

WHAT'S NEW IN CWM TAF PRIMARY CARE?

This edition turns the spotlight on the many health professionals who make up the wider primary care team.

A new campaign is under way to highlight our multi-skilled workforce, employed to deliver the right service, at the right time and in the right place for our patients.

We hope that more awareness about what is available via clusters in Merthyr Tydfil, Cynon, Taff Ely and Rhondda, will also help to alleviate the pressure on our GPs.

So introducing our pharmacists, opticians, dentists, advanced nurse practitioners, physios, occupational therapists, out of hours GPs, well being coordinator, GP support officers...

* Please contact Tom Bodden with your stories tom.bodden@wales.nhs.uk

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Primary Care Newsletter

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Campaign showcases healthcare choices for Valleys' patients



A campaign has been launched across Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf to let people know what healthcare services are available in their local community.

The #YourLocalTeam initiative from Cwm Taf University Health Board highlights the range of professionals who can help patients, without a need to go to the doctor first.

Primary care is changing, with different roles and services now available to support GPs. These include physiotherapists,

wellbeing coordinators, community pharmacists, occupational therapists, dentists, advanced nurse practitioners and GP support officers, who are often best placed to help with issues such as stress, anxiety, back pain, housing matters or family problems.

Clusters

In Cwm Taf there are four primary care 'clusters' covering Taff Ely, Rhondda, Cynon Valley and Merthyr Tydfil. Each consists of a range of health and social care practitioners all working together to

provide the right care and support for local patients.

The clusters are able to employ a range of primary care health professionals in new ways to make a real difference to people in their community.

Sarah Bradley, Cwm Taf head of primary care, said: "There are more opportunities than ever before for people to seek advice and treatment to help them improve their health, make healthy choices and avoid being unwell.

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GP launches patients healthy living project

GP Lisa Thomas asked patients in her Church Village practice to a programme to look at how a better lifestyle could improve their health. All those who took part said their general well-being had improved while some repeat medication was stopped like anti-depressants and pain relief.



Dr Thomas set up a Facebook Group among those who were interested in meeting up for information on healthy eating and exercise. A chef was brought in for nutritional advice, while a personal trainer was also recruited, in collaboration with the Hapi Project which funded the initiative.

Twelve weeks on, the group was thriving and Dr Thomas is working on extending the 'Total Health Workshops' programme.

All 12 people, aged 11 to 77, who took part said that they felt better, no one said it made them feel worse.

The sessions included talks about Mindfulness, medication, a healthy diet and exercise and how these could improve their symptoms. Recipes are shared via the Facebook Group and members also swap their experiences of exercise routines.

"Sometimes we go for a jog together or have a low intensity session with a personal trainer. A chef demonstrates healthier meals and teaches them how to cook it," Dr Thomas said. "I did it in my own time on my day off because that is how much I believe it's the right thing to do. The patients really enjoyed it and felt it made a huge improvement to their general health. As a result

some repeat medication was stopped, like anti-depressants and pain relief," Dr Thomas said.

Kate Maisey who attended the sessions said: "I have really enjoyed the course and love that it has everything for a happy healthy life."

The Hapi Project, which funded the group, works to help people in the Taf Ely area to gain skills and confidence to make choices to improve their health.

Lisa Voyle senior project officer for the Hapi Project said that Dr Thomas' vision of social prescribing and managing health conditions by a healthier lifestyle was 'truly inspirational'.

"In Cwm Taf we have four primary care clusters that consist of a range of health and social care providers, working together to develop services in line with local need.

"They have introduced new roles such as pharmacists, physiotherapists, paramedics, occupational therapists, health and wellbeing workers and support officers, to develop a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach. We want to ensure that as many people as possible know what local healthcare is now available in some of their community."

Lucy Foster is a wellbeing community coordinator supporting 13 GP practices in Rhondda. She works with people facing all kinds of wellbeing and social issues, from problems with their housing and debt to stress, anxiety and loneliness. Often, the people she helps have made an appointment to see their

GP to deal with symptoms, but Lucy's role is to deal first with the cause – which, in turn often eliminates the need to see a



doctor at all.

