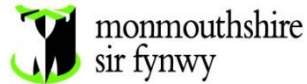


# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Friday, 10 April 2026

## Notice of meeting

### Public Services Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20th April, 2026 at 10.00 am,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK

*Please note that a pre meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting for members of the committee.*

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence.</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest.</b>	
3.	<b>Public Open Forum.</b>  Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council <a href="#">website</a>  If you would like to speak under the Public Open Forum at an upcoming meeting you will need to give three working days' notice in advance of the meeting by contacting <a href="mailto:Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk">Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>  The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the Chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes.  Alternatively, if you would like to submit a written, audio or video representation, please contact the team via the same email address to arrange this. The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three clear working days in advance of the meeting. If combined representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting.  If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Scrutiny Committees, please do so by emailing <a href="mailto:Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk">Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>	

<b>4.</b>	<b>Adult Suicide:</b>	
<b>4.1.</b>	<b>PART 1: To hear from MIND on how Mental Health Services in Monmouthshire are impacting both positively negatively on the individuals they support.</b>	<b>1 - 6</b>
<b>4.2.</b>	<b>PART 2: To receive a presentation from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) to provide a progress update.</b>	<b>7 - 28</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>To receive the following minutes:</b>	
<b>5.1.</b>	<b>Public Services Scrutiny Committee dated 13th October 2025.</b>	<b>29 - 36</b>
<b>5.2.</b>	<b>Public Services Scrutiny Committee dated 15th December 2025.</b>	<b>37 - 48</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Public Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.</b>	<b>49 - 54</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Council and Cabinet Work Planner.</b>	<b>55 - 58</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Next Meeting: Monday 8th June 2026 at 10.00am.</b>	

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Jill Bond	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Steven Garratt	Overmonnow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tony Kear	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	Mardy;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Dale Rooke	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Frances Taylor	Magor West;	Independent Group
County Councillor Armand Watts	Bulwark and Thornwell;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

## Public Information

Please note that Monmouthshire County Council will film this meeting and it will be made available to view in live and archive form online. It is possible that the public seating areas could be filmed and by entering the Chamber you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting purposes. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed.

Recordings of the meeting will be stored in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. Archived webcasts or parts of webcasts shall only be removed from the Council's website if the Monitoring Officer considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law doctrine, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt 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.

### 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

Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council [website](#)

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# 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.

<b>Role of the Pre-meeting</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)</li> <li>2. What is the Committee’s role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?</li> <li>3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead</li> <li>- Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member</li> </ul>	
<b>Questions for the Meeting</b>	
<p><u>Scrutinising Performance</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?</li> <li>2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?</li> <li>3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?</li> <li>4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?</li> <li>5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?</li> <li>6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?</li> <li>7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?</li> <li>8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?</li> </ol>	<p><u>Scrutinising Policy</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?</li> <li>2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome?</li> <li>3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the ‘taxpayer’ perspective?</li> <li>4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?</li> <li>5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?</li> <li>6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?</li> <li>7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards?</li> </ol>

8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications
9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?
- 10.
11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?
- 12.
13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated

## General Questions:

### Empowering Communities

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?
- Is the service working with citizens to explain the role of different partners in delivering the service, and managing expectations?
- Is there a framework and proportionate process in place for collective performance assessment, including from a citizen's perspective, and do you have accountability arrangements to support this?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? If so, can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers provide members with copies and a detailed explanation of the EQIA conducted in respect of these proposals?
- Can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers assure members that these proposals comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation? Do the proposals comply with the Local Authority's Strategic Equality Plan?

### Service Demands

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?
- Have you identified and considered the long-term trends that might affect your service area, what impact these trends could have on your service/your service could have on these trends, and what is being done in response?

### Financial Planning

- Do we have robust medium and long-term financial plans in place?
- Are we linking budgets to plans and outcomes and reporting effectively on these?

### Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?

- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

- Were the intended outcomes of the proposal achieved or were there other results?
- Were the impacts confined to the group you initially thought would be affected i.e. older people, or were others affected e.g. people with disabilities, parents with young children?
- Is the decision still the right decision or do adjustments need to be made?

**Questions for the Committee to conclude...**

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

## **Report to the Suicide Prevention Committee (Tabled to People Scrutiny Committee at Monmouthshire County Council ~ 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

### **Concerns Regarding Service User experience of the Monmouthshire Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)**

**Submitted by:** Jaime Devine

**Date:** February 2026

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

This report has been prepared to formally provide feedback regarding the Monmouthshire Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The issues outlined relate predominantly to systemic service-delivery problems, rather than the actions of individual staff members. Staff encounters have been consistently courteous and staff present as being committed to providing support; however, significant barriers within the system are preventing timely and appropriate intervention for vulnerable individuals.

#### **2. Summary of Systemic Concerns**

##### **2.1 Communication Difficulties**

Across recent months, the following issues have been consistently observed:

- Telephone calls to the duty desk frequently go unanswered.
- At times, calls divert to voicemail; on other occasions, the system reports being unavailable.
- Emails raising urgent concerns about client wellbeing often receive no response.

This inability to connect and communicate has contributed to:

- Increased distress and hopelessness for clients already experiencing significant risk.
- Barriers to accessing timely intervention.
- Heightened pressure on supported accommodation staff attempting to escalate concerns.

##### **2.2 Lack of Continuity and Cover Arrangements**

Further concerns include:

- Clients not being informed when their Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) is absent or has left their role.
- A lack of clarity regarding temporary or alternative points of contact.
- Failures to follow through on commitments to call clients or workers with updates or safety plans. These gaps have left clients without support during periods of acute need.

### 3. Case Examples Illustrating Systemic Failures

The following three anonymised case studies relate to incidents occurring since December 2025, each highlighting significant risks arising from lack of communication, delayed intervention and inconsistent follow-up.

#### 3.1 Case A: "J"

##### Background:

- Moved into supported living in November 2025 following a serious suicide attempt, resulting in burn injuries (approx. 10% of body).
- Diagnoses include Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, with contributing stressors of homelessness, relationship breakdown and financial hardship.
- Discontinued mental health medication over Christmas due to adverse effects, resulting in daily suicidal ideation and significant distress.

##### Timeline of Concern:

- Assessment took place on **13 January 2026**, with agreed actions:
  - Additional support to be implemented
  - Medication review
  - Case to go to MDT
  - Follow-up call by Friday
- No follow-up call was made.
- Over the following three weeks:
  - CMHT staff repeatedly assured that calls would be made, but none occurred.
  - Emails raising urgent concerns received **no response**.
  - A medication review was offered for **16 March 2026**—two months after assessment—despite escalating suicide risk.

##### Impact:

- Continued daily suicidal ideation.
- Deteriorating mental health and increased feelings of abandonment.
- Prolonged period without clinical intervention despite high-risk presentation.

### 3.2 Case B: "K"

#### Background:

- Moved into supported living April 2025.
- Diagnoses: depression, anxiety, learning difficulties; possible schizophrenia not fully assessed/ diagnosed.
- Experiences persistent visual and auditory hallucinations.
- Three acute mental health crises since moving in, two requiring hospital admission.
- No medication review since engagement with services; only one in-person CMHT appointment.

#### Key Events (December 2025):

- Presented with severe confusion, involuntary movements, and non-responsiveness.
- Seen by GP and hospital; discharged with diagnosis of migraine.
- Over following days, continued to present as significantly unwell.

#### Escalation Attempts:

- Multiple attempts by staff and family to contact the Duty Desk; responses were delayed or absent.
- CPN advised that calls had been attempted, though the family reports not receiving any.
- Email warnings regarding lack of Mind in Gwent support over Christmas due to closure received no reply.
- Support Worker again unable to reach duty desk despite high and escalating concern.

#### Impact:

- KF required physical prompting for basic self-care.
- Significant deterioration in mental health functioning.
- Recovery was prolonged and unsupported.
- As of this report, **no follow-up** or medication review has occurred.

### 3.3 Case C: "E"

## **Background:**

- Diagnoses: traumatic brain injury, PTSD, bipolar affective disorder.
- History of five hospitalisations for manic episodes.
- Undergoing a significant life change (moving home), identified historically as a potential trigger for mania.

## **Key Concerns:**

- During the move, EO displayed early warning signs of mania including disorganised communication, extreme sleep disruption, and erratic behaviour.
- Misplaced medication during move and requested support from CMHT.
- Advised that CPN was absent and told to contact GP rather than CMHT assisting with a replacement prescription.

## **Communication Breakdown:**

- EO went approximately one week without medication.
- Support worker emailed CMHT raising concerns about escalating risk—**no response was received.**

## **Impact:**

- Deterioration in mental health and increased risk of relapse into manic episode.
- Lack of continuity despite known triggers and previous hospitalisations.

## **4. Scale of Impact**

The Mind in Gwent Tenancy, Supported Living and Welfare Rights Project currently supports just under 200 individuals in Monmouthshire experiencing mental ill-health.

We only escalate concerns to CMHT when:

- A client is at significant risk of self-harm or suicide
- A mental health crisis appears imminent
- Risk of hospitalisation is high

The cases described represent only a portion of the issues identified since December 2025; additional examples could not be included without client consent.

## **5. Conclusion**

The concerns raised in this report **do not** reflect a lack of professionalism or care from individual CMHT staff members. Instead, they indicate underlying systemic and operational failures that are:

- Increasing risk to vulnerable individuals
- Preventing timely clinical intervention
- Causing avoidable deterioration in clients' mental health
- Reducing trust in support services
- Creating pressure on community-based organisations attempting to manage risk without clinical backing

Given the severity of risk involved—including repeated suicidal ideation, unmanaged psychosis, and risk of manic relapse—there is significant potential for serious harm if these systemic issues remain unaddressed.

## **6. Recommendations for Consideration**

1. **Review and strengthen duty desk capacity** to ensure predictable, timely responses.
2. **Improve communication protocols**, including confirmations of receipt for risk-related emails.
3. **Introduce clear cover arrangements** when staff are absent or cases are unallocated.
4. **Implement faster triage and follow-up for high-risk individuals.**
5. **Conduct a system-wide audit** of communication failures and missed follow-ups.
6. **Establish direct liaison pathways** between CMHT and supported accommodation services.

