

Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 15 January 2025

Notice of meeting

County Council

**Thursday, 23rd January, 2025 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA**

AGENDA

Prayers will be said prior to the Council meeting at 1.45pm. All members are welcome to join the Chair for prayers should they wish to do.

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Chair's Announcement	1 - 2
4.	Public Questions	
4.1.	Submitted by Justine Johnson to Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Under what criteria is the ETRO on Goldwire Lane being assessed and will the results be made available to residents and the public for full consultation and consideration before a decision is made on Goldwire Lanes' future.	
4.2.	Submitted by Jonty Pearce to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economy <i>Given the significant objections raised by both CADW and the Wye Valley National Landscape (AONB) to the RLDP, how does the Council intend to address these issues to ensure that it aligns with statutory protections?</i>	
5.	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th December 2024	3 - 24
6.	Reports to Council	
6.1.	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26	25 - 30

6.2.	Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) Area Plan and RPB Annual Report 23/24	31 - 90
6.3.	Council Diary 2025/26	91 - 108
7.	Motions	
7.1.	Submitted by County Councillor Richard John	
	<p>This Council: Regrets that Monmouthshire, the lowest funded council in Wales, has again received from Welsh Government the lowest increase in funding of any council in Wales. Notes with concern that, under this administration, council tax is rising at more than double the rate of inflation and the council still forecasts an overspend of over £5million in 2024-25 and its five year forecast shows a shortfall of £35million. Expresses concern about the administration's capacity to fund essential services in 2025-26. Supports the administration's regularly repeated statement that "radical change to the council's operating model" is required and instructs the administration to urgently bring this forward.</p>	
8.	Members Questions:	
8.1.	County Councillor Laura Wright to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services	
	<p>"Brew Monday" is this month, encouraging us all to catch up and connect with others to support our mental health. Will the cabinet member please tell us what MCC is doing to support mental health and wellbeing for our residents, council staff and elected members.</p>	
8.2.	County Councillor Laura Wright to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services	
	<p>Can the cabinet member please provide an update on the future of the Tudor Street building in Abergavenny?</p>	
8.3.	County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economy	
	<p>Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on what the Council is doing to enforce parking restrictions on High Street in Chepstow?</p>	
8.4.	County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment	
	<p><i>Please can the cabinet member provide a detailed explanation of the one-way system proposals for Crick Road specifically, can you outline the direction of traffic flow, whether the road will be resurfaced as part of the project, and if</i></p>	

there are plans to include a dedicated cycle route or other improvements to pedestrian and cyclist safety and how long this work will take?

8.5. County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Have the changes in garden waste collections effected the number of collections some areas have received?

8.6. County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

It's been nearly 6 months since the council conducted the raid and seized 71 dogs at Lost Souls Sanctuary. This matter is still of significant concern to members of the public and many are seeking welfare on the dogs and clarity on the resource allocated, please could the cabinet member confirm the total costs incurred to date for the investigation, operation (raid), ongoing shelter of seized dogs and legal representation associated to this case?

8.7. County Councillor Louise Brown to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Please can you provide an update on improvements to High Beech roundabout including nearby land at Moun-ton Road?

8.8. County Councillor Penny Jones to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

In light of the recent proposals of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cmyru (DBCC) consultation relating to the 2026 Review of Senedd Constituencies, how can the residents of Monmouthshire be assured that this administration is working on their behalf to maintain the identity of Monmouthshire and all that that embodies?

8.9. County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Could the Cabinet Member for Education inform council of any proposed future investment the current administration intends to make in both Chepstow School and The Dell Primary School.

8.10. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Could the Cabinet Member for Education inform council of what internal and external meetings have been held in this council term in relation to the council's Chepstow School submission as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, which replaced the 21st Century Schools initiative; and what progress has been made to date.

8.11. From County Councillor Jan Butler to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Could the cabinet member for Education comment on the situation as regards school transport for students attending King Henry School from Penperlleni and Goytre Fawr.

8.12.

**From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby,
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment**

Could the Cabinet Member please advise what dedicated resources are currently available to MCC for the clearing of highway drains and in light of recent flooding issues, will additional financial support be given to fund next year's programme of works?

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY**

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Rachel Buckler	Devauden;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Laura Wright	Grofield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tony Kear	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Catrin Maby	Drybridge;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jan Butler	Goetre Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Ian Chandler	Llantilio Crossenny;	Green Party
County Councillor Sara Burch	Cantref;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Alistair Neill	Gobion Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Su McConnel	Croesonen;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby	Llanelly Hill;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Fay Bromfield	Llangybi Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jane Lucas	Osbaston;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Emma Bryn	Wyesham;	Independent Group
County Councillor Peter Strong	Rogiet;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent
County Councillor Paul Griffiths	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong	Caldicot Cross;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Garrick	Caldicot Castle;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Maria Stevens	Severn;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Steven Garratt	Overmonnow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Angela Sandles	Magor East with Undy;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Ben Callard	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor John Crook	Magor East with Undy;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Dale Rooke	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Sue Riley	Bulwark and Thornwell;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jayne McKenna	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jill Bond	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Lisa Dymock	Portskewett;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tony Easson	Dewstow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Christopher Edwards	St. Kingsmark;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Simon Howarth	Llanelly Hill;	Independent Group
County Councillor Richard John	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor David Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	Mardy;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Phil Murphy	Caerwent;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martin Newell	Town;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Paul Pavia	Mount Pleasant;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell	Pen Y Fal;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Frances Taylor	Magor West;	Independent Group

County Councillor Tudor Thomas
County Councillor Armand Watts
County Councillor Ann Webb

Park;
Bulwark and Thornwell;
St Arvans;

Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
Welsh Conservative Party

Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

Watch this meeting online

This meeting can be viewed online either live or following the meeting by visiting www.monmouthshire.gov.uk or by visiting our Youtube page by searching MonmouthshireCC.

Welsh Language

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Public Speaking at Full Council

Members of the public may register to ask a question of the members of cabinet at full council meetings. There is no facility for the public to register to speak as part of the debate of an item on the agenda at full council meetings. The total time allocated for all questions at a meeting of full council is 15 minutes.

No more than one question is permitted per questioner at a meeting of full council and questions will be asked in the order that they are submitted.

In order to submit a question at a full council meeting, notice must be given in writing or by email to the head of democratic services no later than midnight three working days before the day of the meeting with each question providing the name and address of the questioner.

Questions may be rejected if the question;

- Is not about a matter for which the council has responsibility or which affects the county
- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- Is substantially the same question which has been put at a meeting of full council in the past 6 months
- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information

Where a person is not able to ask the question to full council in person, the chair may decide to read the question out on their behalf, instruct a written response be provided or choose to not deal with the question in their absence. Those who do ask a question in person will be entitled to one supplementary question which must arise out of the original question or the reply. The chair may reject a supplementary question on these grounds.

Any questions that cannot be dealt with at the meeting due to exceeding the time limit for public questions will be dealt with by a written response.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately, we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

Chair's Report 6th December – 10th January 2025

Friday 6 th December 2 p.m.	School Annual Christmas Performance St Marys RC Primary School, Chepstow
Tuesday 10 th December 2 p.m.	Thornwell Primary School Year 1 & 2 Christmas Performance Thornwell Primary School, Bulwark, Chepstow
Wednesday 11 th December 1.45 p.m.	Durand Primary School Year and 6 Christmas Carol Concert St Mary's Church, Caldicot
Wednesday 11 th December 5.30 p.m.	MonLife Volunteers Christmas Celebration Event Shire Hall, Monmouth
Thursday 12 th December 11 a.m.	Monmouthshire Carol Service County Hall, Usk
Monday 16 th December 9.30 a.m.	Secondary School Swimming Gala Chepstow Leisure Centre
Friday 10 th January 2 p.m.	BEM Presentation County Hall, Usk

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 5

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Su McConnel (Chair)
County Councillor Peter Strong (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, M. Newell, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Davies	Acting Chief Executive
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance
Matthew Gatehouse	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
Deb Hill-Howells	Head of Decarbonisation, Transport and Support Services
Craig O'Connor	Chief Officer, Place
Hazel Clatworthy	Sustainability Policy Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Fay Bromfield, Maria Stevens, Sue Riley and Lisa Dymock

1. Local Emergencies

The Chair, Group Leaders and the Acting Chief Executive thanked Monmouthshire County Council staff, partners and emergency services for the support provided during the three local emergencies experienced within the County relating to flooding, the fire in Abergavenny, and recent storms.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=kNMDTjyW0cXa3u2r&t=64>

2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Martin Newell to his first County Council Meeting.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

3. Declarations of interest

County Councillor Jayne McKenna declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2 as her father is a farmer.

County Councillor Rachel Buckler declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2.

County Councillor David Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2. He left the meeting taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon in respect of this Motion.

County Councillor Jane Lucas declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2.

County Councillor Simon Howarth declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2. He left the meeting taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon in respect of this Motion.

County Councillor Su McConnel declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2 as her husband is the beneficiary in a will which affects a family farm. She left the meeting taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon in respect of this Motion.

County Councillor Ann Webb declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 8.2.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=biXUeZUmFbhJ9JCI&t=843>

4. Chair's Announcement

The Chair's Announcement was noted.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=UWidK63LyvMKK4BL&t=1020>

5. Receipt of petitions

County Councillor Jackie Strong presented a petition to County Council on behalf of residents of Caldicot. The petition is entitled 'Design over Health and Safety?' which related to the safety of the zebra crossing on Sandy Lane adjacent to The Cross public house.

It was noted that the petition would be referred to the next meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee with an invitation to the relevant Cabinet Member and officers to address the Scrutiny Committee in respect of the matter.

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=yx5ZPRxabm_OQkK&t=1028

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

6. Public questions

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=OCeWJhdckkp7mNrU&t=1173>

The Chair welcomed Mr. Jonty Pearce to the meeting. Mr. Pearce gave Members a presentation entitled 'Why has Monmouthshire County Council removed key protection for Monmouth's endangered Greater Horseshoe Bats?'

The following questions were noted:

- Why would the Council do this?
- Why would the Council not want to strengthen, not weaken protection for the bats?
- Why would the Council want to make it so easy for the developer to develop houses?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, Deputy Leader, thanked Mr. Pearce for his presentation and provided a response:

- It is not the Authority's belief that it has removed protection from any ecological feature in the County, including Greater Horseshoe Bats.
- The site being proposed is a smaller site than that which was previously proposed and was deliberately separated from the Horseshoe Bat habitat. Notwithstanding that, the information circulated today is the habitat's assessment which accompanies the proposed deposit Local Development Plan.
- We do not have the authority to remove any species or site protection.
- In accordance with legislation, every stage of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) is considered for its potential adverse impacts on sites protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation.
- The Habitats Regulation Assessment for the Deposit RLDP considers each policy of the plan alongside it and available on the Monmouthshire County Council website.
- In addition, should this proposed site emerge as part of an approved Replacement Local Development Plan, then any development on that site would require a planning application and there would be detailed ecological surveys submitted and proposed mitigation and enhancement strategies to meet the requirements of the RLDP and of National Planning Legislation.
- The points raised are important and the Cabinet Member agreed to give them serious consideration.
- We are currently in a process of consultation and this matter raised will form part of the consultation process.
- It will be possible to conclude that further amendments to the deposit Local Development Plan would be beneficial in light of the presentation received and questions raised, and we will be able to bring any changes back to the Council in the report from the consultation.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

- In addition, today's discussion will be reported to the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspector will also consider whether the text within the Local Development Plan conforms with the points raised in the consultation.

Mr. Pearce asked the following supplementary question:

Could the Cabinet Member explain why the wording to the original question was considered too prescriptive and why that wording that would have safeguarded the bats, was removed?

The Cabinet Member responded:

- There is always a balance to be struck between policies which are necessary for the protection of all interests including our environmental interests and whether that balance has been achieved in accordance with the potential need for development alongside it. Whether we have the right balance is one that we will give further consideration to.

7. Confirmation of Minutes

Council resolved to accept the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held on 24th October 2024.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=TuGYBkW-NPGcetrq&t=1794>

8. Reports to Council:

9. Deforestation Free Champion Council

The Cabinet Member presented the report entitled for Deforestation Free Champion Council for Members to consider. The report highlighted the threat that tropical forests face and commits to better understand how Monmouthshire County Council could be contributing to deforestation, by signing the Deforestation Free Champions Charter and committing to develop an action plan which outlines how we will reduce our impact on deforestation and raise awareness of the issues in our communities.

Students from some of Monmouthshire's schools addressed the Council before the report was debated and voted upon.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- That Council signs up to the Deforestation Free Champions Charter.
- That officers develop and implement an action plan setting out the steps that we will take as Deforestation Free Champions both to understand and reduce our impact on tropical deforestation and to champion the importance of these issues in our communities. We have already taken some of these steps over the last year in collaboration with Monmouthshire's young people.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

Following the vote, the students presented Deforestation Free Community Badges to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Monmouthshire County Council, the Cabinet Member for Climate and Environment and Group Leaders.

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=gdGkYQTftSC_U-U4&t=1854

10. Charter for Families Bereaved Through Public Tragedy (The Hillsborough Charter)

The Leader presented the report outlining 'The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy' (Hillsborough Charter) and to seek Council's agreement to adopt and commit to the outlined principles in the response to a major incident.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- That the Council adopts The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy (Hillsborough Charter) and champions the transparent and supportive environment for families bereaved by public tragedy as outlined in the Charter.
- That the charter is embedded into the Monmouthshire County Council Emergency Management Plan and other appropriate major incident response plans to ensure the principles captured can be easily referenced, monitored and adhered to during a response.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=vCP3uVS81Lw27gzG&t=3239>

11. Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Cabinet Member presented the report to appoint County Councillors to represent the authority on the Joint Council for Wales and the board of Y Prentis.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

- To approve the appointment of the County Councillor Ben Callard to the Joint Council for Wales, alongside County Councillor Phil Murphy.
- To approve the appointment of County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader to the Board of Y Prentis.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=V7Xz3fGMDNVP5X7f&t=3764>

12. Motions to Council:

13. Submitted by County Councillor Jan Butler

County Councillor Jan Butler presented the motion:

This Council:

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

- Thanks the emergency workers, volunteers and all those who supported Monmouthshire residents during Storm Bert.
- Expresses concern that a lack of maintenance of the county's drainage infrastructure will have exacerbated flood risks.
- Calls on the Council to reassess its processes to mitigate flood events and evaluate the size and funding of the workforce dedicated to drainage maintenance and environmental management.

Seconded by County Councillor Richard John.

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=V-1stVrNCQOny_Vz&t=4813

County Councillor Catrin Maby proposed an amendment to the Motion:

- Thanks the emergency workers, volunteers and all those who supported Monmouthshire residents during Storm Bert.
- **Recognises the increased frequency of severe weather events related to climate change, and the need for many forms of intervention to mitigate the impact on our communities.**
- Calls on the council to reassess its processes to mitigate flood events and evaluate the size and funding of the workforce dedicated to drainage maintenance and environmental management.

Seconded by County Councillor Chandler.

We proceeded to debate the proposed amendment to the Motion.

County Councillor Jan Butler, the presenter of the original Motion, exercised her right of reply in respect of the proposed amendment to the Motion.

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=gZCU_TJ_0DfM9BZd&t=5755

Upon being put to the vote, the following votes were recorded:

In favour of the amendment	-	21
Against the amendment	-	21
Abstentions	-	0

The vote was tied.

Due to the closeness of the vote, a recorded vote was held:

In favour of the amendment	-	21
Against the amendment	-	21
Abstentions	-	0

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

In light of tied vote, the Chair exercised her casting vote and voted in favour of the amendment. The proposed amendment was carried.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=hl7gYtqcMF10uG4Y&t=9478>

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD Apologies			
Councillor L BROWN		X	
Councillor E BRYN		X	
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		X	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES		X	
Councillor L DYMOCK Apologies			
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor M. NEWELL		X	
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth		X	
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. Jones		X	
Councillor P. Jones		X	
Councillor T KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE		X	
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
Councillor P MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL		X	
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
Councillor M POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY Apologies			
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS Apologies			

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		

Members proceeded to debate the amended Motion.

County Councillor Tomos Davies proposed an amendment to the motion.

County Councillor Jan Butler accepted the amendment.

Amended Motion:

- Thanks the emergency workers, volunteers and all those who supported Monmouthshire residents during Storm Bert.
- **Recognises the increased frequency of severe weather events related to climate change, and the need for many forms of intervention to mitigate the impact on our communities, including maintenance of the county's drainage infrastructure.**
- Calls on the council to reassess its processes to mitigate flood events and evaluate the size and funding of the workforce dedicated to drainage maintenance and environmental management.

Upon being put to the vote, the following votes were recorded:

In favour of the amended motion	-	36
Against the amended motion	-	1
Abstentions	-	0

The amended motion was carried.

14. Submitted by County Councillor Rachel Buckler

County Councillor Rachel Buckler presented the motion:

This Council:

- Greatly values the role of Monmouthshire farmers in producing high quality food, providing food security and acting as the guardians of our natural environment.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

- Regrets the UK Government's proposed changes to inheritance tax, specifically the removal of Agricultural Property Relief, which threatens the future of family farms in Monmouthshire.
- Agrees to work with local farming unions and other Welsh councils to persuade the UK Government to protect our rural communities and not kill off family farms.

Seconded by County Councillor Maureen Powell.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=Gz2EIN1G0VPMof3T&t=12181>

County Councillor Sara Burch proposed an amendment to the Motion:

This Council:

- Greatly values the role of Monmouthshire farmers in producing high quality food, providing food security and acting as the guardians of our natural environment.
- Recognises that many farmers are facing a particularly difficult time as a result of the policies of previous Westminster governments, including Brexit, poorly negotiated trade deals and the failure to rein in the power of the supermarkets, as well as global instability and the growing impacts of climate change.
- Acknowledges that the UK Government's proposed changes to inheritance tax, specifically the limiting of Agricultural Property Relief, are perceived as a threat to the future of family farms in Monmouthshire.
- Agrees to work with local farming unions and other Welsh councils to protect our rural communities, supporting them to thrive and to sustain the inter-generational transfer of family farm businesses.

Seconded by County Councillor Dale Rooke.

We proceeded to debate the proposed amendment to the Motion.

County Councillor Rachel Buckler, the presenter of the original Motion, exercised her right of reply in respect of the proposed amendment to the Motion.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=XWUf5XlIq7qDV4VP&t=13891>

Upon being put to the vote, the following votes were recorded:

In favour of the amendment	-	21
Against the amendment	-	17
Abstentions	-	0

The proposed amendment was carried.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

Members proceeded to debate the substantive motion, as amended.

County Councillor Tomos Davies proposed an amendment to the first bullet point:

This Council:

- Recognises that many farmers are facing a particularly difficult time as a result of the policies of previous Westminster governments, including Brexit, poorly negotiated trade deals and the failure to rein in the power of the supermarkets, as well as global instability and the growing impacts of climate change [as well as continued uncertainty from the Welsh Government's own reforms].
- Acknowledges that the UK Government's proposed changes to inheritance tax, specifically the limiting of Agricultural Property Relief, are perceived as a threat to the future of family farms in Monmouthshire.
- Agrees to work with local farming unions and other Welsh councils to protect our rural communities, supporting them to thrive and to sustain the inter-generational transfer of family farm businesses.

Seconded by County Councillor Jane Lucas.

As there were no requests to speak on the amendment subject to the second amendment proposed by County Councillor Davies, we proceeded to the vote:

In favour of the amendment	-	32
Against the amendment	-	3
Abstentions	-	1

The amendment was carried.

We proceeded to debate the amended Motion.

County Councillor Rachel Buckler, the presenter of the original Motion, exercised her right of reply in respect of the amended motion.

Upon being put to a recorded vote the amended Motion was carried.

For	-	21
Against	-	18
Abstentions	-	0

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=l5NkF3fxlorXdTjs&t=16497>

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD Apologies			
Councillor L BROWN		X	

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

Councillor E BRYN	X		
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		X	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES		X	
Councillor L DYMOCK	Apologies		
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor M. NEWELL		X	
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK			
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth			
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. Jones			
Councillor P. Jones		X	
Councillor T KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE		X	
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL			
Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
Councillor P MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL		X	
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
Councillor M POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY	X		
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS	Apologies		
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		

Following this agenda item the Vice-Chair called for a short break. During this time, County Councillors Tudor Thomas, Malcolm Lane, Frances Taylor and Ann Webb, left the meeting and did not return.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

15. **Members Questions:**

16. **County Councillor Steven Garratt to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment**

Please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the experimental prohibition of driving (except for access) on the section of Goldwire Lane, Monmouth from the junction with Somerset Road to the junction with Drybridge Street?

The Cabinet Member explained that Goldwire Lane is a one-way street in Monmouth that loops around in a 'U' shape from Cinderhill Street down to Drybridge Street. The arm of the loop that runs down to Drybridge Street has a narrow section at the end with narrow pavements. This is the area that is subject to the Prohibition of Driving except for access to properties.

