

Living Healthier,
Staying Well

BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

Tackling the
challenges facing
the Health Board:
HAVE YOUR SAY



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Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board





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INTRODUCTION

Our staff have worked tirelessly to respond to the pandemic. Other organisations and individuals have worked equally hard to protect our community from the impact of the virus and we are grateful for their continued support. This includes Local Authorities, North Wales Police, the third sector, and other key workers in the private sector.

Many of our planned care services were disrupted and we have had to change the way we deliver other services.

The vaccination programme offers hope that we can begin to return to living our lives with fewer restrictions. We know we have further years of hard work to recover from the disruption caused by the pandemic. We therefore believe the time is right to review our existing plans and priorities, to ensure we are focusing on what is important as we begin to tackle the challenges facing us.

We want to check with our staff, patients, partner organisations and the public how Covid-19 has affected health and well-being and what we can learn from this experience.

We also want to check whether our long term strategy for health and well-being is still relevant, or whether we need to amend this now. We want to hear your views on both of these matters.



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Byw'n Iach | Living Healthier
Aros yn Iach | Staying Well

LIVING HEALTHIER, STAYING WELL

Our long term plan for health, well-being and healthcare



During 2017, we spent many months discussing what our priorities should be, with patients, carers and community representatives as well as our staff and partner organisations. We held workshops and attended meetings of community groups to get your feedback. What you told us fed into our long-term plan, which we produced in 2018. You can find the plan [here](#).

A HEALTHIER WALES

Since we produced our long-term strategy, Welsh Government has published A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care. This described the ambition for health and social care services to work more closely together, providing services that are designed and delivered around the needs and preferences of individuals and with a much greater emphasis on keeping people healthy and well.

A HEALTHIER WALES SETS OUT A QUADRUPLE AIM

1

Improved population health & well-being

2

Better quality & more accessible health & social care services

3

Higher value health and social care

4

A motivated and sustainable health & social care workforce

Since then we have been working more closely in partnership with Local Authorities, other public services, the third sector and communities to support health and well-being. We can do more, and working together needs to be the usual way we do business.

Examples of partnership working include the North Wales Regional Partnership Board that oversees the planning and integration of services to ensure effective care and support are in place to meet the needs of the population. At a more local level Public Services Boards (PSBs) improve joint working across all public services in each local authority area in Wales. For more information on your PSB please click below:

- [Gwynedd and Anglesey](#)
- [Conwy and Denbighshire](#)
- [Flintshire](#)
- [Wrexham](#)

We are proposing to update our long-term plan to reflect the ambition set out in **A Healthier Wales**. We want to be clearer as well about the priorities we have agreed with our partners in North Wales.

OUR LONG TERM GOALS

As well as making sure we are working together to fulfil **A Healthier Wales**, we want to check whether the original priorities we proposed are still relevant.

Living Healthier, Staying Well described our goals for health and well-being. These are to:

- Improve physical, emotional and mental health and well-being for all
- Target our resources to people who have the greatest needs and reduce inequalities
- Support children to have the best start in life
- Work in partnership to support people – individuals, families, carers, communities – to achieve their own well-being
- Improve the safety and quality of all services
- Respect people and their dignity
- Listen to people and learn from their experiences.

Q:

Do you agree that these goals are still relevant?

Q:

Are there any other priorities that the Health Board should now include or change?

Q:

Given the challenges that Covid-19 has brought about over the last year are there any goals you think we should prioritise more than others?

Q:

Have you had any experience of how these goals are being put into practice?



OUR PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

There were three main themes in Living Healthier, Staying Well, for which we identified the priority actions we would work on in the first years of the strategy. Whilst we have made progress in many areas, we have a lot more to do. Some areas have proved challenging to put into practice.

Improving health and reducing health inequalities

We said that in the first years of the strategy we would focus on helping people make healthy lifestyle choices.



Since then we have been working with partner organisations across North Wales to develop schemes to support these and implement the programme Building a Healthier Wales e.g.

- Healthy eating and lifestyle – such as Let’s Get Moving North Wales, and Foodwise in Pregnancy
- Infant feeding - additional support for parents to continue breastfeeding once they leave hospital
- Emotional health and well-being - increased support for practitioners and parents including a bilingual on-line support tool
- Physical activity - support for young people and their families to enjoy physical activity and sporting opportunities across North Wales
- Suicide prevention plans
- Alcohol support and smoking cessation services
- Food poverty - including now working through the community hubs developed in response to Covid-19
- Homelessness – such as the development of an onsite café at the Bangor Homelessness Centre to develop skills and employability as well as access to support services including health and housing.

