, advice, or simply don't know where to turn, the Gwent Family Liaison Service aims to make navigating the system easier.

Many parents and carers report feeling overwhelmed when trying to find the right support for their child. SPARKLE's team provides a vital link to information and services tailored to each family's needs.

If you live in Gwent and would like to learn more about what's available, please see the attached information about SPARKLE's Family Liaison Service.

For more information, email:  
[ABB.FamilyLiaisonOfficer@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:ABB.FamilyLiaisonOfficer@wales.nhs.uk)



## Other News...



### Pharmacist's quick action helps save a life

A 32-year-old mother has praised a Monmouthshire community pharmacist whose advice helped her recognise the early signs of sepsis.

Florrie, visiting the area for a wedding, initially sought help for a throat infection. She was seen by Kyle, a Prescribing Pharmacist who had recently accessed resources from the Health Board's sepsis awareness campaign.

Kyle prescribed antibiotics and gave Florrie a leaflet and symptom card, stressing the importance of seeking urgent help if her condition worsened. The following day her health deteriorated rapidly. Remembering Kyle's advice, she called emergency services and was quickly diagnosed with sepsis in hospital.

Doctors confirmed that any delay in seeking help could have been life-threatening.

Florrie said: "Kyle ultimately saved my two young children from losing their mummy. Sepsis is so scary – if I'd waited to see my GP on the Monday, it could have been too late."

Kyle said, "I'm just glad I had the resources to hand and could pass that knowledge on. Campaigns like this really do make a difference."

### Knowing the signs of sepsis can save lives.

Signs of sepsis to look out for include:

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine (in a day)
- Severe breathlessness
- It feels like you're going to die

Skin mottled or discoloured

Sepsis is a medical emergency. If you or someone else shows signs, seek medical help immediately and just ask... "could it be sepsis?".

For information, guidance and campaign assets, visit:

[Sepsis - Home](#)

### Flu Campaign for 2-3 year olds launches

From 1st September, children aged 2-3 will be invited to receive the flu vaccine given at their GP surgery; in some areas of Gwent, it may also be available within the child's nursery setting.

The children's nasal spray flu vaccine helps protect against flu. Flu is caused by viruses and spreads easily. Anyone can get flu but children have the highest rate of infection and can spread flu to other family members. Flu can be serious for children and complications can include bronchitis and pneumonia.

For more information on the nasal flu spray for 2-3 years, visit: <https://linktr.ee/2to3flu>

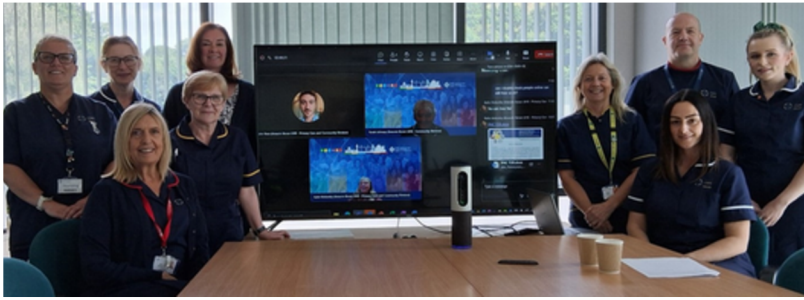
If you have other children who attend school (Reception - Year 11), the flu vaccine will be given by the School Nursing Service at your child's school. Find out more here:

<https://abuhb.nhs.wales/hospital/s/staying-well-and-healthy/living-well/immunisations/childrens-nasal-flu/>

Children can also be vaccinated at our Vaccination Centre in Cwmbran [Vaccination Pop-up Clinics - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board](#)




## Nursing Collaboratives Driving Positive Change





Nursing leaders from across Aneurin Bevan University Health Board met on 27 June for the biannual Nursing Professional Collaborative Leads meeting.

Chaired by Patricia Bartley, Deputy Head of Nursing, and Lucy King, Head of Nursing for Primary and Community Care, the event brought together teams from Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire, and Torfaen to share progress and shape future care.

Highlights included:

 Newport's Red Bag Scheme — improving communication between nursing homes and hospitals, making sure patients get the right care at the right time.

 Monmouthshire's Rural Outreach Pilot — Exploring the need to take nursing support to local markets to reach farming communities who often face barriers to healthcare.

 Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen's Community Focus — creative plans for Wellness Buses, community education, and Park Run partnerships to support early intervention and prevention.

Patricia said: "By coming together like this, we're showing what nurses do best: solving problems, innovating for patients and supporting each other across boundaries."

The collaboratives will meet again later this year to continue driving improvements across boroughs.

## 'Only Order What You Need' Campaign Materials Delivered Across Gwent

The printed materials for the 'Only Order What You Need' campaign have now been successfully delivered across Gwent, marking a key step in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's ongoing efforts to reduce medicines waste and encourage responsible ordering.

Community pharmacies received their materials by hand delivery, ensuring every site has what it needs to support the initiative from the outset.

Jonathan Simms, Clinical Director of Pharmacy, personally delivered the secondary care resources during a site meeting, enabling efficient distribution across hospital settings. Meanwhile, opticians and dental practices have had their materials posted directly to them. General practices received their campaign packs via the standard delivery bags, ensuring a seamless rollout across primary care.

For further information about the campaign, or for campaign assets, please visit '[Only Order What You Need - Medicines Waste Management](#)'



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](mailto:lisa.orford@wales.nhs.uk).