Lucy said: "It is sad to say that I'm coming across such sad stories, but the best thing about this job is that I'm able to help. By having that friendly face just to chat to, we're able to put the right people all around you to make you feel you're not alone; there's always a light at the end of the tunnel."

Occupational therapist



Alex Gigg works as part of a 'virtual ward' in Cynon Valley and aims to enable people starting to experi-

ence difficulties to stay in their own homes. "My role is about supporting people to live at home independently and trying to enhance their ability to cope at home as best as possible," he said.

Daniel Thorne is one of six GP support officers working in Merthyr Tydfil to help patients and ease doctors' waiting times.

The roles were created to support patients who will often make an appointment with their GP to discuss a range of social



issues.

The support officers help in practical ways, such as setting up a package of care or helping with benefits, as well as signposting to health partners and a range of other services.

"When you see someone three or four weeks down the line and you

see their attitude or their behaviour changing, and they are starting to feel a little bit better about themselves and make progress, that's what it's all about for me," he said.

Sian Rees is an advanced nurse practitioner who uses her wealth of experience and an ability to prescribe and examine to help patients with a wide range of conditions and symptoms. "People find it quite easy to talk to me about things and often the appointment ends up longer than it would have been," said Sian.

"They'll come in and go through a full consultation, and right at the end they'll go 'Oh, by the way!' And that actual



problem is often more serious than the one they've come in with, so then you can sort that

out for them as well."

Merthyr-based optometrist **Roseanne Gill** is another primary



care professional taking pressure away from GPs.

"We offer the Welsh Eye Care Service, so if someone comes in with a problem such as sudden loss of vision, flashing lights, floating bits or double vision, we're able within 24 hours to provide them with a free of charge assessment to be able to hopefully diagnose and manage them," she said.

"But I find that we help people the most with the low vision assessments, actually.

"People say, 'Oh, I can read again!' when they finally have a magnifier and you get quite a warming feeling when someone whose eyesight is very poor can suddenly

read a newspaper title."

Dentist **Rob Davies'** practice, which works in partnership with a range of other services in Merthyr Tydfil, has become 'part and parcel' of the community it serves. "We provide a wide range of services within primary care and there's also a secondary care referral aspect, so we see people from the cradle to the grave, from very young babies to the elderly," he said.



"A lot of the patients are not only patients, they know us and we're friends. We have that kind of relationship and are able to give just that little bit more than the clinical care."

Dr Shallini Subbu is the clinical lead of Cwm Taf's out of hours GP service, based at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant.

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Clinicians, including GPs and advanced nurse practitioners, see patients in consultation centres and in their homes where appropriate. "We are there to provide advice and reassurance and when you need to be seen urgently you shall be," she

said. When patient **Alison** was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at the age of just 38, the treatment she received was mainly at the hospital. But now, with many changes in primary care, she's able to pop to her GP surgery to see an advanced nurse practitioner. "You feel as though you can just tell them anything; this is what they're here for," she said. "They're understanding, helpful,



reassuring and they just help in so many ways," she said.

Currently, the range of roles varies in each of the four areas, but the cluster model means that services are continually being rolled out across all communities and improving patient choice.

GP's marathon target **157.3 miles**

Keen runner Andrew Blair set himself a tough marathon challenge to raise cash for charity. Dr Blair, 53, a GP in Pontypridd, is taking on the six 'World Marathon Majors' in a year, a total running distance of more than 157.3 miles.

He has already pounded courses in Tokyo, Boston and London, clocking the respectable times of 2 hours 56 minutes, three hours 10, and three hours 18. But a combination of extreme weather and short recovery time thwarted his ambition to run all six races in under three hours.

The next three races are in the autumn in Berlin, Chicago and New York. "I ran the Tokyo marathon in February but Boston and London in April were six days apart," he said.

