

# Primary Care Newsletter

ISSUE 4

WINTER 2018/19

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New Primary Care Centre plans on show



- Lottery grant boosts for Leg Club project
- Merthyr cluster adopts physio project
- Taff walking rugby adopted by WRU
- Focus on Active Monitoring

Find out more at

[cwmtaf.wales/services/primary-care-community-services/](http://cwmtaf.wales/services/primary-care-community-services/)

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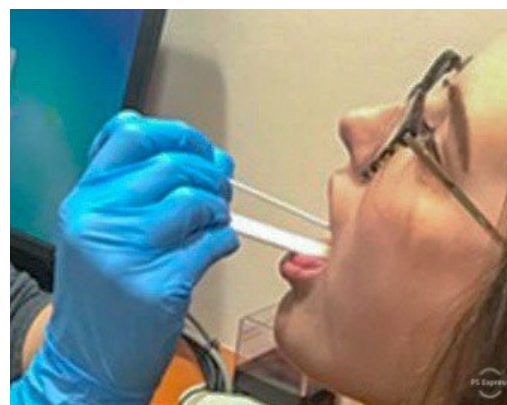
## Pharmacies run sore throat test and treat pilot in Rhondda and Cynon Valley

Pharmacies in Rhondda and Cynon Valley are taking part in a new pilot service to assess sore throat symptoms.

The service is part of the Common Ailments Scheme, which encourages patients to visit their community pharmacist instead of their GP if they feel they need NHS advice to manage common symptoms, such as sore throat, heartburn, conjunctivitis, thrush and threadworm.

Pharmacists will assess patients' symptoms by undertaking a sore throat examination, including a simple throat swab test for those with symptoms which suggest they have a bacterial infection. The results of the test are available in minutes and will help the pharmacist and patient decide on the best treatment and advice to manage the symptoms.

Emma Williams, Lead



Pharmacist for Community Pharmacy and Primary Care, said: "This time of year sore throats are very common and are usually caused by minor illnesses such as colds and flu.

"Most sore throats can be managed at home with medicines you have in your medicines cupboard, and won't need advice from a healthcare professional.

"However, it's a good idea to visit your pharmacist for advice if your symptoms are severe, haven't started to improve after a week or you are unsure about your symptoms and how best to

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## Pointing the way to better health in Merthyr Tydfil



Picture by Mike Erskine

Healthcare in GP surgeries in Merthyr Tydfil is changing - and so is the role of those pointing patients in the right direction. Staff traditionally known as receptionists are taking on care navigation, which is being rolled out across the cluster area.

At Morlais Medical Practice, the friendly faces greeting people at the desk and taking their calls remain the same, but they now have added skills to direct patients to the most appropriate health professional to treat them at the right time.

This might be a GP or it might be another expert, such as a physiotherapist, physician associate, dentist, healthcare assistant or GP support officer, depending on who is best to help them.

Benefits for patients can include being seen more quickly and experiencing a more efficient service. If at any point the health professional thinks a person needs to see the doctor, they will arrange for this to happen.

One of the newly trained staff at Morlais is Rachel Griffiths, who has worked at the practice for a year. She said: "We've been given extra training to be able to direct patients towards a

particular professional, depending on what they are telling us. It's been going well, with patients able to get the right care at the right time."

Morlais practice manager Kate Francis said: "Modern healthcare is changing, with more opportunities to see different types of professional who are highly skilled and qualified.

"As a result, the role of our reception staff is changing too. They are an essential part of the wider practice team, working closely with doctors and other clinicians to help you get the best care you can. It's important that patients get appropriate care at the right time and there are lots of healthcare professionals working in the community who can help. Our staff are here to support patients and have the knowledge to ensure they are seen quickly and more effectively."

The Merthyr cluster was first to implement the care navigation system in Cwm Taf. But it is now helping patients in some other parts of Cwm Taf, such as Taff Ely. Patients have responded well to the changes and can still ask to see a doctor if they feel that's best for them.

## Primary care centre plans go on show



Plans for an ambitious £4m primary and community care centre in Mountain Ash have been unveiled at a public exhibition in the town.

