



# Your Powys Voice

Issue 7  
January 2022

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

### Message from the Chair of Powys CHC

Hearing Your Views	2
Advocacy Service	6
Members Update	8



### Just for fun

1. What was the capital of Wales before Cardiff?
  2. What type of cheese is used to make Glamorgan Sausages?
  3. What is the name of the medieval collection of ancient Welsh folktales?
  4. Which Monty Python star once had a house near Llanidloes?
- Answers on page 9

Until a few months ago, we expected Frances Hunt to continue in the role of Chair until transition to the new 'Citizens Voice Body' in 2023.

Sadly, however, Frances needed to stand down early for personal reasons and I am delighted that members have elected me as new Chair of Powys CHC. I believe that in these challenging times the continuity I bring, having been Vice-Chair since 2018, means we can go through this period of transition with a minimum of disturbance to the service we continue to deliver for the people of Powys.

Management of COVID remains a key challenge to society and will be for some time to come. As an organisation that thrives on engagement and contact with the public, it is a testament to staff and members of the CHC that we have worked to find ways to continue supporting the NHS and patients in these difficult times.

Even with the current peaks in COVID infections

and its impact on primary care, providers are striving to restore and maintain services that have previously been interrupted by the pandemic. The CHC movement will need to continue working closely with health boards across Wales on the evaluation of new and innovative approaches to providing services. This will inevitably provide challenges particular to rural Powys that may not be recognised by providers in more urban areas, the CHC will continue to make sure that rural voices are heard.

Finally, we must recognise the efforts still being made by PTHB, PAVO and others in organising and delivering the on-going vaccination programme.



Article by: Dr David Collington, Chair of Powys CHC

## Hearing Your Views

It seems hard to believe that we sit here making an effort to summarise our work during the last quarter of 2021. I am sure everyone agrees that 2021 has passed by very quickly despite the difficult year it has been for everyone.

Since our summer edition newsletter, in September, we had a sense of optimism that it would be safe for us to get out and about across Powys once again in an effort to listen to people's views about local NHS services. We set about arranging a schedule whereby, between October and December, all parts of Powys would be reached. Unfortunately, due to the rates of coronavirus throughout the county, we managed just three of our planned engagement days: Newtown, Knighton and Welshpool. These three days were very successful and we would like to thank everyone who was willing to share their thoughts about local services. A new engagement plan is being developed and we will be

back on the road as soon as we are able. To remain informed of where we will be, please follow us on social media.

A key part of our role is to visit local health services to hear from patients and carers about their experiences. We have not been able to carry out any physical visits since March 2020. In recent months, we have worked closely with Powys Teaching Health Board to find a way to safely hear from people whilst they are in hospital. We are piloting some digital visits where patients can speak to one of our volunteer members over a video call. Our members ask questions about the hospital stay, to find out whether patients are comfortable, whether they feel listened to and involved in their care, the quality of food, and how easy it is to communicate with loved ones during their hospital stay. We've had challenges with these visits, such as problems with internet connection. However, the more visits we undertake, the more we are becoming streamlined with the process. We look forward to being able to plan more visits in the new year. If you are a relative of someone who is currently in hospital, or who has been in hospital recently, and you wish to share your experience of their care you can do so by emailing us on [enquiries.powyschc@waleschc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.powyschc@waleschc.org.uk)

We have now released our report which reveals how young people in Powys feel about the mental health and wellbeing support available to them throughout the pandemic. This report follows our survey in summer 2021, which received 337 responses from young people.

Many young people spoke of isolation, loneliness, and anxiety during the pandemic, especially during periods where schools and colleges were closed for face-to-face learning.

While some respondents stated that support had been available to them in these times, survey feedback also raised concerns that better sign-posting to support services is needed, and that waiting times for those seeking to access help are sometimes too long.

The report lists several key recommendations, but it stresses that ensuring appropriate levels of support are available to young people requires collaborative action by the local authority, health board, the Regional Partnership Board and the Welsh Government.

Commenting on the findings of the survey and the views expressed by young people taking part, our chief officer, Katie Blackburn, said:

“I’d first like to thank all the young people who took part in our survey for their openness and candidness. Their feedback is crucial to ensuring that effective support is made available to all who feel they need it.”

“From what we’ve heard it’s clear that more can be done to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of mental health and wellbeing support services. We need to ensure that young people, as well as their parents and carers, are provided with information on how and where that support can be found.

“Crucially, we need to ensure that when young people engage with services such as CAMHS, the wait time must be as short as possible, and young people must feel that they have a say in the type of support they receive.”

Our report can be read on our website [here...](#)

We are starting to develop our work priorities and plans for 2022-23. Between November 2021 and January 2022, we have been giving people the opportunity to tell us what areas of work they think we should focus on, by completing our survey. We would like to thank the people who have already participated. So far, key themes emerging from the survey submissions are – face-to-face appointments with a GP, mental health services, ambulance waiting times and access to dental treatment. Further information and the link to our survey can be found on our website.

