



Senedd Members and Welsh MPs

4 July 2022

Dear Colleagues

As I did last month, I would like to share with you a number of case studies from NHS organisations on what they are proud of. These are shared at our monthly NHS Wales Leadership Board.

Below are the highlights and attached is further information about each area from May.

- **Aneurin Bevan's** has now officially opened a Victorian Walled Garden on the site of the Grange University Hospital. The garden, which is run by volunteers, is situated close to the main entrance and the garden has been gradually transformed over the past decade from a previously neglected piece of the site's history into a community space that is open staff and visitors to use as a place of relaxation.
- **Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Boards** Heart failure nurse Vicki Jenkins has been crowned Cardiovascular Nurse of the Year at this year's British Journal of Nursing Awards. Vicki was recognised for her work in developing and trialling an app that monitors cardiac patients at home via their mobile phone or tablet.
- **Cardiff and Vale University Health Board** has launched a new service that will significantly improve treatment for people with pelvic floor disorders. The Pelvic Health Community Hub is based in the Outpatient Department at Barry hospital and will deliver patient-focused support, advice and treatment options for the management of pelvic organ prolapse, incontinence and bowel dysfunction.
- **Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board** has launched a Wellness Improvement Service. The service provides non medical intervention to improve people's health and wellbeing being on specific waiting lists.
- **Digital Health and Care Wales** has been working closely with the occupational therapy department at Hywel Dda University Health Board and has reduced its annual clinical documentation audit completion time from six to nine months to just one month, thanks to a new digitally automated workflow. The new auditing workflow

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

uses Microsoft Teams and SharePoint to make it easier for occupational therapists to complete and return audit surveys, and for the central occupational therapy team to collate and store those surveys securely.

- **Health Education and Improvement** has been working to maximise valuable learning opportunities for healthcare students in the care home sector. They have developed a new Care Home Education Facilitator role to support student placement experiences within care homes.
- **NHS Wales Health Collaborative** has worked collaboratively with a number of partners to ensure an update was applied to the Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP). Swansea Bay Endoscopy Result Reports, went LIVE nationally in WCP, on 4<sup>th</sup> May enabling clinicians to view these patient results, across health board boundaries. This brings the number of hospitals sharing LIVE Endoscopy results to 10 on WCP.
- **NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership's** Legal and Risk Services division recently won 'Employment Law Services of the Year' at the prestigious South Wales Law Awards. The awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of the law community.
- **Powys Teaching Board's** Health and Care Academy has been successful in supporting the growth of the workforce across Powys, offered local training, and has opened opportunities to work with wider education providers. The Health Care Support Worker apprenticeship programme has achieved a 100% success rate with all participants achieving a Level 2 qualification in Clinical Health Care Support and securing substantive Health Care Support Worker roles.
- **Public Health Wales's** medical microbiology and infectious diseases team in their Swansea clinical laboratory service has been recognised for Outstanding Response to Covid-19 at Swansea University's recent Research and Innovation Awards event. The team were directly responsible for the expert microbiology care of Covid-19 patients in the Swansea Bay University throughout the pandemic, providing a clinically excellent 24 hour, 365/7 service.
- **Swansea Bay University Health Board** has fitted the first person in Swansea Bay with one of the latest NHS hearing aids – the Danalogic Ambio Smart. The aid has inbuilt connectivity so it can wirelessly stream from a phone or Bluetooth device.
- **Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust** has opened a state of the art new home for emergency and non emergency crews. Welsh Government has invested £8 million into the project, which began in July 2020 with the remodelling of the former Merton House, Pontprennau Cardiff.

Yours sincerely



**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

## Promoting Excellence: What NHS Wales is proud of – May 2022

### Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

#### 1. Exciting initiative being launched to support staff wellbeing



Sanitary/period products On Site (SOS) boxes are designed to provide staff with free access to sanitary/period products in case of urgent or unexpected need.

We recognise that periods can be unpredictable and the impact of not having access to the period products needed has a significant negative impact on wellbeing.

From June 2022 all staff will have access to SOS boxes containing a range of products in different absorbencies which will be installed in staff toilets in clinical areas and across all sites. If a staff member finds themselves in need and unable to access their personal supplies, they can easily use the SOS box. It is hoped that this SOS box initiative will help allay the worry and distress of potentially being at work without having access to the period products needed.

The pilot of this project won the Staff Recognition Award for Wellbeing recognising the work of Dr Josie Cheetham, a junior doctor training in ABUHB over the past three and a half years. She has heard many striking accounts of the need for the SOS boxes from her colleagues and the positive impact of having access to them during her pilot projects. In recognition of the importance that they place on staff wellbeing and equity at work, ABUHB is the first NHS Health Board or Trust within the UK to provide free access to period products for unexpected need across all sites.

## 2. Walled Garden Officially Opened

A Victorian Walled Garden, on the site of The Grange University Hospital, has been officially opened to the public.

Situated close to the main entrance of the new hospital at Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran, the garden has been gradually transformed during much of the past decade, from a previously neglected piece of the site's



history into a community space that is open to people to use as place of relaxation, contemplation and enjoyment during daylight hours. The walled garden is an important green space and will benefit patients, staff, visitors and the community around it.

Originally the kitchen garden attached to Grange House - on the other side of the garden to the new hospital - when it was a private manor, the garden was later used for therapeutic horticulture for residents when Llanfrechfa Grange became a Learning Disabilities hospital in the 1950s. All manner of fruit and vegetables were grown in well-maintained plots, but when patients were resettled into the community in the 1990s, the garden became unused and fell derelict.



*THEN: The neglected garden in 2015*

In 2013, a small group of staff at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board suggested it be made into a community garden. Ideas were sought for its development, and a formal community group with charitable aims was formed to take this forward. In 2017, the

group applied to the Charity Commission for England and Wales and became an



established charity - the Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden who have worked tirelessly to lead the development and new layout of the garden.



The Friends aim to continue hosting a number of events throughout the year, such as the national "Have a Grow" day in June, and seasonal activities such as fetes and Christmas craft fairs. They also plan to restart some therapeutic horticultural activities for patients in the future.

The garden was officially opened earlier this month at a ceremony attended by the charity's trustees, volunteers and associate members, donors, and supporters from a range of public bodies, organisations, local businesses and the local community.

Dr David Hepburn, consultant in intensive care at The Grange University Hospital cut the ribbon and said: *"The health and wellbeing benefits derived from being outside, especially in a beautiful and peaceful environment, are well documented. I am delighted that the new hospital has been sited next to this lovely garden and that it will be open for all to enjoy. What an amazing resource."*

Jan Smith, who chairs the charity, said the garden's opening is a product of the hard work, determination and generosity of many individuals, groups, funding bodies, and businesses that have donated their time and resources to help realise the dream. Entirely self-supporting, the garden and its Friends group rely on small grants, income generating activities, membership fees, and the hard work and generosity of its volunteers and local supporters.