The community was invited to have their say on the proposals and ask any questions of health board team and architects.

Some 65 people attended to view the latest architect's drawings for the building.

The purpose built facility will become the modern home for the two local GP practices, Cynon Valley Medical Centre and Rhos House Surgery, as well as a range of services delivered by District Nurses and Health Visitors.

It will also be the site for the delivery of community, third sector and public health activities and a training centre.

The centre will form part of an overall network of service delivery, linked to the Ysbyty

Cwm Cynon, neighbouring practices within the cluster of South Cynon and the new community hub.

It will replace ageing surgery buildings at existing GP surgeries which are no longer fit for purpose, with some services for the combined patient populations of 10,500 delivered from temporary buildings.

Cwm Taf University Health Board worked hard to secure funding for the project which was approved by the Welsh Government at the beginning of the year.

### **Safe modern care**

The new primary care centre will provide an environment suitable for the delivery of safe, modern day sustainable services and help to improve the recruitment and retention of skilled multi professional primary and community staff.

Primary care has changed and GPs no longer work in isolation but as

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part of a multi-disciplinary team.

The facility will bring other healthcare professionals together to support GPs and patients.

Facilities will include a health education room with baby massage and breast feeding clinic, minor operations room, as well as space for enhanced health and wellbeing services.

It is anticipated that once planning permission and other requirements are met, work could begin on the site in Mountain Ash this year.

**Allison Williams, chief executive of Cwm Taf University Health Board,** said: "The health board is excited to be able to make progress with this important development.

"The facilities will greatly improve the services available to the people of Mountain Ash.

"I hoped that people would come along to the public event to let us know what they think of the proposals for their new primary and community

care centre.

"It is important that they let us know their views so that we can develop the kind of centre that they want for the future," Mrs Williams said.

**Councillor Andrew Morgan, Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and a representative of the Mountain Ash West ward,** added: "I am pleased to see that progress is being made on the delivery of this much-needed facility, which compliments a number of other important developments in the town.



"Having a purpose-built facility will significantly improve the primary care arrangements in Mountain Ash and it will also ensure that the medical needs of residents in the area will be met into the future."

## Volunteers help to set up Leg Club in Rhondda




  
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 LOTTERY FUNDED**

A pioneering project to take medical care into the heart of the community in Rhondda has been awarded a Big Lottery Fund grant.

Nursing staff are working in a wound clinic as part of a new Leg Club in Trebanog

The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation supports leg clubs around the UK with the aim of providing community-based treatment, and care for people of all age groups who suffer with leg-related problems.

The first leg club in the Cwm Taf University Health Board area has been started in Waun Wen Community Centre, as a prime example of a community initiative led by volunteers that helps people to stay well and support each other.

Instead of travelling to a hospital clinic for an appointment to have wounds cleaned and dressed, members of the club are

able to go along to the community centre every Wednesday morning.

Nurses are on hand to provide treatment and advice but the club is run by an enthusiastic group of volunteers who organise fundraising events to pay for the room, refreshments and any other equipment that may be required.

Medical staff work to best-practice guidelines to provide the high standard of care in a social and friendly setting. No appointments are required and the members can drop in to chat over a cup of tea or coffee while awaiting their treatment.

Now, the Big Lottery Fund, has agreed a grant of £8,700 which will secure the sustainability of the club.

The initiative is part of the Cwm Taf #YourLocalTeam campaign to highlight the range of services now available in the community.



## Leg Club from Page 5



Leg Club member Margaret Davies said: "I think the volunteers are marvellous, so welcoming, and the staff are lovely. I can't speak too highly about them."

Her daughter Cheryl Howells said: "Down here it's like a family. You come in here, there's so many that's welcoming. You're well seen to, you have a nice cuppa while you're waiting. Everything about it is just lovely here."



Duncan Randall, another club member, added: "It's really informal. You can come along any time between 9.30 and 12.30. There's no set time, so no rush to get to an appointment. And you can have a good chat and a good cup of tea."

Club secretary Eleanor Johnson said: "Having this lottery grant ensures and secures the future of the Leg Club and enables us to expand on what we can offer the community now and in the future."

