

# The Gwent Public Health Team Quarterly Newsletter

October - December 2025 Q3

## Welcome

As we move through winter, I want to take a moment to remind us all of the importance of staying safe, well, and connected. The colder months can bring additional pressures on our health and wellbeing, particularly for our most vulnerable residents. Simple actions such as keeping up to date with vaccinations, taking care in icy conditions, and seeking help early when unwell can make a real difference. Winter is also a time when kindness and awareness matter more than ever.

Looking out for one another remains at the heart of public health. Checking in on neighbours, friends, family members, and colleagues; especially those who may be older, living alone, or facing health challenges can help reduce loneliness and prevent avoidable harm. A phone call, a quick message, or offering practical support can go a long way, and together these small acts help build stronger, more resilient communities across Gwent.

I would also like to recognise and thank you for the amazing work happening across the Public Health team and the wider Gwent system, some of the work over the last few months are captured in this newsletter. Your commitment, collaboration, and compassion continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our residents, even during challenging times. I am incredibly proud of what we achieve together and grateful for the dedication you show every day.

**Prof Tracy Daszkiewicz**  
Director of Public Health & Strategic Partnerships



# The Director of Public Health Report

## The Big Gwent Vaccination Conversation

With a concerning decline in vaccination uptake across Wales and the ABUHB, the theme of the 2025/26 annual report is vaccinations.

Vaccines are one of the greatest achievements in public health - they protect our communities from serious illness and, in many cases, save lives. Yet, in recent years we have seen a decline in vaccination uptake and we need to understand why.

As with previous reports, this year's report is grounded in conversations with the people of Gwent. It reflects their thoughts on vaccines; what encourages and what discourages vaccination and most importantly, how our community feels we can work together to build confidence, trust, and positivity in the power of vaccination.



## Lots of great printable resources

Three printable resources from the Director of Public Health Report 2025/26 are displayed. 1. 'A history of vaccinations' (left): A timeline from 1721 to 1980 showing key milestones in vaccination history, such as the smallpox and麻疹 vaccine discoveries. 2. 'Creating a generation of Superheroes!' (center): An illustration of a superhero flying, with text about vaccination as a 'vaccine superhero' and a photo of a group of people. 3. 'When to have your vaccinations' (right): A flowchart showing vaccination schedules for different life stages, from pregnancy to childhood to older age, with specific vaccines like MMR, DTP, and flu.

The report is not about what the NHS recommends - it is about the voices of our communities and what they feel is needed and has been informed through engagement with our communities and stakeholders over a four-month period, through a combination of methods:

- Online survey
- Focus groups
- The Big Gwent Vaccination Conversation, held in Rodney Parade on 6th October 2025

The report lists a series of recommendations for the system, to ensure that advocacy for vaccination is seen as the responsibility of all.

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## International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women- 'I Speak Up'

Domestic abuse affects 1 in 4 people, with the vast majority being women. White Ribbon Day is a global campaign that supports the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, that calls on men and boys to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours, and to play an active role in ending violence against women and girls.

The Health Board is proud to stand alongside local organisations, sports clubs, and community groups to raise awareness about domestic abuse and encourage men to speak up and take action.

Members of our staff including John from our Alcohol Care Team, Doug from Communications, Dan and David from our Public Health team have joined others from across Gwent and the world in collaborating in an important video on how men can 'speak up'.

[CLICK HERE](#)



## WINNER Wales Safer Communities Awards Tackling Mental Health together "Together we can"

The Gwent Public Health Team established a multi-agency Task and Finish Group following a local suicide with significant contagion risk due to the individual's extensive rugby social connections, highlighting the potential community impact.

We secured funding for partners 4Minds and Tidy Butt to pilot a men's mental health initiative in rugby communities. Key activities included awareness sessions across ten rugby clubs reaching 300 men, a Men's Mental Health event (140 attendees and 32 Organisations) and counselling provision for 27 men.

The project's success enabled 4Minds to secure additional funding from local charity: Ted Senior Foundation to expand support to other sports and men's groups across Gwent into 2026.

This work resulted in an award win at Wales' Safer Community Awards in the Early Intervention Category, Sheree, Director of 4Minds can be seen in this video speaking about the award win ➤



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## Launch of 'Nye BeVAN'

Gwent Public Health Team has recently taken delivery of a mobile outreach unit, 'Nye BeVAN', designed to bring health protection services directly into communities.

The unit provides an innovative way to deliver services where they are needed most, increase community engagement and reduce health inequalities by reaching vulnerable and underserved groups.

Nye BeVAN recently supported HIV Testing Week, working with Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service to encourage people to get tested and know their status. This supports the Welsh Government HIV Action Plan for Wales, where improving access to testing is a key priority. During the week, the team offered free 'test and post' home testing kits for HIV and other blood borne viruses, alongside advice and information on testing and prevention.