The charity currently has just under 100 associate members who pay £5 a year to support the garden project. There are around 40 regular volunteers, many of them also members. Volunteering takes place every day.



*NOW: A space for relaxation and contemplation*

New members and volunteers are always welcome. To get involved, visit [www.facebook.com/LlanfrechfaGrangeWalledGarden](https://www.facebook.com/LlanfrechfaGrangeWalledGarden) or the website at [www.llanfrechfawalledgarden.wordpress.com](http://www.llanfrechfawalledgarden.wordpress.com)

## Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

### **1. Heart Failure Nurse Viki Jenkins crowned Cardiovascular Nurse of the Year**



A nurse specialising in heart failure and echocardiography has been crowned Cardiovascular Nurse of the Year at this year's British Journal of Nursing Awards.

Heart Failure Advanced Nurse Practitioner & Echocardiographer, Viki Jenkins, is recognised for her work in developing and trialling an app that monitors cardiac patients at home via their mobile phone or tablet.

The app was produced by developers Huma and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board who along with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board trialled it during summer 2021.

As part of the trial, patients received equipment to take readings, including a blood pressure cuff, weighing scales and a pulse oximeter.

Cardiology specialists were able to remotely monitor each patients' symptoms and progress, and conduct video consultations to address any concerns. If needed, hospital visits were arranged for further treatment and consultation.

Viki said: "We wanted to build on the advances made in digital technology since the beginning of the pandemic, and the app was an extension of that, but we needed to understand how easy or difficult it is for people to use the application, what is what this pilot was all about.

"It was a great opportunity to explore what health services will look like in the future – COVID-19 has shown we have to embrace innovation like this.

“Patients get the interventions they need sooner. It’s quick and easy for me to use, it prevents people having to come into hospital unnecessarily.”

The BJN Awards is a prestigious annual celebration that recognises excellence in nursing.

The Cardiovascular Nurse of the Year award is presented to a nurse who has achieved excellence, or shown a flair for innovation, and translated this into measurable improvement in patient care in the cardiovascular setting.

Speaking of her award win, Viki said: “I am honoured to receive the Cardiovascular Nurse of the Year award jointly with Mandie Welsh from Cwm Taf who I worked with to design and pilot the remote monitoring to manage our high risk heart failure patients during this pilot.

“It’s been a huge learning curve and a long time in the planning but it has also been very exciting and rewarding to see how it has benefited patients and helped me work in new ways.”

Gill Harris, Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, said: “I cannot commend Viki highly enough for her dedication to her patients, colleagues and profession.

“This award is so very well deserved and also an incredible endorsement for the fantastic work she has carried out that has benefited her patients so much.”

## **2. More than 1.6 million COVID-19 vaccinations given to people living or working in North Wales**



More than 1.6 million COVID-19 vaccinations have now been given to people living or working in North Wales.

This significant achievement is down to the hard work of our staff and volunteers and has played a key part in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



So far, 50,000 more jabs have been delivered as part of the spring booster phase – the most in Wales – with plans now being put in place for the wider round of booster vaccinations to be delivered in the Autumn.

Gill Harris, Deputy Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, said: “The incredible efforts of our staff, primary care contractors, partner organisations and volunteers have helped us to keep the momentum going on what has been the biggest vaccination programme ever delivered by the NHS.

“It has been the success of the vaccination rollout that has helped to significantly reduce the number of people dying or needing hospital treatment with the virus, and ultimately return to a more normal way of life.

“While we continue to put our plans in place for the next round of anticipated boosters later this year, we would still encourage those who have not yet come forward to contact us as the invitation to get a vaccination will remain open to everyone.”

Vaccinations have been administered in care homes and over 200 different locations, including GP surgeries, mass vaccination centres, mobile clinics and community pharmacies, as part of a huge logistical effort since the programme launched in December 2020.

To book your COVID-19 vaccination call out Contact Centre on 03000 840004.

### Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

#### **1. New Pelvic Health Hub at Barry Hospital is first of its kind in Wales**



Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has launched a new service that will significantly improve treatment for people with pelvic floor disorders.



The Pelvic Health Community Hub is based in the Outpatient Department at Barry Hospital and will deliver patient-focused support, advice and treatment options for the management of pelvic organ prolapse, incontinence and bowel dysfunction.

The first of its kind in Wales, the new hub will provide a multidisciplinary approach to patient care consisting of consultant colorectal surgeons, urogynaecologists, urologists, physiotherapists, dietitians, clinical nurse specialists, continence advisors and a pain management team.

It is also supported by a Pelvic Health Service Co-ordinator, a role that has been established within each Health Board across Wales, with Welsh Government funding.



The new hub is expected to reduce waiting times and improve pelvic health services within the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan area and has been designed to expand as demand for the service increases over time.

The hub is also able to provide Sacral Nerve Stimulation (SNS), which involves inserting a device that acts as a pacemaker into the bladder and bowel.

The treatment can successfully treat incontinence in up to 75 per cent of patients and the Pelvic Health Community Hub is the first centre in Wales to offer the treatment.

Cardiff & Vale Health Charity and the Arts for Health and Wellbeing Programme has supported The Pelvic Health Community Hub, brightening the corridor space outside their clinic areas.

Sally Keenan, Pelvic Health Service Co-Ordinator, said: “We are delighted to open the new Pelvic Health Community Hub, which will significantly improve our services for people with pelvic floor disorders in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

“We would like to thank Cardiff & Vale Health Charity who in partnership with Grosvenor have brought some light and space into our internal corridor area of the hospital, through the Arts for Health and Wellbeing programme.”

## **2. Reducing major bleeding after childbirth in Wales thanks to life-saving research**

Welsh health improvement project which has resulted in 160 women per year avoiding the need for a blood transfusion after giving birth has changed postpartum haemorrhage guidelines in Wales.

For International Day of the Midwife (May 5) we're highlighting the vital role of research in improving midwifery practice. The Obstetric Bleeding Strategy (OBS) Cymru project was an improvement programme from 2016-2019 based on the results of the OBS2 study, led by Professor Peter Collins, and run by the Centre for Trials Research, part of the Health and Care Research Wales funded community.

OBS Cymru aimed to reduce harm from postpartum haemorrhage through the use of a new checklist requiring midwives to measure blood loss throughout childbirth by weighing the amount of blood on a patient's sheets and in collection containers. This process means midwives know as soon as a patient is bleeding abnormally, enabling early interventions to prevent the need for a blood transfusion. Before this, blood loss wasn't measured consistently in Wales.