This is the only direct route for pedestrians into the town. There are blocks of sheltered housing flats on Goldwire Lane and it is these residents who approached the Authority with a request that something be done to address the dangers faced from vehicles using this route as a shortcut. Recently, 11 residents had written to the Cabinet Member regarding this route and requested that the lane be closed to through traffic. The route is used as a walking and cycling route into the town.

There is a clearly marked alternative route for vehicles via Somerset Road, so it is unnecessary for vehicles to use the lane as a shortcut. The shortcut is dangerous to people walking or wheeling along the lane, to people crossing the end of the lane at Drybridge Street where cars emerging block the crossing from pavement to pavement, and to traffic on Drybridge Street with cars emerging from an unexpected source with poor visibility close to the roundabout and impeding the flow of traffic on this street. Minor accidents have occurred at this location.

The Prohibition Order was delayed during the Welsh Water works but was implemented on 25th October 2024. However, many drivers continue to ignore the Order and continue to use the shortcut. The Cabinet Member expressed concern that by continuing to speak against it, Councillors might be encouraging drivers to continue to use the lane, which is presenting a real danger to vulnerable people. The Cabinet Member asked Members to think about the wellbeing of people in Monmouth including traffic congestion and air quality.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Garratt asked if the Cabinet Member had received any feedback from pedestrians about the impact of the experimental Prohibition of Driving Order.

The Cabinet Member stated that she had received feedback from local residents and read one of the letters to the Committee. The Cabinet Member asked Council to support her and the Road Safety Team in this matter.

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=ITVcu-XWoj_1HWsq&t=17532

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

17. **County Councillor Martin Newell to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment**

In light of the flooding on Wonastow Road last month, when will the Cabinet Member abandon plans to partially close Goldwire Lane?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=M5qlqeF13BcNDz7d&t=17890>

The Cabinet Member stated that the Prohibition Order will be trialled for six months, after which the impact on traffic will be assessed and whether further measures will be required to ensure the safety of all road users. Wonastow Road and several other roads across the region were flooded temporarily on 24th November 2024.

During an emergency event, the Council works with the emergency services to ensure safe and secure access and egress routes are provided for all of our communities. The importance of safe pedestrian routes during emergency events is as important as vehicular access. Feedback has been received from people who had walked into town during this period. Emergency vehicles will use whichever roads are available as needed, as is normal practice.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Newell asked the Cabinet Member when will common sense be used and the road turned into a shared route for vehicles and pedestrians with the path being removed and when will local residents be consulted?

The Cabinet Member responded by stating there had been several examples of near misses in terms of accidents. There have been several requests for safety. The dangers of vehicles using this route as a shortcut had been identified. There is an appropriate access for vehicles via Somerset Road onto Wonastow Road. It is illegal for vehicles to be driving along this section of Goldwire Lane.

18. **County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment**

Please could the cabinet member advise of the current details of road sweepers in use in Monmouthshire, how their use is deployed and managed across the county and in particular the allocation to Llanbadoc and Usk Ward?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=-1Z9GN-c_FVVMWf5&t=18146

The Cabinet Member stated that the Authority has three large mechanical sweepers at present supported by three small mechanical town centre sweepers. The majority of work outside town centres is response reactive with villages receiving three scheduled sweeps per year, as well as reactive when necessary. Capital funding from the previous administration is due to end this financial year.

The budget challenges faced by the Authority will make for difficult decisions on works prioritised, going forward. The Cabinet Member informed County Councillor Kear that

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

she would get back to him as soon as possible with more details in respect of this matter.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Kear asked if a bigger mini sweeper (7.5 tonnes) could be provided and that Usk is given greater priority?

The Cabinet Member stated that she would liaise with relevant officers and get back to County Councillor Kear.

19. County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

Please could the cabinet member give an update on road repair schedules / backlog progress and priorities in Monmouthshire, with particular reference and context to the deteriorating surfaces in my Ward on Chepstow Road, Maryport Street and Porthycarne Street?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=geRAFyr1MPR_ttJd&t=18316

The Cabinet Member stated that with regard to schedules and priorities, the Council prioritised resurfacing based on a number of factors including road condition usage and access to services, but also the impact of closing roads for resurfacing on the strategic network and route diversion. The programme of work for 2024/25 is on target. However, there are some difficult decisions to be made for next year.

With regard to Porthycarne Street, decisions have to be made regarding the Chain Bridge. The Chain Bridge cannot be closed at the same time as the works carried out on Porthycarne Street.

Work was scheduled to be undertaken in Little Mill this year. However, due to the electricity upgrades to the Glascoed works, work had to be temporarily stopped within Little Mill. It is anticipated that this work will be undertaken next year.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Kear asked when the Cabinet Member could give details of work to be undertaken on roads within his ward so that he can inform residents.

The Cabinet Member stated that a precise date could not be provided as budgets and work programmes for 2025/26 were being discussed and had not yet been set.

County Councillor Tony Kear left the meeting following determination of this agenda item.

20. County Councillor Emma Bryn to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on what the Council is doing to ensure the Penallt Viaduct (also known as the Wye Bridge in Redbrook), remains open to users for the foreseeable future, considering the fact that the attached footbridge, built in around

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

1955 is now well beyond its expected lifespan and is showing severe signs of decay. Next Year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wye Valley walk and so there is likely to be an upsurge in walkers.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=Dc1S7rBirLaez3ZE&t=18543>

The Cabinet Member stated that the bridge is of great concern to the Wye Valley Walk Management Group. The bridge is monitored by Gloucestershire County Council and it has commissioned a consultant to produce an options report which will be used to consider options for construction and funding with Monmouthshire County Council. This report is due imminently and Monmouthshire County Council officers will be contacted in due course. Members will then be updated accordingly. A contribution from Monmouthshire County Council is identified in the capital pressures for 2025/26.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Bryn asked to be updated on progress so that she may notify the local community on progress in respect of this matter.

21. County Councillor Emma Bryn to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

Following the news that the extensive Wye Bridge (Wyesham/Mayhill) repairs will not now take place until at least the spring of 2025. Can the cabinet member please let us know what will be done to ensure the rutted potholes that plague the bridge surface will be repaired to standard that will last until then?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=kQulfE2INOdCh7GM&t=18648>

The Cabinet Member stated that maintenance will be carried out on the bridge until the bridge surfacing takes place. We are working towards March 2025 for the resurfacing to take place.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Emma Bryn asked that residents be given peace of mind regarding the timing of works for the new year.

The Cabinet Member stated that she recognises the issues raised and will provide further information of timescale of works, as soon as possible.

22. County Councillor Emma Bryn to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism

Can the cabinet member please provide an update on the progress of the Wyesham/Mayhill to Monmouth Town walking and wheeling bridge?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=3nkYDda-XKf_AkFw&t=18794

The Cabinet Member stated that delivery is dependent on securing external funding. The next stage of progressing this scheme is to reach agreement over land purchase, the detailed design and early contractor involvement and this work continues to move

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

forward. We will then be in a position to bid for construction funding in the future utilising grant funding opportunities.

The changes for the Active Travel Fund criteria from Welsh Government means that we can only bid for one strategic project for 2025/26, and that project must have all permissions in place including the land acquisition and be construction ready. We are in ongoing dialogue with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales regarding the funding applications for 2025/26 and 2026/27 which are focussed on the Abergavenny and Llanfoist Active Travel Scheme.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Emma Bryn stated that a regular progress update on slower moving schemes would be helpful so that communities can be assured that this project is being driven forward.

The Cabinet Member stated this is not a lesser priority but that a matter of this scheme being ready for submission and also ready for funding.

23. County Councillor Tony Easson to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism

Footpath 376/8 alongside the Neddern Brook, Caldicot, has been closed for well over 500 days. There is a recommendation from the Health & Safety Executive that the adjacent recycling yard has created a risk to the public. Can the Cabinet Member provide me with a firm update on when this problem will be resolved, and the footpath will be reopened?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=q9TLWOIWfiiLMV1m&t=18966>

The Cabinet Member stated that she could not provide a firm update on when this problem will be resolved, and when the footpath will be reopened, at present. The path will remain closed until it is safe to be re-opened. It was closed because there was a perceived risk to users from the adjoining business. The responsibility for enforcement regarding that hazard sits with the Health and Safety Executive and with Natural Resources Wales.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Easson considered the response to be not acceptable and asked the Cabinet Member if she was aware that at least 17 outside bodies have been involved in correspondence for the last 500 days and asked that this matter be expedited via the Acting Chief Executive.

The Cabinet Member stated that a multi-agency meeting was required with a view to resolving this matter as soon as possible.

24. County Councillor Meirion Howells to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

Could you provide an update on the support being provided to looked-after children and young care leavers during the Christmas period? Specifically, what initiatives or measures are in place to ensure their wellbeing and inclusion during this time, and how

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

can we, as elected members, and members of the public get involved by contributing gifts or other forms of support to make their Christmas brighter?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=r2P2jx6NLAB1BNG&t=19165>

The Cabinet Member stated that as Corporate Parents we strive to do the best for the children that we look after and for the young adults that have left our care. Each year the Council hosts the Monmouthshire Christmas Wishes Campaign providing gifts to vulnerable children. Local businesses, supermarkets and Council Hubs have collection points across the County. We also have an online portal for those who prefer to donate financially.

About 350 children and families will benefit from approximately 1500 parcels. We also operate the Christmas Hamper initiative which provides over 60 festive food hampers to our County's most vulnerable families in the week before Christmas. Our efforts are supported by two Monmouthshire Primary schools, King Henry VIII School, local churches and local businesses.

For children looked after in Foster placements or with Kinship Carers, there is money to support Christmas built into their Foster Carers fees and allowances. Children's Services also deliver a chocolate selection pack to all our children within a Fostering family.

For those children that are looked after but still placed with their parents, social workers work with the parents to ensure that the children have appropriate food, warmth and presents from their parents which is supported by Children's Services Christmas Wishes Campaign.

For children in residential care placements, the care provider is paid to support Christmas which is overseen by the child social worker.

With regard to our care leavers, they are supported by Children's Services, the Christmas Wishes Campaign and local charities ensuring that they have a £50.00 voucher, a £30.00 food hamper and a handpicked Christmas gift.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Meirion Howells asked how we are thanking the residents and businesses for their donations.

The Cabinet Member shared a short video with the Committee, produced by the Children's Services Team, thanking businesses and residents for their support and donations.

25. County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources

Could the Cabinet Member provide a statement on the administration's assumptions regarding the increase in National Insurance rate for employers and its impact on the Council's budget?

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=gQwXVcuYZA9vvyjqL&t=19561>

The Cabinet Member stated that we have calculated that the impact of the increase in National Insurance contributions for direct employees will be around £3.1 Million. The funding of the direct National Insurance impact is expected to be forthcoming from UK Government in the first half of the next financial year. Welsh Government continues to work with the UK Government to ensure the full impact of the changes on the public sector are considered and adequate funding is provided.

The consideration of the indirect impact of the National Insurance changes, which is primarily driven by our commission services, is more complex. It is impacted by external factors including the size of external businesses, their staffing structure, their ability to access any relief schemes and how they may look to absorb any cost increase through their business models.

We continue to engage in dialogue with our major providers to better understand any resultant impact and will make the case for further funding support through the appropriate channels where appropriate.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Paul Pavia asked that given the 2.8% increase in the Council's core funding earmarked by Welsh Government for the next financial year, significantly below the Welsh average of 4.3%, and with no clarity from either the Welsh or UK Governments regarding whether the Local Government Sector will be shielded from the National Insurance increases, it is evident that any uplift that we are going to receive is going to be absorbed by this policy. How does the administration plan to mitigate the financial pressures resulting from the increased National Insurance rate for employees and what measures will be taken to ensure that essential services are maintained without compromising the quality of service delivered to our residents?

The Cabinet Member stated that the uplift in the draft budget of 2.8% is higher than that expected before the summer, which had been anticipated as being a 0% increase in our funding. However, we are in a much better position now than we were in the spring.

We will continue to work with Welsh Government regarding the impacts of the National Insurance contributions on our budget. We are expecting funding to be forthcoming. The impact on services will be addressed when the budget is brought to Council.

26. County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

What discussions has the Council had with Welsh Government and partners about improving road safety on the A40 junction between Raglan and Tregare?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=oPZq9eaixzGAha2_&t=19817

The Cabinet Member stated that along with officers, she has liaised with the South Wales Trunk Road Agency (SWTRA) with a view to SWTRA taking action to address the road safety issues. We now have the road safety study setting out the options.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

Welsh Government is arranging a meeting in the new year to discuss this matter with Members, community councillors and other key stakeholders. Monmouthshire County Council has offered to host the meeting at the Raglan depot and when a date has been finalised, invitations will be sent out.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor John stated that there are likely to be six options outlined in the Road Safety study with Welsh Government anticipated to support option 6. This option creates congestion and deters private car use by turning the dual carriageway into a single carriageway. Councillor John asked the Cabinet Member's view on this option. Concern was expressed that this option could make the junctions even more dangerous.

The Cabinet Member stated that it wasn't her position to take a strong view on the options at this stage and that she would like to hear what the community thinks about the options available via the meeting in January 2025.

27. County Councillor Jayne McKenna to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment

Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on plans to resurface R46, the main road through Mitchel Troy?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=p4kFa_1mzWZNQjKv&t=20024

The Cabinet Member stated that R46 has been identified in the capital pressures list for resurfacing for 2025/26 but we are currently working through the programme for next year as it may be impacted by the storm damage from the recent storms.

28. County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader

Will the Leader provide an update on the Vauxhall/Inglis Bridge?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=QZ5IMvU44QqvE_Bt&t=20116

The Cabinet Member stated that we are all working together to put pressure on the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to come to a swift conclusion and to provide a solution that opens Inglis Bridge as quickly as possible. We are aware of a meeting on 13th December 2024 where MOD officers will better understand the latest position on replacement or repair. The Cabinet Member has requested an update from this meeting, as soon as possible, regarding the options that are being considered.

The Cabinet Member stated that she would update County Councillor Lucas, Monmouth Town Council, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement, Catherine Fookes MP and County Councillors Martin Newell and Steven Garratt of any developments arising from the meeting on the 13th December 2024.

County Councillor Jayne MacKenna left the meeting during discussion of this agenda item and did not return.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th
December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

29. County Councillor Laura Wright to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader

Following the devastating fire in Abergavenny town centre, can the cabinet member please give an update on what the County Council is doing to support the local community and businesses in the aftermath?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=Y7TKspaypuJZyXq0&t=20336>

The Cabinet Member stated that he was with County Councillor Wright at a meeting convened by Y Fenni Business Community. He thanked the business community and its convenor, Lucy Howell, for the spirit and resilience they have shown in the face of severe challenge. He also thanked the emergency services and Monmouthshire County Council staff for all they have done. The businesses and County Council staff have worked together to manage the difficult consequences. The Authority and the owner will work together to consider the longer-term options for this site.

County Councillor Tony Easson left the meeting during discussion of this agenda item and did not return.

30. County Councillor Laura Wright to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

There has been a rise in the number of recorded incidents of antisocial behaviour in Abergavenny. Will the cabinet member please tell us what the County Council is doing to tackle this problem?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=vmJX4y2UmRQnhp9C&t=20419>

The Cabinet Member stated that we are aware of increased demand in Abergavenny which is driven by youths travelling into the area by train from outside our County. Our Community Safety Team is working closely with partners, including Gwent Police, British transport Police and Gwent Community Safety Teams in Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent to tackle this issue. We are utilising our CCTV to its fullest and sharing information and intelligence to prevent, detect and disrupt further occurrences. Our ASB strike process is also being implemented for the youths involved. This process aims to tackle ASB and prevent further escalation or if necessary to allow us to apply for an injunction.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor Wright asked what are we as a Council doing to cooperate with Torfaen County Borough Council and is there a process for identifying offenders that are known to other local authorities which would enable the Police to fast track their ASB pathway and more easily tackle known offenders who are targeting Abergavenny.

The Cabinet Member stated that through our Community Safety Partnerships, Monmouthshire County Council Officers are liaising with partners including Gwent Police, the CCTV control room and Youth Services on a weekly basis where updates

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm

and information are shared regarding this matter. Our ASB strike process is also being utilised for the youths involved. The aim of the ASB strike process is to tackle anti-social behaviour through intervention which will prevent further incidents from occurring. Officers continue to monitor the situation to reduce anti-social behaviour in Abergavenny with all our partners and communities using all the legislation and guidance available. They are also exploring the use of Home Office funding to provide additional resources in the area.

31. County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader

What steps is the administration taking to support high street businesses?

https://www.youtube.com/live/PHi1FvgAtig?si=_ZT1kAUHeB2MBSqr&t=20624

The Cabinet Member stated that our key strategy in supporting our High Streets is to work through the Transforming Towns Framework established by Welsh Government. We work with town councils, town businesses and communities to develop a shared vision for our towns identifying changes that we can support or employ to support that vision. By agreeing that vision and the placemaking plan we gain access to funding opportunities to support town centres and their business premises.

As a supplementary question, County Councillor John asked that the Administration redoubles its efforts, improve relations with town centre businesses and representative groups as there are businesses that are struggling, and we should be supporting them.

The Cabinet Member stated that it concerns us all when any business ceases to trade in our high streets. The vacancy rate in Monmouth has diminished over the last six months, notwithstanding all the difficulties occasioned by the investment that took place in the town through Welsh Water. The Cabinet Member will continue to make relationships that can be made with businesses in each of our towns throughout the County.

The meeting ended at 7.48 pm.

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject: COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26

Meeting: Council

Date: 23rd January 2025

Divisions/Wards Affected: All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- present arrangements for the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to approve it for 2025/26.
- agree to adopt the amendments to the Regulations, proposed by Welsh Government, as detailed in point 3.7.
- affirm that annual uprating amendments will be carried out each year without a requirement to adopt the whole Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") 2013 by the Welsh Government on 26 November 2013.

2.2 To adopt the provisions within the Regulations above ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") and any 'annual uprating regulations' in respect of its Scheme for the financial year 2025/26 including the discretionary elements previously approved as the Council's local scheme from 1st April 2024.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 On 17th January 2019 Council adopted the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20, in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013.

3.2 The Regulations approved by the Assembly are available as follows:

The Default Scheme

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/3035/contents/made>

The Prescribed Scheme

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/3029/contents/made>

The Senedd approved the Amendment Regulations incorporating the updated benefits from April 2025 at a plenary session on 21st January 2025. The draft regulations are here:

[SL\(6\)561 - The Council Tax Reduction Schemes \(Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme\) \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#)

- 3.3 A failure to adopt a 'local' scheme by 31 January 2025 will result in the Default Scheme being imposed on the Council.
- 3.4 The Welsh Government's regulations for 2025/26 ensure claimants can continue to receive a reduction up to 100% of their Council Tax bill dependent upon their income and household circumstances.
- 3.5 Annual uprating regulations to increase benefits and personal allowances from April 2025 within the Council Tax Reduction Scheme were considered by a plenary session of the Senedd on 21st January 2025.
- 3.6 In addition to the annual uprating of allowances, there are a couple of other amendments to the 2013 CTRS Regulations. These make provision for the treatment of some other types of payments and ensure the 2013 Regulations remain up to date and fit for purpose.
- 3.7 These amendments allow for the following:

Capital Disregards

To ensure that payments from the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme are disregarded indefinitely as capital.

Persons Displaced from Sudan, Israel, Palestine and Lebanon

Displaced persons from Sudan, Israel, Palestine or Lebanon are eligible to apply for a Council Tax Reduction.

Universal Credit treated as an application to Council Tax Reduction

To make the scheme easier to access and simpler to administer, from 1st April 2025, the regulations have been amended to allow a person in receipt of Universal Credit to be recognised by the Local Authority as having made an application for a Council Tax Reduction.

4. Background

- 4.1 It was reported to Council on 28th January 2013 that the Welfare Reform Act 2013 included provisions to abolish Council Tax Benefit on 31 March 2013. From 1st April 2013, the responsibility for arranging support towards paying Council Tax and the associated funding transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to local authorities in England and to the Scottish and Welsh Governments. The UK Government's policy intention was to reduce expenditure on Council Tax and therefore to implement a 10 per cent funding cut.
- 4.2 The report to Council on 28th January 2013 referred to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Regulations 2012 and the amending regulations 2013. Those regulations were for implementation during the 2013/14 financial year only and Council resolved to adopt a new scheme for subsequent years in accordance with new regulations approved by the Welsh Government.
- 4.3 The regulations for Council Tax Reduction include provision for support up to 100% of council tax. As noted, when presenting this issue in January, the regulations control the implementation of reduction schemes across the whole of Wales and are designed to ensure that each local authority consistently provides support for Welsh taxpayers.

5. The Reduction Scheme and discretionary areas

5.1 Although a national scheme has been approved, within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations there is limited discretion given to the Council to apply additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme and which provide for additional administrative flexibility. Council approved the discretionary areas to be applied (listed below in 5.2) following public consultation. It is not proposed to change them in any way therefore no further consultation is required at this stage.