The chair of the voluntary committee

Councillor Margaret Tegg said: "The aim is to make this more of a social event instead of a clinical event, bringing people into the community with the aim of combating, in some cases, loneliness or isolation. It's going pretty well and numbers are growing and as chair I am proud to be involved in it."

Melissa Duffy, Wound Clinic Team Leader, said: "The Leg Club is currently in Waun Wen



Community Centre and is open to members from 9.30 until 12.30 every Wednesday morning. Anyone with lower limb problems is able to attend whether that's for treatment or advice."

Rhondda GP David Miller, locality clinical director, said: "I am tremendously grateful to the volunteers without whose contribution there would not be a leg club."

The aim is to open more leg clubs across Cwm Taf over the next few years.

Cwm Taf UHB chair Prof Marcus Longley and RCT Mayor Cllr Steve Powderhill officially launched the club.

**The Leg Club welcomes new volunteers. Anyone interested can contact Caitlin Jacob, Primary Care Development Manager at [Caitlin.jacob@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Caitlin.jacob@wales.nhs.uk)**

View our video on YouTube here

**<https://youtu.be/E80dPez3tig>**

More information on Lindsay's Leg Clubs at [www.legclub.org](http://www.legclub.org)

# Back to the Front Line: Kelechi Nnoaham



**Kelechi Nnoaham, Cwm Taf's Director of Public Health, worked a shift alongside the team in the Primary Care Mental Health Support Service. This is what he had to say.**

**Where did you work and with who for your frontline shift?**

I worked with the Primary Care Mental Health Support Service at Mountain Ash in the morning and with the same service at Keir Hardie in the afternoon. Most of my morning was spent with the primary care resource team – mainly with Tina Sullivan and Michelle Gray – learning what they do and having a go myself at receiving referrals, booking them onto the system for assessment and then ringing patients to schedule clinic sessions for them.

**Give a brief description of the department and the care/services they provide**

The department plays a key role in providing a variety of community mental health support services. At the Ysbyty Cwm Cynon centre where I worked in the morning, they had trialled successfully an integration across their three key services – crisis, primary care mental health support, and community mental health teams. Their integrated assessment system means that referrals come into one central

point and are then assessed by the Practitioners for the nature of further need, with the right onward referral then made.

Once the care cycle is completed, the relevant team which provided the care has access to the same shared database where they can record the care. The referrals mostly come from GPs although patients can be referred from other sources. The service either directly provides or signposts patients to other externally provided support services. One such internally offered service is the "Frame of Mind" Programme, the sixth session of which I had the opportunity to sit in on.

**What was the best thing that happened during the shift?**

It was lovely just being immersed in the world of the administrators during the morning session. Their role is so crucial to how the entire service operates.

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### Director joins work of mental health support team

They clearly do vital work but it was very lovely to see how they approached the work in such relaxed, compassionate and caring way. The atmosphere was a nice one to work in and while the physical environment is a great part of it, you couldn't help notice how the people working there made it a very welcoming place.

#### What was the hardest thing?

Initially, it felt daunting to get on the phone to speak to patients who had been referred to the service in order to schedule appointments for them. I wasn't sure how they'd react to me, and whether they'd ask questions that I didn't have enough information to answer. It was great that Tina was in the background of my telephone conversations with patients as she could pick up tricky questions and signal the answer. I'm talking about apparently simple questions such as 'how do I find the clinic? So it was initially difficult but in reality, the difficulty felt very fleeting as I quickly got down to doing an ok job!

#### What surprised you?

The approach of the practitioners who led the "Frame of Mind" session surprised me. They were very open with the course participants about their personal experiences and I wondered that it would take much courage from them to be so open with patients about their personal lives. They agreed and suggested that this was key to creating a level playing field and a sense of camaraderie with the patients as this was crucial to them being open and getting the best out of the programme

#### What was the most important thing you learned?

The day confirmed what I had always known – that mental health is a growing societal concern. Crucially, the interaction of physical health conditions (mainly long term conditions), multiple morbidity and mental ill-health is a very interesting phenomenon that is already testing our health and care systems and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

#### What one thing will you do to help the department improve for staff?

I offered any support that might be useful in terms of addressing any specific staff-related issues. There were none that came up in the day but both I and they valued the fact that we had established a relationship that meant they could talk to me directly if I could be of help in the future.