"I had run nine marathons before, and once



did two in one year, but I had never run two in one week. It was compounded by the fact that Boston and London were both run in extreme weather – Boston's subzero temperature was the coldest for 30 years while London was the hottest."

Dr Blair has a break until September when racing begins again. He is aiming to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society and the Tear Fund. Supporters can make donations on the charity web page

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=AndrewBlair4&pageUrl=1>

Wellbeing advice is extended in Rhondda



Patients in Rhondda are being offered more opportunities nearer home to access specialist advice on looking after their wellbeing as well as their health.

Community coordinator Lucy Foster was appointed last year to link patients to the many local services which can change lives for the better.

The post is funded by the Rhondda Primary Care cluster and she is available to patients aged over 18 throughout Rhondda.

Lucy holds sessions in GP surgeries and patients can make appointments for themselves. But no room had been available at Ferndale.

Now the Wellbeing coordinator will be based at the Arts Factory in Ferndale every other Friday from 10am -11.30am.

This new initiative is linked with the Trerhondda wellbeing project and its activities coordinator Beverly Llewelyn.

Situated next door to the Ferndale practice, GPs and staff can refer patients to the clinic or self-referrals are welcome to drop in where a warm welcome is extended to all.

The service signposts patients to help on issues from housing, benefits or finance, to education and learning, employment, training and volunteering.

But it also offers information about mental health issues, healthy and active lifestyle, the arts, music and creativity, befriending, counselling or other support groups.

Aims

The scheme aims to:

Reduce loneliness and isolation

Sign post to relevant local activities and services

Provide a 'safe place' to have a cuppa and a chat

Lucy said: "We will be provid-

ing the patients and community members of Maerdy and Ferndale a one stop shop for all their wellbeing needs.

"We will have a small seating/ waiting area where you can wait to be seen by and have a coffee from our community café stall.

"This clinic is dementia friendly and the Dementia Friends volunteers will be on hand to provide support and information."

The first drop in clinic was held on March 16 and the feedback from those attending so far has been positive.

One said: "You hear of so many places offering activities, support and information but it's all a minefield to me. Coming to one place for a cup of tea and be directed by a friendly face is much easier."

Others added: "This wellbeing clinic in the hub of our community will be great. It's well needed." "If I need help or advice I know where to come."

Developing the Practice Nurses of the future

A new training model aims to encourage undergraduate students to consider the role of a practice nurse as their future careers.

Student nurses from the University of South Wales spent six weeks as part of a pilot project in GP practices across Cwm Taf to learn about the work of the practice nurse.

GP Gaynor Thomas and Sister Kate Wakeling, a practice nurse, from Pont Newydd Medical Centre in Porth led the scheme which is based on a similar 'hub and spoke' model in Yorkshire.

The new approach built on the existing training model and increased the capacity within Primary Care to accommodate placements.

The undergraduate nurses have been on placements at Pont Newydd, Porth, Cwm Gwyrdd Medical Centre, in Gilfach Goch and Morlais Medical Centre in Merthyr Tydfil.

One of them Alicia Howley, 26, a second year undergraduate student from Merthyr, said that she had been impressed with the role of a practice nurse and the team working involved in practice nursing.

"I like the clinical side of nursing and I had always been interested in primary



care," she said.

She had observed ward rounds, chronic disease clinics, well woman and contraception, wound care, hypertension management, spirometry clinics, members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team including GPs and pharmacists and had the opportunity to attend baby clinics, including immunisations.

"I didn't fully realise the role of a practice nurse. The placement has opened my eyes to a positive outlook," she said.

As part of the team in primary care, the role involved managing a patient's care. The experience had persuaded her to consider a future role as a practice nurse, she said.

"Most definitely I would want to consider practice nursing too," she said.

Clare Johnson, practice manager at Pont Newydd Medical Centre, said the feedback from the students had been extremely positive.

"The aim is to allow undergraduate student nurses to spend quality time in a practice to gain a better understanding of what practice nursing involves," she said.