Due to its success, OBS Cymru has been adopted into the All Wales Postpartum Haemorrhage Guidelines. Midwives, obstetricians, anaesthetists, haematologists, and health care assistants throughout health boards now follow the same process for management of blood loss during childbirth. In 2021, OBS Cymru was given the Health and Care Research Wales Research Impact Award.

Dr Sarah Bell, consultant anaesthetist at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, who is leading on this work, said:

"The OBS Cymru project is the result of ten years of research into the best ways to identify and treat major bleeding after childbirth. We know patients in Wales are benefitting from this change in practice and through further research we hope to change future postpartum haemorrhage guidelines across the UK so that this approach can benefit all women."

Maryanne Bray, Lead Research Midwife at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, said:

"Research into interventions like this is so important because it shows how small changes in our processes can have a big impact. What we do as a maternity team can affect a mum and her baby for the rest of their lives so it's important that we get it right. I believe there is still so much we can do to improve care and outcomes for women in the future and research is the answer."

Sarah Milosevic, 35, is from Llangattock and experienced a major haemorrhage with her first baby in November 2021.

Sarah said: “I saw an advert on the Health and Care Research Wales website asking for people with experience of postpartum haemorrhage to help plan further research into the effectiveness of OBS Cymru. I believe maternity research is vitally important, and as the discussions were online it was easy to take part with a small baby!

“Even though I had severe bleeding when I gave birth to my son it was clear the midwives and doctors knew exactly what they were doing and I felt like I was in safe hands. However, I know this isn’t the same for every mum, and that postpartum haemorrhage can be a really difficult experience. I wanted to give feedback so that I could help contribute to the improvement of maternity care throughout the UK.”

Charlene Jones, 42, is from Neath and had a major haemorrhage after giving birth to her twin daughters in February 2020.

Charlene said: “After my daughters were born, my partner noticed that I was losing a lot of blood. Even though it was quite scary for us, the midwife reacted quickly, alerting the obstetric team. I saw them weighing my bed sheets to find out how much blood I’d lost, which I’ve learned is because of OBS Cymru.

“Everyone knew what they were doing and the midwife communicated with me clearly about what was happening. Considering how frightening the situation was, I feel I was given excellent care and I think that is thanks to OBS Cymru. It makes me really proud that Welsh research is leading the way in improving treatment for postpartum haemorrhage.”

Speaking on International Day of the Midwife 2022, Professor Julia Sanders, Specialty Lead for Reproductive Health at Health and Care Research Wales, said:

“Major bleeding is one of the most common complications experienced by women during childbirth, and faced by midwives and obstetricians. The OBS Cymru project has improved the management of postpartum haemorrhage in maternity units throughout Wales, resulting in better outcomes for the women in our care.

“Although the OBS Cymru approach to postpartum haemorrhage has been shown to work in Wales, guidance and practice still differs across the UK. To get the strong evidence needed to support the OBS Cymru approach, research is now required on a larger scale involving the other UK nations. An application for this larger study has been developed and I am hopeful it will be funded. I’m so proud of developments like this which show how the multidisciplinary maternity teams in Wales work together to develop and test pioneering improvements to maternity care and midwifery practice.”



## Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

### 1. Introduction of New Service to Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board - Wellness Improvement Service (WISE)



Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board is proud to launch the Wellness Improvement Service (WISE), a service to provide non-medical intervention to improve people's health and wellbeing whilst being on specific waiting lists. The WISE service forms part of the NHS Wales Planned Care Programme for Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board follows an evidence-based, lifestyle medicine approach where patient empowerment forms the basis of the service and supports behaviour change through person-centred techniques to improve mental and physical wellbeing.

Through a sustained education programme, WISE aims to enable referred patients to better understand the root causes of their current medical conditions and choose lifestyle behaviours that improve their long-term health, as well as ensure a better quality of life with reduced symptom burden.

This ethos resonates with the Health Board's 2030 strategy to support patients' access to several opportunities to improve their physical and mental health outcomes; promote wellbeing; and support the reduction of lifestyle-related diseases which are worsened by deprivation, health inequality, and social isolation.

The WISE Team will initially be able to support patients with the following:

- Chronic Pain
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Emotional Wellbeing - stress, anxiety, PTSD
- Cardiology - High blood pressure
- Respiratory conditions

Patients can be referred by their Consultant, GP practice, health professionals, self-referral, or social connector. The service will also be increasing the opportunity to other conditions over the coming months to offer this key prevention and wellness support.

Liza Thomas-Emrus, Lead Clinician with WISE said: "Our objective at WISE is to focus on what really matters to each individual patient by addressing any barriers they may have to make successful healthy lifestyle choices, and then create the opportunities to deliver holistic care that is impactful to them. We want patients to feel they are being seen as the individuals they are and not as a symptom or disease.

"We all know how difficult it is to change our lifestyles. It can appear simple but that doesn't mean it's easy. Patients will have a Wellness Coach to support them to implement sustained changes that improves quality of life.

“This provides an exciting opportunity for us at WISE as we have created the time to focus more vigorously on the lifestyle factors which are the root cause of our region’s most chronic illnesses. It’s a ‘win-win’ for WISE patients and the Health Board.”

**You can find more information on our website [Here](#) - [WISE CTM - Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)**

## **2. New Holistic Approach for Treatment in Care Home Patients**

A new multi-disciplinary approach to treating patients in care homes is being piloted in the Bridgend area by Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB.

The project looks at the management of swallowing, nutrition and medication in elderly care home residents.

Sheiladen Aquino, clinical lead Speech and Language Therapist for the project explained: “An elderly care home resident can often have multiple difficulties caused by aging. This commonly includes problems with swallowing (dysphagia) which can lead to malnutrition and missed medications.

“Until now, care home staff would need to ask the GP for referrals to three different services including a speech and language therapist for swallowing difficulties, a dietician for nutrition advice, and a pharmacist for a medication review. This means waiting on three different waiting lists and attending three different appointments.”

The care model being piloted in Bridgend brings these three elements together in an integrated multidisciplinary team where just one referral is needed to access three professionals. Patients need only attend one virtual appointment from which they will have an integrated care plan.

“Using the new technology available to us, we no longer need to bring these elderly patients into hospital for numerous appointments,” said Sheiladen. “We are upskilling and training care home staff to ensure that take a lead in facilitating appointments without the elderly person leaving the premises.

“Disjointed care in elderly patients is proven to lead to hospital admission. By integrating care in this way, the care package is wrapped around the individual, enabling a sustained quality of care as well as greater comfort for the patient.”