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Yn falch i fod  
yn rhan o  
Proud part of



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Aneurin Bevan  
University Health Board

# Update on Progress – Understanding Suicide in Monmouthshire

Louise Turner, Divisional Director for Mental Health & Learning Disabilities, Aneurin Bevan

University Health Board

Dr Liz Andrew, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



# Suicide Prevention in Gwent

Jackie Williams, Senior Public Health Practitioner

Emily Clark, Consultant in Public Health

Gwent Public Health Team, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board



## Self-Care and Safety

- Acknowledge that any discussions around suicide can be distressing.
- We may talk about issues today, that might make you feel uncomfortable, so please look after yourselves and step out/away if you need to. If you need support, please speak to someone you trust and/or contact a help line.
- Whilst talking and asking about suicide does not increase the risk of suicide, providing detailed information including method can increase risk. As such, we will not be discussing individuals.



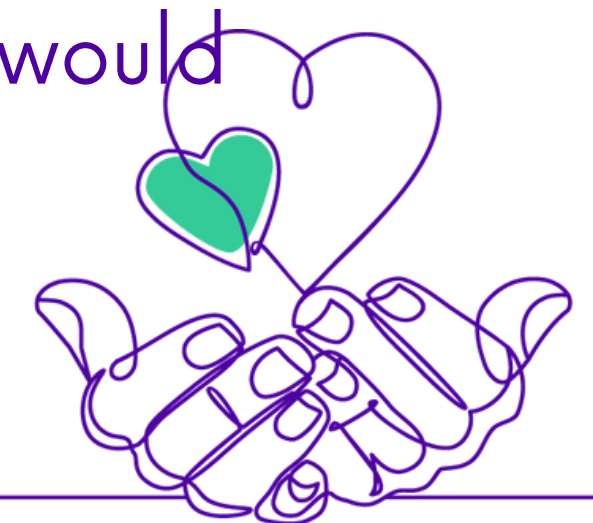


## Media Reporting and Social Media

- Guidelines are available to support responsible and sensitive coverage
  - [Independent Press Standards Organisation \(IPSO\) Guidance on Reporting Suicide](#)
  - [Samaritans Media Guidelines](#)
  - World Health Organisation (WHO) [Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals](#)
  - Samaritans Social Media Guidelines – available soon

## Pre-Election Period

- Today's presentation will respect pre-election period guidelines and we would ask that any questions raised do the same



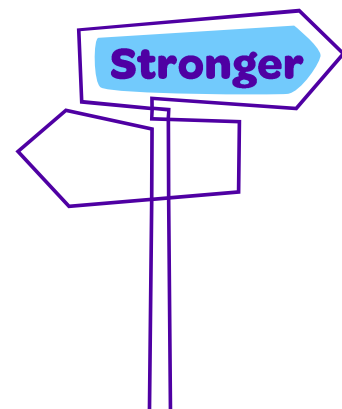


## Introduction

- Re-orientation to our last conversation
- Data
  - Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance (RTSSS)
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS)

### Our vision

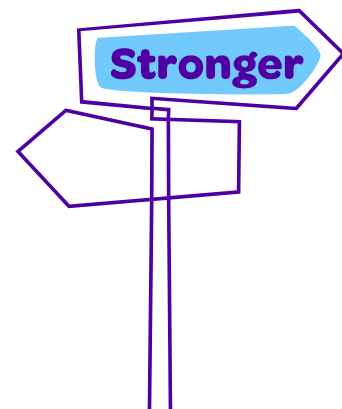
- Progress to date and feedback from Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Division
- Priority areas for action





## Our last visit – July 2025

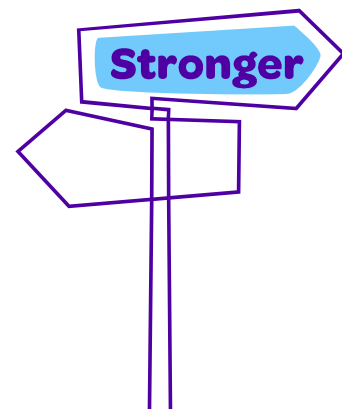
- A close examination of sudden and unexpected deaths for mental health patients in ABUHB
- The review covered 2021 – June 2024 and covered all causes of deaths
- All deaths are recorded, investigated and scrutinised for learning
- All affected people are supported
- A reminder that intended suicide remains a rare but impactful event and that, very sadly, the majority of people that intentionally take their own life, are not known to or under the direct care of mental health services





## Introduction

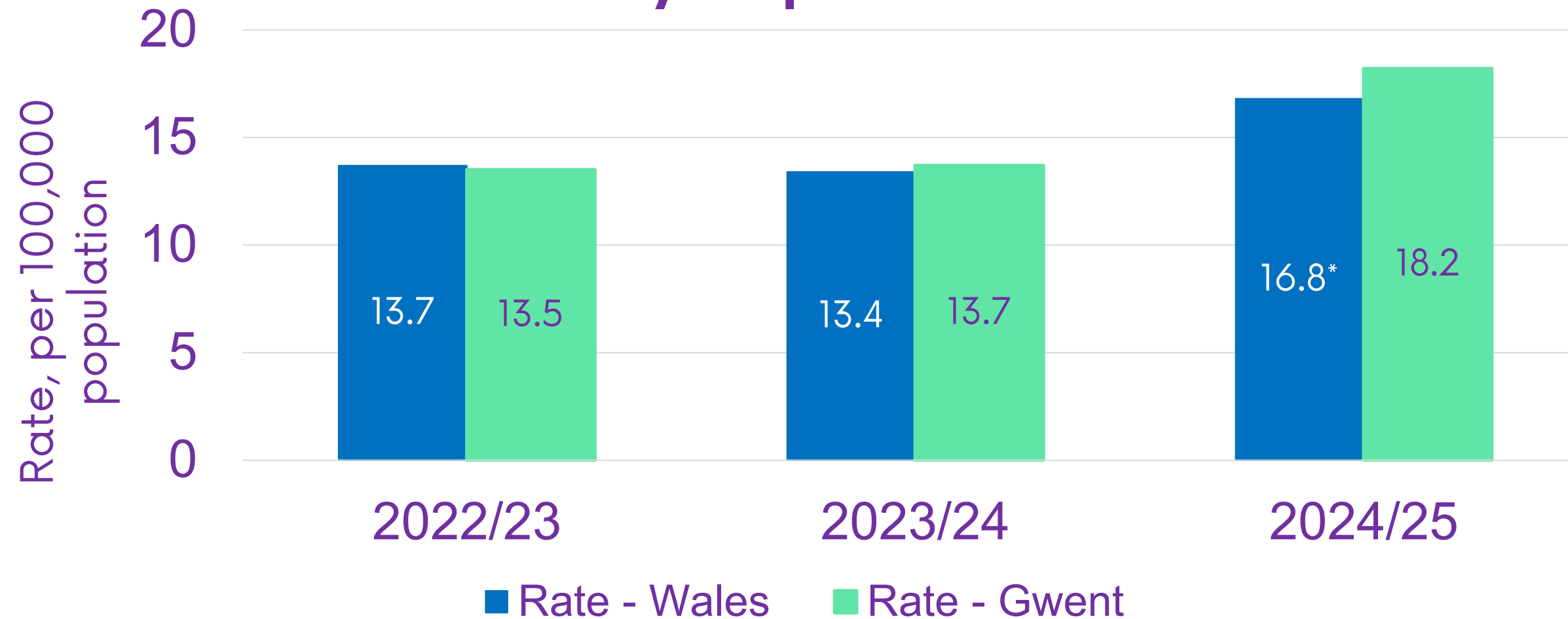
- Data
  - Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance (RTSSS)
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS)





## Key Findings from the RTSSS

### Deaths by Suspected Suicide



\*The rate in 2024/25 for Wales was statistically significantly higher than in 2023/24 and 2022/23. This could be because of a real increase in the rate of suspected suicides in Wales or it could be because of increased reporting into RTSSS during 2024/25.

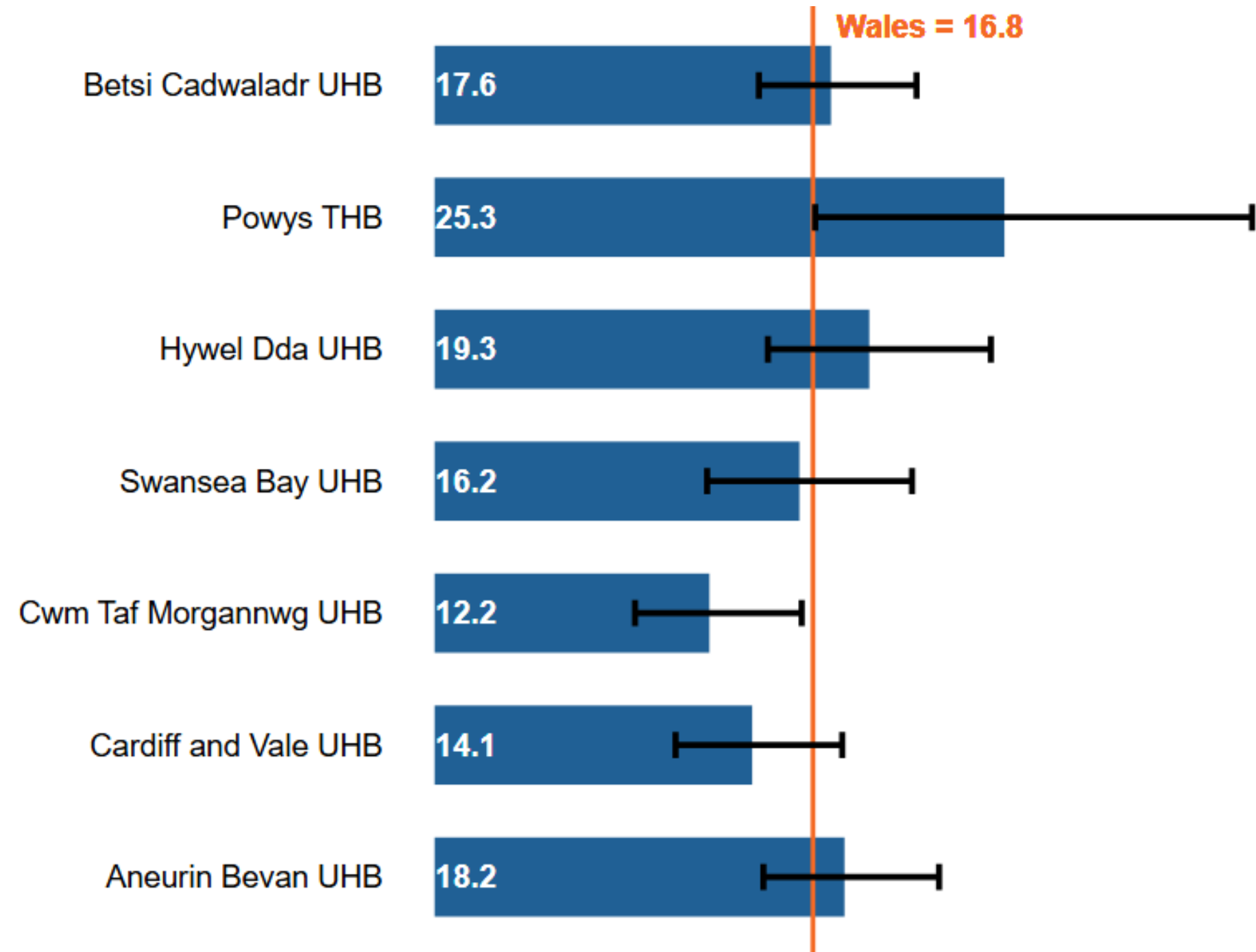
The rate for Gwent in 2024/25 is not statistically significantly higher than the Wales average rate, or compared to the rate in Gwent in 2023/24 or 2022/23.



