

EITEM AGENDA / AGENDA ITEM: 5.1

Cyd-bwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal y Canolbarth / Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care			
Dyddiad y Cyfarfod: Date of Meeting:	4 th April 2025		
Teitl yr Adroddiad: Title of Report:	Rural Health and Care Wales Work Programme update report		
Arweinydd: Lead:	Anna Prytherch, Head of Rural Health and Care Wales		
Pwrpas yr adroddiad: Purpose of the Report:	To receive an update report on the RHCW Work Programme 2024/25	Ar gyfer cytundeb For Agreement	
		Ar gyfer trafodaeth For Discussion	
		Ar gyfer gwybodaeth For Information	✓
<u>Crynodeb / Summary</u>			
This report provides an update of progress made to date by RHCW in achieving its Work Programme for 2024/25.			
<u>Argymhelliad / Recommendation</u>			
For information - The Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care is asked to note for information progress made in achieving the RHCW Work Programme 2024/25.			



IECHYD A GOFAL GWLEDIG CYMRU
RURAL HEALTH AND CARE WALES

RHCW Progress Report March 2025

Aim 1: Health, Wellbeing and Prevention

- *Improve the health and wellbeing of the Mid Wales population*

- Work has commenced on scoping the provision of **Dentistry** and **Pharmacy** services across Mid Wales, with project plans and frameworks completed. BD is leading on the Dentistry research and ML on Pharmacy. A review of international best practices will also be undertaken to ascertain whether there is potential for adoption of new models of delivery in Mid Wales.
- A first meeting of the full Enhancing Wellbeing in Place thematic group of the **Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales** initiative was held on the 27th January 2025, with 3 meetings held since to explore key themes and areas for research that were raised. A proposal for research into how food can be a conduit for community wellbeing has been submitted, with an appointed researcher allocated to undertake the work. This will consider how food impacts wellbeing in its broadest sense, from affordability / poverty, social / community gathering and impact on loneliness (in line with the increasing provision of community gardens and allotments), nutritional impact on health etc. Three areas are being proposed for the research – Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Monmouthshire. This core theme (food as a conduit for wellbeing) is being further developed as a potential innovation project, with associated community investment potential (£30k).

All 4 UK LPIP projects met in Cardiff on the 7th March 2025 to share best practice and experiences. AP attended as Co-lead of the Enhancing Wellbeing in Place Thematic Group.

Further information on Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales can be found here:

[Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales \(phase two\) - Arsyllfa - Supporting the Welsh rural economy](#)

- The **Macmillan Rural Cancer Patient Experience** research has been adjusted slightly due to a hiatus between October 2024 and March 2025. The last piece of research for the project that is outstanding is a focus on cancer patient case studies and the revised project will now seek to follow cancer patient experiences over a 6-month period in lieu of 12-months. The project has now been extended to continue until the end of October 2025. Support in making contact with suitable case studies from across the region would be appreciated (please contact anna.prytherch@wales.nhs.uk).

- Meetings have been held with representatives from Tanymaen (<https://tanymaen.org.uk>) who are aiding with the development of walking trails in Barmouth, Tywyn and Dolgellau (Gwynedd) as the next phase of development for the RHCW Wellbeing Walks series, linked to healthcare centers. A meeting has also been held with representatives from Walking Newtown (12/03/25) to develop walks in Newtown and raise awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of walking in nature. Funding is being sought to cover cost of the design and printing of leaflets for all locations.
- The **Dementia** scoping project in Ceredigion (UK Shared Prosperity Fund, £7k award) has been completed, with a presentation of findings made to the RHCW Stakeholder Group at its meeting to be held on 11th March 2025. An application for funding through ARUK has been submitted to support the extension of the work to Powys and Gwynedd in order to create a Mid Wales regional overview; work on scoping dementia support services in Powys and Gwynedd has commenced.
- RHCW was approached to participate in a national initiative to prevent diabetes, with an inaugural “hackathon” held at the University of South Wales Conference Centre on 17th March 2025. The “**Tackling Diabetes Together Programme**” (TDTP) is being led by Public Health Wales, with the aim of bringing about a step-change in diabetes management and prevention across Wales. RHCW has been asked to support the dissemination of information and uptake across rural areas, giving input and advice into how best this could be achieved in order that people in rural areas are not omitted from the campaign.