The pilot project is being supported by the Bevan Exemplar Programme, which enables health and care staff across Wales develop and test their own prudent ideas to improve and transform health and care.

Joanne Cass, Clinical Lead at Picton Court Care Home has been working with the Health Board team on this project. Her team has recently received the training needed to get up and running. She said: “This was a well organised, multi team effort that was motivational and educational.

“It’s an advantage to have access to the knowledge held by you all, alongside the opportunity for members of the nursing team to ask questions and clarify aspects of dysphagia.”

## Digital Health and Care Wales

### **1. Occupational Therapy cuts time spent on clinical audit thanks to digital innovation**

The Occupational Therapy department at Hywel Dda University Health Board has reduced its annual clinical documentation audit completion time from six to nine months to just one month, thanks to a new digitally automated workflow.

Developed with the NHS Wales Microsoft 365 Centre of Excellence, a Microsoft innovation hub based in Digital Health and Care Wales, the new auditing workflow uses Teams and SharePoint to make it easier for occupational therapists to complete and return audit surveys, and for the central occupational therapy team to collate and store those surveys securely.

Previously, up to 250 occupational therapists would fill in paper-based surveys, which were then managed through emails and spreadsheets by a central team. When audit surveys were late, the team would spend time seeking out the information, which delayed the completion of the audit.

Now, the team maintains all audit information in SharePoint. Automation is used to prompt occupational therapists to enter their audit information online, which means data can be more easily tracked and analysed. If an audit is late, an email reminder is automatically sent.

Another new feature is a Power BI dashboard, which is automatically updated every 30 minutes with a visual overview of key metrics, including how many audits have been submitted, user information, and audit type.

Following a successful first audit with the tool, the Centre of Excellence team hopes that it can be adapted for use by other teams with complex audit processes.

Suzanne Crompton, Occupational Therapy Service Lead, Hywel Dda University Health Board, said, "This new process gives us more time for patient care. Administrative tasks previously took over 1 hour 30 minutes to complete per audit, but now that those processes are automated, we have that time back. The new process is much simpler and easier for everyone involved, and we're already getting such positive feedback from the team.

"We're also benefitting from improved communication and governance. The data provided by the solution gives assurance that self-audit of clinical documentation and learning is taking place three times a year for each clinician."

Damian Mayer, Interim Head of the NHS Wales Microsoft 365 Centre of Excellence, said: "Suzanne, together with Elaine Price, Occupational Therapy Administrator, originally brought their audit process challenges to us in one of our Microsoft hackathon events, and we've worked together every step of the way to ensure that the audit solution doesn't just make processes easier to manage, it actively frees up the clinicians' time to care.



“It has been a joy for us as a team to see the Occupational Therapy department’s audit challenges solved in real time and collaborate on a solution that has had such a big impact on their way of working. It’s one of many examples of brilliant Microsoft 365 innovation work happening across NHS Wales every day.”

If you're an NHS Wales colleague with an operational challenge that you think could be solved by Microsoft 365 innovation, [sign up to the Digital Champions Network](#).

## **2. New Executive Directors join the DHCW Board**

Digital Health and Care Wales is pleased to welcome two new executive directors to the Board this month.

Sarah-Jane Taylor joins as Director of People and Organisational Development and Gareth Davis has taken up the post of Interim Director of Operations.

Prior to joining DHCW, Sarah-Jane worked in government and the NHS at Director level for over 25 years and led on transformation of services across diverse workforce groups in the civil service and public services.

She said: “The organisational passion, drive and optimism amongst everyone that I have met so far has been fantastic. I have received such a warm welcome and am really looking forward to getting to know everyone better, and in working together to achieve the aims and objectives of DHCW.”

Gareth Davis brings a wealth of experience in delivering operational stability and digital transformation into the public sector and has an innovative and customer led mindset.

He said: “I am very excited about my role at DHCW, especially during this important time of digital transformation throughout NHS Wales. I am looking forward to working alongside the team and key stakeholders and using my experience to drive technical innovation throughout.”

DHCW also recently welcomed Ifan Evans, previously Welsh Government Director for Technology, Digital and Transformation as its Executive Director of Strategy.

## **Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)**

### **1. Creation of new C.H.E.F roles will maximise opportunities in care homes for healthcare students in Wales**

We are working to maximise valuable learning opportunities for healthcare students in the care home sector. A first in Wales, we have developed a new Care Home Education Facilitator (CHEF) role to facilitate and support student placement experiences within care homes.

Opportunities for healthcare students’ to gain better understanding of the personal and healthcare needs of residents living in care home settings is critical to a wider

appreciation of holistic care, inter-professional ways of working, and the fundamental importance of a person-centred approach as set out in A Healthier Wales.

The first phase of this work will focus on care homes across Wales that offer nursing provision. There are significant numbers of care homes across Wales that offer high levels of nursing care with multi-professional input. There are fantastic learning opportunities here for students' personal and professional development, a chance to undertake a wide range of new skills, and to appreciate and gain an understanding of the important connections across health and social care services. At the same time, there are opportunities for care homes to enhance their status as centres of educational excellence and showcase the sophisticated work they undertake day in day out.

We have recruited three Regional Care Home Education Facilitators (CHEFs), who are working to:

- Develop accurate information on the breadth of healthcare student placement opportunities across the care home sector in Wales starting with care homes that offer nursing provision.
- Collaborate with university, health, and social care partners, to build on existing care home placements and establish new relationships and links with care home settings to facilitate further student learning opportunities.
- Provide ongoing support to care homes in facilitating student placements that are appropriately audited and provide effective student supervision and assessment.
- Highlight the important contribution that care homes make to the development of the future health professional workforce.

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/news/creation-of-new-c-h-e-f-roles-will-maximise-opportunities-in-care-homes-for-healthcare-students-in-wales/>

## **2. NHS Wales Bursary Scheme continues to support student's tuition and living costs**

Health Minister Eluned Morgan has confirmed the extension of the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme for eligible healthcare students starting their studies in 2023-24.

The non-repayable bursary provides a package of financial support which covers both tuition fees and an element of living costs for student nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and healthcare scientists. Eligible students must commit to working in Wales for up to two years after qualifying.

As one of the administrators of the bursary, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) welcomes this announcement. The Welsh bursary has helped so many people gain qualifications and develop their career in the NHS to help care for the people of Wales.

HEIW is committed to investing in the education and training of our nurses, midwives and other highly-skilled professionals working in our NHS. The organisation is working to ensure the future NHS workforce has the skills and capacity to create 'A healthier Wales'.

Beverlea Frowen, NHS Wales Bursary Relationship Manager said, "The scheme has given valuable support to many people from diverse backgrounds to enable them to train and ultimately work in Wales for the benefit of the people in Wales."