5.2 It is recommended to adopt the Scheme in the Prescribed Requirement Regulations as noted in paragraph 3.2. and to exercise the previously approved discretions as follows:

- The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons after they return to work where they have previously been receiving a council tax reduction that is to end because of their return to work - it is not recommended to increase the standard extended reduction period.
- Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions (including Armed Forces Independent Payments and Guaranteed Income Payment) which is to be disregarded when calculating income of the claimant - it is recommended to disregard the whole amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions.
- The ability to backdate the application of council tax reduction regarding late claims prior to the new standard period of three months before the claim - it is not recommended to increase the backdated period.
- To provide above the minimum level of information to customers to ensure they are appropriately notified of their award in accordance with legislation - it is recommended that we maintain the current standard provision.

Council approved these discretions on 17th January 2019.

5.3 There are no additional monies available from the Welsh Government to fund discretionary elements but they are allowed for within our existing budget.

5.4 Changes to pensions, benefits and allowances normally take effect every April and sometimes during the year. The scheme has to reflect the changes to benefits in order to adjust calculations of entitlement. This is part of normal Benefits administration. We are advised that the Council need to approve the annual uprating regulations each year without formal adoption of the whole scheme.

5.5 As the uprating of benefits is not an area of discretion the Council is not able to consult on it.

6. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

6.1 There are no implications for sustainable development.

6.2 The scheme to be applied for 2025/26 does not contain any significant changes from the scheme that is currently operational.

6.3 The Welsh Government has undertaken a detailed ‘regulatory’ impact assessment, which includes equality impact assessment, and we understand that the findings reported were in line with their expectations.

6.4 Our Sustainability Community Officer has confirmed that under these circumstances there is no requirement to complete a Future Generations Evaluation.

7. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

This is not applicable as there are no changes to the scheme that is currently in place. The report has been presented as the uprating regulations are effectively amendments to the main scheme, for which we need to obtain overall approval.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The scheme is largely prescribed by Welsh Government. Previous annual reports have reaffirmed the minimal discretions that the Authority can apply. These discretions have been found to be resilient and fair.

9. REASONS

9.1 To agree the council tax reduction scheme for the forthcoming financial year as required by legislation.

9.2 To affirm the annual uprating prescribed by the Welsh Government.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 From 2014/15 onwards the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was funded through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The Council therefore needs to manage the cost of the Scheme within its annual budget.

10.2 Any additional costs for growth in caseload and/or increases in entitlement attributable to a rise in the overall level of Council Tax have to be managed and are built into the Councils budget proposals for 2025/26.

10.3 Caseload has now returned to pre pandemic levels with current data indicating that there are approximately 5,400 active CTRS claims.

10.4 The provisional budget allocation, for 2025/26, of £8,830,639 is based on a 5% increase in Council Tax which is currently being used for budget modelling purposes. Any subsequent changes in the council tax increase will be reflected in the final budget proposal report.

11. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Chief Officer for Resources
Head of Legal

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

13. AUTHORS:

Ruth Donovan – Assistant Head of Finance: Revenues, Systems and Exchequer

Tianna Thomas – Shared Service Benefits Manager

14. CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: ruthdonovan@monmouthsire.gov.uk

Tel: 01633 644592

Email: tianna.thomas@torfaen.gov.uk

Tel: 01495 742347

This page is intentionally left blank

SUBJECT: GWENT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD (RPB) AREA PLAN AND RPB ANNUAL REPORT 23/24

MEETING: Council meeting

DATE: 23rd January 2025

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Regional Report (Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly)

1. PURPOSE:

To update Members on the work of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) in fulfilling local authority statutory duties required under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, presenting the:

- Regional Area Plan 2023-2027, and
- RPB Annual report 2023/2024

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. Council to consider the joint commitments within the Area Plan.
- 2.2. Ensure that Members have the opportunity to review the RPB Annual Report and progress made against the objectives; and provide any feedback/comments.

3. KEY ISSUES:

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) places a statutory duty on local authorities and health boards to prepare a regional Area Plan, following the publication of the region's population needs assessment (PNA) and Market Stability Report (MSR). The Gwent PNA was previously signed off by MCC members during Autumn 2022 and a commitment was made to share the Gwent Area Plan with MCC members, to set out how regional priorities are to be delivered in partnership.

3.1 The ***Gwent Area Plan 2023-2027 (appendix 1)*** has been completed and signed off by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board. An Area Plan summary has also been included as ***appendix 2***. The plan has been developed in partnership with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen local authorities, and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Third Sector partners and the Regional Partnership Team. The Area Plan sets out the actions required to achieve the priorities identified in the PNA, by our partners and citizens, and closely aligns and share similar principles of working to the Public Service Board (PSB) and Well-being Plan. The Area Plan is reviewed annually to ensure we are meeting the needs of our communities.

3.2 The progress against delivery of key objectives in the Area Plan, is monitored through the **RPB Annual Report (Appendix 3)** which considers specifically the priority groups set out in the PNA and cross cutting themes. Key developments have also been set out in **appendix 4**.

Following the publication of the regional Population Needs Assessment (PNA) report each local authority and health board are required to prepare and publish an Area Plan setting out the range and level of services they propose to provide in response to the PNA core themes, which are:

- Children & Young People
- Older People, including People with Dementia
- Health & Physical Disabilities including Sensory Loss & Impairment
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Learning Disabilities
- Autism and Neurodevelopmental Conditions
- Unpaid Carers
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence

3.1 Core themes are not addressed in isolation and there is an element of cross cutting working, in addition to the above including:

- A resilient skilled and integrated health and social care workforce
- Housing needs
- Rebalancing health and social care including social value
- Substance misuse
- Adult protection, child protection and safeguarding
- Transforming children's services and removing profit from the care of looked after children
- Tackling loneliness and isolation

3.2 Area plans must include the specific services planned in response to each core theme identified in the population assessment. As part of this, area plans must include:

- The actions partners will take in relation to the priority areas of integration for Regional Partnership Board
- Administer and monitor Welsh Government grant funding e.g. Integrated Care Fund.
- The instances and details of pooled funds to be established in response to the population assessment.
- How services will be procured or arranged to be delivered, including by alternative delivery models.
- Details of the preventative services that will be provided or arranged.
- Actions being taken in relation to the provision of information, advice, and assistance services
- Actions required to deliver services through the medium of Welsh

A section of the Area Plan is monitored at each Strategic Partnership that sits within the RPB governance structure, to monitor progress; with an annual review report by the RPB via an Annual Report which is submitted to Welsh Government. (**Appendix 2**)

The regional Area Plan has been developed with ABUHB and Integrated Service Partnership Board (ISPB) leads to ensure alignment with the Monmouthshire ISPB Plan. The RPB will work closely with the 5 ISPBs across the region to ensure plans are delivered in collaboration, resources maximised, and duplication is avoided. ISPB plans have to demonstrate alignment to the RPB population needs assessment, and the regional strategic partnerships will define integrated models of care, and work with the ISPBs to make an

assessment of how close they are to delivering those models, identify gaps and what can be addressed through the local Neighbourhood Care Networks. The RPB and Strategic Partnerships will identify specific actions within the Area Plan that are best delivered at the ISPB level and form part of a place-based care model. A copy of the Monmouthshire ISPB plan is published alongside the Area Plan <https://www.gwentrpb.wales/area-plan>

3.3 Conclusion

This is the second Area Plan for Gwent (following the inaugural plan in 2017) where we will continue to develop on work already underway and address the care and support needs reflected in the most recent PNA. The Area Plan also links to Monmouthshire County Councils Improvement Plan and will align and complement other strategic plans such as the Public Service Board (PSB) Wellbeing Plans to avoid duplication and ensure national cross cutting priorities can be delivered.

The Area Plan will also set out high level actions to support winter planning and use of Welsh Government grants such as Regional Integration Fund; and members are asked to take note of any future implications to winter planning arrangements and tapering of funding.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION

Promoting equalities is a fundamental requirement of the Social Services and (Wales) Wellbeing Act 2014 and integral to the development of the Area Plan. An equality impact assessment was developed under the Population Needs Assessment and linked to the Public Service Boards (PSB) Wellbeing Assessment. Further monitoring and review will be ensured, during the lifetime of the Area Plan.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Area Plan progress is evaluated annually via the RPB annual report to highlight key milestones and achievements made.

6. REASONS:

The Regional Partnership Board complies to the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act to improve the wellbeing of the population and improve how health and social care services are delivered.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct financial implications related to this report. However, there are considerable Welsh Government grant funding streams supporting projects and staff across health and social care in Monmouthshire; and grant requirements and implications will need to be monitored closely.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No implications. Officers from the Gwent Regional Partnership Team have been working closely with Council's Corporate Policy Unit who have played a key part in ensuring the

alignment of both the regional Area Plan and Well-being Plan required under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and Well-being of Future Generations Act respectively.

8. CONSULTEES:

Cllr Ian Chandler – Cabinet member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services.

Jane Rodgers – Strategic Director of Social Care and Health, Monmouthshire.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Population Needs Assessment 2022/2023:



PNA English.pdf



PNA Welsh.pdf

- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act [social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-the-essentials.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)
- [Overview of the Social services and well-being... | Social Care Wales](#)
- [Regional Partnership Boards \(RPBs\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Regional Area Plan 2023-2027



Area Plan.pdf

Appendix 2: Area Plan Summary

Welsh Government Core Theme	Outcome Priority
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve outcomes for children and young people with complex needs through earlier intervention, community-based support, and placements closer to home. To ensure good mental health and emotional wellbeing for children and young people through effective partnership working especially mitigating long term impact of Covid-19 pandemic.





Older People including Dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve emotional wellbeing for older people by reducing loneliness and social isolation with earlier intervention and community resilience. • To improve outcomes for people living with dementia and their carers. To support older people to live, or return following a period of hospitalisation, to their own homes and communities through early intervention, integrated care models and a whole system approach. • To mitigate the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic through, especially reducing waiting lists and times to access support, appointments, and medical procedures
Health and Physical Disabilities including people with sensory impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support disabled people, including sensory impairment, through an all-age approach to live independently in appropriate accommodation and access community-based services, including transport. • Ensure people are supported through access to accurate information, assistance and 'rehabilitation' where required. • Improve transition across all age groups and support services. • Ensure people are supported through access to accurate accessible information, assistance and 'rehabilitation' where required.
People with a Learning Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support people with learning disabilities to live independently with access to early intervention services in the community; and greater public awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities needs.
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding and awareness of mental health amongst the public, to reduce stigma and help people to seek support earlier. • We need to improve emotional well-being and mental health for adults and children through timely early intervention and community support.
Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support unpaid carers to care through flexible respite, access to accurate information, peer to peer support, effective care planning and through increased public understanding. • Improve well-being of young carers and young adult carers and mitigate against long-term impacts
Autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide more timely diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency partnership approach to ensure appropriate housing and accommodation for older people and vulnerable citizens. • To ensure effective use of Disabled Facilities Grants and appropriate partnership support and available resources. • Homelessness requiring a collaborative response from public services and partners, especially the non-use of B&B accommodation for young people, and through prevention and early intervention.


Appendix 3: RPB Annual Report 2023/24



RPB Annual Report
23-24 WG final.pdf

Appendix 4: Key Developments over the last Year

	<p>Carers Annual Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects were developed to support carers with hospital discharge across the region, with 1,626 carers accessing support. • 226 individuals received a small grant between April and June 2024. • The Young Carers in Schools Programme extended its remit to offer support to schools for transition days. • 3,145 carers received a short break from their caring role, supporting wellbeing and positive caring relationships. • Projects delivered community support, providing information, advice, and assistance (IAA), activities, individual and peer support to 3,389 carers.
	<p>Dewis figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed views of resources have increased by 2,728. This is the number of times someone has searched for something on Dewis and then clicked to find more information. • In March 2022 there was 31,227 clicks and in March 2023 there was 40,795 expired resources have reduced from 966 to 852 showing that currency of the directory is improving.
	<p>Dementia Friendly Gwent Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are now over 270 multi agency networks members, including both paid professionals, volunteers, carers, and people living with dementia. • 55 network members joined us for the 2023 Dementia Friendly Gwent coffee morning, to celebrate the hard work of organisations across Gwent. • 4,305 Dementia Friends have been made across 152 sessions during 2023 – 2024, to help raise awareness and understanding across the region.
	<p>Citizen Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since it's relaunch, we have expanded the Gwent Citizen Network to over 100 members. • A Gwent wide Coproduction and Engagement event, 'Decisions Made Together: Inclusion and Experience' was attended by over 150 professionals and citizens. • Coproduction Luncheons are taking place across Gwent to enable us to connect and engage with citizens to influence and support development of our strategic priorities and service delivery.
	<p>Workforce & College Consortium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regional work placement scheme was launched in September 2022, to support students to apply for local authority work placements and to support social care teams to adequately prepare to accept these placements. • 92 work placement applications were received for the 2023/24 academic year, with a total of 30 work placements facilitated by LA social care teams. Future efforts will focus on converting placements to paid work opportunities. The RPB have continued to engage with members of Coleg Gwent to promote careers across health and social care and how to design course content to promote the sector. <p>Access to Medicine Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a continued shortage of Welsh students seeking to pursue a career in medicine, particularly those

	<p>from socially disadvantaged areas. Developed with Professor Paul Edwards (ABUHB) this course, prepares local students for a Medical Pathway Degree and is designed to support talented individuals who have traditionally faced barriers in entering the field of medicine, <i>it is the first of its kind in Wales.</i></p> <p>The first cohort of students were recruited in September 2023, and it is anticipated that the course will expand in the new academic year.</p> <p>Clinical Placement Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially launched in September 2022 this initiative provides second-year students with 100 hours of clinical placement in hospital settings such as The Royal Gwent, Nevill Hall, and Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr. Building on this success the program has been expanded to include placements at The Grange university hospital and Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan. 38 students across Coleg Gwent have secured placements this year. 2 students have recently secured substantive posts as Healthcare Support Workers within the health board. The remaining 36 students are currently on track to complete their qualifications this year and are poised to advance into university or employment within the sector. <p>Micro Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following an initial 12-month Micro Care pilot in 2022-23, exploring if micro carers could support local care capacity and delivery, providing an alternative to traditional domiciliary care provision, Micro Care Monmouthshire continues to support local citizens to become self-employed care workers. There is a total of 25 micro carers on Monmouthshire’s Micro Care Directory to date. Further funding for the development of a digital, self-service portal via the Regional Innovation Co-ordination (RIC) Hub has also been secured. Implementation of the portal spanned from January - April 2024 and includes features to ensure training compliance, document collection, and secure data handling. The portal will help to streamline the onboarding process, providing an easy access platform that will help the protect future resilience and longevity. Recognising the need for region-specific solutions, the Gwent Regional Partnership Team established a Micro Care Community of Practice in Wales in July 2023. The bi-monthly meetings aim to address barriers specific to Wales and foster the growth of micro care services.
	<p>AskSARA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AskSARA All metrics (users, new users, sessions, reports, bounce rate) have increased. The user/report percentage and bounce rate remain at very positive levels, indicating users are interacting well with the site. Good variety of referral sources. 90% of users would recommend AskSARA, 71% were helped to find a solution or equipment.

10. **AUTHOR:** Natasha Harris, Head of the Regional Partnership Team.

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 07904 921532

E-mail: Natasha.Harris@torfaen.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Regional Partnership Board

Annual Report

2023/2024

“Working together for a Healthier Gwent for the right care and support, in the right place, at the right time”.



CONTENTS

	Section	Page
1.	Foreword	3
2.	Partnership Perspectives	4
3.	Executive Summary	6
4.	Engagement at the heart of our work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Gwent Citizen Network · Coproduction Luncheons · Decisions Made Together: Inclusion and Experience Event · Engagement with other partners. 	7
5.	Overview of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Role and Priorities · Membership · Partnership Governance · Area Plan · Market Stability Report 	10
6.	Key Partnership Developments (overview) 2023/2024	13
7.	Joint commissioning and Pooling of Funds	15
8.	Achievements aligning to the Area Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Gwent Adult Strategic Partnership (GASP) · Children and Families Strategic Partnership · Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership · Autism and Neurodivergence Strategic Partnership · Carers Strategic Partnership · Dementia Strategic Partnership · Health, Social Care and Housing Strategic Partnership 	16
9.	Assistive Technology and Digital Solutions to Health and Social Care	40
10.	Supporting Better Integration and Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Regional Integration Fund Revenue Programme · Regional Capital Programme 	42
11.	Coproduction, Engagement and Social Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Communication and Engagement · Social Value Forums 	44
12.	Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub (GRICH)	47
13.	Looking Ahead	47
	Annexe 1: Membership of the Gwent RPB	49
	Annexe 2: Dewis Citizen Portal	49
	Annexe 3: Citizens Panel Weekly Burst Data 2023 – 2024	49
	Annexe 4: Regional Integration Coordination Hub	50
	Annexe 5: Our Future Our Voices, Gwent Director of Public Health Report	50
	Annexe 6: Young Carers in Schools report	50
	Annexe 7: Carers Week Report 2023	50
	Annexe 8: Gwent Regional Integration Fund Year 2023-2024 Story of Change Report	50

1. Foreword

Ann Lloyd, CBE – Gwent Regional Partnership Board Chair



The Regional Partnership Board Annual Report provides RPB partners with the opportunity to highlight progress over the last year and to set out case studies where innovation and good practice have been developed through partnership working.

The progress highlighted in this annual report is significant when considering the challenges and demands placed on partners following the Covid-19 pandemic, the workforce challenges, and difficulties in recruitment, as well as the recent cost of living increases and cuts to budgets. The increase in demand replicated across the whole of health and social care services has been unprecedented. The challenges highlighted set out the need for partners to collaborate effectively more than ever, to create synergy across services and reduce duplication. The RPB is central to creating a partnership environment to tackle these challenges and we have developed a new Area Plan which sets out how we intend to work together, pool resources and transform services.

We have also undertaken a significant review into governance and working practices for the RPB to ensure we remain as effective as possible. This annual report sets out progress made throughout the previous Area Plan and also how we made steps to deliver the 'Further, Faster' ambition set by Welsh Government.

We have to improve and create the best health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Gwent. We work closely with our communities to co-produce care and support services and enable people and their families to feel supported and listened to; and I am pleased to include perspectives from our citizen network, third sector and provider partners within this annual report.

As RPB Chair I feel it is important to ensure the RPB recognises the hard work of all partners and identifies innovation and good practice to develop further; this report aims to recognise the improvements to care, and outcomes delivered in partnership through considerable efforts of all staff, volunteers, providers, and unpaid carers.

1. Partnership Perspectives

Lorraine Morgan, Citizen Network Champion

When I was a health and social care professional, I talked like a care professional, I thought like a professional, I behaved like a professional. Now I am a retired citizen, I put away the ways of professionals. I think like a citizen; a citizen with knowledge and experience to share and influence. The policy innovation of Welsh Government has given rise to two Acts which enable citizen knowledge, skills, experiences, and opinions to be taken much more seriously. Has anyone heard about Arnstein's ladder of Citizen participation? The ladder is a guide to seeing who has power when important decisions are being made. It has survived for so long because people continue to confront processes that refuse to consider anything above the bottom rungs of non-participation. The top rungs are Partnership, Delegation and Citizen Control. During the Decisions Made Together event in May, we talked passionately about Co-Production, and where Citizens are within a long-term engagement model that progresses towards Transformative Community Participation. This is where we, the citizens are becoming equal partners in the wide-ranging visioning and production for all our diverse communities. As Champion of the Citizen Network, I have attended most of the RPB meetings, and I have seen a significant shift in how care and support services are being attempted to be redesigned. My own comments to discussions and issues discussed are based on my experiences as a carer for three family members. These experiences are mirrored in what we hear at our Citizen Network luncheons. Every carer has individual experiences, worries, and roles, and we are core to supporting our loved ones, saving public services millions of pounds. We are a conduit for information to flow to and from the RPB. I believe that carers' contributions and experiences to our region are embedded in how public services think about what is important for health and social care services in Gwent. So far, I have seen a significant shift in how public servants are now perceiving what we have to say and are actively listening. I think it's more constructive to talk about what we want to create not prevent - wellbeing and flourishing lives. I would like to emphasize that the citizen voice is crucial, particularly in public services. We are not at the horizon yet, but we are at the crossroads. Let's make sure we keep the momentum going, choose the right road and continue to make decisions together.

Tanya Evans, Interim Director Social Services, Blaenau Gwent

Having taken up the chair of the Leadership Group within the last 12 months, I have seen a genuine commitment from all partners around the table to improve outcomes for children and adults who live within Gwent.

The independent review of the governance surrounding the Regional Partnership Board resulted in bringing a much sharper focus to the way the RPB and its supporting partnerships deliver its business.

An increase in the frequency of meetings and face to face workshops of the RPB has served to build better working relationships and a greater understanding of each partners roles and responsibilities. This can only be seen as a positive when working together to meet the needs of the population of Gwent.