## Key Findings from the RTSSS

### Deaths by suspected suicide, by health board area of residence

Crude rate per 100,000, Welsh residents, 2024/25



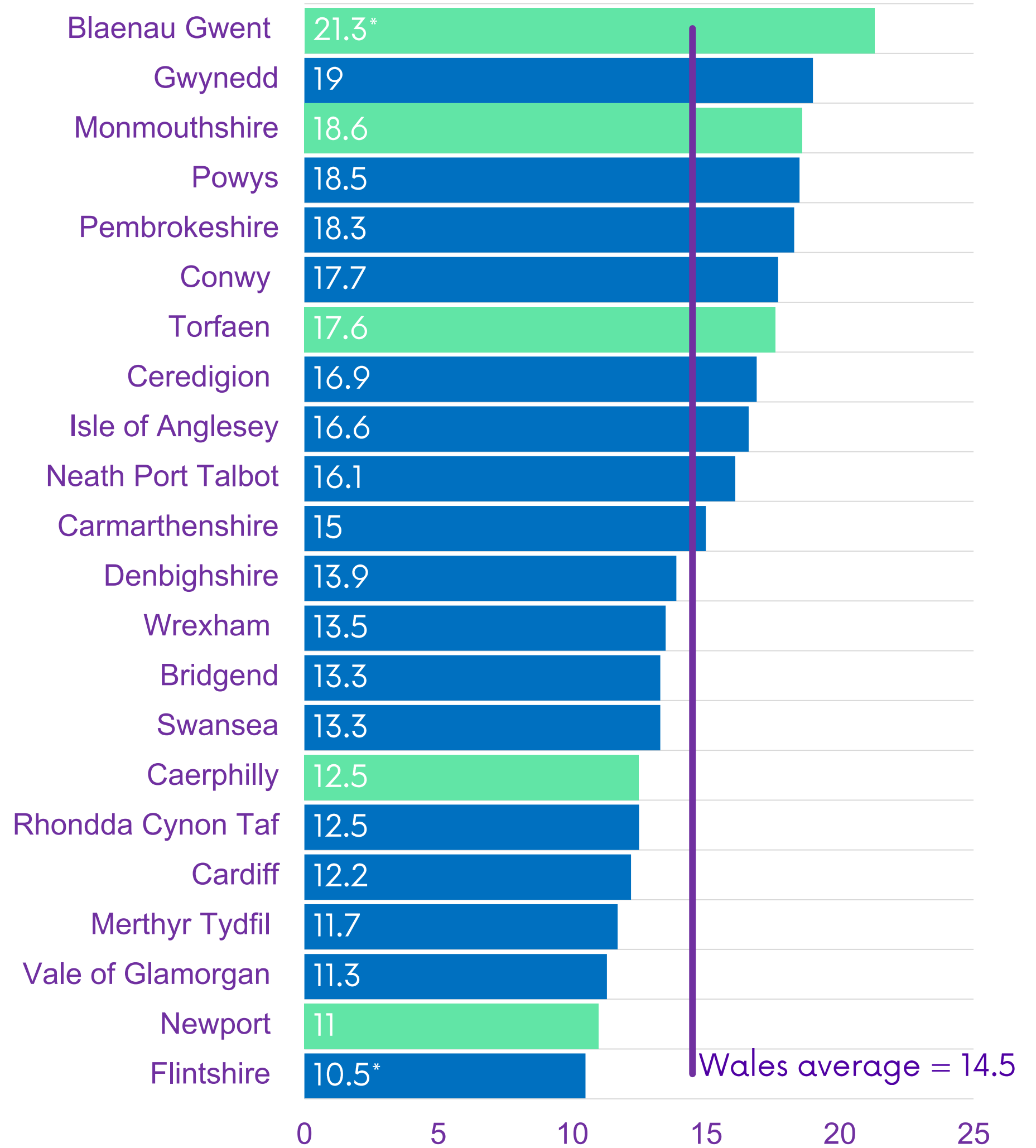
The rate in 2024/25 was statistically significantly higher in Powys Teaching Health Board compared with the all-Wales rate, and statistically significantly lower in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

The rate for Aneurin Bevan UHB is not statistically significantly different than the Wales average.

## Key Findings from the RTSSS

### Deaths by suspected suicide by local authority of residence

Crude rate per 100,000, Welsh residents, 3-year period, 2022/23 to 2024/25



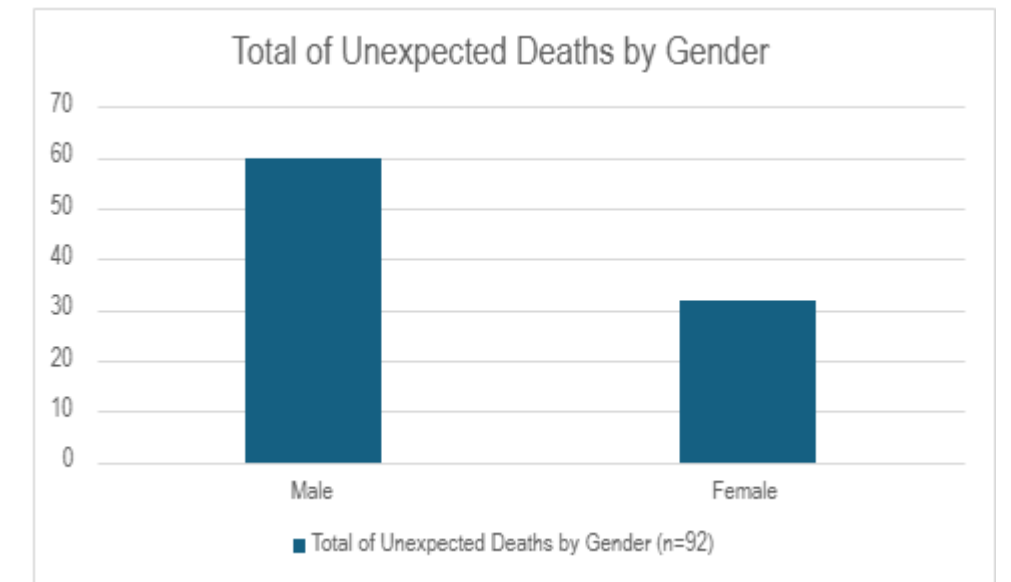
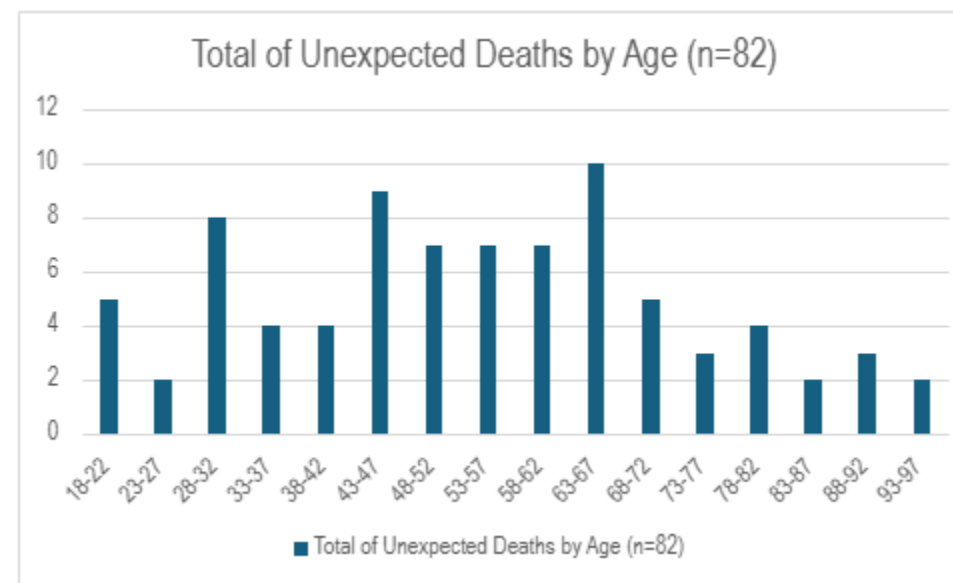
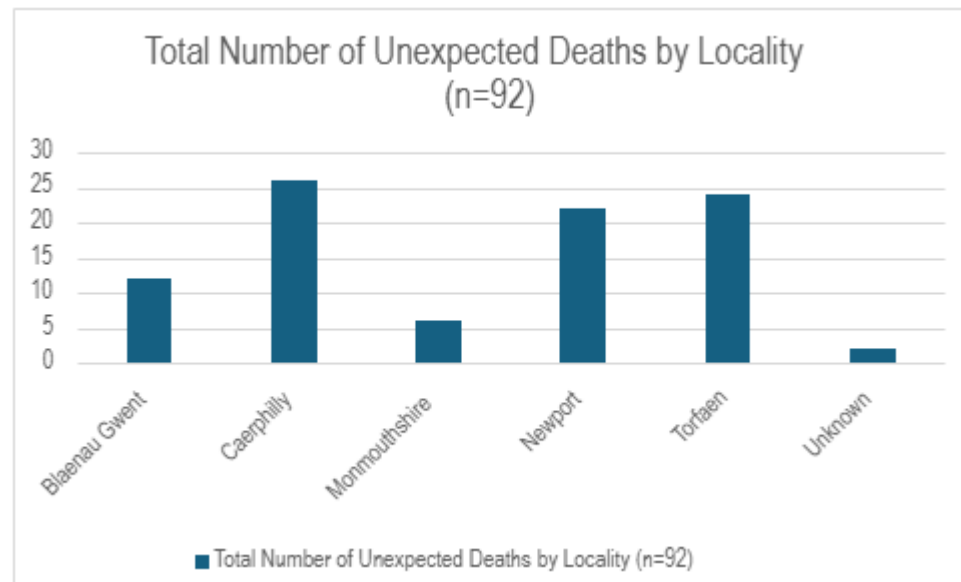
Please note that this graph includes data from 2022/23; 2023/24; and 2024/25 combined.