The extra one year of funding allows enough time for all stakeholders to contribute to a review of the scheme to ensure that the overall objective is effectively achieved. This also provides time to assess its appeal to prospective students so that Wales continues to secure an adequate, sustainable and high-class workforce.

HEIW administers the scheme in partnership with NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP), Health Boards and Trusts, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Wales.

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/news/nhs-wales-bursary-scheme-continues-to-support-students-tuition-and-living-costs/>

## NHS Wales Health Collaborative

### **1. Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP)**

In a joint collaboration between the National Endoscopy Programme (NEP), Digital Health **and** Care Wales (DHCW), Swansea Bay University Health Board (SB UHB) and supplier MediLogik Ltd, a recent update was applied to the Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP).

Swansea Bay Endoscopy Result Reports, went LIVE nationally in WCP, on 4<sup>th</sup> May enabling clinicians to view these patient results, across Wales health board boundaries.

Endoscopy results are now available for Singleton, Morriston and Neath Portal Talbot hospital locations. The collaboration also enabled Princess of Wales Hospital results for Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, bringing a total of ten hospital locations now reporting LIVE Endoscopy results reports in WCP.

### **2. DHCW are implementing LINC standardisation work in WLIMS1**

During 2020-21 the Laboratory Information Network Cymru (LINC) extracted the current state configuration from the present laboratory information management system (LIMS), Trak Care Lab (TCL2016), known as WLIMS1. LINC then led the review and standardisation of this configuration (the future state); more than 20,000 configuration items in total including more than 1,200 test set workflows.

LINC is now working closely with Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) Configuration Leads, health board colleagues, and standardisation groups to



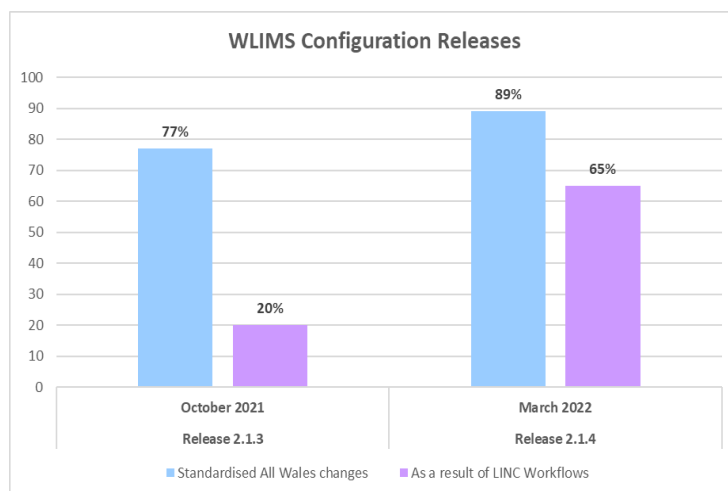
implement the agreed standardised configuration as far as achievable in WLIMS1. This means synchronising the delivery of the standardised configuration with the service's existing backlog of change requests. A primary goal of this work is to ensure a seamless transition to the new LIMS service currently be customised for Wales.

The LIMS Enabling Programme (LEP) within LINC is responsible for monitoring changes to WLIMS1 that incorporate standardised workflows and ensuring alignment of the change management processes for WLIMS1. Changes to the WLIMS1 configuration are released according to a predetermined release schedule, resulting in a release going live approximately every 12 weeks.

The graph below clearly demonstrates the positive impact this standardisation work is having on WLIMS1 configuration changes.

Out of 52 configuration changes, **40 (77%)** were standardised across Wales in Release 2.1.3 in October 2021, and **8 (20%)** of those changes were the **result of LINC workflow reviews**.

By Release 2.1.4 in March 2022, the numbers had **dramatically increased**: out of 55 configuration changes **49 (89%)** were standardised across Wales, and **32 (65%)** of those changes were the **result of LINC workflow reviews**.



Jodi Hughes, DHCW Clinical Specialist Configuration Lead for Wales outlines some of the advantages of this standardisation work: “It



removes the postcode lottery for patients, it simplifies configuration so that if all health boards do the same then it reduces the clinical risk of mistakes being made in adversely to other health boards, and it also reduces the amount of testing required in laboratories as one health board can test for All Wales.”

WLIMS Configuration Release 2.1.5 is scheduled to go live in early July 2022, and LINC is confident that standardisation levels will continue to increase.

## NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

### 1. Success for NWSSP Legal & Risk Services Employment Team at South Wales Law Awards



Congratulations to the Employment Team within our Legal & Risk Services division who were winners in the category of 'Employment Law Services of the Year' at the prestigious South Wales Law Awards.

The South Wales Law Awards celebrates the truly outstanding achievements of the law community and provides significant recognition for the Employment Team's work within the legal profession.

Head of the Employment Team, Sioned Eurig said;

*"I am delighted to lead such an amazing team. We're all thrilled with the win at the South Wales Law Awards and will continue to strive to provide excellent service and advice to HR teams and beyond within NHS Wales. The last two years have been difficult for many and we pride ourselves on having been able to support the COVID 19 Pandemic. We don't only defend NHS Wales organisations in Employment Tribunal claims but we also advise on policy development and structures to make the NHS more inclusive and a better place to work."*

Mark Harris, Director of Legal & Risk Services said:

*Congratulations to our brilliant team of employment lawyers on their success at the South Wales Law Awards on 6 May 2022. The team was awarded the prize for Employment Team of the Year 2021, an award which they thoroughly deserved for their hard work, expertise, boundless enthusiasm, and commitment. All under the inspiring and compassionate leadership of Sioned Eurig.*

The Employment Team was established in 2012 and currently consists of 8 solicitors, 2 Chartered Legal Executives, a legal secretary and a Network 75 student. The Employment Team has a broad remit within NHS Wales and acts for Health

Boards and Trusts in a wide and diverse range of Employment Tribunal cases and also advises on high level strategic policy issues.

## **2. NWSSP Single Lead Employer**

The Shared Services Partnership Committee signed off the proposal in early 2020 that NWSSP should become the Single Lead Employer (SLE) for Pre-Registration Pharmacists, Foundation Doctors, Foundation Dental, Specialty and Core Medical and Dental Trainees not subject to an existing SLE arrangement in NHS Wales. The initial completion date for the roll-out of the new model was scheduled for August 2021 but was subsequently amended to May 2022 because of COVID. This revised target has now been met and the SLE model has been rolled out to all eligible trainees in accordance with this agreed timescale.