The RPB and the supporting partnerships need to keep asking the "so what" question to identify the difference we have made. A programme of evaluating the impact of the Regional Integration Funded Projects is underway, which will go a long way to enable this question to be answered and I look forward to seeing this evidence during 24/25

Tracy Daszkiewicz, Executive Director of Public Health & Strategic Partnerships, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

This year has seen a great deal of energy surrounding, prevention, food security, community involvement and engagement, health, and care services, tackling inequalities, and increasing equity. This all directly links back to our commitment to delivering the findings of the **Marmot Report** and towards **building a Fairer Gwent**. One significant achievement this year has been the development of a [Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment](#). This provides us with a picture of Gwent, and brings key data and intelligence into one space to provide a single version of the truth. This is enabling the extension of conversations around health and wellbeing to think about the causes of the causes, and the imperative of understanding the wider determinants of health, the importance of safe, warm homes, education, employment opportunities, tackling domestic abuse, how we can address preventable premature mortality and deliver the very best start in life for every child. What is emerging, is not just the need to have a Fairer Gwent, but also a safer, stronger, healthier place, to live, work and visit.

Stephen Tiley, Chief Executive Officer, GAVO

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact services provided by the public sector and has continued also to impact much of the Third Sector and its services within the community. Collaboration is now more crucial than ever for the benefit of the Gwent region's residents. GAVO, working across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, and Newport have been diligently ensuring the continuity of services during these challenging times, which have included providing support, monetary and advisory, and strategic connections to the sector.

Fortunately, we have established strong relationships with partners around the Regional Partnership Board, allowing us to address and resolve issues affecting the sector across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board footprint. Collaborative working remains at the core of our partnership work, and this continues to evolve for the benefit of our communities. Our work in supporting the ambitions of the Regional Integration Fund monies has brought many positive changes and will continue to do so in the coming years. Our collective commitment to working together has enabled us to navigate these changes successfully.

Speaking on behalf of GAVO, I am excited to continue contributing to the positive work of the partnership on behalf of the Third Sector.

Melanie Minty- Policy Adviser for South West and South East Wales, Care Forum Wales.

In the last annual report, I spoke about the opportunities to strengthen the voice of regulated care services, across third and private sectors. This has become increasingly necessary as the impact of budget constraints are felt increasingly across all sectors and we need to remember the value of working together, as we did before and during the pandemic. That includes reviving and repurposing some of the ways we engage, so I am really pleased that providers, the Health Board and Local Authorities are setting up a working group to shape a new Gwent care home provider forum, that will enable us to share information and best practice, and take forward some of the more thorny issues in a spirit of partnership.

2. Executive Summary

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) published their Area Plan in 2023 in response to core themes identified within the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) April 2022. The Area Plan sets out how the RPB will deliver the regional priorities identified by partners and communities, within the PNA, and forms the work programme for the strategic partnerships that support the RPB.

Working in partnership and creating synergy across our services is fundamental, the RPB provides a forum to develop the solutions required whilst ensuring the focus is on the difference made to lives and outcomes. The continued focus on coproduction with citizens is key, as well as working side by side with our third sector and independent providers.

We have the opportunity through the '**Further Faster**' agenda to further invest in our community services, as the pressure on hospitals is not only a health board challenge, but system wide. The RPB and partners need to ensure we help people to remain well at home, but also return home quickly and safely from hospital, following treatment. Winter planning is still a continuous year-round process and the strain on front line workers will require close monitoring, given the pressures they have worked under over the previous years. Yet again it is testament to the passion and commitment of all RPB partners and their staff, that we have been able to continue with the delivery of priorities in the Area Plan.

Key successes include:

- **The Adult Strategic Partnership** has continued to support the coordinated effort to deliver a **Winter Plan programme** with regards to admission avoidance, discharge to assess and community resourcing. The partnership has been key to the development, monitoring, evaluation, and delivery of the national '**1000 beds**' aim during 2022/23 and have applied the learning to **2023/24**; and has continued to work closely with local care homes and domiciliary care providers to support sustainable services, through a regional commissioning programme.
- **The Carers Strategic Partnership** has developed ways to enable carers to be supported in the hospital discharge processes, in line with National priorities; as well as delivering the other Welsh Government National priorities for carers of all ages. **Information and support to carers during Carers Week and Carers Rights Day** has been highlighted across partners. Administering of the Carer's Small Grant Scheme has continued, as well as the commitment to supporting young carers in education.
- **The Children and Families Strategic Partnership** are continuing to deliver the **NYTH/NEST** Framework planning tool to ensure a '**whole system**' approach for developing mental health, well-being and support services for children and young people, as well as developing residential solutions to reduce the number of out of county placements.
- **The Dementia Strategic Partnership** have continued to implement the All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards, with dedicated subgroups and workstream leads. People living with dementia, their carers, and families play a crucial role in supporting this work, and engagement continues within our communities, to help coproduce services. We have continued to lead and further develop the Dementia Friendly Gwent programme of work and have over **270** partners supporting this programme, raising awareness of dementia and the importance of social inclusion and connected communities.
- **The Health & Housing Strategic Partnership** has focused on the development of the rapid rehousing requirements. Members have continued to implement Capital Projects and improve existing resources, particularly around the use of digital technology. Key priorities have been identified through the Area Plan, which members continue to deliver against, as well as developing a Strategic Capital Plan for the Gwent region.
- **The Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership** have continued to develop and improve access to, and awareness of, approved mental wellbeing self-help

information, resources, and the workforce training programme. The Coproduction steering group continues to work with people with lived experience and we now have **8** new lived experience members on the Mental health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership, to help develop, shape, and evaluate mental health and learning disability provision across Gwent.

- **Autism and Neurodivergence Strategic Partnership** have been evaluating the impact of implementing the **Autism Code of Practice** in Gwent and supporting the Welsh Government evaluation. Through the Neurodivergence Improvement Fund, the partnership is supporting challenges in the system around assessment and diagnosis, pre and post assessment support and multi-agency workforce development around awareness, understanding and acceptance.

3. Engagement: At The Heart of Our Work

The Gwent RPB want to ensure we hear the voices of our citizens, so we can work as partners to help improve the quality and delivery of health and social care services across Gwent.

We are committed to understanding the needs of our different communities and working with people to build on existing practices, as well as seeking opportunities for innovation and change. We take forward engagement with our communities across the RPB's strategic partnerships, throughout each year, and also work with our multi-agency partners to share learning and avoid duplication of engagement across the region.

Gwent Citizen's Network

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) sets out through coproduction principles the need for partners, including citizens to work together. Citizen Network Champions, including a representative for Unpaid Carers, attends the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) meetings and provides feedback on topics raised by network members.

Following the Covid19 pandemic, the formally named **Gwent Citizen Panel** had been facilitated through virtual meetings, with an introduction of hybrid meetings commencing in **2023**. During the pandemic, network members and engagement dropped, resulting in a need to reinvigorate meetings to support engagement and coproduction.

As a result, the former panel has now evolved into a virtual network of over **100** members, who we engage and coproduce with regularly to support the priorities of the RPB.

Members also receive [weekly information bursts](#) (**Annexe 3**) to support our offer of information and advice within the community, and we are continuing to grow this network and raise awareness of the group.


“ I wanted to contact you and thank you for sending me this, I have not visited the Rugby Surgery for about 3 years, and I have never spoken to the doctors in the practice, however, because of you, I attended a health fayre. The outcome was that a doctor referred me. He diagnosed me with a possible irregular heartbeat, which I was totally unaware of. Thank you once again!”

– Quote from Gwent Citizen Network member having received information via the weekly information burst.

Coproduction Luncheons

As well as our virtual network we are developing a roadshow series of in person events called '**Coproduction Luncheons**' in each Local Authority area.

Gwent Regional Partnership Board



Co Production Luncheon

Co Production means working together. By combining efforts, everyone contributes to make things better for everyone else. Co-production enables people providing and people receiving services to share power and responsibility, and to work together in equal, reciprocal and caring relationships.

Thursday 29th February
10:00 - 14:00
Cwmbrân Library
NP44 1XQ

Agenda:

- Welcome and Introduction
- Overview of Co-Production
- Roundtable Discussions
- Networking Opportunities
- Luncheon



These events provide the RPB and citizens of Gwent with the opportunity to network and connect, improving the way we engage and coproduce with citizens, and raising awareness of opportunities to get involved with the work of the RPB. These events are also an opportunity for citizens to tell their stories and experiences of care and support, and share with us what has gone well, where they would like to see improvements made and importantly, '**what matters**' to them.

A Citizen Network planning group has been established to co-design these events with citizens, with the first taking place in **February 2024** and further dates now planned throughout the year. Following each Coproduction Luncheon network members receive a [newsletter](#), with a roundup of the event including key themes and next steps.

These events also provide us with an opportunity to consult on key documents such as the **Gwent Citizen Charter**, RPB **Communications and Engagement Strategy** and Welsh Government consultations.

Decisions Made Together Event: Inclusion and Experience

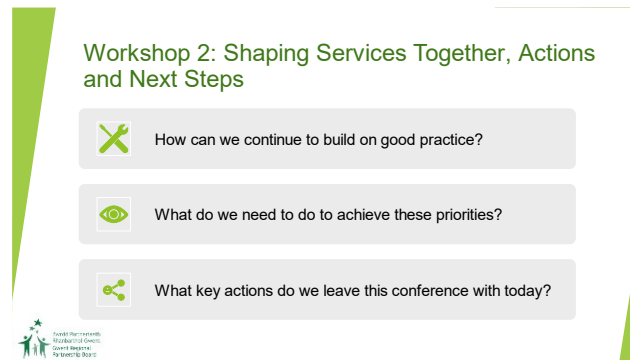
In **May 2024** we held an exciting and thought-provoking event in Newport, focusing on people's stories and the small things that can make a big impact in people's lives. The event highlighted the importance of *making decisions together* and the importance of *co-production*, in the delivery of care and support.



Workshop 1:
Co-Production is a journey

- What does 'citizen voice' mean to you and how can we ensure it is respected and heard by others?
- How can we develop better, more positive relationships between practitioners and the people they work with?
- What are the challenges to coproducing care and support, what does good look?





We had over **150** attendees from across Gwent, including multi agency partners and citizens, with guest speakers who had received support across health and social care for themselves, or as carers. They shared personal experiences highlighting where things had gone well but also where services and processes need to be improved, to help inform and shape future services.

There were a variety of engaging presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities, including **30** partner information stands from across various sectors. We also discussed as part of the workshops, how we can further develop and create an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes collaboration, to improve health and social care in Gwent.

A report is being finalised and will be reviewed and discussed within each of the relevant strategic partnerships, and the RPB, so we can look to develop this work further over the coming months.

Engagement With Other Partners

We work with a range of partners as part of our board, including leads from ABUHB, LA, Third Sector lead representatives (TVA and GAVO) and provider leads. We also ensure we align to other partnerships, networks and forums to ensure a whole system approach to improving health and social care, working in collaboration to support the priorities of the RPB and aligning Welsh Government policies.



5. Overview of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Role and Priorities

The Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) was established as part of the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act (SSWB) to:

- **To improve care and support, ensuring people have more say and control.**
- **To improve outcomes and health and wellbeing for people across the region**
- **Provide co-ordinated, person-centred care and support.**
- **Make more effective use of resources, skills, and expertise across partners.**

As a partnership we work together on an agreed shared vision for service development and integration of health, care aligning to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and A Healthier Wales, specifically the four themes of:

- **Improved population health and wellbeing**
- **Better quality and more accessible health and social care services**
- **Higher value health and social care, and**
- **A motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce**

To deliver the RPB priorities and the objectives of the Area Plan, the RPB have established 7 strategic integrated partnerships, which also have oversight of the relevant programmes of work and projects within the new Regional Integration Fund (RIF). These sub partnerships report to the RPB and update on progress against Area Plan priorities and challenges:

- **Carers Strategic Partnership**
- **Children and Families Strategic Partnership**
- **Dementia Strategic Partnership**
- **Gwent Adult Strategic Partnership**
- **Health, Housing and Social Care Strategic Partnership**
- **Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership**
- **Autism and Neurodiversity Strategic Partnership**

The thematic partnerships each deliver on sections of the Area Plan, as part of a strategic work programme, which is also translated at a local level via the Integrated Partnership Boards and Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs).

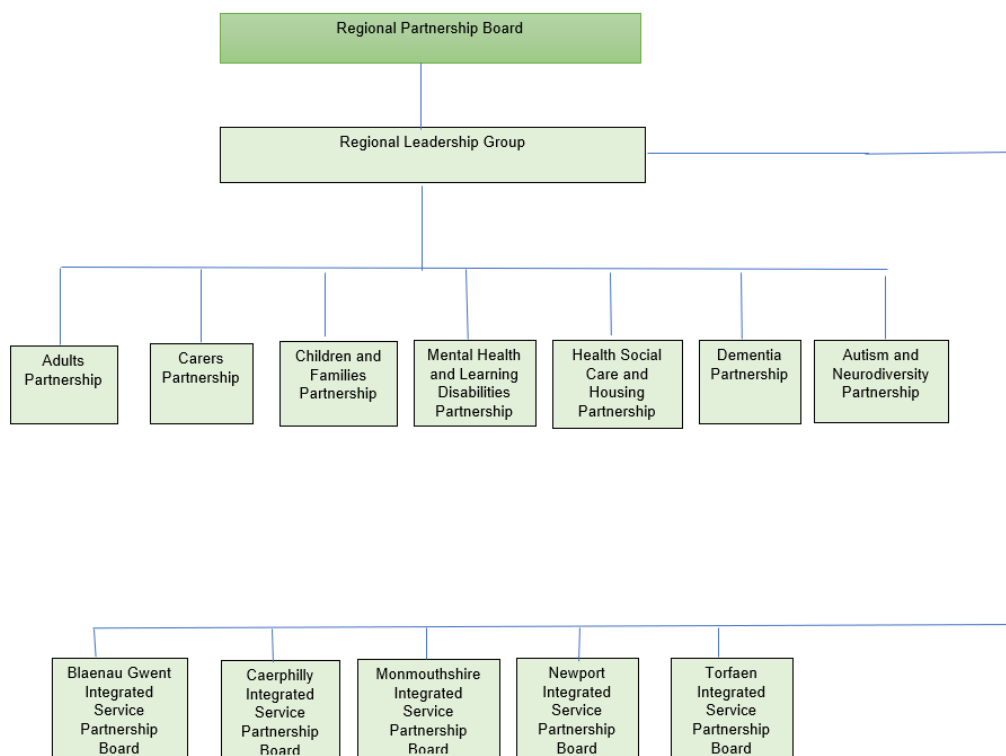
The RPB has also established enabling and supporting partnerships as part of the requirements set out in the SSWB Act and this includes:

- The regional citizens network (including carers), with two champion representatives to sit on the Board.
- The Value-Based provider and third sector forum, to connect to the RPB directly – having two elected representatives to sit on the Board.
- A regional Joint Commissioning group
- A regional Workforce Development Board
- A regional Gwent Assistive Technology Network

Membership and Partnership Governance

Full membership as at May 2024 is detailed in (*Annexe 1*).

RPB Structure



Population Needs Assessment (PNA)

The Gwent RPB developed its second PNA for the region with citizens and partners in 2022. This assessment is the foundation for our planning of future service provision, across Health and Social Care, identifying the range and level of services required, to ensure we are meeting the needs of the population. The PNA was developed via citizen engagement through the RPB and partner organisations alongside a collection of data sets, in order to effectively shape services to meet future demands. Our engagement is ongoing with citizens, to ensure we are always addressing current needs and highlighting emerging priorities to the RPB.

Area Plan

The [Gwent Area Plan](#) was reviewed and published last year and details the priority areas for integration of services between health and social care and the direction of our Gwent board.

It is ambitious, and it sets a clear road map for the delivery of an integrated model of health care and wellbeing across Gwent. The RPB provides leadership and oversight on the delivery of the plan, supported by appropriate governance and performance management systems.

The Plan is structured around the statutory core themes identified in the PNA which are **older adults, children and young people, carers, autism and neurodivergence, mental health and learning disabilities, housing, workforce, and commissioning**. All work programmes align and report into the above RPB structure, which comprises of strategic partnerships, 5 integrated boards, and the locality models known as Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCN's).

Market Stability Report (MSR)

This Market Stability Report (MSR) links with the findings of the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) which sets out current and projected need and demand for care in local communities and the range and type of services that will be required to meet that demand. This MSR has been produced in partnership with each of the 6 commissioning organisations that make up the Gwent Regional Partnership Board: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board; and covers regulated services as well as independent, private and third sector provision. The MSR and PNA documents complement each other and provide a comprehensive picture of current and projected demand and supply.

The MSR is a useful tool for providers and potential providers of regulated services to enable a better understanding of the region and help to inform their own strategic thinking about future investment. It will also be of interest to local communities, as it provides transparency about the use of resources and how decisions about service provision are made.

6. Key Partnership Developments 2023/2024



Carers Annual Report:

- Projects were developed to support carers with hospital discharge across the region, with **1,626** carers accessing support.
- **226** individuals received a small grant between April and June 2024
- The Young Carers in Schools Programme extended its remit to offer support to schools for transition days.
- **3,145** carers received a short break from their caring role, supporting wellbeing and positive caring relationships.
- Projects delivered community support, providing information, advice, and assistance (IAA), activities, individual and peer support to **3,389** carers.



Dewis

- Detailed views of resources have increased by **2,728**. This is the number of times someone has searched for something on Dewis and then clicked to find more information. In March 2022 there was **31,227** clicks and in March 2023 there was **40,795**.
- Expired resources have reduced from **966** to **852** showing that currency of the directory is improving. More information can be found in **Annex 2**.



Dementia Friendly Gwent Network

- There are now over **270** multi agency networks members, including both paid professionals, volunteers, carers, and people living with dementia.
- **55** network members joined us for the 2023 Dementia Friendly Gwent coffee morning, to celebrate the hard work of organisations across Gwent.
- **4,305 Dementia Friends** have been made across **152** sessions during **2023 – 2024**, to help raise awareness and understanding across the region.



Workforce and College Consortium

A regional work placement scheme was launched in September 2022 to support students to apply for local authority work placements and to support social care teams to adequately prepare to accept these placements. **92** work placement applications were received for the **23/24** academic year, with a total of **30** work placements facilitated by LA social care teams. Future efforts will focus on converting placements to paid work opportunities. The RPB have continued to engage with members of **Coleg Gwent** to promote careers across health and social care and how to design course content to promote the sector.

Access to Medicine Course

There has been a continued shortage of Welsh students seeking to pursue a career in medicine, particularly those from socially disadvantaged areas. Developed with Professor Paul Edwards (ABUHB) this course, prepares local students for a Medical Pathway Degree and is designed to support talented individuals who have traditionally faced barriers in entering the field of medicine, it is the **first of its kind** in Wales. The first cohort of students were recruited in September **2023**, and it is anticipated that the course will expand in the new academic year.

Clinical Placement Programme

Initially launched in September 2022 this initiative provides second-year students with **100** hours of clinical placement in hospital settings such as The Royal Gwent, Nevill Hall, and Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr. Building on this success the program has been expanded to include placements at The Grange university hospital and Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan. **38** students across Coleg Gwent have secured placements this year. Two students have recently secured substantive posts as Healthcare Support Workers within the health board. The remaining **36** students are currently on track to complete their qualifications this year and are poised to advance into university or employment within the sector.

Micro Care

Following an initial 12-month Micro Care pilot in 2022-23, exploring if micro carers could support local care capacity and delivery, providing an alternative to traditional domiciliary care provision Micro Care Monmouthshire continues to support local citizens to become self-employed care workers. There is a total of **25** micro carers on Monmouthshire's Micro Care Directory to date. Further funding for the development of a digital, self-service portal via the Regional Innovation Co-ordination (RIC) Hub has also been secured. Implementation of the portal spanned from January - April 2024 and includes features to ensure training compliance, document collection, and secure data handling. The portal will help to streamline the onboarding process, providing an easy access platform that will help the project's future resilience and longevity.

Recognising the need for region-specific solutions, the Gwent Regional Partnership Team established a Micro Care Community of Practice in Wales in July 2023. The bi-monthly meetings aim to address barriers specific to Wales and foster the growth of micro care services.



Citizen Engagement

- Since its relaunch, we have expanded the Gwent Citizen Network to over **100** members.
- A Gwent wide Coproduction and Engagement event, '**Decisions Made Together: Inclusion and Experience**' was attended by over **150** professionals and citizens.
- Coproduction Luncheons are taking place across Gwent to enable us to connect and engage with citizens to influence and support development of our strategic priorities and service delivery.



AskSARA

All metrics (users, new users, sessions, reports, bounce rate) have **increased**. The user/report percentage and bounce rate remain at very positive levels, indicating users are interacting well with the site. Good variety of referral sources. **90% of users would recommend AskSARA, 71% were helped to find a solution or equipment.**

7. Joint Commissioning and Pooling of Funds

It's important that people receive the right services, at the right time, and in the right place. To do this, we must ensure funding is directed to meet the needs of our communities in Gwent.

The Regional Joint Commissioning Group (RCG) has developed a regional Market Position Statement (MPS) as set out under Section 144B of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and an action plan to deliver the identified priorities for care homes, domiciliary care, community services, advocacy and ensuring effective links with provider groups.

The RCG has a cross-cutting function across the regional strategic partnerships and has undertaken work on their behalf. The group is also an information and good practice sharing forum across the regional partnerships, as well as specialist technical advice to partners on commissioning related activity.

The focus over the next 12 months is to continue to support the domiciliary care and care home sectors, as they face crisis in recruitment and retention. This works links closely to that of the Workforce Development Board and its regional workforce strategy.