The rate for Monmouthshire is not statistically significantly higher than the Wales average.

\*Denotes a statistically significant rate compared to the Wales average.

## Updated data from Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Services

- In the period July 2024 and June 2025, there were 92 SUDs of patients known to MH services in the 12 months prior to their death; 25 of these were death by suicide/suspected suicide



## Most recent data (MH and LD specific)

- We are currently conducting a deep dive on data from April – October 2025
- Looking at this data for Monmouthshire, there were 11 reported deaths – the majority of these are associated with dementia and frailty
- Service developments
  - Open access to 111 option 2, 24/7 (service that people of all ages can call for urgent mental health support, brief intervention, signposting, and onward referral to appropriate local services)
  - A pilot began on 12th April to integrate crisis assessment and urgent referral pathways, ensuring timely access to assessments and support for service users and referring professionals. This service is co-located with 111 press 2, moving toward a single point of access model.

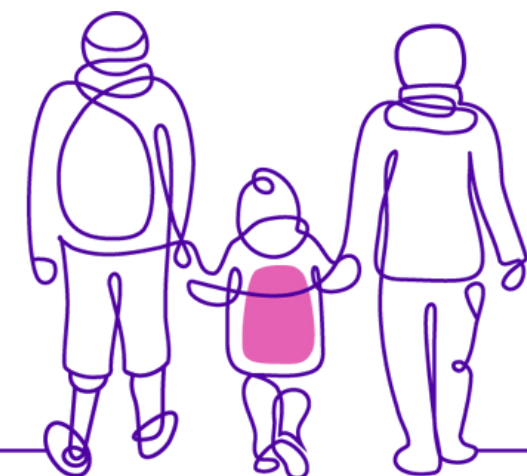
## Risk Factors for Suicide

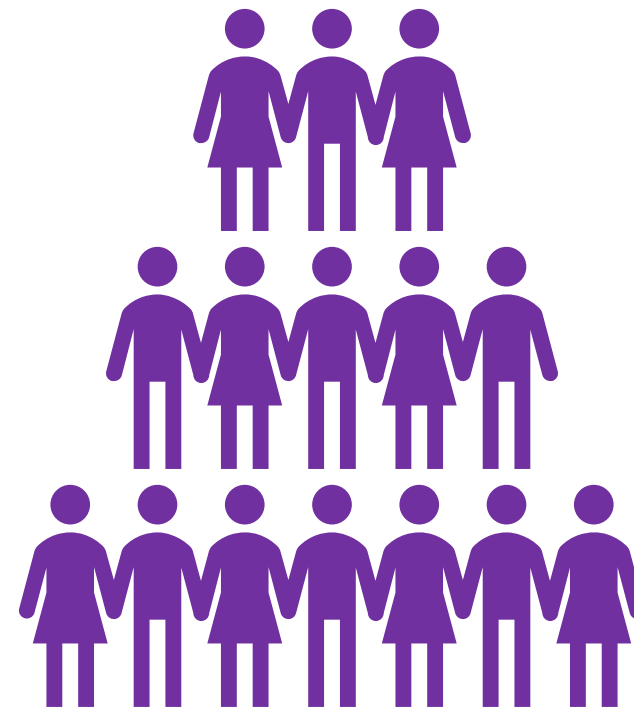
- Suicidal thoughts are common: 25% lifetime prevalence
- Self-harm and previous suicide attempt
- Physical and mental health
- Socioeconomic inequalities: including deprivation, debt, unemployment, and economic inactivity
- Relationship/family issues
- Domestic abuse – perpetrator, victim, witness



## Impacts of Suicide

- Each death by suicide affects around 135 people
- May lead to relationship break up, unemployment, financial problems, worsening physical health, and mental health problems





**Suicide prevention is  
everyone's business**

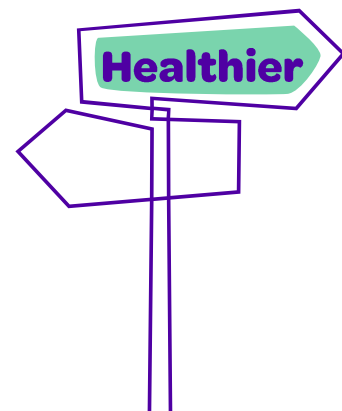


## Our vision

**Our vision is for every person affected by suicide or self-harm to feel safe, understood, and supported within compassionate, informed communities.**

Page 21

Anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm will feel empowered to seek timely, accessible, person-centred care that meets their needs when and where they need it. Organisations serving those living in Gwent will work together to strengthen the focus on prevention.





## Progress to Date

- Leading annual partner consultations to develop a **regional framework and delivery plan**
- Coordinating **routine reviews of Gwent Police suspected suicide data** to identify trends/themes which require a preventative intervention
- Initiating **Task and Finish Groups** addressing high-risk populations and locations of concern, from data, resulting in targeted interventions (e.g., awareness campaigns, community engagement initiatives)
- Securing ongoing funding for a **local suicide bereavement support service** and for training and commissioning third-sector trainers to deliver **Suicide First Aid courses**
- Developing and maintaining the **Melo website**, with content on suicidal thoughts, providing accessible mental health and wellbeing resources for public and professionals
- Developing a **Padlet for professionals** which contains up to date information, reports, training and events



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# Free self-help for your mental health and wellbeing

Melo contains information, advice and self-help resources to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

To get started simply enter a search term to find specific resources.

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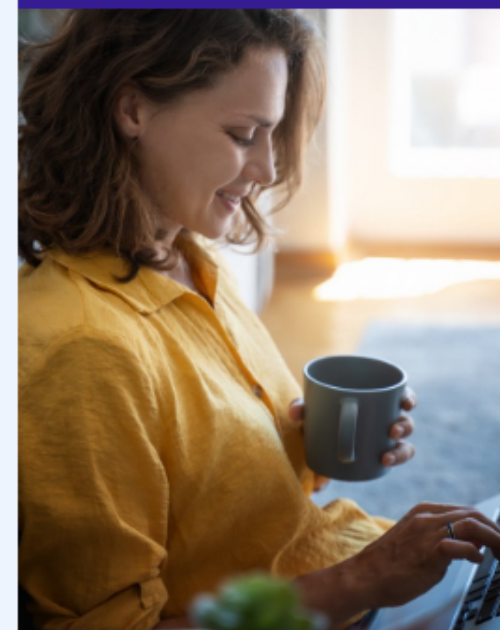
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# Gwent SSH Information Board

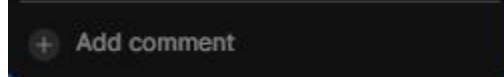
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## News



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sshpcymru 5 months ago

royalfoundation.com

## Events



sshpcymru a day ago

**The Farm Walk for Hope**

A walk for those bereaved or impacted by suicide

Join us at the home of Wales's largest Christmas Tree Grower for a farm walk and the opportunity to connect with others who have been affected by suicide

Sunday, 19th April 2026 at 11:30am  
Poundfield Farm, Three Crosses, Swansea, SA4 3PB  
Contact Kate on kate@thefoundation.org.uk or 07984 149637 to reserve a space!

Add comment

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**Free ASIST Training - Western Super Mare - Open to anyone supporting Veterans / those part of the forces community**

PAPYRUS have been granted funds from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver an ASIST course on 28-29th April in Weston Super Mare.

Open to anyone supporting Veterans / those part of the forces community (personally, professionally or in a voluntary

## Self Harm



sshpcymru 20 days ago

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

gov.wales

The Quality Statement for Self-Harm | GOV.WALES

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## Mental Health & Wellbeing Resources



joanogonovsky 5 months ago

PDF helpu chi Helping you to

Melo-Cymru-Poster-A4

Digital Melo poster for public display

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joanogonovsky 5 months ago

PDF

Suicide Prevention DIGITAL 9\_16 aspect VERTICAL

4 variations of digital suicide

## Helplines and Services



jackiewilliams6\_2 6 months ago

**NHS 111 Press 2**

Am gyngor iechyd meddwl ar frys 24/7  
Honiwch 111 & gwasgwch Opsiwn 2  
For 24/7 urgent mental health support  
Call 111 & press Option 2

abuhb.nhs.wales

Mental Health Crisis

NHS 111 press 2 is available for urgent mental health support 24/7, free to call, even if the caller has no credit.

Add comment

jackiewilliams6\_2 6 months ago

**Childline**

childline.org.uk

Get Support | Childline

Childline is available 24/7 and offers free confidential support for

## Suicide Bereavement Support Services



jackiewilliams6\_2 6 months ago

**2wish Bereavement Charity**

2wish.org.uk

Home - 2 Wish

For anyone affected by a sudden death of a child or young person aged 25 and under.