The mobile unit has also been touring Gwent to provide flu vaccinations to eligible members of the public.

Nye BeVAN can be used by partner organisations in conjunction with health board employees for insurance purposes. For more information, please contact Dan Clayton at [Daniel.Clayton2@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Daniel.Clayton2@wales.nhs.uk).



## Health Protection Service Wins Prestigious 'Hero Award' at UKPHR Awards



The health board's Health Protection Service was honoured with the Community Public Health Hero Award at the 2025 UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) Awards in November, recognising the team's outstanding dedication to protecting and improving public health across Gwent. The integrated Health Protection Service brings together the Gwent Public Health Team, Vaccination Service, and Health Protection Response Team, creating a seamless, collaborative approach to tackling infectious diseases, managing outbreaks, and reducing health inequalities. By combining clinical, operational and professional expertise, the service ensures a rapid and effective response to a wide range of public health challenges.

[CLICK HERE](#)

# Team Spotlight

## Meet our Award Winning Health Protection Team

The Health Protection team sits in the Gwent Public Health Team. Covering all of Gwent, the team take a collaborative approach to tackling infectious diseases, managing outbreaks, and reducing health inequalities.

### Dan Clayton

Dan is Principal Public Health Practitioner leading Gwent's Health Protection Team. He oversees priorities such as sexual health, outbreak management, vaccination equity, and disease elimination, combining strategic leadership with hands-on involvement. Dan values his skilled, collaborative team and their partnerships across health, local authorities, and third sectors to keep Gwent's population healthy. Outside work, he enjoys family time and playing tennis, football, cricket, and golf.



### Sammi Davies

Sammi recently joined the Health Protection Team, bringing expertise in vaccination delivery and a passion for equity. She uses data to guide targeted, effective services and has focused on staff vaccinations to protect the health board workforce. Outside work, Sammi enjoys family time and reading.



### Kim Rennick

Kim enjoys the variety of health protection and brings experience as an Environmental Health Officer in public health, housing, health & safety, and infectious disease. At ABUHB, she leads acute incident and outbreak response, working with PC HeaRT on mobilisation and case management pathways. She has a keen interest in TB and emergency planning. Outside work, Kim loves reading with her cat, Mrs P, or exploring the outdoors with her horse, Jeff.



### Bethan Ridsdale

Beth is one of the newest members of the Health Protection Team, bringing over five years' experience in health improvement. She now focuses on sexual and reproductive health, leading the Gwent C-Card Scheme, and is passionate about supporting young people. Outside work, Beth loves family time with her husband and two-year-old daughter and has a strong enthusiasm for travel.

### Lisa Verallo

Known as the team's "BBV Queen," Lisa leads work on national elimination programmes for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV, and has played a key role in staff vaccination initiatives like flu and MMR. Outside work, she's a mum of two, a Zumba instructor, and a Karate enthusiast.



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## Healthy Weight Alliance

November saw the launch of the Gwent Healthy Weight Alliance, bringing together partners from across the public and voluntary sectors to work collaboratively on a 2040 vision for Healthy Weight in Gwent. Areas for collaboration will include public sector food outlets, high streets offering healthy food, providing children with opportunities to taste, grow, cook and become familiar with a wide range of fruit and vegetables, creating communities where active travel, green spaces are accessible and local; and empowering healthy weight through compassionate mental health support.



## parkrun Cardiac event

We were thrilled partner with parkrun for our third collaborative event - and what a success it was! The weather was on our side, and around 400 participants came together to celebrate heart health and wellbeing.

This special event also welcomed partners from the British Heart Foundation - Wales and the ABUHB Cardiac Rehab staff, reinforcing the importance of community, movement, and positive routines in improving cardiovascular health.

[CLICK HERE](#)



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## Gwent Warmer Homes

The Gwent Public Health team are excited to be launching a pilot affordable warmth service in January, in partnership with [Severn Wye, Monmouthshire and Torfaen Council](#). The service will help households across Torfaen and Monmouthshire make their homes more energy efficient, save money on their bills and benefit both their physical and mental health. Households have been identified through the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as potentially being a resident with an underlying health condition that may be made worse by living in a cold home.

The support will be tailored to the resident and can involve a range of FREE advice:

- fuel debt support
- help understanding gas, electric and water tariffs
- money maximisation and saving energy
- Referrals into partners (NEST, ECO, Care and repair)
- Small grant help (energy efficient bulbs, radiator insulation and radiator thermostats)

If you wish to know more about the pilot please contact [Richard.francis@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Richard.francis@wales.nhs.uk).