Progress made in 2023/24:

Providers of care are experiencing considerable challenges but despite this, good progress had been made against Part 9 requirements and the revised regional Area Plan for commissioning, this includes:

- Section 33 Pooled Fund Arrangement, signed by all parties.
- A review has taken place of the previously agreed regional contract for care homes for older people.
- Reconvened the working group with care homes regarding a regional fee methodology with reasonable progress being made despite considerable budgetary constraints.
- Development work underway to establish a common joint contract monitoring framework for care homes for older people.
- Development work underway to establish a common joint contract monitoring framework for domiciliary care services.
- The Section 16 Forum has been relaunched and an event took place in March 2024. The Section 16 Forum represents a pivotal step towards a collaborative synergy and driving positive change across Gwent. It is committed to inclusivity, innovation, and transparency, and champions citizen voices and empowering stakeholders to effect meaningful outcomes.
- Development of a commissioning approach to mental health and learning disabilities commissioned services within ABUHB remains under review by ABUHB.
- A discussion took place regarding pooled funds opportunities in Gwent – no further pooled funds were identified at this time.
- A review of direct payments in Gwent took place with further work being taken forward.
- Establishment of a monthly webinar for care homes in Gwent will be further developed to become the Gwent Care Homes Engagement Forum. This will be a collaborative ongoing process.

- Establishment of a monthly webinar for domiciliary care services in Gwent remains.
- The Gwent RPB continues to look for new opportunities to use the flexibility afforded by pooled budgets and the current pooled funds supporting care homes. Torfaen County Borough Council hosts the pooled fund manager under a Section 33 Agreement.
- The regional commissioning work program will ensure that pooled funds remain a 'live issue' and is routinely considered as an option when discussing, devising, and developing joint commissioning arrangements. The existing regional pooled fund arrangement under the Section 33 Agreement 'Accommodation Arrangements for Care Homes for Older people in Gwent' remains in place. A report is presented to the RPB annually.

8. Achievements Aligning to the Area Plan

The Area Plan outcomes are delivered and monitored through the 7 strategic Partnerships, with the following priority areas:

- **children and young people with complex needs**
- **unpaid carers.**
- **older people, with specific reference to supporting people living with dementia.**
- **People with physical disabilities.**
- **People with learning disabilities.**
- **Autism and Neurodevelopmental Conditions.**
- **People with poor mental health and/or emotional support needs.**
- **People with sensory impairment.**
- **People experiencing VAWDASV or homelessness and the secure estate (as set out in the Code of Practice)**

In addition to the above statutory themes, the RPB have also included a focus on housing.

Working in collaboration with strategic partnerships is key to creating synergy across the region and avoid duplication of efforts; and the RPB also links closely with the Area Planning Board, who lead on substance misuse issues and also the Safeguarding Boards. At a strategic level the RPB links closely with the regional Public Service Board to ensure there is a collaborative approach to the delivery of the Area Plan and regional Wellbeing Plan, VAWDASV agenda, as well as delivering the ambitions of a Marmot region.

This section of the annual report sets out key work taken forward through each of the partnerships under the RPB and key outcomes delivering the Regional Area Plan.

Gwent Adults Strategic Partnership (GASP)

Area Plan Priority

- To improve emotional well-being for older people by reducing loneliness and social isolation, with earlier intervention and community resilience.
- To support older people to live, or return following a period of hospitalisation, to their own homes and communities, through early intervention, integrated care models and a whole system approach.
- To mitigate the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic through, especially reducing waiting lists and times to access support, appointments, and medical procedures.

Partnership Progress:

- **Community Connectors** is a community-based service that provides information, advice, and assistance (IAA) to help people connect with resources and support in their community. These projects focus on improving well-being, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness, and connecting people with appropriate resources and support. The four Community Connector projects are delivered in Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen, with each project tailored to the needs of each local authority area.



- **Community Car Scheme & Befriending Service Project:** This service has recently achieved success in increasing social connections and reducing isolation amongst its participants. These outcomes are crucial for enhancing the overall well-being of socially isolated individuals in a County with significant rural areas. The service successfully links isolated individuals with befriending services, addressing critical needs for social interaction and support. By utilising a flexible service model, the project has met its objectives to provide tailored support to vulnerable populations, particularly older people, and isolated residents. In 23/24, the scheme arranged **2,270** journeys with a total of **32,902** miles.

**“WHAT
MATTERS
TO YOU?”**

- **Improving System Flow: Home from Hospital:** There are **18** projects under this programme, supported via ABUHB, LA and Third Sector. The projects help people return home from hospital quickly to recover, rehabilitate, and regain as much independence as possible. Over **60,000** people were supported through this programme in **2023/24**.
- **SMART/Assistive Technology Spaces:** Four innovative SMART spaces in Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen, have been established across Gwent over the last few years. The spaces offer residents and staff hands-on experiences with AT products designed to enhance preventative care and support for individuals, enabling them to stay well at home for longer. The Monmouthshire NCN have teamed up with Monmouthshire County Council to provide two Assistive Technology rooms within Chepstow Community Hospital to demonstrate AT to patients, their relatives, staff, and the wider community. This innovative project will be tested and evaluated before potential roll out in other areas of the region. More information on the SMART/AT spaces across the region can be found on the ABUHB website [here](#).

Children & Families Strategic Partnership

Area Plan Priorities:

- To improve outcomes for children and young people with complex needs through earlier intervention, community-based support, and placements closer to home.
- To ensure good mental health and emotional well-being for children and young people through effective partnership working especially mitigating the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

Partnership Progress:

- The five LAs with colleagues in ABUHB, continue to develop residential solutions for children in the region following development of Windmill Farm in Newport, using Capital grant funding. Windmill Farm is a four bedroomed children's home accommodating a safe space and trauma informed environment, whilst partners work with the family to establish the best care in the longer term. An end of year review is currently in progress as part of the first phase of the evaluation.
- Coproduction work is ongoing with parents and children, ABUHB, Parents Voices in Wales and the wider partnership. The group has led to a number of changes within the Neuro-developmental Pathway for children and young people including: a re-design of the referral pathway and its accessibility, a new document developed to help parents understand the process, a re-designed information leaflet for families entering the pathway, and creation of a pathway animation specifically targeted for children entering the neuro-developmental pathway to explain what to expect in a child friendly way. This work won the NHS Wales award in 2023 for ***Empowering People to Co-produce Their Care***.

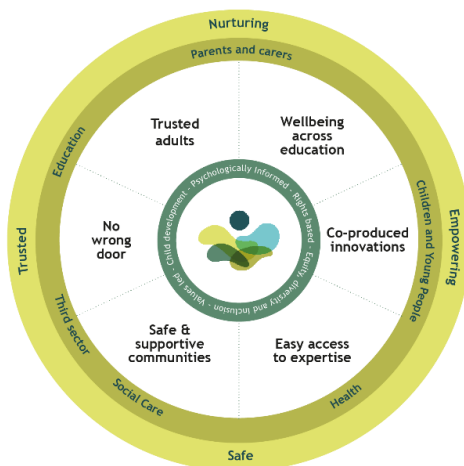


- Children's Centre Psychology (formerly Helping Hands) is structured to integrate seamlessly into three children's centres in Gwent. The project team, comprising of psychologists and allied health professionals such as occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, delivers accessible psychological support. Services include counselling, workshops, and direct therapeutic interventions for both children and their caregivers, facilitated through self-referral routes that connect directly to SPACE Wellbeing and the Integrated Services for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN) panel.
- ISCAN operates through a multi-disciplinary team of health, social care, and educational professionals who coordinate comprehensive support for children with additional needs. The project is structured around regular coordination meetings that ensure all aspects of a child's care are integrated and managed collectively. ISCAN has effectively coordinated support for children with additional needs by integrating services across health, education, and social care. The project has successfully facilitated transitions for children between these services, ensuring that children receive timely and appropriate support tailored to their needs.

- The ISCAN Care Co-ordination team have continued to support families of children with complex needs across the five Gwent Local Authorities. It has been a challenging year due to elevated levels of sickness absence within the team over the past 18 months. However recruitment is taking place, and a full team is anticipated by September 2024. Development work has been ongoing, and focus has been on reducing the current waiting list which was introduced due to low staffing levels. This does mean that by empowering families to support with their child's needs, the ISCAN Care Co-ordination team can ensure that their work is directed to the child's needs.
- Digital applications in the form of the referral form and supporting questionnaires have been set up for parents to access via a QR code and the introduction of electronic case files has led to a more efficient, streamlined service. The **ISCAN animation** went live in February 2024 to give a clear explanation to families about the ISCAN process and benefits. ISCAN will be circulating an online evaluation form in the first quarter of 2024/2025 to ensure that the processes continue to work for families.
- Family Intervention Team (FIT) utilises a clinical psychology led service offering an early intervention mental health service through a brief intervention of 12 sessions (with an optional two top-up sessions within a year of ending). It is structured as a whole Gwent service, embedded in communities to meet children where they live their lives.

"I can see things from different perspectives now and that's been helpful. I think about what I can control and what I can't, like my own emotions and how I act. I've realised it's not very helpful to hold on to grudges, so I've been letting things go a bit more."

- Platform 4YP brings together young people aged 14–18 to empower them through peer support and community involvement. The project structures its support by enabling young people to choose their areas of focus in wellbeing discussions and peer interactions.
- The partnership continues to work closely with Welsh Government and partners to raise awareness and roll out the NEST/NYTH model on a multi-agency level.



Case Study: The SPACE-Wellbeing programme



The Gwent Single Point of Access for Children’s Emotional (SPACE) Wellbeing Service has been embedded successfully across the five local authorities in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board since 2019.

The process was developed to reduce the distress faced by families and referrers for accessing support to children and young people and to reduce the workload on services in processing ‘inappropriate referrals. There was a need for agencies to work together, in a collaborative manner, without bouncing referrals between services. The SPACE-Wellbeing model is driven by the ‘no wrong door’ approach and operates in line with the Single Front Door principle of the NEST/NYTH model. It enables children, young people, and families to access the right service at the right time. It is recognised as an example of good practice in Wales.

SPACE Wellbeing is a process through which professionals and families can seek early help and support for a range of difficulties in children and young people’s emotional well-being, behaviours, parenting, access to facilities as well as activity-based input.

The improved system has eliminated the need to screen referrals in silo. The children and young people identified as having mental health needs are discussed in the multi-agency panel and can be accepted and offered clinical appointments in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This is now a well-established system with good co-ordination between services that offer a timely response. The panel accept self-referrals and offer one point of contact; a valuable support to families.

Over **34,000** referrals have been processed in the **5-year period**. Specialist CAMHS no longer screen referrals in isolation. Parents can self-refer for their child’s well-being needs without the need to seek professional consultation.

There is equity in the provision of care. The services are working in harmony as a whole-system approach and benefit from learning from each other by using shared language, goals and outcomes.

“Every child’s needs can be addressed in a timely way.”

Evaluation and informal feedback highlighted that:

- Children and families are getting the right help, first time.
- Reduced duplication and improved co-ordination between services (of referrals, assessment, and interventions)
- Improved access to consultation and advice from ABUHB staff for Local Authority (LA) and Third Sector staff
- A straightforward pathway for referrers

"I am most proud of seeing how services/professionals work together to support the families and young people and in our role as co-ordinator, we help facilitate this support to provide the best possible outcome for our families"
– *SPACE well-being coordinator.*

"Thank you for making SPACE Wellbeing work, you have no idea how much relief it has brought to GPs!"

The role of the peripatetic SPACE Wellbeing Co-ordinator has been invaluable in offering sustainable services and has meant that, in the past 12 months, **50 SPACE** Wellbeing panel meetings and discussion of **800 referrals** went ahead.

The SPACE Wellbeing Helpline supports the families by giving general advice and support.

Engagement with Children and Families:

The RPB continues to engage with the **Regional Youth Forum** around a Mental Health Campaign following the completion of the national UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark survey.



Tracy Daszkiewicz, Director of Public Health published the Gwent report **'Our Future, our voice: babies, children and young people of Gwent 2023/2024'**, to share the personal experiences from children and inspire thought on what we can do to make Gwent a place where our babies, children and young people can flourish. This report provides us with the views of young people and what they need from us when we are planning support and services that impact their lives. (Full report can be found in **Annexe 5**).

Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership

Area Plan Priorities:

- Increased understanding and awareness of mental health amongst the public to reduce stigma and help people to seek support earlier.
- To improve emotional well-being and mental health for adults and children through early intervention and community support.
- To support people with learning disabilities to live independently with access to early intervention services in the community; and greater public awareness and understanding of people with learning disabilities needs.

Partnership Progress:

Foundation Tier Work

The Gwent Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Foundation Tier Programme is funded through the RIF and focuses on a number of distinct but complementary projects, which set out to improve access to, and awareness of, approved mental health resources – Gwent Connect 5, Suicide First Aid, Specialist Suicide Bereavement Support and Services in Gwent and Melo Cymru.

Melo Cymru



Since its launch in January **2021** there have been over **100,000** New Users to our local [Melo Cymru website](#), with the majority originating from the Gwent area and falling within younger age brackets. Melo has been developed by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's Public Health Team and supported by regional partners. The site acts as a repository for approved self-help resources and information on mental wellbeing.

The site displays over **34** different topics which have been co-produced with topic experts, including people with lived experience and houses **over 370** available resources and over **60** courses that are available both online and face to face.

It acts as a central point of digital access for mental wellbeing resources, providing access to up to date, approved self-help information, advice, and free courses/resources to help people look after and improve their emotional and mental wellbeing.

It is an accessible, bilingual resource, and the Reach Deck tool enables text to speech and reading and translation of text into over **100** languages. This makes online content more accessible for people with dyslexia, low literacy levels, mild visual impairments and those who speak English as a second language.

As well as being used by members of the public, Melo is routinely used by our partners including the NHS 111 Press 2 and ABUHBs Psychological Health Practitioner Service. Feedback from our 'Melo Users' has been overwhelmingly positive. Melo is promoted across various social media channels and regional partners and there is a continued increase in followers across these platforms. Melo has been recognised Nationally as a beneficial resource, and discussions continue to take place regarding possible roll out of the website as a national wellbeing resource.

There are also more resources on Melo that are downloadable/printable, that can be printed off for people who are digitally excluded or can be given out by GPs and other partners. In addition, the promotion of Melo continues to be part of ABUHBs Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner programme's staff induction training and an integral part of the Gwent Connect 5 training.

Gwent Connect 5 Training Programme



Gwent Connect 5 is a mental wellbeing workforce training programme, supplying contemporary evidence-based tools and techniques, which can be applied within everyday life and working practice.

The programme is managed by the Public Health team within ABUHB who work in partnership with organisations across Gwent, with the aim of improving population mental wellbeing, by changing the way our frontline workforce has conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

Since its launch in **2020**, over **600** Gwent Connect 5 training modules have been delivered. Gwent Connect 5 is available online or face to face and is delivered by experienced local Mental Health Third Sector partners. Training has been provided to over **40** partners including the Gwent Regional Partnership Team, South Wales Fire & Rescue service, Gwent Police, Department of Work and Pensions, Diverse Cymru, South-East Wales Carers Trust, ABUHB and Local Authority staff. Over **25** trainers are currently delivering the Gwent Connect 5 training across Gwent. Most trainers are delivering in-house, whilst **5** local trainers from Third/Not-for-Profit organisations are commissioned to deliver to organisations who do not have access to an in-house trainer.

Data shows that Gwent Connect 5 participants report an improvement in their own mental health and wellbeing, as well as feeling more knowledgeable, skilled, confident, and motivated to have an effective mental wellbeing conversation.

In **2023**, a second external evaluation of the training programme, using Most Significant Change Methodology, increased confidence in its effectiveness and impact. Powerful and moving '**Change Stories**' were gathered from training participants.

"It gives you a toolkit you can use (unlike other training). I have a physical workbook now I can take out to people. It allows us to follow a process. Process is important to me. I want to get people thinking for themselves and arm them for the future".

"Now I feel more positive. It's like a 'shining light has come across me'!"

Specialist Suicide Bereavement Support and Services in Gwent

Specialist suicide bereavement support services are essential to support grieving and help reduce the risk of further deaths by suicide. Research indicates that families and friends bereaved by suicide are at greater risk of mental health and emotional problems and are also at higher risk of suicide themselves.

Since 2020, anyone in Gwent affected by a death by suicide have had access to free specialist suicide bereavement support services. As there is no National suicide bereavement service, we have been extremely fortunate to have had access to a 'gold standard' service locally provided by two charities: 2wish and the Jacob Abraham Foundation.



From **September 2020 to March 2023**, 2wish provided support for anyone affected by a sudden and unexpected death, including death by suicide of someone of any age. This was in addition to 2wish's national offer of providing support to anyone affected by a sudden and expected death of someone aged 25 and under across Wales. 2wish provided this all-age service in Gwent thanks to WG and ABUHB funding.

From **April 2023**, Jacob Abraham Foundation have provided a specialist support service for those affected by a death by suicide in Gwent of someone aged 25 and over. Support is provided to anyone who needs the support regardless of when the death occurred.

Current funding for the Jacob Abraham Foundation service continues and has been secured from the WG RIF Gwent Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Foundation Tier Programme but is only sufficient to fund the service until the end of **September 2024**. Further funding is being sought as a priority.

Suicide First Aid



Over **100** fully funded suicide awareness training courses: 'Suicide First Aid' have been delivered across Gwent since 2021. We are extremely fortunate in Gwent that our local workforces and volunteers have been able to access Suicide First Aid training for free.

Five experienced trainers from our local Mental Health Third Sector organisations are trained to deliver the Suicide First Aid (SFA) courses. Our Trainers deliver three SFA courses, both online and in person. You can choose from a half day course, a one-day course or a course specifically for professionals working with secondary school aged children. Feedback has been overwhelming positive with participants reporting an increase in their knowledge, skills, and confidence to have a 'suicide conversation'.

In 2023, local charity Ted Senior Foundation, provided funding enabling our local Trainers to deliver another **60** SFA courses. If attendees do not have the time to attend a full course, there is also a suite of free Zero Suicide Alliance online courses starting from 20 minutes that can be accessed via Melo.

"I found the course very informative and useful. It has given me more confidence to talk to a family member who has attempted suicide many times. I was pleased to learn how to phrase things and to repeat back to them what they have told me"

"Excellent training. I have done suicide training before, and this is the best by far".

Case Study: A Journey at Growing Space

'No More Barriers' is an outcome focused, employment programme that supports individuals with a learning disability, autism, or mental ill health along a bespoke employability pathway towards employment opportunities.

An individual attended the Blackwood Growing Space location in **2023** after being referred by Mind. Initially, she was hesitant but sought to improve her mental health and social interactions after experiencing medical setbacks. She started as a participant in arts and crafts sessions and eventually became a volunteer, contributing to the shop floor operations one day a week. Her gradual involvement in the programme worked well, allowing her to build confidence and skills at her own pace, finding comfort in the non-judgmental environment and the shared goals of improving mental health.

"I've tried everything else for my mental health and nothing has helped... I may as well give it a try."

Her participation and enjoyment increased which were clear indicators of success. Her transition from a quiet attendee to an active volunteer illustrates significant personal growth.

"Growing Space is the best thing I've done for my mental health and has really helped me".