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sshpcymru 8 months ago

**Gwent Suicide Bereavement Support Service**

JACOB ABRAHAM FOUNDATION

## Lived Experience



sshpcymru 9 months ago

samaritans.org

Lived experience opportunity

Add comment





## Priority Areas for Action

### Objective 1: Listening and Learning

- Establish Intelligence Sub-Group
- Continue Data Review Group
- Establish a Lived Experience Sub-Group

### Objective 2: Preventing

- Establish a Communications, Engagement and Training Sub-Group
- Work with partners to reduce risk factors: e.g., housing, VAWDASV, drugs and alcohol, debt

### Objective 3: Empowering

- Gwent Padlet
- Workforce Task & Finish Group



## Priority Areas for Action

### Objective 4: Supporting

- Establish a Self-Harm Sub-Group
- Promote training and learning opportunities for public and professionals
- Pilot a suicide prevention service

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### Objective 5: Equipping

- Promote Melo Charter
- Focus on support for children, young people, parents and schools

### Objective 6: Responding

- Support specialist suicide bereavement services
- Develop local protocols in response to new national protocols
- Focus on staff mental health and wellbeing

## A final word on self-care

- A reminder that intentionally taking one's own life is a rare but impactful event and it would not be unusual for you to be affected by what you have heard today
- Please do use the resources available to all of us in our communities to help your understanding and support your own well-being

24/7 help in an emotional crisis: 111 press 2

[Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide](#)

[Suicide Prevention Charity | Campaign Against Living Miserably \(CALM\)](#)

[Staying Safe](#)

[Melo - Mental Health & Wellbeing Resources, Courses & Support](#)

[Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#)



**melo,**

## Become a Melo Champion

Join us in creating a culture where mental health and wellbeing and suicide is openly discussed and supported.



**Thank You**

## Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Public Services Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 13th October, 2025 at 10.00 am

### Councillors Present

County Councillor Armand Watts (Chair)  
County Councillors: Jill Bond, Steven Garratt, Meirion Howells, Penny Jones, Tony Kear, Malcolm Lane, Dale Rooke, Frances Taylor, Ian Chandler, Jackie Strong and Peter Strong

### Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager  
Sharran Lloyd, Community and Partner Development Manager  
Amy Thomas, Regional Lead Advisor for Gwent Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Team

**APOLOGIES:** None

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

None received.

#### 3. Public Open Forum

None present.

#### 4. VAWDASV Regional Strategy - To assess how the regional arrangements under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 support the Council in delivering the Act's objectives.

Officers explained that the report was being presented to provide the Committee with a progress update of how the regional strategy supports the Council in delivering the objectives of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. The committee was asked to scrutinise these arrangements and provide feedback.

Sharran described the evolution from local to regional arrangements in Gwent, highlighting the establishment of a regional board to ensure equitable access to support services and reduce postcode lottery effects. The Gwent strategy aligns with national objectives and is due for review next year. She outlined the extensive board and subgroup structure, noting the lack of formal mechanisms for information sharing with Community Safety Partnerships, but assured that efforts are underway to strengthen these links. Monmouthshire is an active member, benefiting from shared resources, funding, and expertise.

Sharran highlighted the positive outcomes, which include mandatory staff training, regional IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) services, and education/prevention programs like Spectrum. Challenges include data collection, service accessibility in rural areas, service gaps (e.g., for male victims and those with no recourse to public funds), resource allocation, and communication.

Sharran introduced a presentation covering strategic governance, integration, monitoring, data challenges, and benefits to Monmouthshire from regional commissioning. She emphasized the importance of collaboration, the role of subgroups, and the need for improved data and communication mechanisms.

Amy detailed the regional team's structure and support mechanisms, including pooled resources, specialist expertise, and regional funding. She highlighted statutory and specialist training (Ask and Act), collaborative projects, and awareness campaigns. Amy discussed the Spectrum program for schools, targeted support for diverse and rural communities, and recent training for staff on supporting victims with no recourse to public funds. She noted the presence of specialist advisors for older people and those in health settings.

Amy acknowledged ongoing challenges with data collection and needs assessments, reliance on police/probation data, and the resource-intensive nature of comprehensive assessments. The regional approach enables thematic needs assessments and cross-referencing with other duties (e.g., serious violence).

Both officers called for improved data collection, enhanced training, increased community engagement, regular progress reviews, and deeper collaboration to ensure effective support for victims and continued strategy impact.

#### **Questions from Members:**

- Councillor Bond asked how the regional arrangements measure impact and whether they are fit for purpose, given the lack of comprehensive data over the years.

*Amy replied that the VAWDASV Act is 10 years old and that measuring impact has been challenging due to evolving needs, COVID, and reliance on police/probation data. She stated the regional arrangements are fit for purpose and provide Monmouthshire with access to specialist services and expertise, such as the regional IDVA team.*

- Councillor Bond also queried the tangible benefits for Monmouthshire residents and how local accountability is supported, asking what the return on investment is for Monmouthshire, and whether board members are paid, and if more local resources are needed to address data gaps.

*Amy advised that board members are not paid; they participate on top of their regular roles. The chair is the strategic director for Social Services in Newport, and Sharran represents Monmouthshire.*

*She acknowledged there is a lack of dedicated data analyst resource; current data analysis relies on partner organisations, especially public health. More resource is needed for meaningful data interpretation. She explained that for victims, the regional approach means more robust pathways, closer collaboration, and seamless access to services, regardless of where they present.*

- Councillor Jones expressed concern about accountability and governance, noting disappointment that the board chair did not attend the committee. She asked about the Spectrum program: whether it is expanding, how many schools are involved, and why it targets only years 2, 5, and 9, expressing the view that older students (years 12 and 13) should also be prioritised.

*Amy explained Spectrum is funded by Welsh Government and recently changed to ensure all schools in Wales receive provision for years 2, 5, and 9 as a minimum, with additional year groups available on request by schools. Previously, provision depended on school requests, leading to patchy coverage.*

*For older students, Amy noted there are other community-based programs and grant-funded initiatives (like Empowering Future) to cover those not reached by Spectrum, and that schools now have a dedicated advisor to support delivery of the relationships and sexuality education curriculum.*

*Amy confirmed that all schools will now receive Spectrum provision, addressing previous inconsistencies.*

Councillor Jones added that rural children might miss out on some community-based programs but was reassured by the universal school coverage.

- Councillor Kear asked about the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in the partnership board, given the PCC's focus on protecting the vulnerable and tackling violence against women and girls.

*Amy advised that the Deputy PCC is a member of the VAWDASV Partnership Board and that there is strong collaboration with the PCC's office, including regular meetings and joint planning for funding and project delivery.*

- Councillor Kear requested clarification on how the partnership links with Gwent Police, especially regarding the availability and use of detailed crime data for Monmouthshire.

*Sharran stated that Gwent Police provide detailed data, which is the primary local source, but challenges remain in analysing and contextualizing this data for Monmouthshire due to limited analytical capacity. The team is working with public health to improve this.*

- Councillor Kear also asked what work is being done to address violence against men, not just women and girls.

*Amy clarified that all services in Gwent are open to male victims, and efforts are made to ensure men feel included and represented in communications and service access,*

*despite the legislative language focusing on women and girls. She confirmed that campaigns and resources are designed to be inclusive of men, and recent work has specifically engaged young men and boys.*

- Councillor Garratt asked if there is any work being done to measure the effectiveness of outreach to schools and the community, specifically whether there are follow-up interviews, surveys, or evaluations with survivors to assess if messaging led them to use services.

*Amy explained that during public awareness events, feedback cards are collected and reviewed to inform future campaigns. For example, feedback from a Caldicot event led to clearer messaging about support services for both victims and concerned individuals.*

- Councillor Garratt queried if the promotion and training are being monitored for effectiveness and if feedback is used to improve future outreach.

*Amy added that all specialist sector services conduct exit surveys with survivors before case closure, covering service effectiveness, inclusivity, and practical aspects. Survivors are also invited to join forums to provide ongoing feedback for continuous improvement.*

- Councillor Rooke asked how local needs are understood and prioritised in the absence of robust data.

*Sharran acknowledged the difficulty in developing baseline data for Monmouthshire and explained that current service delivery relies on visible demand and pressure points, with efforts ongoing to improve data analysis for more effective resource targeting.*

- Councillor Rooke also queried whether there is sufficient resourcing and capacity in Monmouthshire, especially after the loss of the local domestic abuse coordinator.

*Sharran stated that losing a dedicated coordinator impacts capacity, but now responsibility is distributed across multiple departments, making domestic abuse more embedded in business as usual, though it does not fully replace the benefits of a dedicated post. Amy added that this integration means a broader range of staff are now involved in the regional structures.*

- Councillor Howells shared information about an upcoming annual "Light a Candle" service in Usk at St Mary's Church, organized by the Women's Institute, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Mentioned a banner parade, stalls, guest speakers, and an invitation for men to participate. Also expressed appreciation for upcoming councillor training on the topic.

*Amy confirmed that the event organisers had contacted the regional team, and the event would be promoted through their campaign communications group and included in a bulletin sent to professionals across the region.*

- Councillor Jackie Strong highlighted the issue of violence against older women, sharing that the oldest woman accepted into a refuge was in her 90s, emphasising the vulnerability of older women, especially those living alone. She noted the significant impact of COVID-19 on victims' ability to seek help. Jackie also mentioned hearing critiques about the effectiveness of the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) process, referencing a case where a family felt it did not work as intended. She encouraged continued support, more resources, and feedback from survivors and others to improve services.
- Councillor Peter Strong noted the importance of professional experience in understanding domestic abuse trends, especially given data limitations. He stated that he regarded certain areas of Gwent to appear to have more serious domestic abuse cases reaching court, and questioned whether this reflects actual differences, reporting rates, or other factors.

*Amy explained there is no specific evidence that any Gwent area has more cases going to court; reporting and escalation to court can vary widely based on individual circumstances.*

- Councillor Peter Strong asked if differences in reporting or case outcomes could be attributed to regional variations and sought Amy's perspective based on her experience.

*Amy described the support available for victims through police and advocacy services, and noted that reasons for reporting or withdrawing from the justice process are complex and varied. She outlined mechanisms in place to track attrition rates in the criminal justice process and highlighted special measures to support victims in court. Amy emphasised that all victims receive a tailored response, and that much abuse remains unreported, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions from available data.*

- Councillor Bond asked how the reported increase in misogynistic language and behaviour in schools (as informed by the Education Directorate) is being addressed, and whether this informs the direction of the Spectrum program for early prevention.

*Amy explained that Spectrum delivers sessions mapped to the curriculum, focusing on online harm, grooming, sexting, and related issues, but not directly targeting misogyny; however, new AVECS Cwtch advisors and the Empowering Futures project are working with schools to address misogynistic behaviour and promote healthy relationships, especially among boys and young men. She also referenced a global movement, "She Is Not Your Rehab," being introduced locally to shift culture.*

- Councillor Bond requested clarification on who is ultimately responsible for the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Act in Monmouthshire, given that the agenda is now embedded across all directorates.