Over the past two years, we have seen our lives, our communities and the way we carry out our daily activities change in a way we have never seen before.

We have been in a global public health emergency situation for some time now. We know how difficult a time it has been for everyone – and particularly for people who are in the most vulnerable situations.

If you are currently receiving NHS care or have been waiting for care for some time because you need or regularly use NHS services, you may be feeling very anxious and worried.

As your NHS Patient Watchdogs, CHCs across Wales want to continue to play our part in reflecting people's views and representing your interests in the NHS at this critical time and as the NHS attempts to recover from the pandemic.

### **Use our survey to tell us about:**

Your experience of care and/or treatment - it can be good or bad.

How your care and / or treatment has been affected by this emergency and how you feel about this.

Any suggestions you may have on how the NHS in Wales could do things differently to try to re-establish health services.

Please complete our survey:

<http://ow.ly/KzSG50DZWHS>

### **Your feedback will help make a difference.**

We will share with the NHS what people and local communities are telling us. This is so it can see what people think is working well and take action to make care better where this is needed - as quickly as it is possible to do so.



## Advocacy Service

Community Health Council (CHC) Complaints Advocacy Service can help you to use the NHS concerns process "Putting things right".

If you would like to discuss any concerns you have about NHS treatment you have received within the past 12 months you can contact the Advocacy team on: **01874 610646**



### **Sonia Thomas - Complaints Advocate**

I am the Complaints Advocate for Powys CHC. I am responsible for providing a free, independent, client-led advocacy service that covers all aspects of NHS treatment and care. I joined the CHC in August 2006, having worked in Mental Health Services in the public sector in Wales for many years. In my spare time I enjoy crocheting, reading and walking my two dogs

### **Diane Phillips - Advocacy Support Officer**



I am the Advocacy Support Officer for Powys CHC. I assist the Complaints Advocate in offering support to Powys residents in putting forward concerns to the appropriate NHS organisation for investigation. I joined the CHC in August 2018, having previously worked within office environments in both the public and private sector. In my spare time I enjoy writing poetry, reading, crocheting and spending time with my dog, Tess.

Our Complaints Advocacy Service is **free, independent** and **confidential**.

## **A poem for Christmas** by Diane Phillips

It's coming up to Christmas  
And the staff say Hooray!  
As they book Annual Leave  
In anticipation of that day.

But it's also that time,  
A time for reflection  
To analyse and look backwards,  
To assess the new direction.

Covid is still with us  
And will be for some time  
So our ways of working  
With government rules must align.

For the Advocacy Service  
Enquiries and Complaints still abound  
With our help and assistance  
Their concerns they expound.

Engagement has continued  
Although in different ways  
Through Social Media  
And the use of surveys

The Patient Experience  
And how we record it  
With GDPR & Consent  
We must overhaul it.

Our work has continued  
As a team we go on  
Past Christmas and New Year  
And further beyond.

## Member Update



Sue Bidmead

### Welcome .....

Since our last newsletter was issued we welcomed two new members: Sue Bidmead and Cllr Hywel Lewis. They undertook their induction training online in December.



Cllr Hywel Lewis

Training sessions have been arranged with PAVO for all members and will be taking place in February.



Frances Hunt

### Farewell to .....

Frances Hunt joined the CHC in 2016 and was a dedicated and enthusiastic member. She took on the role of Chair of Powys CHC, a position she undertook with professionalism at all times.

In November 2021 she took the decision to retire and our Chief Officer, Katie Blackburn, presented her with a Certificate and leaving gifts.

We all wish her the very best.

## Interested in becoming a Member ?

For more information or details on how to become a volunteer member with Powys CHC please contact our Business Manager, Claire Powell.

Telephone: **01874 624206** or

Email: **Claire.powell1@waleschc.org.uk**



## Contact Us

If you would like someone from Powys Community Health Council to give a presentation to a group you belong to please send your email enquiry to: **enquiries.powyschc@waleschc.org.uk**

### Brecon Office

1st Floor, Neuadd Brycheiniog, Cambrian Way,  
Brecon, Powys, LD3 7HR

Tel: 01874 624206

### Newtown Office

1st Floor, Ladywell House, Newtown, Powys,  
SY16 1JB

Tel: 01686 627632



We regularly share information about health services which are relevant to Powys residents.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

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Twitter **@powys\_chc**



## Did you know .....

**Mail-order shopping** - When the small community of Newtown in mid-Wales was connected to the UK railway network in the mid-19th century, one local draper, Sir Pryce Jones, saw an opportunity to expand his customer base. By using trains to deliver his products, Jones pioneered the world's first major mail-order business, eventually supplying garments to customers as far afield as America and Australia, as well as to a number of famous clients, including Florence Nightingale and Queen Victoria!

### Answers to quiz page 1

1. Machynlleth    2. Caerphilly Cheese    3. The Mabinogion    4. Terry Jones