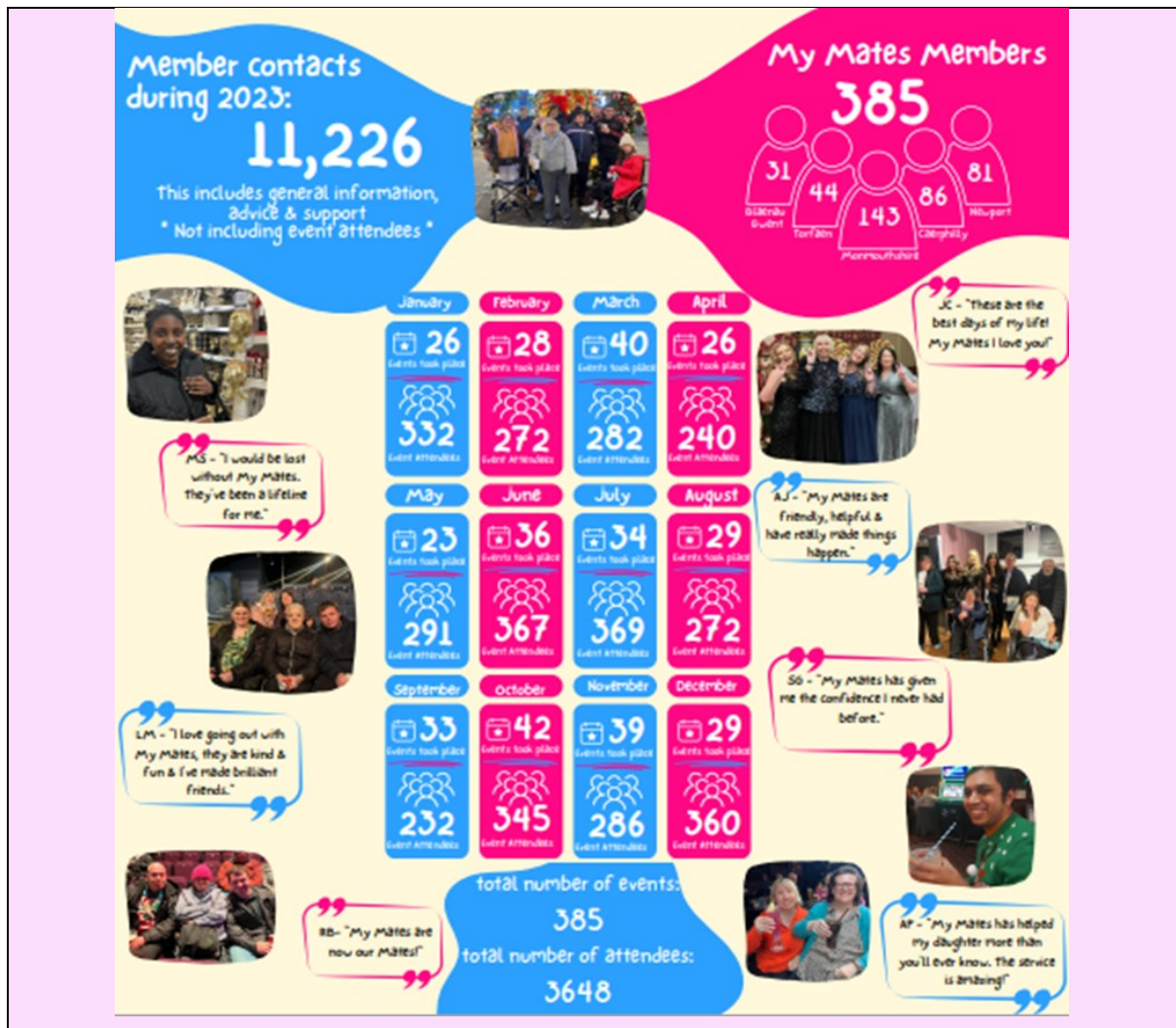
Her mental health improved significantly as she became more involved with Growing Space, not only gaining confidence but also acquiring practical skills and qualifications in mental health awareness, budgeting, and customer service. Her experience at Growing Space demonstrates the profound impact of inclusive, supportive community programmes on mental health and personal development. Her journey from a hesitant participant to a confident volunteer highlights the importance of providing opportunities for skill development and social engagement.

"I didn't know there were other people like me here... It feels great to finally be in a place which understands me."

My Mates

My Mates supports those with a learning disability to access a variety of social events, on request, individuals can be supported to develop a relationship by finding a date and are offered advice and information.

Whilst My Mates emphasis is upon unpaid friendships and relationships, they adapt to meet needs and demand. As members grow in confidence and develop friendships and relationships, they embrace an individual's journey, encompassing the 'whole' person; this may include areas such as crisis prevention, housing, finance management, care and appearance, health and sexuality and anything else required to enable each member to live their best, self-directed life.



Case Study: Acer House – Redevelopment

United Welsh purchased the former Brynmawr Clinic site from ABUHB in 2019. In 2020, the Welsh Government Land and Buildings Development Fund (formerly known as the Land Release Fund), provided funding to demolish the buildings in June 2020. The ICF programme supported the development with £596,516.

The land was redeveloped to create a bespoke supported living scheme for people with complex needs. The intention of the project was to provide a safe, therapeutic, and homely environment for young females with complex mental health needs transitioning from children's services into adult services, providing an opportunity to move from secure placements into the community with 24/7 support.

The building is made up of large communal spaces, staff space and 5 individual bedsits. Once the physical building had been completed it was important to ensure that it was furnished in a therapeutic and homely way and that there was equipment available for individuals to experience different activities to help with their wellbeing. As a result, in 2023, financial assistance was secured via the HCF Minor projects programme, in order to create a homely environment. The project has been delivered in partnership with ABUHB.

The aim of the supported accommodation developed on the Brynmawr Clinic site is to provide an innovative and alternative model of support for young females with complex mental health needs having experienced significant trauma and been placed in placements that have been restrictive and institutional in nature. It was important to create an

environment that was therapeutic and safe for these individuals and that it would be supportive of creating a relational service where staff could build genuine relationships with the individuals, supporting them on a different pathway with the aim of full transition into independent accommodation and discharge from services altogether.

Most recently, one of the residents who moved into the project from a secure placement, has successfully secured employment.

“it’s amazing to wake up in the morning without a nurse at the end of my bed. I am slowly getting my life back on track.”



Engagement with Citizens

The Mental Health & Learning Disability Strategic partnership have engaged with people within mental health and learning disability services to develop a **Coproduction Steering Group**.

Extensive engagement was also completed to develop the Regional Engagement and Involvement Strategy for Gwent, which was coproduced with people, to help transform future services.

In 2023 **8 new lived experience members** were recruited to join the Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategic Partnership and training and support is ongoing to aid meaningful engagement and participation in these roles. Our new partners are working with us providing their views and expertise to coproduce support and service provision across Gwent.

Autism and Neurodivergence Strategic Partnership:

Area Plan Priorities:

- To provide more timely assessments of Autistic Spectrum Disorder and access to support services and information and advice.
- Increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity across the region and recognise the varying individual support needs; via training to health, social care and wider RPB partners, as well as the wider public.
- Increase opportunities and practical support for learning, training, volunteering, and paid employment, to support independent living.

Partnership Progress:

A Gwent Autism and Neurodivergence(ND) Strategic Group has been established that is Co-Chaired by individuals with lived experience and carers. The membership is currently under review as the partners now also oversee the Neurodivergence Improvement Fund and are evaluating the impact on the implementation of the Autism Code of Practice in Gwent.

Neurodivergence (ND) Improvement Fund

We have been working closely with clinical leads, partners and the Gwent Autism and ND Strategic Partnership, to ensure full use of the Neurodivergence Improvement Fund. This has been utilised to increase children’s additional support sessions, increase assessment

capacity, increase post diagnostic support and to produce digital material for individuals and their families, whilst awaiting assessment.

The third sector allocation of ND funding 2023/24 aimed to build on the success of the pilots delivered within 2022/23 and was utilised in Gwent to raise greater awareness, provide local community support for families, support parents with a child awaiting an ND assessment via CAMHS and individuals awaiting an ASD/ADHD assessment. Five third sector organisations were successful in gaining funding, Hope GB, Torfaen Opportunity Group (TOGS), The ADHD Sisterhood, Growing Space and Autistic Minds.

The projects have supported a total of **460** individuals through phone and online support, provided signposting opportunities and resources to **209** of those individuals. It has provided support to **75** individuals via coffee mornings and supported **116** individuals via one-to-one visits. A total of **1240** individuals have received support through the projects delivered within this programme. Learning and feedback from the projects, is now being used to help inform some of the detail in the Autism Code of Practice Action plan for Gwent.

Child and Family Support

72 hours of 1:1 parent carer support was delivered, and coffee mornings hosted to facilitate community support. Engagement in coffee mornings and the direct feedback from families highlight the project's impact on supporting families through the assessment process.

Autism Reality Experience

A multi-agency experience was provided across Gwent to help improve understanding and acceptance of autism among frontline staff. **19** training days were conducted and were attended by **387** people and **5** conference sessions with **330** attendees, focusing on autism awareness and empathy building. High engagement and positive feedback indicate that **93%** of the attendees rated the experience as excellent, evidencing effective delivery towards the project's objectives.

Adult ADHD Services

From July **2023** the adult ADHD service became a stand-alone service under the Primary Care Mental Health Directorate. This service covers Gwent with a focus on developing assessment and treatment pathways. In line with NICE guidelines and the ND improvement programme, the service began taking direct referrals in January **2024**, meaning referrals no longer go through the individual community mental health teams. Individuals being referred now are sent an electronic booklet to complete so that triage can take place to ensure individuals are not waiting unnecessarily and are signposted correctly. The booklet will replace the initial assessment/ triage appointment currently offered and should result in additional diagnostic assessment being offered in the future.

Post Diagnostic Support

A social media survey was carried out in September 2023 that invited individuals diagnosed and undiagnosed to tell us what would be helpful from an ADHD psychoeducation group. We received **216** responses and used this information to build an eight-week psychoeducation programme. The next stage will be holding some service user focus groups to discuss the content with the hope to run the first group this year. We will be sharing this with the national neurodivergence team and other health boards.

Training and Collaborative Working

The ADHD and Integrated Autism Service clinicians have attended joint training and held a workshop to discuss and plan a pilot due February 2024 that looks at joint ADHD/ASD assessments for those requiring both. We have also developed pathways of moving individuals between services should this be required.

Engagement with Citizens

There is lots of ongoing engagement led by Child Therapy and Transformation leads and parents awaiting an assessment for their child, to develop solutions on how support can be improved for those on the waiting list for assessments.

We also have members with lived experience on the Autism and ND Strategic Partnership and have regular meetings to monitor the Area Plan priorities and programme of work.

Carers

Area Plan Priorities:

- Support unpaid carers to care through flexible respite, access to accurate information, peer to peer support, effective care planning and through increased public understanding.
- Improve well-being of young carers and young adult carers and mitigate against the long-term impact of Covid-19 pandemic.

Partnership Progress:

We continue to deliver programmes aligned to the four Welsh Government National priorities for unpaid carers.

- **Carers Hub and Spoke Model** provides a range of Gwent wide services to support unpaid carers with practical help and Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) as guided by carer need. This includes hosting specialist services such as a free legal advice clinic, and group meetings for carers to obtain respite from their caring role in a friendly and supportive environment. 'Spoke' sessions are also held in communities across Gwent, working with partners to ensure carers get the support they need. During 2023/24:
 - **1,501** Carers accessed the service, **360** of which were newly identified unpaid carers.
 - **5473** contacts were made with carers, **1216** carers received IAA.
 - **58** carers received intensive support.
 - **227** Hub and Spoke surgeries were held.
- **HUG by LAUGH (HUG)** is a therapy device developed by design researchers, engineers, and health professionals from Cardiff Metropolitan University. In the evaluation study, it was found that HUG **improved the quality** of life for **87%** of people who used HUG for a period of six months. HUG devices are now being piloted with unpaid carers. During 2023 a total of **59** HUGs were distributed to unpaid carers across Gwent.
- Coleg Gwent has achieved an Advanced **Carer Friendly Accreditation**, a carers employment initiative developed for all public and private workplaces and communities to become more Carer Friendly. To date **19** services have been awarded Carer Friendly status and 1 employer.
- **The Young Carers in School Programme (YCiSP)** aims to support young carers in education settings through an accreditation programme. The programme aims to integrate support for young carers into the school environment, ensuring they receive the necessary recognition and assistance directly in their educational settings. This approach helps in creating a supportive school culture that acknowledges and addresses the unique needs of young carers.
 - A total of **89** schools in Gwent are engaging with the programme and a total of **562** young carers have been identified and supported in school.
 - Events took place during the first quarter of 2023 across the **5** Local Authorities for pupils transitioning either from primary schools to secondary or secondary to Coleg Gwent.

Training

Since April 2023, **579** participants have attended virtual / face to face training. The digital training which has been provided has seen **58** staff complete the training and evaluate the session. The training was 'Young Carers: Identifying Us' training.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Number of virtual staff training sessions	4	2	3	2	11
Number of face-to-face staff training sessions	9	4	8	5	26
Number of digital attendees	0	0	58	0	58
Number of attendees	119	106	223	131	579

- In 2023/24 a total of **433** carers received small grants via the **Small Grants Scheme**. These grants are a lifeline for many and are awarded on a case-by-case basis through a partnership panel to ensure every carer who applies to the scheme receives the best possible outcome for their needs, applicants are also referred to the Gwent Carers Hub, Local Authorities and to other services where needed.

“Thank you for the Carers Grant for giving me back some precious time with my husband after so much was taken from us as a result of his Cancer diagnosis and treatments. You gifted us time away with family” – Unpaid Carer

Following a ministerial Inquiry, the funding eligibility for carers in 2023/24 focusses on supporting carers with hospital discharge processes; an area identified as key to enable improvement across Wales. To ensure a robust delivery we:

- Set up a Discharge Working group, including representative of carers, LA's, HB and Third sector.
- Developed pilot initiatives which were endorsed through the Integrated Discharge Improvement Board and Gwent Carers Strategic Partnership Board and endorsed via the Regional Partnership Board.
- Identified resources and agreed on pilot project ward areas that had potential to deliver impact across a range of disciplines.
- Arranged carer awareness training to all staff involved in the pilot areas and offered all pilot wards/service areas the opportunity to become Carer Friendly Accredited.

Pilot Project - Gwent Carers Information and Advice Service (GCIAAS)

Delivered by our Third sector partner Adferiad, this model is an extension of The Gwent Carers Café model (delivered in our Older Adult mental health services). By having a staff member present on a ward to which unpaid carers can be signposted, carers are supported and feel better equipped with the necessary information and advice to support their caring role upon discharge of the person they care for. In addition, carers are able to consider their own needs and be referred for carers assessments. The following pilot ward areas were identified:

- Acute Medical Unit – The Grange Hospital – This will identify carers from point of admission in a short turnaround setting.
- Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan - Ebbw Vale hospital - Care of the Elderly /Rehabilitation ward.
- Paediatrics – The Grange Hospital – To identify parent and young sibling carers.
- Trauma and Orthopaedics at Royal Gwent Hospital – step down and C7W elective.

Key Findings

- 68 GCIASS sessions were held across the 4 areas.
- 196 carers supported.
- 176 carers received IAA.
- 77 carers reported they felt they influenced the decisions that affect them.
- Carers would welcome a place where they could be signposted to within hospital settings.
- Location of accessing support services was found to be key.
- Training ward staff was challenging due to shift working patterns and release of staff.

Case Study:

A carer said she was struggling with her own mental health due to her caring role. She talked about what relaxes her and what she does for self-care. She enjoys reading to unwind and goes for walks when she can. The carer was aware of her right to a carers assessment and spoke to social services. She talked about respite and what that looks like for her and said, ***“I would love just to have a day out with my children and make it as fun as possible”***. The Amser grant was mentioned, and an application submitted for the carer to go to Legoland for her son’s birthday, as a treat for them. This has been actioned and the carer says she is ***“over the moon”***. ***“Thank you so much I am so grateful” – unpaid carer***

Carers Short Breaks: Bridging the Gap Gwent and Local Short Breaks – NEWCIS, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Monmouthshire CC, Newport CC, and Torfaen CBC

The Carers Short Breaks projects provide carers with the opportunity for a short break from their caring role, supporting wellbeing and positive caring relationships. This includes the Bridging the Gap Gwent (BTGG) project that operates a voucher system, giving eligible carers a voucher to spend over 6 months with approved providers. In addition, local authorities have provided local short breaks for carers, including individual, group and family breaks.

BTGG recently supported a young carer in accessing swimming lessons, offering them a valuable respite from their caring responsibilities, an opportunity to acquire a new life skill, and a chance to socialise. Initially, Newport Live, the swimming lesson provider, was not part of the BTGG scheme. However, after discussions they agreed to sign up, expanding respite opportunities not only for this young carer but also for others in the future.

BTGG has also played a pivotal role in establishing an after-school club at a special educational needs school, addressing the lack of options for children to interact beyond school hours. Through collaborative efforts among the Local Authority Carer Lead, Social Worker, and school staff, the club was successfully launched. It provides respite for parents and carers while offering enriching activities for children and young people. BTGG's flexibility allowed respite opportunities to cater to the specific needs of carers with five families currently benefitting from the after-school club. Its success has prompted plans for expansion to accommodate more children, thereby providing additional respite for carers.

The local short breaks across the local authorities have provided various short breaks opportunities, including trips, pantomime, and cinema visits and much more. The Carers Short Breaks Scheme in Monmouthshire has provided much-needed respite for young carers and carers, allowing them time away from their caring responsibilities. Reflecting on the recent young carers trip to Folly Farm, one participant shared,

"The staff are so supportive and amazing, and we are forever grateful as supporting and caring for family can be hard going and it's nice to go out as a family. Thank you."

We continue to work to deliver services to our unpaid carers in the most appropriate way. Hospital discharge remains the core theme for delivery for 2024/25. Whilst we recognise the increased need to reach carers in more innovative ways, balanced with adverse challenges of having enough resources to maintain delivery of the carer's priorities, we remain steadfast in our commitment. We will use the outcomes of the pilots to continue to support the discharge pathway and also take forward delivery against the core National priorities as specified in the Welsh Government National Carers Strategy, making sure that "caring becomes everybody's business". For further information, see **Annexe 6 and 7**.

Engagement with Citizens:

We have a Gwent Citizen Network Champion who is an unpaid carer and is the identified RPB carers member. Unpaid carers sit on the Gwent Carers Strategic Partnership and provide a voice for carers across the region. The partnership also links to established carers groups and coordinators in each of the 5 local authority areas and ABUHB.

Dementia

Area Plan Outcomes identified through the Population Needs Assessment:

- To improve outcomes for people living with dementia and their carers

Partnership Progress:

- ABUHB have adopted and embedded the '**Dementia Friendly Hospital Charter**' for Wales. It provides a set of principles and indicators that focus on the needs of people with dementia and their families, carers, and supporters, and offers an improvement guide to assist hospitals in their self-assessment against the dementia friendly principles. Importantly, the Charter informs people of what to expect when they receive care and visit a hospital. The following animation has been created to further raise awareness of the charter and its aims: English <https://youtu.be/KudreUFNZ-E/> Welsh <https://youtu.be/8qu4AB5VFLM>
- Feedback about people's lived experience of dementia care when they are in hospital has been used to influence, shape, and improve dementia care across our hospital wards. Our Hospital Dementia Action Plan has been significantly revised based on feedback and what matters to people.
- The Dementia Strategic Partnership continues to support the implementation of the '**All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards**' and workstream leads continue to take forward work plans through the various subgroups. Significant engagement has been undertaken across all areas of Gwent to find out '**what matters**' to people around dementia care.
- Improving the experience of people living with dementia whilst in hospital, through providing meaningful activities and Dementia Volunteer Companions.
- Our Dementia Friendly Gwent network now has over **270** partners championing dementia awareness, inclusion, and support across Gwent.
- We have continued to work with schools, colleges, charities, community groups and partners across Gwent, providing online and in person Dementia Friends sessions and

supporting online connections with communities. **4,305** Dementia Friends have been made across **152** sessions during 2023/2024.

Free Digital Skills Training to Help People Living with Dementia

As part of **Dementia Action Week 2023** Dementia Friendly Gwent worked in partnership with Digital Community Wales, to offer free online training sessions for people living with dementia, their family, friends, carers, and professionals. A [blog](#) post was also produced with DCW to highlight the partnership, Dementia Action Week and the training.

The sessions provided an opportunity to increase dementia awareness and understanding within the community and provide people with practical knowledge to help support people to live well with dementia in the community. Six sessions were held with positive feedback given from attendees.

Following the success of these sessions, Dementia Friendly Gwent has since continued its partnership with Digital Communities Wales, offering monthly **Lunch and Learn** sessions throughout **2024**. These cover a variety of topics, all aimed at increasing awareness of digital tools and devices, that can support carers and people living with dementia, to remain independent, provide meaningful activity and improve wellbeing.

Dementia Friendly Gwent Network

A Gwent wide Dementia Friendly Communities group was formed in 2021, merging all the local steering groups, and has since gone from strength to strength. It now consisting of over **270** partners and members of the community, sharing their passion to improve our communities for people living with dementia their families and carer's. This network allows us to streamline our Dementia Friendly Communities work programme and feeds directly into the Dementia Strategic Partnership, allowing partnership working across boroughs. Taking a regional approach has allowed each borough to showcase projects, network and provides opportunities to share learning, raise current challenges and seek support.

This year, following changes made to the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative by the Alzheimer's Society, our network decided to develop its own logo. A design competition was created for network members and the wider community, and we had many submissions from across a number of different groups, including care homes, people living with dementia and schools.

A design team were enlisted to create a set of logos based on all the submissions that we received, resulting in 5 Dementia Friendly Gwent logos inspired by all those who had taken part. The network then voted on their favourite resulting in a completely codesigned and coproduced logo that we are extremely proud of!



Dementia Friendly Gwent Coffee Morning 2024



“It’s lovely to see all the services in Gwent we can refer too, and access!”

55 network members joined us for a Dementia Friendly Gwent coffee morning to celebrate the work of Dementia Friendly Communities across Gwent and mark ***Dementia Action Week 2024***. This provided an opportunity for members to network, make connections and learn about various projects supporting those living with dementia and their carers.

The day consisted of a mix of presentations and interactive sessions, including Dragons Rugby Sporting Memories and Love2Move. Our opening address was provided by members of our Experts by Experience group, sharing their journey of dementia so far, what has worked well, and what they wish could have been different.

Attendees also took part in dementia friendly pledges, committing to continue our efforts as a network, to support those living with dementia, and their carers, as well as increase understanding and awareness of dementia.

To end the morning we had a special performance from Age Connects Love to Sing choir, performing their first ever public concert!

“I really enjoyed seeing the amazing work going on in the area, also loved hearing Simon and Lisa’s story!”