*Sharran clarified that responsibility under the Act formally lies with the chief executive of the relevant authority, but in practice, the chief officer (Matt Gatehouse) and herself (as the nominated lead) coordinate the agenda in Monmouthshire.*

- Councillor Watts asked how Monmouthshire can be assured it has adopted the intended culture around domestic abuse after losing the dedicated coordinator, and whether staff across all directorates are receiving the required training.

*Sharran explained that the Community Safety Partnership ensures multi-agency involvement, with all relevant directorates engaged, but acknowledged the approach is currently more reactive than proactive due to data limitations. She confirmed that mandatory training is in place for staff, with about 80% completion, and committed to sharing the latest figures with members.*

- Councillor Watts questioned what tangible benefits Monmouthshire is getting from the regional arrangements, given the lack of comprehensive data and limited specialist resources and requested specifics on staff training and school participation in the Spectrum program.

Amy listed tangible benefits: statutory training delivery, specialist training, partnership coordination, and pooled regional resources. She noted that while the regional team provides expertise and support, the lack of a comprehensive data dashboard is a Wales-wide issue, not unique to Monmouthshire. She confirmed only three schools (two primary, one comprehensive) have received Spectrum sessions so far, covering 354 pupils and 20 teachers, and acknowledged there is a long way to go for full coverage.

### **Chairs Summary:**

The Chair thanked Amy for attending and answering Members' questions and thanked Sharran for producing the progress report. The Committee agreed to schedule further progress updates within their forward work programme, but agreed the following actions would be requested from officers when the topic returns to scrutiny:

- Members request that subsequent updates provide clearer evidence of impact, including a consistent regional and local data dashboard (covering demand, outcomes, equality of access and rural reach), clearer lines of accountability between the Partnership Board, Community Safety Partnerships and the Council, and regular reporting on training compliance and Spectrum programme coverage.
- The Committee also asks that future reports set out resource requirements (including analytical capacity), progress against agreed actions with timescales, and how survivor and community feedback is being captured and used to improve services.

### **5. Public Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

The work programme was noted.

### **6. Council and Cabinet Work Planner**

Noted.

**7. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**8. Next Meeting: Tuesday 28th October 2025 at 10.00am (Special Meeting).**

**Action List:**

No.	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1	<p><b>Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 Scrutiny</b></p> <p>Members request that subsequent updates provide clearer evidence of impact, including a consistent regional and local data dashboard (covering demand, outcomes, equality of access and rural reach), clearer lines of accountability between the Partnership Board, Community Safety Partnerships and the Council, and regular reporting on training compliance and Spectrum programme coverage.</p> <p>The Committee also asks that future reports set out resource requirements (including analytical capacity), progress against agreed actions with timescales, and how survivor and community feedback is being captured and used to improve services.</p>	<p>Sharran Lloyd and Thomas</p>	<p>Future Progress Updates</p>

The meeting ended at **1.11 pm**

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## Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Public Services Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr Usk on Monday, 15th December, 2025 at 10.00 am

### Councillors Present

County Councillor Armand Watts (Chair)  
County Councillors: Jill Bond, Steven Garratt, Meirion Howells, Penny Jones, Tony Kear, Malcolm Lane, Dale Rooke, Frances Taylor, Louise Brown, Sue Riley, Angela Sandles, Emma Bryn, Jan Butler, John Crook and Catrin Maby

### Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager  
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
Sharran Lloyd, Community and Partner Development Manager  
Deb Hill-Howells, Chief Officer Infrastructure  
Ian Muirhead, Community Safety Officer  
John Crandon, Community Safety Officer  
Sueanne Sandford, Highway Asset Street Works Team Manager  
Carl Touhig, Head of Neighbourhood Services  
Jonathan Hill  
Alan Feist  
Maria Evans, Substance Misuse Lead Officer  
Brendan Chambers

**APOLOGIES:** None

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Penny Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest as an independent member of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

#### 3. Public Open Forum

A video was shown that had been submitted by a resident in relation to traffic resulting from the restrictions to heavy goods vehicles on the Severn Bridge. This related to item 5 on the agenda. The Chair invited Jonathan Hill from National Highways to comment.

The National Highways officer acknowledged the videos, explaining they showed the impact of managing freight over the M48 during planned closures of the M4 Prince of Wales Bridge. He noted that, without such management, freight would face a 100-mile diversion. It was clarified that the high proportion of freight seen in the video was due to the M4 closure and is not representative of normal operations; once the medium-term solution is implemented, this will be a managed scenario only during planned closures.)

#### **4. To discuss drug related deaths and the impact of synthetic drugs with the Heroin & Crack Cocaine Action Area Co-ordinator for Gwent Police.**

Maria Evans and Brendan Chambers delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions.

##### **Questions from Members:**

- Councillor Bond asked what socio-economic and health factors contribute to drug-related deaths in the county, and is there commonality? How far back do root causes get investigated, especially regarding childhood trauma and abuse?

*Maria explained that factors include unemployment, unstable housing, parental substance misuse, and deprivation. Substance use occurs across all social classes, with different drugs prevalent in different areas. Prevention campaigns and education are conducted in schools and universities. Mental health issues and childhood trauma (ACEs) are common among substance users, and interventions are trauma-informed. There are challenges in engaging mental health services, and efforts are made to address trauma through specific pathways.*

- Councillor Bond further asked which came first—the chronic conditions or the drug use? Do you work with schools to prevent future cases?

*Maria stated that some use substances to mask mental health issues, which can lead to further problems like drug psychosis. There is a revolving door syndrome between substance use and mental health. Schools are targeted for awareness and education, but the school programs focus on drug effects and legal consequences, not on identifying trauma risk. Drop-in clinics are available for students to discuss drug concerns.*

- Councillor Bond queried how effective has this approach been, and what were the previous numbers compared to this year?

Maria and Brendan responded that there were 30 drug-related deaths in 2024 and 28 so far in 2025. The highest recorded was 34. In Monmouthshire, there was 1 death in 2024 and 3 in 2025.

- Councillor Howells asked how much of a problem is nitazine in drug-related deaths? Is it easily identified in autopsies, and how effective is naloxone in combating it?

*Brendan explained nitazine is an emerging trend, more prevalent nationally and especially in Scotland, with a few cases in Gwent. It is usually mixed with heroin or cocaine, making potency unpredictable and overdoses more likely. Identification is improving through forensic providers and universities. Maria added that naloxone works but often requires many more doses for nitazine overdoses compared to heroin, sometimes up to 10 or 11 injections.*

- Councillor Kear asked what is the police team's liaison and approach to prevention regarding drug misuse and related deaths, given trends in drug possession and supply statistics?

*Brendan responded that his involvement is primarily investigative after the fact, not in prevention. Prevention is addressed through partnership meetings and other police units, but he is not directly involved in frontline prevention activities. Tony acknowledged this and suggested he may take the question back to the chief and the Police and Crime Commissioner.*

- Councillor Jones asked why isn't there more public advertising or government initiative to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs like ketamine and synthetic opioids, given how serious and unknown these risks are? Would a stark campaign (e.g., on social media or TV) be effective?

*Maria responded that many harm reduction campaigns are already in place, including multi-agency ketamine action plans, urology pathways, and drug testing kits for users. Despite these efforts, young people often do not seek help until in crisis. Previous national campaigns (like "Say No to Drugs") were found ineffective. The area is also distributing nitazene testing strips. However, Maria noted these efforts only reach the "tip of the iceberg." Penny followed up, suggesting the Welsh Government should be asked to do more, such as a broader publicity campaign, especially for prescribed drugs like pregabalin, which is implicated in many deaths.*

- Councillor Rooke asked how prescription drugs are monitored to ensure they are not falling into the wrong hands?

*Maria explained that concerns about irresponsible prescribing (e.g., pregabalin, gabapentin) are raised through the Controlled Drugs Local Intelligence Network and reported to the Health Board's Accountable Officer. However, they are still awaiting a response from the Health Board despite these reports.*

- Councillor Riley asked whether people become homeless because of drug use, or do they start using drugs because they are homeless?

*Maria said it is a "chicken and egg" situation: some become homeless due to substance use (e.g., veterans masking PTSD), while others start using drugs after becoming homeless to survive on the streets.*

- Councillor Riley also asked if most drug-related deaths in Newport are due to people migrating there for services, or are they local residents?

*Maria explained that while some migrate to Newport for treatment and drug accessibility, issues exist across Gwent, with people moving for temporary accommodation. Newport is a hotspot for drug dealing, but deaths occur in other areas as well.*

- Councillor Riley asked whether providing more local services in Monmouthshire would reduce migration to Newport and affect statistics?

*Maria clarified that G DAS services cover all of Gwent, not just Newport. Monmouthshire has community pharmacies offering needle exchange and supervised consumption, plus two bases (Chepstow and Abergavenny) for local support.*

- Councillor Brown asked whether funding could be changed so that Health Board staff are based in homeless hostels or B&Bs to support people with drug and alcohol issues, rather than relying on peripatetic services?

*Maria responded that this would be outside her remit. The current grant from Welsh Government is already allocated for treatment provision, so there are no available funds within their grant for this purpose. She could not speak for the Health Board's ability to provide such funding.*

- Councillor Butler expressed concern as a parent about the widespread availability of illegal drugs online, including products like gummies and muesli bars laced with synthetic opioids, and noted the prevalence of substance misuse among young people. She stated that she was concerned that the "Wings to Fly" drug education program is no longer running and emphasized the need for drug education before students enter sixth form and again when they start college. Councillor Butler suggested that the scale of the issue was overwhelming and asked Councillor Kear to raise these concerns with the police board.
- Councillor Watts asked how the Area Planning Board (APB) interacts with Community Safety teams to ensure data and intelligence sharing?

*Maria stated that Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and the five local authorities sit on the APB, and information is fed back to CSPs via their representatives on the board.*

- Councillor Watts asked if there is a hotspot for drug-related data in Monmouthshire and who represents Monmouthshire County Council at multi-agency meetings on community safety, and who focuses on treatment response? He also asked whether data is fed back into the Council?

*Maria's explained that the Monmouthshire data is shared with the Council via Community Safety Partnership representatives on the Area Planning Board.*

- Councillor Watts asked if the loss of school liaison officers impacted the police's ability to work in schools?

*Brendan said the loss likely has an impact on prevention, though he does not have data to quantify it.*

- Councillor Watts asked if police resources impact their ability to police drug supply and use?

*Brendan explained that policing is proactive and targets local, regional, and national supply chains, but the scale and sophistication of the drug market make it difficult to address fully with current resources.*

- Councillor Watts asked how drug supply is being targeted, especially in schools?