Programme Management Board Arrangements were put in place from April 2020 with the establishment of sub-groups to oversee the development of:

- 1) Governance arrangements to underpin the model e.g. (standard employment contracts, Employment Management Agreement(EMAs) between NWSSP and the respective Host Organisation);
- 2) A Financial model and agreed funding flow mechanisms;
- 3) A Standard Operating Procedure for SLE Trainees for Occupational Health services
- 4) Operational and Workflow process issues (including the migration of data between Intrepid and ESR); sickness reporting via robotics; the establishment of appropriate communication and engagement processes with all key stakeholders; and the establishment of a dedicated website, FAQs etc.

Implementation of the new model resulted in the need to simplify, rationalise, and change numerous transactional processes whilst rolling out the model. NWSSP now employees over 3,000 trainee medical and dental staff. The intended benefits of the new arrangements are now coming into fruition with medical workforce resources being released back to the Health Boards. Those trainees who opt to stay and train in Wales only now require one round of employment checks prior to the start of their initial training. There are also less problems experienced with tax codes when rotating to a new Health Board, and trainees are able to access various salary sacrifice schemes. For participating Health Boards, any additional duties can be paid through one payslip.



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd  
Addysgu Powys  
Powys Teaching  
Health Board

## Delivering a Healthy, Caring Powys

May 2022

Your stories of innovation and improvement in Powys

### Health & Care Academy - Health Care Support Worker Apprenticeships

Powys's Health & Care Academy was established in 2021, its purpose to contribute to a Wales-wide response to increase local access to education, training and development across the health and social care sector, specifically focused on the workforce in Powys.

Through the Academy's School of Professional and Clinical Education and Training, the Health Care Support Worker Apprenticeship programme has been successful in supporting the growth of the workforce across Powys, offered local training, and has opened opportunities to work with wider education providers.

The Academy has supported local people wishing to take the first steps into a career in health care allowing apprentices the opportunities to gain clinical skills expertise whilst studying alongside experienced multi-disciplinary teams and health care professionals, ensuring that they are trained to deliver the highest standards of care to patients.

The Health Care Support Worker apprenticeship programme has achieved a 100% success rate with all participants achieving a Level 2 qualification in Clinical Health Care Support and securing substantive Health Care Support Worker roles.

These newly qualified Health Care Support Workers are being encouraged by the academy to continue with their professional development by following pathways onto higher levels of Health Care and having the opportunity to embark onto the flexible routes into nursing programmes.

The HCSW programme continues to grow with the recruitment process shortly to commence for a new intake of apprentices to start in the Autumn of 2022. This will support the ethos of "growing our own" to develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce across Powys.





Current cohort of Health Care Support Worker Apprentices





# Delivering a Healthy, Caring Powys

May 2022

Your stories of innovation and improvement in Powys

## Health & Care Academy – Adaptive Living Space simulator

Following Welsh Government investment, contractors have now handed over the keys to the latest stage in the development of the Health and Care Academy in Powys.

The pioneering *Adaptive Living Space* is the first in Wales as part of the Health & Care Academy.

A converted bungalow on the Bronllys Hospital Site, the building is next door to the Health and Care Academy and will provide an opportunity for people to engage with simulations of real-life home equipment and environments during their training.

The facility will also enable us to trial and test some of the latest technology that supports people to stay at home. The space is kitted out with digital technology that enables sophisticated observation to take place by assessors, other students and/or tutors. As the space will be connected to the hub building and other spoke sites coming online in the future, these individuals don't have to be on site but could be observing/assessing from different locations including other health organisations across Wales.

The Health and Care Academy was established in 2021 to contribute to a Wales-wide response to increase local access to education, training and development across the health and social care sector in Powys. Operating as a hub and spoke model, it will offer state of the art practical, academic and digital learning opportunities through four schools. Developed in partnership with Health, Social Care and the third sector, it will start to deliver an enhanced education, training and development offer to our workforce across Powys, including volunteers and carers.





## Public Health Wales

### **1. Public Health Wales' World Health Organization Collaborating Centre Re-designation Event**

Public Health Wales became a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Investment in Health and Well-being in 2018. We are delighted to have been re-designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for a further four years and held a re-designation event which marked the renewal of the WHO Collaborating Centre status. The Centre is the first and only one in this area of expertise in the world, and is part of a global network of more than 800 Collaborating Centres in more than 80 countries.

Over the past four years, the Collaborating Centre has worked in close collaboration with key stakeholders and partners across Wales, the UK and internationally. The Collaborating Centre has successfully developed, synthesized and shared information, international guidance, actionable intelligence, practical tools and

approaches on how to invest in a more sustainable way to improve people's wellbeing, reduce inequity and build stronger, more resilient communities, economies and planet.

The new 4-year programme of work for the Centre focuses on providing scientific and policy evidence and expertise to build capacity and implement effective inter-sectoral policies for health and equity across the life course. It also plans to innovate and harness economic and multi-disciplinary tools and approaches to support building an *Economy of Well-being* in Wales, exploring and identifying solutions to the global challenges of widening health gap and socio-economic disparities, COVID-19 response and recovery and climate change.

You can find more information here: [More information - World Health Organization Collaborating Centre On Investment for Health and Well-being \(phwwhocc.co.uk\)](https://phwwhocc.co.uk)

## **2. Swansea University Research and Innovation Award for our Microbiology Team**

The medical microbiology and infectious diseases team in our Swansea clinical laboratory service in Public Health Wales was recognised for *Outstanding Response to COVID-19* at Swansea University's recent Research and Innovation Awards event.

The Awards dinner took place on the 5 May at the Great Hall on Swansea University's Bay Campus and was attended by 250 people from across the University. The team was represented by Steve Hadfield and Jenny Hudson for Public Health Wales and Angharad Davies for the medical school. Team members were directly responsible for the expert microbiology care of COVID-19 patients in the Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) area throughout the pandemic, providing a clinically excellent 24 hour, 365/7 service. They were responsible for the care of the first COVID-19 patients at the beginning of the pandemic, set up the first COVID-19 ward to admit infected patients and the last ward to close during the first two waves. The team showed leadership at a time of widespread challenge and demonstrated how COVID-19 patients could be looked after with appropriate risk mitigation early in the pandemic.

The Team rolled out extensive laboratory testing of clinical samples at pace in our Swansea Microbiology service to support clinical services in SBUHB. At the start of the outbreak viral PCR testing was not available in SBUHB and during the challenging period of scaling up testing infrastructure and capacity, the team worked tirelessly and innovatively to deliver testing by adopting a wide range of testing platforms to build capacity and resilience. SBUHB can now deliver over 800 PCR tests daily and carry out COVID-19 variant assay testing, with contingencies to rapidly deploy a further 500 daily tests. The service runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week providing access to rapid turn-around results (approximately 90 minutes) as well as high throughput tests.