Sporting Memories

Sporting Memories has been delivered weekly to older people, and for people living with dementia at Rodney Parade throughout the year. The group has also supported extra activities such as trips and parties, provided new physical activity equipment and grown the number of volunteers to support the facilitation of the club since it began. Some of the members are now attending Dragons Rugby matches and socialising outside of the club.

The weekly club consists of the ‘first half’ being sporting reminiscence and cognitively stimulating games supported by memorabilia and resources such as replay cards, quizzes and the weekly Sporting Pink newspaper but defined by the participant’s sporting interests and preferences. With refreshments served at ‘half time’ the ‘second half’ of the weekly club includes at least 45 minutes of physical activity including indoor curling, boccia, throwing activities and a range of balance and strength exercises. [Newport Sporting Memories in Action](#)



The club works to reduce isolation, improving mental and physical wellbeing and increase connections in the community, having a huge impact on those who attend. Members feel like a family and look forward to seeing each other each week. Members feel comfortable, look out for each other, and feel they are part of something which strengthens their bonds. Overall, we have an average of 20-25 participants attending each week.

'If it was not for this group and the people within, I would not be here now!' – Sporting Memories Member

Extra activities such as an intergenerational day have been held, with a local primary school visiting and talk with members, further supporting the outcomes of the project. The members enjoyed talking to the children of the primary school whose pupils speak 34 languages between them. We have also introduced extra support elements within the club such as Local Police Community Officers who visit regularly and provides advice on things like scammers, how to make your home secure and general safety.

We have recruited 4 new volunteers throughout the year to support project facilitation. Volunteers thoroughly enjoy their role, improve their own mental wellbeing in the process.

Below is Ron, who attended Sporting Memories with his wife and carer Julie. Sadly, Ron passed away due to dementia this year. The picture below shows volunteers and club members visiting Ron at home when he was unable to attend the club due to illness, delivering a session from his bedside so he could remain included and connected with members and not miss out.

Following the loss of Ron, Julie became very isolated and after some persuasion came back to the club, now becoming a volunteer at Sporting Memories clubs across Gwent. It has given her a new a new lease of life and a wider support network following the passing of her husband.



Home Based Memory Rehabilitation' Occupational Therapy (OT) Programme

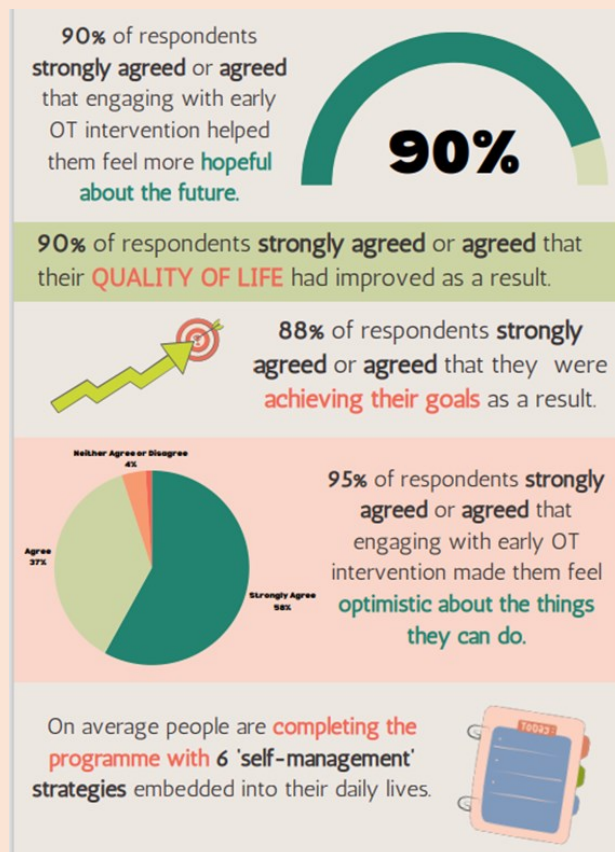
This is a programme for individuals recently referred to memory services and are willing and able, to engage including practicing strategies. The support is delivered one to one in a person's home across six 'themed' sessions (or as needed). The programme introduces memory strategies, memory aids and environmental adaptations at an earlier stage of dementia, whilst the individual still has the ability to learn new habits and routines.

Due to the nature of the person-centred initial assessment, the OT is led by the person's occupational priorities and suited to their unique skills and needs. The family/carer can be involved to support embedding the strategies into daily life, if appropriate. A pilot service took place in Blaenau Gwent and Newport from April 2022 to April 2024.

There are four patient experience themes:

- Orientation Clock (can improve cognitive functioning).
- Range of memory strategies.
- Growth in Confidence.
- Hope for the Future.

Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) were collected, as well as service-user questionnaires. **92** questionnaires were completed. Average experience rating was 9.25, on a scale of 1-10, 10 being excellent.



Engagement with People Living with Dementia

The Dementia Friendly Gwent Network is regularly engaged with to seek their views about services and support and proposed pilot projects. There is also an Engagement workstream as part of the Standards programme that take a multi-agency approach and works to understand what dementia care looks like in Gwent. People with dementia and their carers sit on both the Dementia Friendly Gwent Network and the subgroups under the Dementia Strategic Partnership to help coproduce and shape the dementia care pathway for Gwent.

Work is ongoing through collaboration with partners and communities to provide information and awareness sessions, to raise awareness of dementia, brain health and dementia risk factors, highlight the Dementia Care Standards, and gather people's experiences of dementia care. This engagement includes both virtual and in person visits to groups, organisations, and schools across the community.

We understand the importance of ensuring we are reaching seldom heard voices and have engaged with people with sensory impairment, ethnic minority communities, carers and people who identify as LGBTQ+ to find out '**what matters**' to them and how we can improve dementia care.

Wales Listens Campaign: Improvement Cymru has launched a Wales Listens Campaign, which encourages regions to engage with specific communities and work with those communities to identify what they feel is important to ensuring good dementia care and support. Through our engagement workstream we have developed a communications toolkit to highlight the dementia standards, how people can become involved in our listening campaign, workstream groups, and feedback stories of lived experience by joining our Experts by Experience group.



Health, Social Care & Housing (HSC&H) Strategic Partnership

Area Plan Priorities:

- A multi-agency partnership approach to ensure appropriate housing and accommodation for older people and vulnerable citizens.
- To ensure effective use of Disabled Facilities Grants and appropriate partnership support and available resources.
- Homelessness requiring a collaborative response from public services and partners, especially the non-use of B&B accommodation for young people, and through prevention and early intervention.

Partnership Progress

- The HSC&H Partnership continue to oversee the ICF Capital grant and prepare for the implementation of the new RIF Housing with Care Fund (4-year programme) to support tenanted accommodation for people with complex needs, particularly where affordable housing standards are not appropriate, Intermediate care accommodation (e.g. step up/down, children's residential) and discretionary funding (aids/adaptations, feasibility studies, etc.).

- MCC and TCBC Care and Repair are continuing to deliver the Hospital to Healthier Homes project to support hospital discharge. Every £1 spent on home adaptations to support quicker hospital discharge generates £7.50 saving for health and social care.
- The Partnership continue to provide regional support to individual partners in relation to the homelessness and ending evictions agendas during the pandemic and going forward will coordinate a regional response to the Rapid Rehousing policy.
- Oversight of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme especially in relation to early intervention programmes, housing related support to homelessness services, activity to help people stabilise their housing situation, prevent people from becoming homeless, or people affected by homelessness to find and keep accommodation. This grant also funds several VAWDASV refugees across the Gwent Region.
- A Substance Misuse and Housing task group reporting to both the Area Planning Board and Regional Housing Support Grant Coordination Group developed a specific free online substance misuse training course targeted towards housing staff.

Supporting individuals Using the Housing Support Grant

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is a merge of the Supporting People Wales Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant, and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement. HSG is administered by Local Authority teams and aims to fund an early intervention programme to actively prevent homelessness, help individuals to stabilise their housing situation or help homeless individuals to source and retain accommodation.

The following case study is a powerful testament to unwavering support and the transformative potential of compassion. During the pandemic, a citizen needed support, it took a month to persuade her to open the door of her temporary accommodation to support workers. After two weeks, she came to sit on the doorstep with the worker and two weeks later let them into her home, communicating through minimal words and minimal contact.

There was high risk of failure of tenancy with substance use issues, hoarding and attachment problems. A harm reduction model was implemented, aimed at stabilising her life and reducing her substance use. Staff worked to engage her with NHS professionals and strategies were put in place including involving the South Wales fire inspector to help manage the fire risk in the property.

In late 2022, the citizen started experiencing severe throat problems and through intensive Housing First support she was able to engage with a series of NHS consultations and tests, diagnosing her with terminal throat cancer. The cohesive support of the team was essential to manoeuvre the complex challenges and support the citizen required to get her voice and wishes heard. Staff provided the support she needed to receive radiotherapy. There were many challenges across the complexities of the individual's needs.

As she deteriorated, she trusted staff to assist her in rehoming her dog. She went into a hospice, but she discharged herself after a week and likely would have disengaged from all treatment, but staff persisted, and she returned to the hospice.

Staff supported estranged family connections, contacted the Salvation Army, and secured a grant from Macmillan Cancer Support to make a reunion possible. Her daughter visited her with support for her visit. Staff also facilitated communication and support through the final stages of her life, advocating for her when she could no longer speak to ensure her final wishes were honoured. Sadly the client passed away in 2023, peacefully and surrounded by the care of her support network at a local hospice.

Specialist Long Term Supported Accommodation for Adults with Alcohol Addiction

In 2023-24, the RPB and Welsh Government Ministers approved an application for the delivery of Specialist Long Term supported accommodation for adults with alcohol addiction in an existing Housing Association asset. Funding of **£285,000** was paid in advance to United Welsh Housing Association, with **£239,933** private finance being provided by the Housing Association.

The aim of the project is to deliver a holistic specialist long-term supported accommodation to adults (16+) with emotional and mental wellbeing needs as well as alcohol addiction. The project will enable the refurbishment of an existing property to provide long-term sustainable accommodation for up to 4 individuals with alcohol problems, together with provision for staffing. Potential residents are either:

- currently within a hospital setting (in or out of county) who require a lower level of service or,
- Individuals with long term needs, including care that would require care and support for the foreseeable future, to varying degrees of each with a flexible need-based assessment.

The property will provide benefits for each individual who is currently being referred and refused accommodation due to lack of provision to meet their emotional and mental needs. The property will provide a safe home for individuals to continue living within a community, a part of society, where needs can be met with the potential of stabilising consumption, in some cases reducing it and in others stopping it entirely with a view to move to living more independently.

The property is ideally located with key support staff being located on the street behind, as well as support services in the area for wider services over and above Housing Support. The project is proposing on-site support workers across Housing Support and GDAS/GSSMS to provide ongoing support to access rehabilitation and on-site recovery programmes.

The revenue funding will primarily be provided through Housing Support Grant. There will be other interventions required through partner organisations that are already being funded and will continue to be provided and funded at the scheme. The project is currently on site and should be completed by the end of March 2025.

Engagement with Citizens:

The Health, Social Care and Housing Strategic Partnership recognise that the citizens voice is important in informing how services are designed and delivered. Housing is essential in supporting positive wellbeing, and as a result, the Gwent Region have initiated the Housing Engagement and Learning Panel (**HELP Group**), to better inform services of the issues being experienced by citizens in relation to housing, identifying where services need to be established or improved and identifying where services are working well. Each panel session is scheduled prior to those of the strategic partnerships, to allow citizens to provide their feedback on agenda items and inform the priorities of the strategic partnership.

9. Assistive Technology and Digital Solutions

The Gwent RPB Assistive Technology Programme aims to maximise the use and impact of Assistive Technology (AT) solutions to improve health and well-being outcomes, maintain and enhance independence, and support the development of models of care across Gwent. The programme collaborates with partners across Gwent to optimise the implementation and effectiveness of AT and technology-enabled care (TEC) solutions, enhancing health and well-being outcomes and ensuring consistent delivery across the region. The programme includes regional Better Care projects, a Technology Coach, and a series of AT projects, working with partners to develop the Gwent AT Network to bring partners together across the region. Over the last year, the Network has:

- continued to meet and develop shared resources.
- arranged AT Roadshows within the ABUHB estate.
- invited guests to present the latest technologies.
- shared the latest developments across the membership.

Progress Update

Over the past 12 months the programme has assisted **1,114** people through projects funded via the RIF.

The Gwent RPB has funded a series of Assistive Technology projects to test new interventions and care delivery methods, these include HUG by LAUGH, PainChek, RITA, the Happiness Programme, and the Stay Well at Home pilot.

HUG by LAUGH (HUG): The comfort of a hug when it's needed most!



HUG by LAUGH® is a sensory device designed to bring people pleasure and comfort. The device has been designed by Cardiff Metropolitan University specifically for people living with dementia but can be used by people with various conditions. In Gwent, HUG is being piloted in a range of different settings to test effectiveness. It has weighted arms and legs along with an optional beating heart within its soft body. It can play personalised music that can be changed to a favourite playlist. The HUG "magic box" which provides the heartbeat and music runs from a rechargeable unit which is removed when washing.

The Gwent RPB has to date provided funding for **500** devices, which has benefited people living with dementia, autism, and ND conditions, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, carers and people receiving end-of-life care. It has been a real partnership effort and we have been proud to support the distribution of a product developed here in Wales which is making a real difference to people across our Gwent communities. You can find out all about HUG on our webpage [here](#).

Read all about the Life Sciences Hub HUG by LAUGH launch event at the Senedd here: [The power of a good HUG: supporting care in the community!](#)

PainChek

The Life Science Hub Wales (LSHW) received funding from the Gwent RPB in April 2022 to support the pilot of PainChek, the world's first clinically proven digital pain assessment tool. PainChek uses AI, facial recognition, and smartphone technology to intelligently automate the pain assessment process at the point of care. Care home groups involved in the PainChek pilot have seen benefits, such as upskilling their workforce and effectively managing pain, leading to improved care and better outcomes for residents. As a result of the pilot Shaw Healthcare and Dormy Care Communities are now rolling out PainChek across their Welsh care homes. Additionally, an evaluation by Pobl provided further evidence of PainChek's effectiveness for people with learning disabilities.

This has bolstered PainChek's evidence base and supported further evaluation in North Wales through Cartrefi, a Welsh learning disability group. An evaluation of the Gwent PainChek pilot project, funded by LSHW and delivered by ATIC, is due to be published in **July 2024**.

Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities (RITA)

RITA developed by My Improvement Network, enhances care for older individuals, including those with dementia and mental health conditions. Using a touchscreen device, RITA offers meaningful activities that combine entertainment with therapy, helping patients with memory impairments recall and share past events through music, news, speeches, games, karaoke, and films. Over **260** RITA devices were purchased with Gwent RPB funding between 2020-2022. These devices have been distributed in partnership with ABUHB, local authorities, and third-sector organisations across Gwent, including care homes, hospitals, community venues, and third-sector projects. RITA is also used by mobile teams and has been trialled in complex care settings. More information is available on the Gwent RPB website's [RITA page](#).

Happiness Programme

The Happiness Programme, created by Social Ability, combines interactive sensory light technology with a structured programme, training, and support. Designed for individuals with cognitive and physical care needs, the Happiness Programme provides meaningful and engaging activities through more than 80 interactive options including a variety of interactive games, quizzes, and mindful immersive content.

In 2021/2022, 147 Happiness Programme devices were funded by the Gwent RPB for 2 years. The devices have been distributed across all sectors in the region with organisations reporting positive results. Feedback from organisations using the Happiness Programme indicates a positive impact on both the supported individuals and the staff.



"It's an essential resource for us as we use it in bedrooms for our residents who are less mobile. The ceiling play is really helpful. We'd be lost without it."

Millheath Nursing Home

Further information is available on the Gwent RPB website's [Happiness Programme page](#).

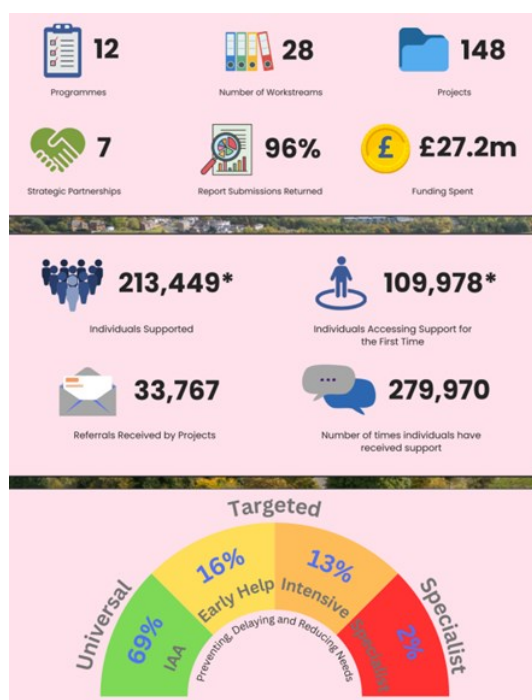
10. Supporting Better Integration and Delivery

Regional Integration Fund (RIF)

The Gwent RPB uses its allocations from Welsh Government revenue and capital funds as a key resource to deliver progress against the Area Plan.

Welsh Government provided a 5-year commitment of partnership funding at the outset of **2022-23** within the Regional Integration Fund. The RIF revenue portfolio for the Gwent RPB has been delivered via **12** Strategic Programmes, consisting of **28** workstreams and **148** projects.

The projects and services within this programme have been enabled via **£27.2million** of revenue funding provided via the Regional Integration Fund. The full RIF 2023-2024 **Story of Change** report can be viewed in **Annexe 8**. The report focuses on **'story telling'** to highlight difference made to citizens and development activities remain underway to support delivery organisations to improve data quality, accuracy, and consistency for future reporting.



23/24 Snapshot of the RIF Revenue Programme

The Regional Integrated Fund has had significant reach across Gwent supporting more individuals than ever and many for the first time.

Impacts of RIF funded projects:

- 42% of carers felt less isolated following the support they received and 79% felt more confident.
- For our children and families programmes 73% of participants reported feeling less isolated with 75% prevented from an escalation of their level of care.
- Many of the system resilience and winter interventions are in the Gwent Adults Strategic Partnership Programmes where 98% received support which prevented an escalation of the level of their care and 90% reported maintaining or improving their emotional health and wellbeing.
- For our Mental Health and learning disability programmes 80% had their independence maintained or improved.
- 81% of participants in dementia projects felt more confident in accessing services.

These outcomes demonstrate positive impact of the fund. Whilst there is more to do to evaluate and understand the impact of specific programmes there is progress in supporting the population.

National Models of Care

As an intended output of the Regional Integration Fund 5-year programme, regions are being asked to contribute towards learning to help shape National Models of Care, so that citizens of Wales, wherever they live, can be assured of an effective and seamless service in relation to:

- **Community based care – prevention and community coordination**
- **Community based care – complex care closer to home**
- **Promoting good emotional health and well-being**
- **Supporting families to stay together safely and therapeutic support for care experienced children.**
- **Home from hospital**
- **Accommodation based solutions.**

Partners across Gwent have been supporting the Communities of Practice set up by Welsh Government, that align to the models and continue to do so to share national learning and ongoing engagement.

Regional Partnership Capital Programme 2023/24

The Gwent RPB Capital Programme invests in the regions long-term aim of ensuring support is delivered as close to home as possible and is available when people need it, through the transformation of spaces. The Regional Capital Strategy for Gwent was developed in 2023, within which there are 9 key strategic priorities. During 2023-24, the Integrated Capital

Planning Group progressed **23** applications for capital resources in support of our strategic priorities.

The visual below illustrates the volume of activity and associated funding commitment supporting developments in 2023-24.



In addition to bed spaces, a range of aids and adaptations in support of care closer to home and home first priorities were delivered in 2023-24.