#### What one thing will you do to help the department improve for patients?

The department already recognised this but I did stress the importance of keeping collective sights on how we continually improve experience of care for the growing numbers of people with co-occurring mental and physical health challenges.

#### What will you do differently in your own role following the experience?

I valued the immersion into the frontline. I will continue to welcome and engage with these sessions enthusiastically. I am very grateful to Stuart Williams, Rachel Akande, David Whitcomb and Sam Haxton-Foley who not only put great thought into how they might help me make most of the day but also spent quality time talking with and taking me through the service.



# Gala Night as awards recognise hard work

Groups of staff from primary care were able to get dressed up for special gala nights after being shortlisted for prestigious awards by their patients.

The practice team from Cwm Gwyrdd Medical Centre in Gilfach Goch were first runner up as Practice of the Year in the Royal College of General Practitioners Wales awards held in Cardiff.

Meanwhile, Dr Lisa Thomas from Parc Canol Practice in Church Village was second runner up in the GP of the year category.

Both awards were nominated by their patients.

Louise Duck, Practice Manager at Cwm Gwyrdd, said: "The nomination was recognition from the people that we provide our services to, and the judging panel was made up of patients too."

"Some 109 practices were nominated across Wales and we came in the top three."

Dr Thomas at Parc Canol was among 100 nominated for her initiative to set up a Lifestyle Workshop.

She asked patients in her Church Village practice to join her in a programme looking at a better lifestyle and improved health. As a result, all those who took part said their general well-being had improved while some repeat medication was stopped, like anti-depressants and pain relief.

A chef was brought in for nutritional advice, while a personal trainer was also recruited. The initiative was in collaboration with the Taff Ely Cluster and Hapi Project which provided funding.



**Staff from Cwm Gwyrdd Medical Practice**



**Dr Lisa Thomas, top right, at RCGP Wales**

The sessions included talks about mindfulness, medication, a healthy diet and exercise and how these could improve their symptoms.

Dr Thomas said: "I had such a brilliant night at the RCGP awards night. What a privilege to be among so many inspiring people. Thank you to my patients, Richard Shaw @cookingtogetherwales and Lisa Voyle from Hapi Rhondda Cynon Taf. You have taught me the value of lifestyle medicine and social prescribing. I really believe that by empowering patients we can make them happier and healthier."

## Virtual Ward team is recognised at UK General Practice awards



**An Aberdare practice was shortlisted as Team of the Year in a glittering awards ceremony taking place in London.**

**Members of the Virtual Ward team at St John's Medical Practice attended a gala night at the Park Plaza hotel in Westminster on November 30.**

**The event marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the General Practice Awards which aim to 'celebrate the very best examples of innovation, dedication and leadership taking place in primary care'.**

**The 'virtual ward' is a new method of working developed at the practice. A multi-disciplinary team of about 10 staff, including GP, district nurse, pharmacist, social worker, community paramedic, occupational therapist, manager and third sector services collaborate to take services to their patient to avoid crisis admissions to hospital.**

**They meet once a week to discuss sick or vulnerable patients who may need more intensive support from the Primary Care Team to continue to live and function safely at home.**

**The initiative frees up GPs time to concentrate on complex medical cases and keeps patients out of hospital.**

**Lead clinician Dr Owen Thomas said:**

**"Being shortlisted for this award is fantastic for the whole team. What isn't always seen is the amount of work everyone has put in over the last three years.**

**"This is the culmination of learning from our mistakes and driving it forward.**

**"Now we are a functioning team that's making waves bigger than the pot it came from.**

**"It really cements the team and it will be fantastic to feel all the hard work is worth it, making a difference for patients."**

**The awards organisers seek to recognise GPs, nurses, pharmacists, practice managers, leaders in healthcare and clinical teams who are making an outstanding contribution to patient care. There were 23 categories of awards for healthcare professionals, including General Practice Team of the Year.**



## Walking rugby project welcomes VIP visit



The Older People's Commissioner for Wales Helena Herklots visited the Walking Rugby project in Pontypridd.