Aim 2: Care Closer to Home

- *create a sustainable health and social care system for the population of Mid Wales which has greater focus on care closer to home*
- The **Sustainable Communities / Cymunedau Cynaliadwy** project is being delivered in Lampeter, Ceredigion, funded through the RIF. A new venue has been found that is more central to the town and therefore more accessible. It is owned by Barcud (Llys Dewi) and has residents that are able to join in activities and events provided by the project. Whilst delivery of the project continues, it is being used as a modelling exercise to further develop a form of sustainable community support that can be emulated in other towns and villages. Therefore, whilst the practical delivery of social events and their evaluation in terms of benefit to attendees continues, work is being undertaken alongside this to connect volunteers to individuals requiring one-to-one support, with research on community resilience models and developing a suitable model for the delivery of low-level support in Mid Wales also being undertaken.

The final reports on the **SPF-funded Sustainable Communities** project delivered in Lampeter and Llanidloes in 2024, evidenced the following outputs:

- 52 events held (26 in Lampeter; 26 in Llanidloes)
- 410 attendees (207 in Lampeter; 203 in Llanidloes)
- 119 individual people received support (40 in Lampeter, 79 in Llanidloes)

- 27 Community Groups engaged with (10 in Lampeter, 17 in Llanidloes)

As yet, no funding has been found to continue the project in Llanidloes, albeit that connections are being maintained in the town as we await the next round of Shared Prosperity funding to open, when we hope to also include a community in Gwynedd in the initiative.

- The next phase of work relating to the review of **GP / Primary Care provision across Mid Wales** is underway, with a draft survey in circulation which, when finalised, will be distributed to GPs across the region. A draft outline for a longitudinal grant has been developed with Swansea University, with a meeting held to explore funding options on 11th March 2025. Prof. Ronan Lyons attended to impart advice to the meeting however he has since retired, albeit that Rhodri Johnson and the team are continuing to develop the application with RHCW.
- High level support for the proposed **Virtual Rural Healthcare** model for Mid, North and West Wales has now been received from all three health boards, with some minor changes to the proposal requested. The edited proposal is to be considered at the next meeting of the Mid Wales Planning and Delivery Executive Group on 16th May 2025 with members to provide feedback on the proposal and hopefully final approval. Once this has been received, work will commence on seeking external grant funding to support roll-out of this exciting initiative.

Aim 3: Rural Health and Care Workforce

- *Create a flexible and sustainable rural health and care workforce for the delivery of high quality services which support the healthcare needs of rural communities across Mid Wales*
- RHCW is working with the **Graduate Entry to Medicine** / admissions team at Swansea University to hold an event on 30th April 2025 in Aberystwyth that aims to attract graduates, of all ages, from all backgrounds, who might consider doing medicine as a postgraduate degree. Dr Lauren Blake, Welsh Lead for the Medical School / Director of Rural and Remote Health in Medical Education, Swansea University, has developed a programme and bilingual posters that will be circulated once the logistics have been confirmed. This initiative has been instigated in an attempt to increase the number of people already living and established in rural Mid Wales to train to become doctors, with statistics over the last 4 years showing a steady decline of applications from the region. As a reminder, research has shown that it is people from rural communities that will choose to work and stay in rural communities over the longer term, hence the need to recruit local people to roles where there are issues of recruitment and retention.
- AP presented a lecture on the work of RHCW to third year **nursing students at Aberystwyth University** on 6th February 2025, with a lot of interest shown in research / innovation and attending the Conference in 2025.

Aim 5: Communications, Involvement and Engagement

- *ensure there is a continuous and effective communication, involvement and engagement with the population of Mid Wales, staff and partners*
- The **RHCW Webinar** held on-line on the 28th January 2025 (10am – 12 noon), was well attended, with 49 registered attendees (see poster on page 6 for more information on content) and great online interaction with delegates and good feedback on Mentimeter (see page 7).

Dr Deborah Morgan, CADR (Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research), presented information on Loneliness in Rural areas and whilst the planned presentation by Tenovus was postponed to the July Summer Webinar, Michelle Symes from RHCW was able to step in and present on the “Wellbeing benefits of Walking in Nature”. Both presentations are uploaded and available on the RHCW YouTube channel that can be found here: [RHC Wales - YouTube](#)

Whilst Mentimeter has been used for some time as an instantaneous evaluation tool at the Webinars, a new “word cloud” element was added this year to try to capture what future topics people would like to see. The Mentimeter evaluations and Word Cloud of future topics can be viewed on page 6.

The next RHCW Webinar will take place on 29th July 2025.

- RHCW will again have a stand at the **Royal Welsh show** this year (21 – 24 July 2025) in order to showcasing the excellent work that is being undertaken across the Mid Wales region in addressing rural health and care issues.