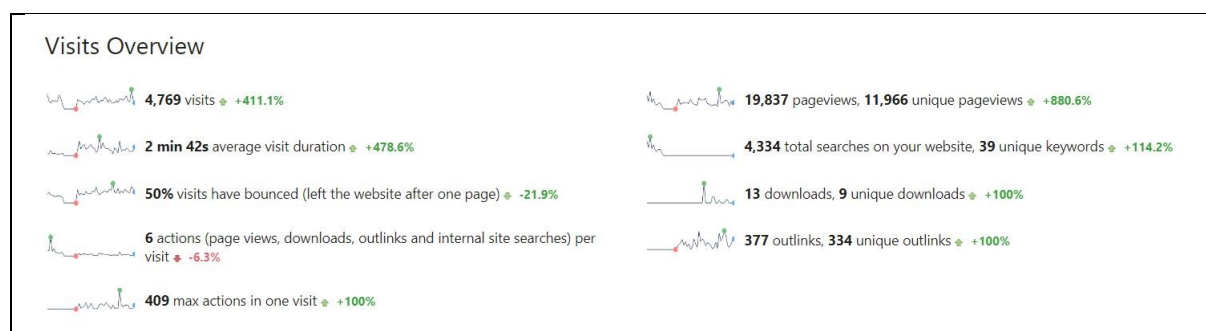
11. Coproduction, Engagement and Social Value

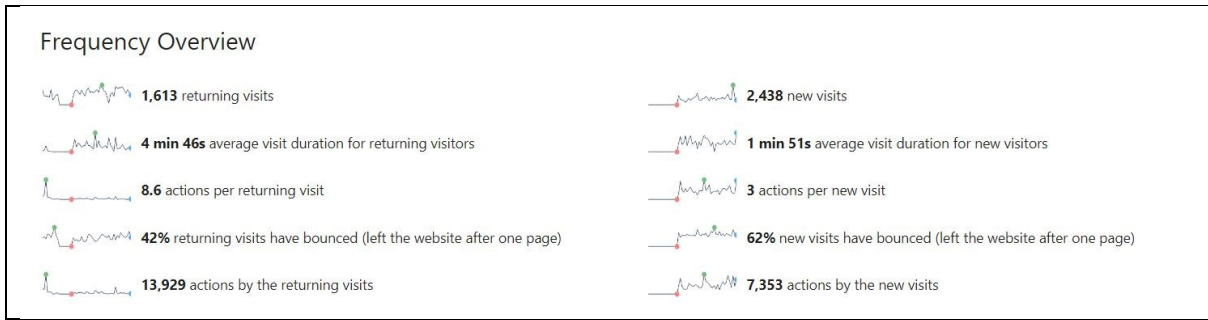
Communication and Engagement Strategy

The RPB is working to refresh its communications and engagement strategic approach, in light of the Rebalancing Care consultation. A newly formed Communications and Engagement (C&E) group has been developed, involving partners from across the RPB landscape, with the aim to provide a golden thread of C&E activity throughout the RPB and align with outside partner activities and workstreams. This group will report to the RPB and provide updates on work and aligns with National and regional priorities, which is under regular review to ensure alignment with individual partner strategies and emerging work such as the Integrated Service Partnership Boards ISPB's) newly created strategy.

The [Gwent RPB website](#) has undergone a redesign over recent years, with regular reviews, updates, and promotion, to ensure it is up to date and effective. The new look website will be key to further raising the profile of the RPB, with both the public and professionals. The website acts as platform to share the work of the RPB and partners across Gwent, with the aim to engage citizens in policy decisions and share information, advice, and assistance.

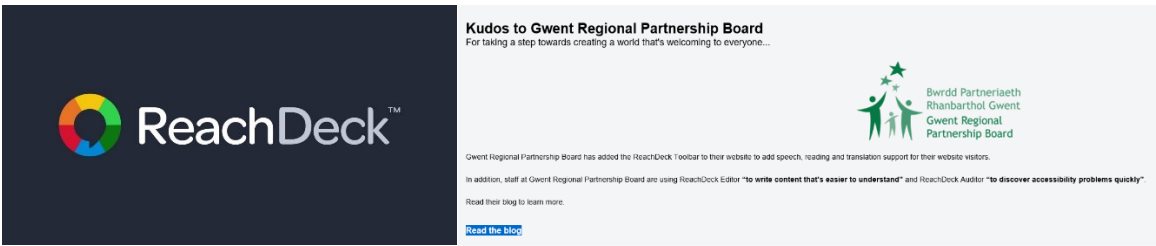
The below data, demonstrates the increase in website usage over the last 12 months.





Accessibility

We are working hard to ensure that our website is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, version 2.1. We are pleased to have added Speech, Reading and Translation support, with the Reach Deck toolbar and our [blog announcement](#) featured in their newsletter.



Kudos to Gwent Regional Partnership Board
For taking a step towards creating a world that's welcoming to everyone...

Bwrdd Partneriaeth Rhanbarthol Gwent
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Gwent Regional Partnership Board has added the ReachDeck toolbar to their website to add speech, reading and translation support for their website visitors.

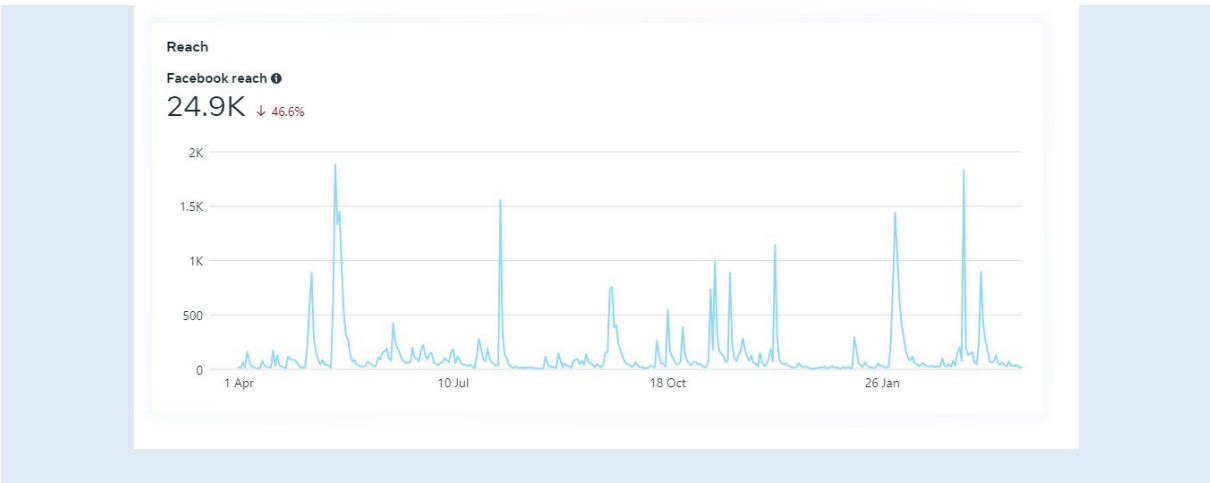
In addition, staff at Gwent Regional Partnership Board are using ReachDeck Editor "to write content that's easier to understand" and ReachDeck Auditor "to discover accessibility problems quickly".

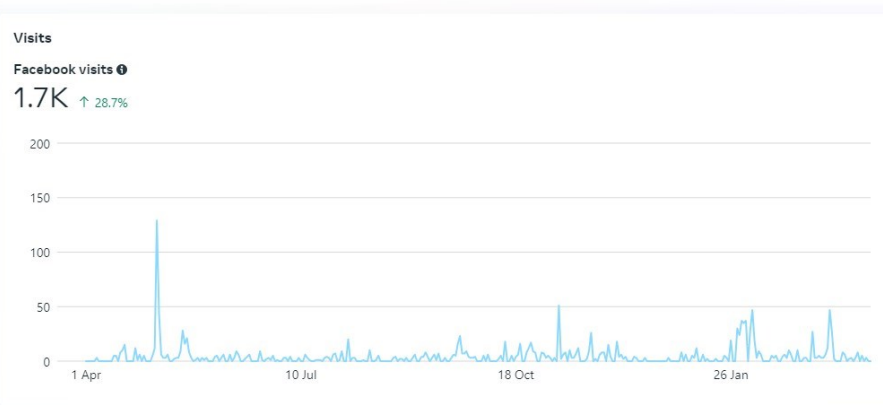
Read their blog to learn more.

[Read the blog](#)

Social Media

The RPB raises awareness of regional and National campaigns through its social media channels, [X](#) and [Facebook](#). We continue to grow our community following and engagement through these channels to help support the reach of our messaging and gain valuable feedback through consultation from the citizens of Gwent. Over the last 12 months we have more than doubled our social media followers on both platforms (Facebook: **490** followers / X: **654** followers).





Social Value Forums

The RPB continues to engage with WCVA and the Wales Cooperative Centre, in adopting a Social Value Forum Toolkit and will look to support the development of social enterprises across the regions, working with our third sector umbrella organisations. We will work at pace during 2023/24 to rebrand our current forums in line with new duties set out in Rebalancing Care reforms and refreshed codes of practice.

The Regional Commissioning Group continue to explore new opportunities linked to RIF and HSG and will provide a renewed focus to further develop the role of third sector Social Value-Based services in the region. This may be linked to day services or supporting hospital discharge, admission avoidance and maintaining low level support in the community.

The Mental Health and Learning Disability Partnership are also exploring a new coproduction approach to commissioning, based on a consortium approach across third sector providers.

Gwent Regional Domiciliary Care Fora

The Gwent Regional Domiciliary care provider fora is a long-established forum led by the Regional Team and ABUHB to provide support to domiciliary care providers in Gwent. Meetings are held monthly collaboratively between the local authorities and ABUHB, and address current issues being experienced by providers.

Gwent Care Homes Engagement Forum

As with third sector and domiciliary care providers, the regional team also engages with care home providers. Support has been provided by ABUHB in partnership with the Regional Partnership Team at monthly care home webinars.

More recent meetings have focussed on the recruitment and retention issues faced by providers, and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on services. Regular engagement with care providers in Gwent, while also ensuring key priorities are addressed by RPB through provider representatives. Providers also engage with ongoing workstreams, such as regional fee methodology and a regional approach to contract monitoring procedures in care services.

This engagement forum is set to evolve once again into a co-productive monthly engagement forum led by the Regional Partnership team, in collaboration with ABUHB and provider representatives.

Gwent Third Sector (including Section 16) Forum

This new forum will replace the existing provider forum and incorporate the duty to have regard to the Third Sector and to promote social enterprises and co-operatives. This work will be a

collaborative, co-productive venture which will place 3rd sector organisations at the heart of the preventative agenda in the region.

12. Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub (GRICH)

To support and develop improved co-ordinating research, innovation and improvement, each region has established a Regional Innovation Co-ordination (RIC) Hub to jointly support health and social care research capacity. The Hubs are expected to:

- **Foster Innovation:** Promote a culture of innovation in Gwent to encourage the development and adopting of new ideas, processes, and technologies.
- **Enhance Collaboration:** Promote collaboration, co-production with citizens and networking across different organisations and sectors to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.
- **Improve Service Delivery:** Elevate the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, particularly in health and social care, to better address community needs.
- **Support Evidence-Based Adoption:** Advocate for the adoption and adaptation of evidence-based innovation activities across health and social care in Gwent, ensuring ongoing evaluation, learning, and refinement for continual advancement.

Key Highlights and Achievements (full report in Annexe 4):

- **Established GRICH:** Successfully launched the Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub, with new branding and dedicated web pages to enhance visibility and accessibility.
- **Collaborative Partnership Model:** Established a partnership model between the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) that manages operations efficiently without additional staffing, thereby maximising innovation investment.
- **Formation of the Innovation Committee:** Developed a collaborative Innovation Committee across health and social care sectors to provide oversight and strategic guidance, ensuring alignment with regional needs and priorities.
- **Launch of the Rapid Innovation Initiative:** Introduced the Rapid Innovation Initiative, specifically designed to fund and support innovative projects addressing key health and social care challenges.
- **Significant Project Support:** Within three months, successfully supported nine innovative projects, with a total of **£150,000** allocated, demonstrating rapid deployment and effective use of resources.

13. Looking Ahead

The Area Plan sets out the Gwent RPB's key actions and priorities following the Population Needs Assessment and is reviewed at each strategic partnership meeting. We will continue to monitor, update and support progress of the Area Plan through **2024/25** with a focus on collaborative priorities including:

- Engaging with and coproducing health and social care services with citizens.
- We will improve how we measure impact and difference made to have a stronger evidence base through intelligence-led approaches to data, engagement and future needs. We need to understand the positive impact of the work we do, to improve health and social care, via a mixture of quantitative and qualitative information.
- Reducing length of hospital stays for older people and help return safely back home with sustainable support, through our system resilience planning and delivering the '**Further Faster**' agenda.
- Continue to focus on children with complex needs and children looked after, especially provision and impact of out of county placements, under the 'Eliminate agenda'.
- Continue to look for innovative and supportive solutions to help people who are awaiting an Autism/ND Assessment (pre and post assessment/diagnostic support)
- Continue to support people living with dementia and their carers, especially with community support and earlier intervention such as 'community dementia hubs'.
- Continue to find innovative solutions to long term recruitment and retention issues across health and social care, particularly Domiciliary Care.
- Work in partnership with our Gwent PSB and other partners to reduce isolation, loneliness, and impact on mental health, with a focus on emotional wellbeing.
- Continue to look at respite solutions for carers in a timely and flexible way (formal, informal) especially in crisis situations.
- We will continue to develop and further strengthen our partnerships and provide good governance: ensuring effective and responsible management of the RPB's functions to deliver its objectives.

ANNEXES

Annexe 1: Membership of the Regional Partnership Board

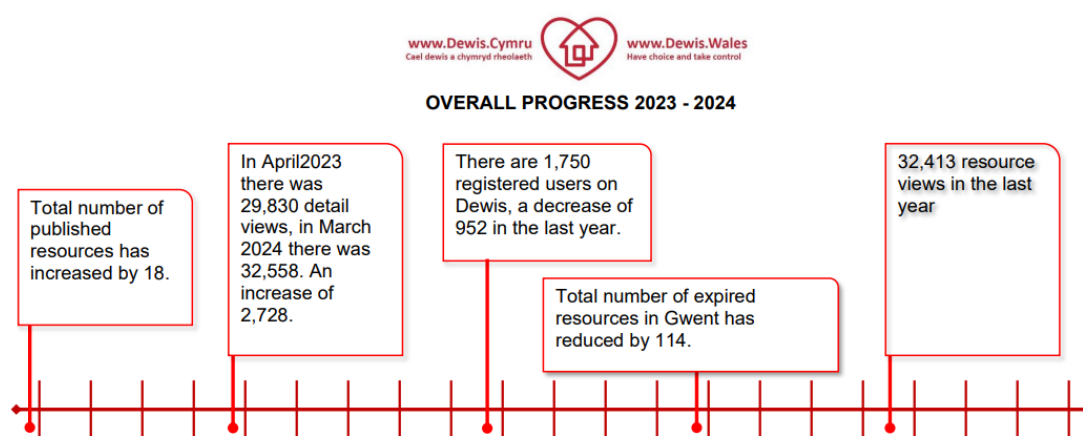
The required membership of the Regional Partnership Board is set out in statutory guidance in Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. The Board also has the flexibility to co-opt additional members should they wish. The current RPB membership as of March 2023 is set out below:



Gwent RPB
Membership 2024.do

Annexe 2: DEWIS Cymru, National Directory of Services

Overall Progress



TOP 3 SUCCESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increased resources.2. Decrease of expired resources.3. Resource detail views have increased.
TOP 3 CHALLENGES
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Re-engaging with expired resources.2. Myth busting that DEWIS resources are out of date if viewable.3. Ensuring DEWIS is developed with/linked to existing/new directories, developing stronger links with partners and organisations.
NEXT STEPS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continue to lead and coordinate Dewis implementation across the region.2. Promote and encourage the use of DEWIS within the community and with providers of support and services throughout Gwent.3. Continue to increase available resources and reduce the number of expired resources.

Dewis Data 2023-2024



Dewis Data
20232024.docx

Annex 3: Citizens Panel Weekly Burst Data 2023 – 2024



Citizens Panel
Weekly Burst Analytic



Citizens Panel
Weekly Burst Analytic

Annexe 4: Gwent Regional Innovation Coordination Hub Annual Report



Draft GRICH Annual
Report 2023-24 v0.10

Annex 5: Our Future Our Voices, Gwent Director of Public Health Report



Our Future Our Voice
Gwent Director of Pub

Annex 6: Carers Week 2023 Annual Reporting



RPB -Carervents
annual Reporting 202

Annex 7: Young Carers in Schools 23-24



TCC Dashboard
Gwent EOY 2023-202

Annex 8: Gwent Regional Integration Fund Year 2023-2024 Story of Change Report



Gwent RPB - Y2 Q4
RIF SoC Report Final \



SUBJECT:	DIARY OF MEETINGS FOR 2025/26
MEETING:	Full Council
DATE:	24 January 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	N/A

1. PURPOSE:

To approve the diary of meetings for 2025/26.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council approve the diary of meetings for 2025/2026 to ensure good governance arrangements are in place and meet the requirements of the Councils Constitution.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Some Committees set their own dates during the year eg SAC, Appointment of LEA Governors Committee, Corporate Parenting Panel and these will be added to the diary in due course if we have not already received those dates.

3.2 The diary includes, for information only, dates of meetings for political groups and outside bodies that are not agreed by Council and are subject to change by the organising bodies.

3.3 As per previous years, as far as is practicable meetings have not been scheduled during school holidays as requested by Councillors. There is an inevitable need to hold some meetings during school holidays so that the diary does not become too congested and avoids clashes with other meetings and priorities, but these have been kept to a minimum.

4. REASONS:

The Council calendar needs to be approved annually to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the year and enables Members and officers to forward plan effectively.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None as a direct result of this report.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no sustainable development or equality impacts arising from this report.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTEES:

SLT
Political Group Leaders
Democratic Services Committee

Scrutiny Manager

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

10. AUTHOR:

John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644212

E-mail: johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

1 MAY 2025 - 1 JUNE 2026

MAY, 2025				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 9.15 am Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm Governance and Audit Committee	2 9.00 am Planning Site Visits
5	6 2.00 pm Planning Committee	7 5.00 pm Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	8 9.00 am Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee	9
12 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Public Services Scrutiny Committee	13	14	15 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	16
19	20 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	21 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	22 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	23
26 School Holiday Start	27	28 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	29 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	30 School Holiday End

JUNE, 2025				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	3 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	4	5	6
9	10 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	11 3.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC) 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	12 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	13
16 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Standards Committee	17 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee	18 WLGA Conference	19 WLGA Conference 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	20
23 10.00 am ARMED FORCES DAY	24	25 11.00 am PROVISIONAL - Corporate Parenting Panel 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	26 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 12.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Welsh Church Fund 1.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Public Service Board 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	27
30 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Joint Advisory Group				

JULY, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	2	3 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Scrutiny Chairs Meeting	4
7 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Public Services Scrutiny Committee 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee	8 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	9 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	10 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	11
14 11.00 am PROVISIONAL - Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Democratic Services Committee	15 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	16 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	17 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	18
21 School Holiday Start	22 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee	23 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	24 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	25

28	29	30	31 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	
----	----	----	--	--

AUGUST, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	5 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	6 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	7	8
7 Page 97	12	13	14 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	15
	18	19	20 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	21 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting
				22

25	26	27	28 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	29
----	----	----	--	----

SEPTEMBER, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	5
8 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	9 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	10 3.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC) 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	11 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	12
15 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Standards Committee	16 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	17 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	18 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 12.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Welsh Church Fund 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	19

Page 98

22	23 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	24 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	25 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 1.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Public Service Board 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	26
29 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Joint Advisory Group	30 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee			

OCTOBER, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	7 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	8 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	9 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Scrutiny Chairs Meeting	10
13 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Public Services Scrutiny Committee 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Democratic Services Committee	14	15 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet 6.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Corporate Parenting Panel	16 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	17

20 11.00 am PROVISIONAL - Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust	21 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	22 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	23 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	24
27 School Holiday Start	28	29	30 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	31 School Holiday End

NOVEMBER, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee	4 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	5	6 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	7
10	11 11.00 am ARMISTICE DAY	12 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	13 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	14

17	18 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	19 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	20 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	21
24	25 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee	26 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	27 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	28

DECEMBER, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	2 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	3 3.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC)	4 1.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Welsh Church Fund 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	5
8 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Public Services Scrutiny Committee	9 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	10 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	11 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 1.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Public Service Board 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	12

15 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Standards Committee	16	17 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	18 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	19
22 School Holiday Start	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

Page 1
2

JANUARY, 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2
5	6	7	8 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	9

12 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	13 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	14 11.00 am PROVISIONAL - Corporate Parenting Panel 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	15 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	16
19 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Joint Advisory Group 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Democratic Services Committee	20 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	21 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	22 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	23
26 11.00 am PROVISIONAL - Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust	27 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	28 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	29 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Scrutiny Chairs Meeting	30

Page 103

FEBRUARY, 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	3 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	4	5 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	6

9 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Public Services Scrutiny Committee	10 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee	11 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	12 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	13
16 School Holiday Start	17	18	19 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	20 School Holiday End
23 Page 104	24	25 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	26 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	27
MARCH, 2026				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee	3 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	4 3.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC)	5 1.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Welsh Church Fund 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	6

9	10 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	11 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	12 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	13
16 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Standards Committee	17 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	18 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet	19 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Place Scrutiny Committee	20
23	24	25 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	26 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Children and Young People Appointment of Local Authority Governors Committee 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	27
Page 105 School Holiday Start	31 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - People Scrutiny Committee			
APRIL, 2026				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	3

6	7	8 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	9 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	10
13 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits	14 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	15 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Public Services Scrutiny Committee 4.30 pm PROVISIONAL - Cabinet 6.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Corporate Parenting Panel	16 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Governance and Audit Committee	17
20 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Democratic Services Committee	21 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	22	23 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	24
27 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Joint Advisory Group	28 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Licensing and Regulatory Committee	29 5.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Individual Cabinet Member Decisions	30 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 10.00 am PROVISIONAL - Scrutiny Chairs Meeting	

Page 106

MAY, 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 9.00 am PROVISIONAL - Planning Site Visits

4	5 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - Planning Committee	6	7 SENEDD ELECTION	8
11	12	13	14 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting 2.00 pm PROVISIONAL - County Council	15
18	19	20	21 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	22
25	26	27	28 9.15 am PROVISIONAL - Planning - Delegated Panel Meeting	29

This page is intentionally left blank