The Taff Ely Primary Care Cluster was instrumental in setting up the initiative in conjunction with Men's Sheds, as part of efforts to enhance health and well-being for the over-50s in the community.

The shared aim between the cluster and Men's Sheds is to create a social activity and opportunity to meet up for men and women who may in some cases face isolation or loneliness.

The physical exercise in a sporting group also encourages players to want to improve their fitness and diet, and watch what they are drinking and smoking.

The commissioner visited the group as part of a fact-finding mission into similar community initiatives across Wales.

Prof Marcus Longley, chair of Cwm Taf University Health Board, said: "This is about improving people's health through their own natural ability rather than medicines.

"It's about encouraging a healthy life at any age."

Dr Stephanie Foulkes-Moran, joint cluster lead in Taff Ely and a GP in Talbot Green, said: "The great thing about an initiative like Walking Rugby is that it combines the health benefits with being part of the wider community."

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales Helena Herklots said: "Loneliness and social isolation affect more than 1 in 4 older people in Wales and can lead to a range of detrimental physical and mental health impacts, equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Tackling loneliness and social isolation is a vital part of my aim to make Wales the best place in the world to grow older and I will continue to work with the Welsh Government to develop their strategy."

The successful project has attracted support of the WRU with four teams taking part in a mini-tournament, and 20 weeks of coaching aiming to develop walking rugby across Wales.



# GP's World Marathon Challenge



Pontypridd GP Andrew Blair completed an amazing six major city marathons in one year after crossing the finishing line in the world biggest race of its kind in New York. The run was the culmination of marathons around the world, starting in February in Tokyo, followed by Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago and finally New York early in November.

Remarkably, the 54 year old family doctor finished four of the six races in under three hours.

Dr Blair, based at Ashgrove surgery, said: "The runs are all the world marathon majors. I called them the 'World marathon Major Challenge 2018'.

"I am delighted to have completed the challenge and that my times were also competitive," he said.

"In New York, I was 756<sup>th</sup> out of more than 52,000 and 13<sup>th</sup> in my age category in what is the biggest marathon in the world.

"In Chicago I was 637<sup>th</sup> out of 44,000 being 11<sup>th</sup> in my age category. For me, it's not just about completing the marathons it's also doing a competitive time."

He has now become an 'Abbott 6 star finisher' which entitled him to the larger medal for completing all six major marathons. But they can be done over any

number of years.

"It's been a hard 12 months with no break in training so looking forward to a few weeks off now. But I plan to run London Marathon next in April, so training will have to begin again in January."

## Times

His times in the marathons were: Tokyo 2 hours 56 minutes; Boston 3 10; London 3 18; Berlin 2 55; Chicago 2 51 and New York 2 54. The combined running distance was more than 157.3 miles in 18 hours.

"Boston was the worst conditions I have ever experienced in a marathon, with a sub-zero wind chill and I never really warmed up. When I got to London I worried what my time would be and it was half an hour slower than last year because of my legs."

Dr Blair, who has been running seriously for about 10 years, ran his first London Marathon in 2009. His best time for the marathon is two hours 48 minutes.

**The GP is raising funds for the Alzheimer's Society and Tear Fund via a fund-raising web page at <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=AndrewBlair4&pageUrl=1>**

## New range of health and wellbeing services now available at Dewi Sant Health Park

A young people's counselling project, advice with benefits or debt problems, and support with bereavement are among a range of health and wellbeing services made available at the developing Dewi Sant Health Park in Pontypridd.

The Taff Vale GP practice has already moved into the former hospital as part of the project to transform the site in a similar way to the ground-breaking Keir Hardie Health Park in Merthyr Tydfil.

The health board's @Home Service is also based there. Other services and a coffee bar will follow during the phased development of the building.