The framed certificate the team was presented with is now on display in the department.



Congratulations to all our Swansea team on this very well-deserved recognition of their hard work and dedication throughout the pandemic. We are so very proud of all the amazing work of our microbiology teams across Wales who worked at pace and scale to protect the people of Wales.

## Swansea Bay University Health Board

### **1. Florence Nightingale's legacy inspires nurse to take safety into the digital age**

A senior nurse is taking patient safety into the digital era with the support of a charity named after the profession's most famous leading light.

Lisa Graham is the Deputy Head of Nursing for medicine in Singleton and Neath Port Talbot hospitals.



Every morning the nine medical wards hold what is known as a safety huddle, during which any issues involving patient or staff safety are raised.

As the wards are spread across two sites, this is done virtually, with the information collated into a spreadsheet.

Now Lisa is looking to create a live and interactive digital version, which will improve patient safety even further.

And she has been awarded a Florence Nightingale Foundation Digital Leadership Scholarship to help turn her vision into reality.

The foundation's main focus is on improving health, clinical outcomes and patient experience by fostering nursing and midwifery leadership.



Its scholarship programme provides support and mentorship for nurses and midwives undertaking projects to achieve those aims.

Lisa said she was inspired to apply by her manager, Sharron Price, Head of Nursing for Adult Services in the two hospitals, who has herself just completed her own Florence Nightingale Foundation scholarship.

“Sharron’s was a leadership scholarship and mine is a digital leadership scholarship so they will be very different even if the underlying principles are the same,” Lisa said.

“We are in the digital age of nursing now, and Swansea Bay is at the forefront of that in many ways. So it will be good to see what this scholarship will bring for the health board.”

All hospitals have their own versions of safety huddles. They are led by matrons, with ward managers providing daily updates on any patient or staff safety-related matters. These can range from falls and pressure ulcers to infection control issues.



It was Lisa who introduced them in Singleton and Neath Port Talbot, where the huddle is known as a “buzz”.

She described it as being among her proudest leadership achievements, and the one that had made the biggest improvement to safety.

*Pictured opposite: Lisa (right) with Sharron Price outside Neath Port Talbot Hospital*

“It’s an opportunity for ward managers to raise any issues with us and we in turn can escalate them if necessary,” Lisa said.

“In a nutshell it’s about keeping our patients and our staff safe, and ensuring we are providing quality care.

“We are seeing a reduction in avoidable harm. Risks are being escalated to the matron team in a timely fashion, allowing them to offer expert advice on the spot.

“I would like to take this to the next level and adapt the safety huddle into a digital version that is live and interactive.



“Digitalising it will make it easier for the ward managers, who can then spend a lot more time at the bedside.”

Swansea Bay is already pioneering the latest digital technology in a number of key areas within its hospitals.

The Welsh Nursing Care Record, WNCR, went live in Neath Port Talbot Hospital last year following a pilot in 2020.

It allows staff to record and access patient information via computers, saving hours of time previously spent handwriting notes.

Swansea Bay created the original version, and subsequently developed WNCR on behalf of Digital Health and Care Wales, which selected it as the basis of an all-Wales solution.

Before that, the hospital led the way in another digital solution – HEPMA (Hospital e-Prescribing and Medicines Administration).

This automates the prescribing and administering of medicines for patients in hospital, saving time and reducing risks.

Both were implemented by the health board’s digital services team, with which Lisa (*left*) will work with on her digital safety huddle plan.

“I have the vision but they will have the brains to develop the system,” she said.

Lisa hopes the scholarship will help her to enhance her leadership skills – and those of others in turn.



She added: “I am a passionate nurse through and through. I want aspiring nurse leaders to follow in my footsteps and apply for scholarships.

“Working with other scholars across the UK and globally opens up a whole world of knowledge that we can pass on to our teams and colleagues within the health board.”

While Lisa is only at the start of her scholarship, her manager Sharron (*right*) has reached the end of hers.

She said she had been unsure what to expect from it, but described the impact it had made as incredible.

During the year she has had ongoing support from her mentor, a highly experienced nurse director.

“I’m also interacting with women leaders from a range of corporations and companies across the world,” Sharron said.

“It’s wider than nursing as well. It’s about promoting leadership. You just get some fantastic opportunities.

“The networks you build are really inspirational and you get to meet and engage and talk to so many inspirational nurse leaders across the country. It really does give you a different perspective.

“I’m really passionate about nurse leadership and I’m delighted that Lisa has got the opportunity to do the scholarship as well.”

Like Lisa, Sharron would like to see more nurses from across the health board applying for scholarships.

She said: “We’ve always had a really strong nursing voice, but the scholarship is really helping to amplify that, and to make sure we are being heard and keeping patient safety at the centre of every discussion and every decision that we’re making.”

**2. A music-loving teenager can now hear his favourite tracks clearly for the first time thanks to the latest technology available within Swansea Bay.**



Born profoundly deaf, Gethin Davies has become the first person in Swansea Bay to be fitted with one of the latest NHS hearing aids available – the Danalogic Ambio Smart.

The aids, which Gethin is currently trialling, have inbuilt connectivity, so he can wirelessly stream from a phone or Bluetooth device.

It means the 15-year-old can now hear music a lot clearer and even answer phone calls.

This is all done via an app, which also allows adjustments to be made to speech clarity, noise and directionality, helping Gethin focus on a particular sound without being cut off from other sounds around him.

The benefits don't stop there either. A keen sportsman, his new aids reduce the risk of moisture affecting his hearing devices while he is competing in various sports.



Having worn hearing aids since he was 11 weeks old, the new technology has provided Gethin with more independence.

Thanks to Sarah Theobald, head of audiology services, and Natalie Phillips, head of paediatric audiology, he now has the first hearing aid of its kind in the Swansea Bay area.

“I’m really proud of being the first person to have these new hearing aids,” said Gethin.

“I used to find it hard to hear conversations in busy environments such as the dining room, playground and during sports, where people are moving around.

“I’ve adapted to this over the years but more recently I found that using a mobile and listening to music was much harder as it took time to find headphones which would go over my hearing aids without causing a lot of feedback.

“I’d try to avoid talking on the phone other than using Facetime and would prefer to text.



“But I noticed that when I was competing in sport, the battery compartment of my aids was getting damp from sweat. This would sometimes result in the device switching off, which obviously is not great and really affected my enjoyment of it.”

That all changed following a recent hearing review with the audiology department at Singleton Hospital, who are now issuing the smart aid when it is required and suitable.

“Hearing aid technology is constantly improving both in sound quality and in making hearing aids easier to use along with all of the other devices we now have in our life,” said Sarah.