## Nicotine Discovery Report schools focus groups

As the write up of phase 1 of the nicotine discovery report comes to an end, focus is turning to phase 2. In November we completed workshops with four primary schools across Gwent, involving over 200 year 5 & year 6 students. These workshops were designed to gather their views and understanding of smoking and vaping. The pupils demonstrated awareness of a range of nicotine containing products and expressed the desire for a lot more knowledge about "What is inside cigarettes and vapes?"



"What are the side effects?", "why is it so addictive", and "is vaping worse than smoking?".

Phase 2 continues in the Spring term with a secondary school survey plus a separate survey for teachers. Findings from Phase Two will be published in summer 2026. We're hosting a webinar on our Phase 1 findings on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb, register [here](#).

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## Caerphilly Wellbeing Day

Caerphilly IWN, in partnership with GAVO, organised and held a Wellbeing Day for World Mental Health Day on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The day, held from 2-6pm at St Gwladys Church Hall in Bargoed, was a great success with over 100 attendees.

There were market stalls of services and providers promoting and providing health and wellbeing information including Caerphilly Nature Wellbeing, GDAS (Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service), CHAMPS (Charist Help 4 All Mental Peer Support), Caerphilly Employment Support, PHPs (Psychological Health Practitioners), Dicky Ticklers, Platfform, DEWIS, Help Me Quit and Home Start Cymru.



## Nature Prescribing launch in Newport



The Integrated Wellbeing Network team in Newport has played a key role in supporting the launch of Nature Prescribing, in conjunction with the RSPB.

Nature prescriptions connect people to nature, in order to support their health and well-being. The prescription brochure outlines well-being activities, local community assets and places, and relevant elements of nature to look out for during each month and includes a link at the bottom of the page for local assets to visit and explore.

[CLICK HERE](#)

## Help Me Quit Community Clinics

The public health team host the smoking cessation service, Help me Quit, who are expanding provision of their community clinics in the new year and offering more group sessions for those who wish to quit smoking. Groups are a great way to stop smoking because it provides support and encouragement from others on the same journey, and provides the opportunity to share practical tips from people who understand what it's like to quit.



# HIV Testing Week Campaign Highlights

**Total Impressions 1,104,292**



## Our Aim..

To raise awareness across Gwent that anyone can get HIV because it does not discriminate, that anyone can test for HIV and knowing your status is key, and that living well with HIV is possible through options like PrEP and the U=U principle.

## Social Media

**Posts: 5**

**Impressions: 34,757**

**Link clicks: 32**

**Likes: 52**

**Comments: 2**

**Shares: 14**

[CLICK HERE](#)



## Out of House Advertising



Including a number of digital screens on the M4, Friars Walk, Newport Bus Station and more.

**1,027,535 Impressions**

## Radio Advert



A 30 second radio advert was produced and played throughout the week

**42,000+ Reach**

## Community Engagement Events

**Number of events: 4**

**Conversations: 40+**

We got out across town centres and events to speak to people about HIV and hand out test kits



**Scan to watch our video**



**Let's keep the conversation going..**

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## Coming Up over the next few months

### Our Women's Health Discovery Report

Since the publication of the Wales Women's Health plan the Health Board have launched a Women's Health Board to look at a number of key areas. To inform this work we will be publishing our Women's Health Discovery Report, which will be full of a variety of key data to help inform our work across Gwent in improving Women's Health and outcomes. We hope to publish this towards the end of January.

### Join parkrun for Mental Health - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026

To continue our partnership with parkrun, we will now be focusing on Mental Health for a special event on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at the Aberbeeg parkrun. This follows Time2 To Talk Day on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>, a national Mental Health Event that encourages talking and conversation to lessen the load of daily challenges that impact on our mental health and wellbeing. Once again our staff are stepping up, and local organisations such as Mind, Tidy Butt, 4Minds, VAWDASV and more will be in attendance to provide advice and signposting. Come join us for a fantastic event!

### Starting 2026 off with a little support

New year brings lots of thoughts about change, whether it be eating well, drinking less alcohol or making this the year to quit smoking for good our web pages are packed with lots of helpful free support. Check out our Live Well Hub.

[CLICK HERE](#)



# Gwent

Live Well For Longer



### Key Dates & Campaigns

- Dry January
- Brew Monday (19<sup>th</sup> Jan)
- Parent Mental Health Day (30<sup>th</sup> Jan)
- Children's Mental Health Week (Feb 3rd-9th)
- Time 2 Talk Day (Feb 5<sup>th</sup>)
- parkrun for Mental Health, Aberbeeg parkrun (7<sup>th</sup> Feb)

Our webpage: [Click Here](#)

Get in touch: [Admin\\_ABGPHT@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Admin_ABGPHT@wales.nhs.uk)