Now the new Primary and Community Resource Hub combines clinics such as wound care and physiotherapy services alongside community organisations offering support for local people, such as MIND, Cruse and Citizens Advice.

Elizabeth Owen, from the Eye to Eye Young People's Counselling Service for 10-25 year olds, said: "The hub has enabled us to increase delivery of counselling hours to the young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf."

Louise Gaw from Changing People Changing Lives aims to help people aged over 25 who may be long-term unemployed or have a work-limiting health condition.

"We can offer group and individual support to enable them to live their lives more effectively, access training, volunteering opportunities, further learning or work if required," she said.

Claire Ingrams, customer services manager for Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taf, said: "We deliver services from primary healthcare venues enabling us to work more closely with health professionals to assist with issues that can affect a patient's health, such as debts and benefit problems. Over the three months that we have been running, the session has become progressively busier demonstrating the need for the service."



Karen Glover, pictured, was appointed as the Primary and Community Care Resources co-ordinator at the health park to work with the organisations on day to day issues. She works closely with the Cwm Taf community coordinator Deanne Rebane at the voluntary sector organisation Interlink.

Other services available during the week also included Merthyr and the Valleys MIND, who offer one to one counselling and Recovery College group sessions; Autism Directory and Cruse Bereavement also hold group workshops on a weekly basis; and Drink Wise Age Well can be seen in the foyer with their promotional stand.

Alan Lawrie, Director of Primary, Community and Mental Health for Cwm Taf University Health Board, said: "It is great to see our voluntary sector organisations using the hub. This gives the opportunity for the population to access joined up services in a central location.

"This is key to the vision for Dewi Sant Health Park becoming a community facility. We looking forward to continuing our work with partners from primary and community care, voluntary sector and social care to ensure the site develops in a way that makes best use of the health park and delivers community based services."



## How Active Monitoring brought some colour back into Sonia's life



A colouring book might not seem like an obvious benefit to anyone left devastated by bereavement but, for Sonia Bucsenac, taking up the activity has helped her cope with the loss of her beloved husband.

Tibor, who was originally from Hungary, passed away earlier last year after a long spell of illness. Feeling like she was 'going downhill fast', Sonia turned to the Active Monitoring programme and the impact on her day to day life has been extremely positive.

Active Monitoring, delivered by practitioners from Merthyr and the Valleys Mind via some surgeries in Cwm Taf, helps people experiencing anxiety, stress, mild depression, a lack of confidence, anger or grief.

The programme involves five face-to-face sessions of up to 40 minutes with a trained practitioner over eight weeks, with the aim of giving people the tools and strategies to manage their mood.

Sonia, of Glyncoch, Pontypridd, said: "Even though he'd been ill, I wasn't really expecting him to pass away when he did."

Sonia visited her GP in the months following Tibor's death and was referred to Mind practitioner Sadie Hardwick, who works in the Taf Ely cluster.

"I went downhill fast and everything was getting on top of me, but Sadie was a marvellous woman who really understood me."

She advised me to get an adult's colouring book, which I did, and colouring in the pictures really took my mind off things.

"I still don't like to go out a lot, as I'm afraid people will ask and it's difficult to talk about, but I am trying to get out more and my children have really been helping."

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Active Monitoring has helped hundreds of people to look after their mental health since the programme began in Cwm Taf. The programme enables people to change their thoughts and behaviour patterns, with measurements of wellbeing from those taking part in the scheme showing overall improvements in feelings of anxiety, depression and general wellbeing and confidence.

Practitioner Sadie, who works in the Taff Vale and Ashgrove surgeries, explained more about the service. "If people otherwise go for counselling, they get what's known as a

therapeutic hour, which is between 50 minutes and an hour," she said. "When they come for Active Monitoring, they get an initial session of 15 minutes where we get an idea of what they have been dealing with and they get to find out more about what we do.

Awareness of Active Monitoring is growing, with patients now asking their doctor if they can access the service.

**To find out more about Active Monitoring, people can ask their GP or visit the Mind website.**



**GIG  
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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf  
University Health Board

### Primary Care Clusters

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### CWM TAF CARES

**Merthyr Tydfil** GP Lead Dr Mary Franklin. Practice Manager Leads Kate Francis; Kevin Rogers. Primary Care Development Manager Imran Gilani 01685 351357.