“Hearing via a hearing aid will always have its challenges but each generation of hearing aids provides some benefit over the last, so it is great to be able to provide these improvements for our patients when they require a hearing aid upgrade.

“We use a number of different hearing aids which are available to account for the different types and degrees (mild to profound) of hearing loss. Patient’s needs are considered, along with their degree of hearing loss to determine the suitable model.”

For Gethin, it means his enjoyment of sport and music, in particular, has considerably increased, along with benefiting his communication with family, friends and in school.

The hearing aids have, he says, made a big difference.

Gethin said: “They are amazing and I love being able to hear the singers and not just the bass when I’m playing music.



“These aids are more water resistant and I haven’t had any issues with them turning off during sport.”

Gethin has attended the audiology department at Singleton Hospital since he was four, and has nothing but praise for the care and expertise he’s received for the past 11 years.

“I’ve had constant support from the audiology department - they’ve been brilliant throughout,” said Gethin.

“I must give a special mention to Sarah, who was my main audiologist until this year.

“Sarah has always been brilliant and has been very responsive to my changing needs over the years.

“Seeing the same audiologist most of the time makes things so much easier and I’m always at ease because I know her and she knows me.

“During the pandemic, I had a few issues with my aids and the department made it very easy to get things sorted out.

“I first met Natalie via a web-based consultation and then in person this year - she was really friendly and listened to my answers carefully and was able to offer suggestions and solutions to any issues I raised.

“I’m delighted with the department as a whole, and I’m thankful for what they’ve done for me.”

### Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

#### **1. Welsh ambulance service is helping to make people’s dying wish come true**

The Welsh Ambulance Service is helping to make people’s dying wish come true with an extraordinary initiative.

The Trust’s Wish Ambulance takes patients at the end of life to their favourite destination for a memory-making experience for them and their loved ones before they die.

Since its creation in 2019, the Wish Ambulance has transported patients to an Elton John concert, a rugby match, a wedding reception and the beach, as well as on a fishing trip.

One patient made the journey to watch his beloved football team, while another patient with weeks to live collected his mother from Heathrow Airport, who he had not seen for six years.

Ambulance staff give up their time to run the Wish Ambulance, which is a non-emergency vehicle not in service on the day of the journey.

Patients are referred by their palliative care team into the Wish Ambulance initiative, which is also a UK ambulance service first.

Ed O’Brian, the Trust’s End of Life Care Lead, said: “Naturally, people think of the ambulance service’s role as preservation of life, but people may not realise we also support patients approaching the end of their life due to an advanced illness.

“As a service, we’ve been providing transport for many years via a dedicated service to ensure people can be conveyed to their preferred place of death, but the Wish Ambulance service is a newer concept which was borne out of a conversation with one patient about going home for a couple of hours before returning to a hospice.

“It’s our absolute honour and privilege to facilitate these experiences for patients, which are as heart-warming for us as it is for them.

“We couldn’t run the service without the volunteers across the Trust and across Wales who give up their time to make it happen, not just on the day itself but also in the build-up.”

Dr Idris Baker, Consultant in Palliative Medicine and National Clinical Lead for Palliative and End of Life Care in Wales, added: “When someone is approaching the end of their life, we try to focus urgently on what matters most to them.

“Sometimes that’s about their health care, but often it’s about the other things in life.

“I’m so impressed and grateful to see the commitment of the ambulance service and its staff who volunteer their own time to plan and then achieve a journey which is so important to someone, allowing them to enjoy it and make memories for those who will remain long after a death.

“It isn’t always possible, but since the scheme was launched, it’s had profound effects on people all over Wales who have wanted that one last trip to somewhere special but may have given up hope of being able to.”

Improving palliative care provision is a priority for the Welsh Ambulance Service, who last year appointed its first dedicated palliative care paramedics.

The four-strong team work as part of Swansea Bay University Health Board’s Specialist Palliative Care Team and divide their time between patients in the community and patients in a hospital and hospice setting.

The Trust has also joined forces with Macmillan Cancer Support in Wales to improve the training delivered to ambulance crews so they can provide the very best care for patients at the end of life.

The End of Life Care Rapid Transport Service provides transport for terminally ill patients to their preferred place of death, and has made more than 2,400 compassionate journeys since its introduction in 2017.

The Trust was also the first ambulance service in the UK to introduce ‘Just in Case’ medications to its frontline emergency vehicles, allowing paramedics to better manage the symptoms that may sometimes be experienced as terminally ill patients become more poorly.

Lee Brooks, Executive Director of Operations, said: “Where and how people die matters, and we are very proud of the work we’re doing as an ambulance service to improve the experience of patients at the end of their life.

“The many and various initiatives in place for palliative patients means we can help people and their loved ones to spend their final days in the way they want.

“As people near the end of life, dignity and the knowledge that their final wishes have been met is the best comfort and gift we can give them.”

## **2. The Welsh ambulance service opens a state-of-the-art new station in Cardiff.**

The £8 million Welsh Government-funded facility on the Avenue Industrial Estate in Pontprennau is the new home of emergency and non-emergency crews previously based at the ageing Blackweir station.

The Trust's Cycle Response Unit is also based in the new facility, which boasts a Wellbeing Suite for staff and a 'Make Ready Depot' where dedicated Fleet Assistants clean and re-stock vehicles, enabling clinicians to spend more time with patients.

Rob Brunnock, the Welsh Ambulance Service's Locality Manager for Cardiff, said: "This project has been many years in the pipeline so we're thrilled that it's now complete.

"We have fond memories of our time at Blackweir station, but the building was of its time and no longer fit-for-purpose.

"This is a 21st century ambulance station to be proud of, and it means that crews finally get the facilities they deserve, which ultimately means a better service for people in Cardiff.

"The Make Ready Depot in particular is a huge advance and not only frees up crews to spend more time in the community but also improves infection control, which has been more important than ever through the Covid-19 pandemic."

Welsh Government has invested £8 million into the project, which began in July 2020 with the remodelling of the former Merton House.

The opening is part of a broader programme of work to modernise the Trust's estate, which last month saw the unveiling of a new station in Aberaeron for crews previously based in a Portakabin.

Richard Davies, Assistant Director of Capital and Estates, said: "One of our key priorities as an organisation is to ensure our people have access to facilities that are safe, well maintained and fit-for-purpose and which allow them to serve communities to the best of their ability.

"We're grateful to Welsh Government for their investment in this project."

Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services, added: "I am delighted this new ambulance station has opened in Cardiff.

"These state-of-the art facilities will benefit local communities by increasing the time crews can spend with sick and injured people; ensure greater infection control of vehicles and equipment and help to maintain and develop ambulance staff skills.

"I look forward to seeing the new facilities in action soon."