*Brendan described a tiered approach: local neighbourhood teams target local dealers, organized crime teams target regional suppliers, and the National Crime Agency targets national/international supply. He reiterated the challenge due to the size and complexity of the market.*

- Councillor Watts asked what improvements can be made—are more resources needed, or can public bodies work more cleverly together?

*Brendan emphasized the importance of prevention and noted the landscape is constantly changing, requiring ongoing adaptation and collaboration.*

### **Chairs Summary:**

The Chair thanked both Maria and Brendan for attending the meeting and providing helpful responses to Members' questions on such an important topic. The Chair commented that some of the issues raised could be discussed with the Chief Constable when he is invited to attend a future meeting. The Chair thanked them for their time and for preparing such a cohesive presentation.

### **5. To present an update on the M48 Severn Bridge Heavy Goods Vehicle Restrictions (question and answer session)**

Alan Feist delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions with Jonathan Hill.

### **Questions from Members:**

- Councillor Bond commented that local members could form a helpful part of the stakeholder steering group to improve information flow and allay fears. She asked what the impact and risk assessment is for disruption on the Chepstow side due to the proposed HGV metering solution? How often will significant issues occur, and what is the worst-case scenario?

*The project team explained that modelling is tiered (strategic, cordoned, and detailed visual models) and ongoing. The worst-case scenario is a peak hour eastbound ban on HGVs (e.g., 7:00–10:00 AM), which would prevent additional congestion. Best case, the ban could be shorter or not needed. The team does not plan to rebuild the roundabout or A466 at this stage.*

- Councillor Bond questioned if HGVs are banned during peak hours, will they stack up on the slip road and roundabout, affecting car traffic?
- *The team responded that the signing strategy will be designed to prevent HGVs from reaching Chepstow during the ban, diverting them via the Prince of Wales Bridge. Signs will be triggered early enough to avoid stacking.*

- Councillor Howells asked whether there has been any progress on opening the M49 junction at the Avonmouth/Severn side, and could the opening date be brought forward? What effect would opening this junction have on M48 bridge traffic?

*The project team confirmed the M49 junction (Junction 1) is scheduled to open in late summer next year. Its opening will allow haulage units from Avonmouth to access the M4 and Prince of Wales Bridge directly, reducing their need to use the M48 via Aust. The team expects this will provide additional network resilience, though the exact proportion of traffic shifting routes will be determined through further modelling. They noted that bringing the opening date forward is unlikely, as six months is a short timeframe for such a civil engineering project.*

- Councillor Rooke asked whether economic impact assessments have been done for the area, especially considering the serious impact when both bridges were closed?

*National Highways stated that no economic assessment was required for the safety-driven HGV removal decision, so none was done. However, a cost-benefit and value-for-money analysis will be required for the medium-term solution, and the long-term business case will include socio-economic impacts, such as effects on employment and growth.*

- Councillor Rooke asked what can be done in exceptional circumstances when both bridges are closed to prevent complete shutdown of local infrastructure and business?

*The team is conducting a full debrief of the recent event and response. The main mitigation is to ensure non-essential journeys are avoided so essential ones can proceed. Messaging and communication are key, and lessons will be learned from the recent closure.*

- Councillor Taylor asked when there will be signalisation at the Magor Junction 23 interchange, and what improvements are planned for signage during adverse incidents?

*National Highways meets regularly with Monmouthshire County Council, Sutra, and Welsh Government. A proposed signalisation solution for Magor Roundabout is in internal pricing and expected to be a 2026 project. An update will be shared in January.*

- Councillor Taylor asked what are the thoughts of National Highways on the removal of tolls and the long-term cost of maintaining the bridge?

*The response was that the removal of tolls was a government decision. National Highways continues ongoing maintenance and reviews infrastructure investment. The recent incident is under review for lessons learned, and messaging is being improved.*

- Councillor Taylor raised the matter of what the Department for Transport's (DfT) long-term proposals are for managing and maintaining the bridge, given its importance and ongoing issues? She

suggested the Committee may want to consider requesting National Highways or the DFT to detail the long-term proposals and maintenance plans for the bridge, highlighting its significant economic and social impact.

Councillor Taylor clarified she was not advocating for a return to previous tolls but supported the idea of maintaining a minimal toll or public transport levy to fund bridge maintenance and promote alternatives like rail, reiterating the importance of a long-term solution. She thanked the National Highways representatives for their updates on current and medium-term solutions but stressed the need for a comprehensive long-term strategy.

- Councillor Garratt asked why there was a lack of signage and information during a recent car fire incident near Bristol, and can information provision be improved during such events?

*National Highways acknowledged the feedback and will pass it on. They are aware of the need for better corridor-wide communication and are working on improving holistic information sharing, including using technology to provide targeted, in-car updates to drivers approaching incidents.*

- Councillor Garratt asked if there is a holistic approach to managing the impact of works and incidents across the wider transport corridor, including the M48, A449, and A40?

*National Highways confirmed they are working with local authorities and other regions to coordinate works and communications across the corridor, not just on the bridges, to manage impacts more effectively.*

- Councillor Bond requested that a local member (e.g., a Chepstow member) be part of the stakeholder group, given their significant local knowledge?

*National Highways advised that senior officers from local highway authorities are on the stakeholder steering group, with the expectation that information from members is fed up to officers and back down. They also provide a monthly newsletter and are open to direct engagement triggered by member questions.*

- Councillor Bond asked if Members could be updated on the proposed junction on the M48 between Rogiet and Caldicot, which could reduce congestion at Magor and Chepstow?

*National Highways responded that this junction is not on their network and would need to be addressed by Monmouthshire, SWTRA, and Welsh Government.*

*Deb Hill-Howells advised that the proposed link has been included in the Regional Transport Plan, but as it is a SWTRA road it will need to be agreed by Welsh Government. She explained that the Council has met with the Cabinet Secretary to lobby for the inclusion of this junction. This has also been referenced in the High Beech studies and reassured Members that officers and the Cabinet Member are continuing to push the case for this junction as part of the Burns work. The latest update is that Welsh Government Officials have been asked to look at the proposed re-classification of the*

*M48 which will be essential to enable the junction to be constructed due to the differential in costs. Another hurdle that will need to be overcome is the roads review, which ruled against the construction of this junction, however we understand that this may be reviewed.*

- Councillor Brown asked whether the new system for HGVs on the M48 (starting October next year) will be monitored for its impact on the local network, especially in Monmouthshire?

*National Highways confirmed they will conduct before-and-after monitoring of the impacts and expect the community and elected members to report any unforeseen issues.*

- Councillor Brown asked how will coordination be managed if there are works or closures on the Prince of Wales Bridge, especially regarding wind-related closures, to avoid traffic chaos like the recent incident?

*National Highways explained that the Met Office is involved in planning, and coordination between the M4 and M48 is prioritized to manage such events, though last week's impact was acknowledged.*

- Councillor Brown asked what can be done about traffic using unsuitable rural roads (e.g., at Haysgate, Crick, Newton, Hayesbrook) as rat runs during incidents, including large vehicles and coaches, which are a danger to residents?

*National Highways noted that while they understand the wider impact, restrictions on local roads (like traffic regulation orders) are a matter for local authorities. They emphasized the importance of communications to discourage non-essential journeys and manage impacts before they occur.*

- Councillor asked if there is a way to improve signage or prevent satellite navigation from directing traffic onto these unsuitable single-track roads?

*National Highways reiterated that signage and restrictions on local roads are not within their remit and should be addressed by local authorities.*

- Councillor Rooke asked whether the traffic light system on the Chepstow end of the bridge will require use of the A449 for stacking HGVs?

*National Highways responded that they do not anticipate needing to use the A449 for stacking; the slip road is expected to be long enough to accommodate the required number of lorries.*

- Councillor Watts commented that the slip road on the A449 seems able to accommodate only about five vehicles—so where would the other five go if up to ten are needed?

*National Highways explained that typically, no more than ten HGVs are on the bridge at any time, and arrivals are usually spaced out, so stacking beyond the slip road is rarely needed. In rare cases of incidents, stacking may occur on the roundabout, but this is not expected in normal operations. The duration of any eastbound HGV ban in the AM peak will be set to avoid over-stacking.*

- Councillor Watts highlighted that the resident's video evidence showed more than five, possibly more than ten, HGVs—does this contradict your modelling?

*National Highways acknowledged the point and indicated that their forthcoming visual traffic model (visim) will help demonstrate and clarify how the system will operate in practice.*

- Cabinet Member Councillor Maby expressed encouragement about the short-term plans from National Highways and emphasized the importance of progressing plans for Junction 23, noting ongoing officer work and positive updates from Welsh Government. She highlighted the need to get the medium-term solution right for the M48 bridge, recognizing the long-term solution will be expensive and take time.

Councillor Maby referenced the comments echoed by Councillor Taylor and stated that she agreed with Councillor Taylor on the need for a long-term vision, especially regarding freight, and raised concerns about large lorries using rural roads and towns, suggesting broader issues with strategic road networks and advocating for better rail alternatives.

Councillor Maby expressed confidence in officer representation on the stakeholder group and found the monthly newsletter helpful, but noted that members may want more frequent updates, especially on Junction 23.

- Councillor Watts raised concerns about communication, suggesting it could be improved and advocating for councillor involvement in the stakeholder steering group to provide direct democratic input and alleviate public fears. He questioned why the committee is limited to officer-level membership and not elected members.

*National Highways explained the stakeholder steering group is intentionally officer-level and non-political, with clear communication channels for councillors to feed in concerns; they are open to meeting with councillors and parish councils as needed.*

- Councillor Watts expressed concerns about livestock welfare during the Christmas period, specifically regarding animal transport delays due to bridge restrictions, and questioned the stacking capacity for vehicles on the Chepstow slip road, doubting the claim that only five vehicles would ever be stacked.

*On livestock welfare, National Highways stated responsibility lies with hauliers, but they assist in emergencies and have experience supporting animal welfare during incidents.*

- Councillor Watts asked for clarification on confusing road signage (e.g., A48 North closed) and whether it accurately reflects local traffic patterns and raised concerns about emergency situations where Wales is cut off, referencing recent incidents where people were stranded for hours.

*On communication and incident management, National Highways acknowledged the need for improvement and are conducting a debrief to learn lessons from recent events, aiming for better messaging and management in future emergencies.*

- Councillor Watts requested to see the current Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and asked for clarity on which authority is responsible for them (National Highways or SWTRA). **(Action)**.