During the week, a series of engagement events will be held, such as:

- Monday 21st July: Sustainable Communities
- Tuesday 22nd July: Dementia Friendly Communities
- Wednesday 23rd July: RHCW Stakeholder Group

The MWJC is welcome to display information on the stand and / or host an event at the stand.



Rural Health & Care Wales Winter Webinar

Tuesday 28th January 2025
10^{am} – 12 noon

The Wellbeing benefits of Walking in Nature



Michelle Symes

Research and Development Officer, RHCW

Michelle will outline the work undertaken by Rural Health and Care Wales between 2020 – 2025 in developing and promoting a series of Wellbeing Walks that focus on the health and wellbeing benefits of walking in nature by having starting points at traditional health locations, such as GP surgeries and hospitals. The presentation will outline why walking is such an important, accessible activity, also providing an overview of how the leaflets were developed, collaboration with external partners, the design and funding of leaflets and the launch events. The presentation will also outline other work in progress by RHCW for developing similar initiatives in other towns across the Mid Wales region.

Michelle joined RHCW in November 2022 from the University of Birmingham, where she worked part time alongside part time Ward Clerk and Family Liaison Officer roles at Bronglais Hospital. Michelle has a long-standing interest in Dementia care and support, and the accessibility of healthcare provision across the Mid Wales region. Since joining RHCW Michelle has undertaken a range of research activities including Wellbeing Walks, Community Hospitals, and a scoping review of Dementia Services and Support across Ceredigion.

Only the lonely?



Dr Deborah Morgan

Senior Research Officer / ENRICH Cymru Research Manager,
Centre for Innovative Ageing, Swansea University

Loneliness is a universal experience that most people experience at some point in their lives. During this presentation, Dr Deborah Morgan will introduce the topic of loneliness and explore the difference between loneliness and social isolation, why loneliness is such an important issue, who is affected and identify some of the key trigger points. This will be followed by an exploration of the language of loneliness and how it contributes to the stigma surrounding loneliness experiences. The presentation will end with a short discussion on what actions we can take to help address loneliness and social isolation in our communities.

Deborah is a senior research officer and the Research Manager for ENRICH Cymru. Deborah's research focuses on loneliness and social isolation. She is interested in loneliness across the life course, loneliness transitions, prevention, and intervention. In addition to her work on loneliness and social isolation, Deborah has an interest in health/social inequalities, ageing with a disability and chronic illness, and social and digital exclusion. Deborah sits on various internal and external committees including the Welsh Government Loneliness and Isolation Strategy Board, and the Cross-Party Intergenerational Solidarity Group. Deborah is an executive committee member of the British Society of Gerontology.

Agenda →	10am	Welcome & Introduction
	10.15am	The Wellbeing benefits of Walking in Nature
	11am	Only the lonely?
	12 noon	Close

The Webinar is free of charge to attend but you will need to register for your place by completing the booking form that can be found at

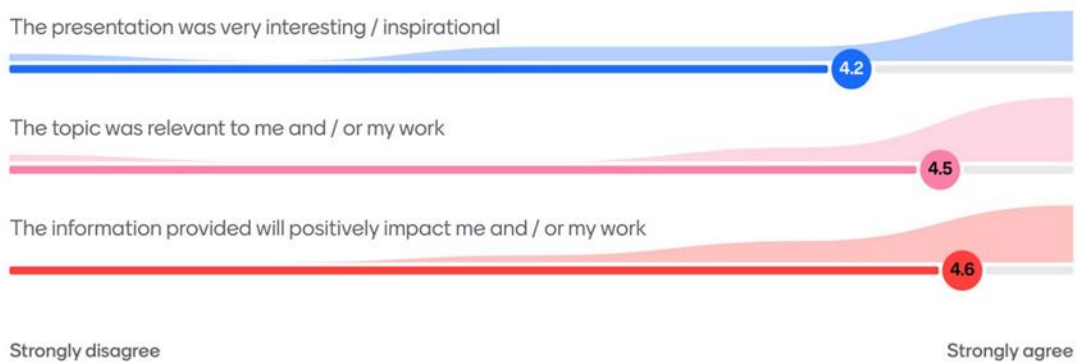
<https://ruralhealthandcare.wales/webinar>

<https://ruralhealthandcare.wales>
contact@ruralhealthandcare.wales

The Wellbeing benefits of Walking in Nature



Only the lonely?



Please provide ideas for future RHCW Webinars

Are there any particular topics or areas of interest that you would like to see covered in one of our future Webinars?

21 responses