"We know that there is a need for practice nurses going forward as some of those in post reach retirement or choose to follow other career paths. We hope that this early exposure to the role of a practice nurse encourages more to consider it as a career once they qualify."

Cluster trialled Nurse Home Visiting Service

Cynon Valley Primary Care Cluster employed a nurse to work in the community in a new home visiting service.

Alyson Pryse was recruited after 13 years as a district nurse in an effort to take on some home visits which otherwise would have to be done by a GP.

400 patients visited

Over the five months of the trial, 400 patients were seen by the community nurse, avoiding 152 home visits by a doctor.

Alyson was able to refer patients on to other specialties where appropriate including district nursing, podiatry, an occupational therapist, social services, mental health, and the @Home service; only seven patients required follow up with the GP.

She was able to help with chronic disease management of patients unable to get to the surgery and conduct dementia and care home reviews.

Tess Raybould, the development manager for the Cynon Valley, said: "The advantage of the role was that it reduced the demands on GPs, was an example of prudent health care with the most



Community nurse Alyson Pryse

appropriate health care professional carrying out the work.

"The post was integrated into the practice and linked to the multi-disciplinary team."

Learning curve

Alyson, who worked across 10 practices in the Cynon Valley, said: "It was a learning curve from the primary care perspective.

"It differed from working as a District Nurse and it was surprising how quickly I got to know the patients."

Her role took her into care homes, both residential and nursing, and she had the time to take a holistic

approach to patient care ensuring a timely response.

"I would carry out, for example, a routine diabetic review but may then identify other needs where I would initiate a plan of care appropriate to meet those needs."

The reaction of practices was positive:

"Alyson has had the time to efficiently carry out chronic disease assessments within the community, saving us hours of time and enhancing patient care.

"She worked well with our GP's and would ring relevant agencies if she noticed anything when she did the visits. She saved our GPs a lot of time."

HealthWise Wales wants to come to your surgery

Vital research to develop better treatments and to manage diseases

HealthWise Wales is an online study to help the NHS in Wales to plan for the future. Anyone in Wales aged 16 and over are invited to take part by registering their contact details and completing questionnaires approximately every six months either online or by telephone.

People taking part will allow access and use of their routinely collected NHS records (coded data only). Information will only be accessible by appropriately trained and authorised personnel.

Participants' data is only used to support the aims of the project. It will never be shared with doctors or third parties such as insurance or mortgage companies. Questionnaire data will be anonymised and encrypted and linked by researchers to NHS records.

In order to promote HealthWise Wales in the Cwm Taf area Research Assistants Alan, Zoe and Sally from the Research and Development Department have been going out to locations to talk to people and encourage their participation. Several GP practices across the Health Board have shown their support by hosting promotions in their surgeries where the team bring a banner, registration forms and leaflets and spend a morning or an afternoon in the waiting room talking to patients, relatives and staff about HealthWise Wales.

These have been enjoyable and successful events with many people



filling in registration forms.

A common response is 'anything to help the NHS' with people also keen to talk about their experience of taking part in other Health Research.

Alan, Zoe and Sally are grateful for the help and support shown by all the Practice Staff.

Towards the end of May every household in the Rhondda and Cynon area was contacted by post with information about HealthWise Wales and details on how to join if interested.

The more people who join the more information will be available to help shape the health and wellbeing of future generations in Wales.

Hopefully the mail drop will encourage more interest in HealthWise Wales and Alan, Zoe and Sally would be happy to visit Surgeries and Clinics to promote the project.

If you would like to set up a visit or would like more information please

contact:

Alan Meudell:
Alan.Meudell@wales.nhs.uk
Sally Hodson:
Sally.Hodson@wales.nhs.uk
Zoe Hurrell:
Zoe.Hurrell@wales.nhs.uk

The Research Assistants are also available to attend other community events or promote HealthWise Wales to groups.