**Cynon Valley** GP Lead Simon Gray. Practice manager leads Lynwen Francis and Lucy Evans. Primary Care Development Manager Tess Raybould 01685 351387.

**Rhondda** GP leads Dr Westley Sauders; Dr Rachel Bennett; Dr Neeraj Singh. Practice Manager Lead Sarah Simpson. Primary Care Development Manager Hayley Pugh 01685 351341.

**Taff Ely** GP leads Dr Oliver Williams and Dr Stephanie Foulkes-Moran. Practice Manager Leads Rachael Baker and Ian Dodd. Primary Care Development Manager Janet Kelland 01685 351483.



## Merthyr physios helping patients 'back' to good health



Patients with back, leg and hip pain are being helped to better health with quick access to expert physiotherapists.

People experiencing musculoskeletal problems in Merthyr Tydfil can ask to see a physio without the need to visit their GP first.

Same-day appointments are often available, with patients then signposted to further help and support or given advice on how to manage the condition themselves.

The scheme started as a pilot in Cwm Taf in 2017, with feedback from GPs being so positive that it was rolled out across the health board.

The physios are part of a wider team of health professionals working to ease pressure on GP waiting times and to ensure that patients get the most appropriate care as soon as possible.

Physio Ben Searle, who works in a number of health practices in Merthyr,

said: "We assess joint and muscle problems such as pain in the back, shoulders, hips and knees. Patients have quick access to a service, usually within a day or two, without the need for a GP appointment first. It's a short appointment, usually of around 20 minutes, in which we give advice, such as how to lose weight or about taking exercise. It's a triage system, so we refer patients on to other professionals such as clinical specialists in the musculoskeletal team or to their GP if appropriate.

"One of the most common problems we see is lower back pain, which affects people of all ages. The earlier a patient can be seen, the better."

The physios are among a range of healthcare professionals that patients may see in their local community instead of seeing a doctor, including GP support officers, physician associates, pharmacists and opticians. To find out more, patients can speak to staff at their GP surgery and follow #YourLocalTeam news on social media.



## Do you have time to help others?

We at Cwm Taf Health Board **Time4me Self-Management Service** are looking for volunteers who are 18+ to join our friendly team that supports people to manage their health condition.

We provide Health & Well Being courses and sessions to encourage people to learn new skills and practice new techniques to better manage their health and wellbeing across Rhondda, Cynon Taf and Merthyr.

We have a variety of available opportunities:

- Delivery of the courses/sessions
- Service promotion and awareness raising
- Administration duties including social media

No previous experience is required and full training and support will be given for the roles which can assist your future career opportunities.

If retired or unable to work then it may be something fulfilling you could be supportive of.

If you think this is something you would like to be a part of and have the time and commitment, please contact Debra, Jan or Gillian on [0168535125/32](tel:016853512532) or email [CTT\\_time4me@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:CTT_time4me@wales.nhs.uk)



# Sore throat test and treat service is trialled in Rhondda



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treat them."

Local pharmacist Dai Williams, of Central Pharmacy, Pentre, said: "If you feel that your sore throat is severe or not improving, visit your local pharmacy first.

"You will be seen that day, by a highly qualified member of the healthcare team, who will be able to offer advice and / or treatment at that point.

"If it requires further investigation, the pharmacist can direct you to the correct place to be seen.

"The NHS belongs to all of us, use its services wisely so choose well and choose pharmacy as your first point of contact."

Dr David Miller, of Forest View Medical Practice, said: "This is a

really exciting new service which will serve those patients who are worried about a severe or persistent sore throat.

"It's an additional resource which we are very grateful for as GPs during the busy winter period.

### 'Free service'

"Crucially the time your GP might have spent seeing patients with sore throats will be free for quicker access for your family, friends and neighbours with more complex illness to be seen.

"I would strongly encourage patients over the age of six years old with a sore throat and who need advice from a healthcare professional to access this free NHS service in the first instance."