*Regarding TROs, they confirmed the orders are managed by National Highways and go through the English parliamentary process for the bridge, but coordination with SWTRA/Sutra is required for any orders affecting their networks. They agreed to provide copies of the relevant orders. They reassured Members that they are willing to provide information and meet with councillors to address concerns and clarify technical details.*

#### **Chair's Summary:**

The Chair recommended that the Council has a democratically elected member on the user group (stakeholder steering group) to improve communication and representation. This recommendation was voted upon and approved by a show of hands.

The Chair concluded that National Highways would be invited to return in 6 months' time to update Members.

#### **6. Public Services Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme**

The work programme was noted.

#### **7. Council and Cabinet Work Planner**

Noted.

#### **8. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### **9. Next Meeting: Monday 9th February 2026 at 10.00am**

**Action List:**

No.	Action	Responsible	Timescale
1	<p><b>Update on the M48 Severn Bridge Heavy Goods Vehicle Restrictions</b></p> <p>Councillor Watts requested to see the current Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and asked for clarity on which authority is responsible for them (National Highways or SWTRA). <b><u>(Action)</u></b>.</p>	Jonathon Hill	To be sent via email
2	<p>The Chair recommended that the Council has a democratically elected member on the user group (stakeholder steering group) to improve communication and representation. This recommendation was voted upon and approved by a show of hands.</p> <p>The Committee requested National Highways to return in 6 months' time to update Members.</p>	For consideration by National Highways	

The meeting ended at **12.55 pm**.

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## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Public Services Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
20 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	<b>Adult Suicide</b>	To hear from MIND how mental health services in Monmouthshire are impacting both positively negatively on the individuals they support (Report).  To invite ABUHB to provide a progress update (Presentation)	MIND  Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	External Scrutiny
<b>TO BE REARRANGED</b>	<b>Invite the Chief Constable</b>	Invitation to the Chief Constable of Gwent Police to discuss outstanding issues raised by the Committee and to discuss the White Paper proposing changes to force structures.	Chief Constable, Gwent Police	External Scrutiny
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	<b>National Highways: Update on the Severn Bridge Heavy Goods Vehicles Restrictions</b>	Invite to National Highways to provide a 6 monthly progress update.	Jonny Hill National Highways	External Scrutiny
27 <sup>th</sup> July 2026				

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Public Services Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
12 <sup>th</sup> October 2026				
7 <sup>th</sup> December 2026				
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>Youth Offending Service</b>	To consider the latest progress report on the Youth Offending Service, particularly how partners contribute and what it delivers for Monmouthshire.	Chesney Chick	Performance Monitoring
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>Changes to Ambulance Performance Framework</b>	<i>Discussion on changes to the Ambulance Performance Framework which take effect on Tuesday 1 July 2025.</i>	<i>Ambulance Service</i>	<i>External Scrutiny</i>
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>Pre-decision Scrutiny of the Public Service Board Annual Report</b>	<i>To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the report and to draw agree any items for future scrutiny.</i>		<i>Pre-decision Scrutiny/Performance Monitoring</i>

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Public Services Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<b><i>Integrated Services Partnership Board</i></b>	<i>To discuss the role and remit of the Integrated Services Partnership Board and how it delivers services in Monmouthshire.</i>		<i>Performance Review</i>
<b>Items to consider for Inclusion: (Arising from Corporate and Community Plan)</b>				
<b>Progress the development of the new Magor and Undy Community Hub</b>				
<b>Invest in better bus infrastructure</b>				
<b>Work with the police, partners and communities to tackle anti-social behaviour</b>				
<b>To explore streams: Housing Social Grant, Substance Misuse Grants,</b>				

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Public Services Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
to assess what they are delivering for Monmouthshire				

- Violence and Women ~ Scrutinize the delivery of the Gwent perpetrator assessment and the impact of inappropriate sexual behaviour among 10-17 year-olds. Address the increase in misogyny in schools, including the influence of figures like Andrew Tate.
- Flood Risk Management ~ Jointly with Place Scrutiny Committee, inviting National Resources Wales
- Public Transport and Accessibility: Assess the impact of dental service relocations on public transport accessibility for residents.
- Update on the flying start ~ Update on the collaboration between health visitors and Sure Start, including changes in reporting structures and service provision.
- Request a comprehensive health update from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) (**in progress**), covering:
  - Holistic approach to supporting older people.
  - Primary and secondary care integration.
  - Resource, nurses, doctors, sustainability and retention.
  - Communication with the public on service provision.
  - Preventative services, colon tests, jabs.
  - Updates on specific projects like the Neville Hall Velindre satellite.
  - The uptake of preventative measures like vaccinations, especially among children.
  - Adult Mental Health Services ~ adult suicide
  - Care for people in the community with dementia, family support services.
- Community Policing ~ invite Police and Crime Commissioner ~ **in progress**
- Invite the Integrated Strategic Partnership Board to discuss dentistry and the flow of funds.

# Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

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Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Report Title	Cabinet member	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner
Cabinet	Deferred	Pavement Café Policy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To adopt the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences	Carl Touhig	4-Oct-22
Council	04-Mar-27	Adoption of Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)2018-2033	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To consider adoption of RLDP following the public examination by PEDW	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Caldicot Placemaking Plan	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To consider adoption of the Caldicot Place making Plan	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual letter	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To fulfil the expectation of the PSOW that their report is brought to the attention of Cabinet.	Annette Evans	2-Mar-26
Council	12-Nov-26	Annual Director's Report for Social Care	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Present the annual report to Council	Jane Rodgers	3-Mar-26
Council	12-Nov-26	Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Present the annual evaluation of safeguarding across Council services	Jane Rodgers	3-Mar-26
Council	24-Sep-26	Self-Assessment Report 2025/26	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2025/26 to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2026 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Hannah Carter	10-Feb-26
Cabinet	08-Jul-26	Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023: Monmouthshire County Council's Annual Report	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval of the Social Partnership Duty Report 2026, setting out how the authority will build on existing practice and work collaboratively with trade unions to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.	Philippa Green	9-Feb-26
Council	25-Jun-26	Panel Performance Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To receive the Panel Performance Assessment report and the authority's response to the recommendations.	Matt Gatehouse	17-Mar-26
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Investment Package for Caldicot Leisure Centre	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Consideration of proposed investment to improve facilities at Caldicot Leisure Centre	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	20-May-26	S106 Affordbale Housing Contributions	Sara Burch	To recommend options to commit and spend some of the contributions	Louise Corbett	27-Mar-26
ICMD	20-May-26	REVOKING THE USK AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA ORDER 2005	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To request the Cabinet Member (Cllr Angela Sandles) to agree to the revocation of the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005.	Huw Owen	9-Apr-26
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	15-Apr-26	Consultation concerning the provision of Early Education at Durand Primary School	Laura Wright - Education	To provide Members with feedback following the statutory consultation process concerning proposals to replace the Local Authority Nursery with a non maintained setting at Durand Primary School	Matthew Jones	4-Mar-26
ICMD	08-Apr-26	Goldwire Lane ICMD - Prohibition of Driving Except for Access, Goldwire Lane, Monmouth	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek Cabinet Member approval to proceed to make permanent the MCC Goldwire Lane prohibition of driving (except for access) traffic order	Graham Kinsella	26-Mar-26

Cabinet	30-Mar-26	Proposed acquisition of land to construct a road diversion at Llanthony Valley	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek Cabinet approval to the acquisition of land to enable the Highway Authority to construct a road realignment away from the land slip at Llanthony Valley.	Deb Hill Howells	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Monmouthshire Draft Local Growth Fund Investment Plan	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To present to elected members UK Government's new Local Growth Fund and Monmouthshire Draft Fund Investment Plan.	Hannah Jones	12-Feb-26
ICMD	25-Feb-26	Submission of Section 6 Biodiversity duty report to WG	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To submit report outlining how the Council maintains and enhances biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems	Craig O Connor	7-Jan-26
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	26/27 Placemaking Delivery	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To agree funding allocations for Welsh Government Transforming Towns and Pride in Place. Impact Fund.	Craig O Connor	19-Dec-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Annual Performance Report - Planning	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Report the Annual Performance Report to Welsh Government	Andrew Jones	15-Oct-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Section 6 Report to Welsh Government on Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Report of Councils actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity	Kate Stinchcombe/Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Various Traffic Regulation Orders - Amendment Order No 18	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	The report seeks Cabinet Member approval to proceed with the making and implementation of the MCC Traffic Regulation, speed limit and parking regulations Consolidation Order 2019 (Amendment Order No.18) 2025	Gareth Freeman	26-Nov-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Craig O Connor	17-Nov-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Car Parking Review	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	That Cabinet endorses the following recommendations 1.That Cabinet agrees the strategic objectives for the Council's parking strategy 2.That Cabinet agrees the proposed MCC actions in response to the recommendations made in the Monmouthshire car parking review	Craig O Connor	9-Oct-25
Council	23-Oct-25	RLDP for Adoption	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Rachel Lewis	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	Connect to Work and Future Focus programmes	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones / Rory Clifford	21-Jul-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Proposed endorsement of the Monmouthshire Local Area Energy Plan	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Welsh Government commissioned the production of Local Area Energy Plans for Local Authority areas which will be used to develop a regional and national Energy Plan. The Local Area Energy Plan for Monmouthshire provides data on the energy requirements of the county and the transition that will be required to support carbon neutrality of the energy demands. The report seeks Cabinets endorsement of the Local Area Energy Plan to enable the development of the regional Area Energy Plan and a supporting Investment Prospectus.	Deb Hill Howells	28-Jul-25
ICMD	20-Aug-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 17	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Gareth Freeman	4-Aug-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Nature Recovery Action Plan & Green Infrastructure Strategy	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Y Prentis Update	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	26-Feb-25

Cabinet	21-May-25	Placemaking Grant 25/26 & 26/27	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Craig O Connor	29-Apr-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	PSPO Lane Closure to prevent fly tipping & off roading	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Mark Cleaver	13-Mar-25
ICMD	12-Mar-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 16	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment			
Council	06-Mar-25	Appointment of Chief Officer - Head of Transport - Exempt info	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Deb Hill Howells	21-Jan-25
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	UK Shared Prosperity Fund post March 2025 – financial implications and impact	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	10-Jul-24

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