If you are interested in using the information gathered by HealthWise Wales or would like to apply to submit a questionnaire to be added to the HealthWise Wales, or advertise your own research on the website then you may like to attend a Researchers Workshop on June 26 in Cardiff

To book your place, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/healthwise-wales-researcher-workshop-2018-registration-44591102187>

Yfed Doeth Heneiddio'n Dda



Spotting the signs and starting the conversation

Why is alcohol and ageing an issue?

Older adults with alcohol related issues are often ashamed of their drinking and may be more likely to try to hide it.

Life experiences such as retirement and bereavement, or a loss of a routine or purpose can lead to increased drinking as we age. Drink Wise, Age Well supported by the Big Lottery Fund was established in 2014 to help people aged 50+ make healthier choices about alcohol and is being run across Cwm Taf and four other parts of the UK.

In our survey we found that four out of five adults over 50 at risk from their drinking had never been asked about their drinking by family, friends or a healthcare worker. This may be why many issues associated with

alcohol remain unrecognised. Older adults are also less likely to seek support around their drinking despite being more likely to have positive outcomes.

Recognising when someone's drinking is causing them harm

There are a number of signs that someone you support may be experiencing problems with their drinking. These could include:

Appearing under the influence of alcohol, with symptoms like slurred speech or smelling of alcohol. Recurrent accidents and injury such as falls – look out for frequent appearance of bruises.

Complaints about sleeping and signs of tiredness or insomnia.

Tremors, poor co-ordination or shuffling when

walking.

Persistent irritability without obvious cause or agitation.

These signs could of course indicate other health problems so it's important to 'start the conversation' in a sensitive way and explore what might be going on for the individual.

For individuals and professionals

We run free alcohol awareness and brief intervention training to help increase professional's confidence in both spotting the symptoms of problematic drinking, and to raise the conversation with over 50's drinkers.

We also offer a variety of group diversionary social activities to those at risk of drinking through social isolation; employer workshops to prepare individuals for

life's transitions; one-to-one support for individuals and their families affected by alcohol and community prevention campaigning directly to the public.

Get in touch:

To book free training, find out more or to make a referral:

Call:

0800 161 5780

Website:

www.drinkwiseagewell.org.uk

Email:

wales@drinkwiseagewell.org.uk



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board

Cwm Taf University Health Board

Ynysmeurig House

Navigation Park

Abercynon

CF45 4SN

Email Newsletter Editor

tom.bodden@wales.nhs.uk

CWM TAF CARES

Primary Care Clusters

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 lead Lynwen Francis. 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 Oliver Williams; Steph Foulkes-
Moran. Practice Manager Leads Rachael Baker
Ian Dodd. Primary Care Development Manager
Janet Kelland 01685 351483.

We're recruiting

Joincwm Taf.wales

Source: Wales Diabetes Network

Type 2 diabetes: **My Type 2 journey**

There's plenty of useful information available to you on how to manage your Type 2 diabetes.

1 Orange Booklet

Designed to give you some initial advice until you are able to attend a 3 hour group session or six week course. It will help you start to manage your diabetes, whilst continuing to live a full and active life.



4 Type 2 Diabetes and Me

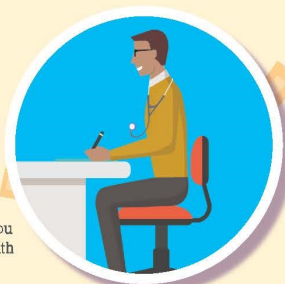
This fun and easy online guide is designed to help you understand and start managing your diabetes.

www.diabetes.org.uk/learningzone



3 Information Prescriptions

Working with your doctor or nurse you can use the information prescription to identify the steps you can take towards a better future with diabetes.



2 Pocket Medic Films

Watch these short film clips that help you to balance the demands of Diabetes care.



5 Courses Available

Whether you are newly diagnosed or have had diabetes for a while, these group sessions give the support and information you need to manage your diabetes.



6 Local Support Groups

Are run by volunteers and offer people with diabetes a chance to share experiences with other people in similar situations.



For further information on accessing any of the above please contact your local GP or Nurse.