Q:

Do you agree that this is still the right approach?

Covid-19: Community Support Hubs Working with partners and local communities, we have developed five hubs across North Wales where people can get home testing kits, advice about money, help with food or energy problems and support for their mental well-being.



CARE CLOSER TO HOME

Care Clusters

Helping services work together better in one place.

Primary Care Workforce

Working together, sharing information and supporting needs.

Health & Well-being Centres

Offering advice, assessment, outpatient appointments and much more.

Digital Healthcare and Technology

Offering independence and control.

Community Resource Teams

One point of assessment, co-ordinated care and support.

Social Prescribing

Non-clinical activities and support in the community that improve well-being.

It's important to have local services that can meet needs in the right way at the right time. People want care as close to home as possible.

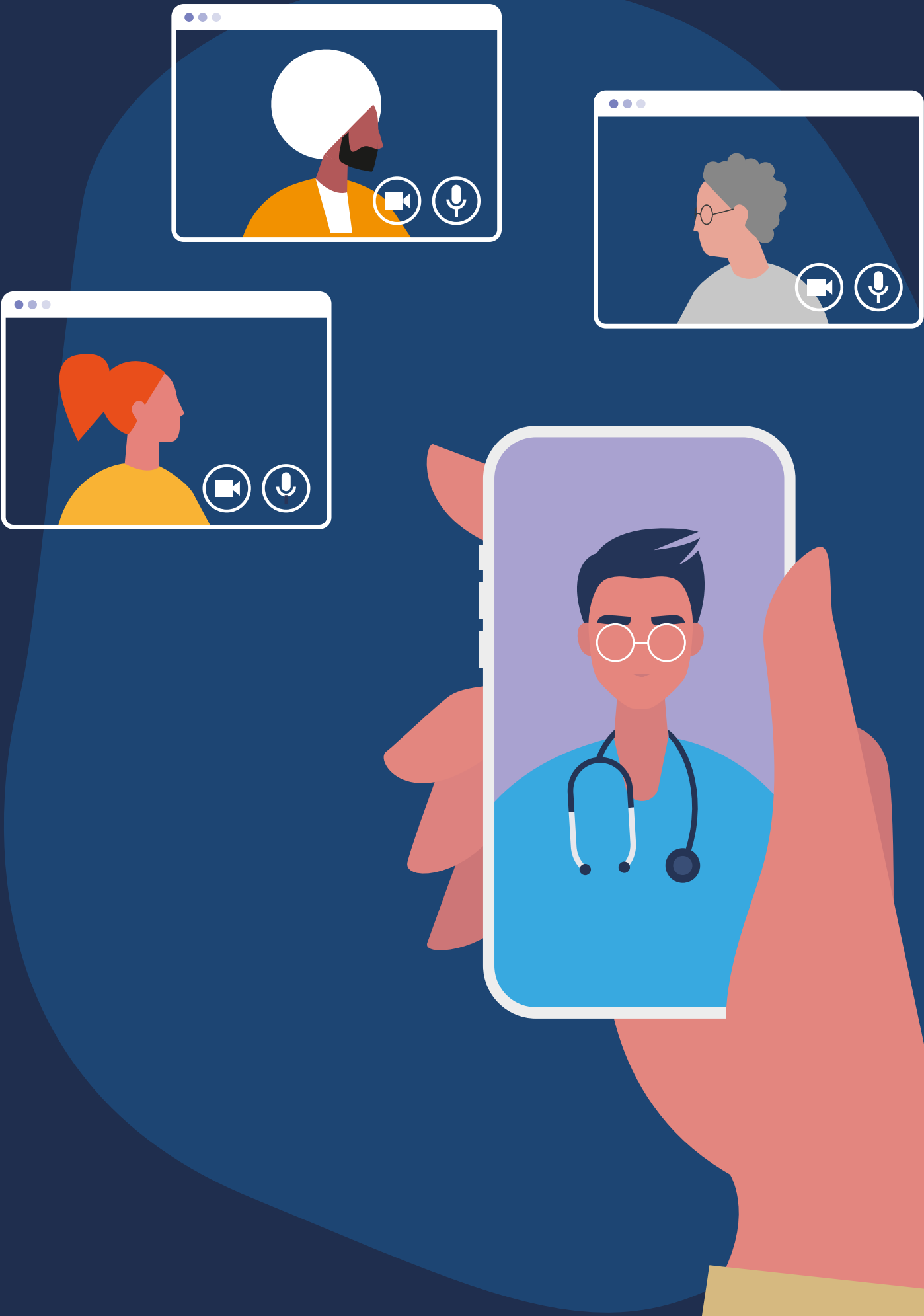
What we have done:

- Local (cluster) developments - including support for mental health and well-being, advanced practitioners and pharmacists
- Health and well-being centres such as Dolgellau Hospital
- Major proposals such as the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Rhyl replacement.

- Community Resource Teams are working together across health, social care and third sector
- We have established a Primary and Community Care Academy to focus on innovation, research, new ways of working and recruitment
- Home First Bureaux to support care out of hospital
- The transformation fund programme has supported significant improvements
- Social prescribing across North Wales.

Q:

To ensure local services can meet people's needs in the right way and at the right time, do you agree that this is still the right approach to take?



CARE WHEN YOUR HEALTH NEEDS ARE MORE SERIOUS: Hospital Care

▯▯
The right care, at the right time, from the right person. ▯▯

Our three main hospitals are Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor; Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, Bodelwyddan; and Wrexham Maelor Hospital. All three will play an important role in meeting the needs of the people of North Wales now and in the future. Each has a 24/7 emergency department and supporting services.

Sometimes you may need to travel further than your local hospital for care, when it is more specialised. You may also be offered care at another hospital if there is capacity to treat you more quickly.

Our aims for hospital care included:

- Better outcomes for patients
- Easier access to services
- Early diagnosis and treatment
- A wider range of specialist care
- Safe and high quality care
- Meeting increasing demand
- Offer more alternatives to hospital care

We have completed a number of major projects to help achieve these aims such as the redevelopment of Ysbyty Glan Clwyd; opening the new Sub-Regional intensive care centre for newborn babies; improving stroke services; and launching the NHS 111 phone service.

Whilst we have made many improvements, we have not completed all the commitments in Living Healthier, Staying Well (such as for orthopaedics and urology.)

In our strategy we said we needed to provide quicker access to services. However waiting times have deteriorated further during the pandemic.

It has been necessary to reduce planned care in order to redirect clinical staff to manage the increased number of patients admitted to hospital as emergencies with Covid-19. This means that a large

number of people with less urgent needs have had long delays that we now need to tackle.

The plan to address these delays will need to be delivered over a number of years. Current estimates suggest this could be four – five years, which is broadly in line with other Health Boards in Wales.

We are working to increase capacity to help reduce the long waits people are now facing. This includes considering the development of new dedicated Regional Treatment Centres. The Centres will improve access for services such as day case surgery, ophthalmology, orthopaedics and diagnostics.

We will provide more information on these centres as the proposals move forward but you might have views on how these could work to help you.

The case studies below provide examples of some of the innovative improvements that are being made to our care pathways (by pathway we mean the journey from start to finish of a healthcare treatment or experience):

CASE STUDY
Virtual Follow-up in Orthopaedics

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic we managed our orthopaedic follow-ups using face-to-face appointments. The Covid-19 pandemic challenged our ability to maintain activity levels including face-to-face consultations. This provided the incentive to consider other models of follow-up care. In response, a system to determine the clinical need for face-to-face follow-up consultations was developed and a new pathway designed by our clinicians. This led to the provision of ‘virtual’ orthopaedic follow up clinics at Wrexham Maelor Hospital for those patients who are fit and healthy.

1,132 patients have been transferred to the new pathway. Of those, an assessment (based on completed patient questionnaires) determined that over 90% of patients don’t require any further review after their initial appointment six weeks after surgery, and can be virtually monitored instead.

Work is underway to monitor and assess patient feedback. Initial evidence suggests that patients have welcomed attempts to reduce unnecessary hospital visits. There have been a number of other benefits. The virtual clinics have helped to release clinical capacity to manage the increased waiting lists due to Covid-19 and helped to reduce the footfall in our hospital facilities.

We are now making plans to implement the service at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Ysbyty Gwynedd.



CASE STUDY

Virtual Group Education in Major Joint Replacement (hip and knee)

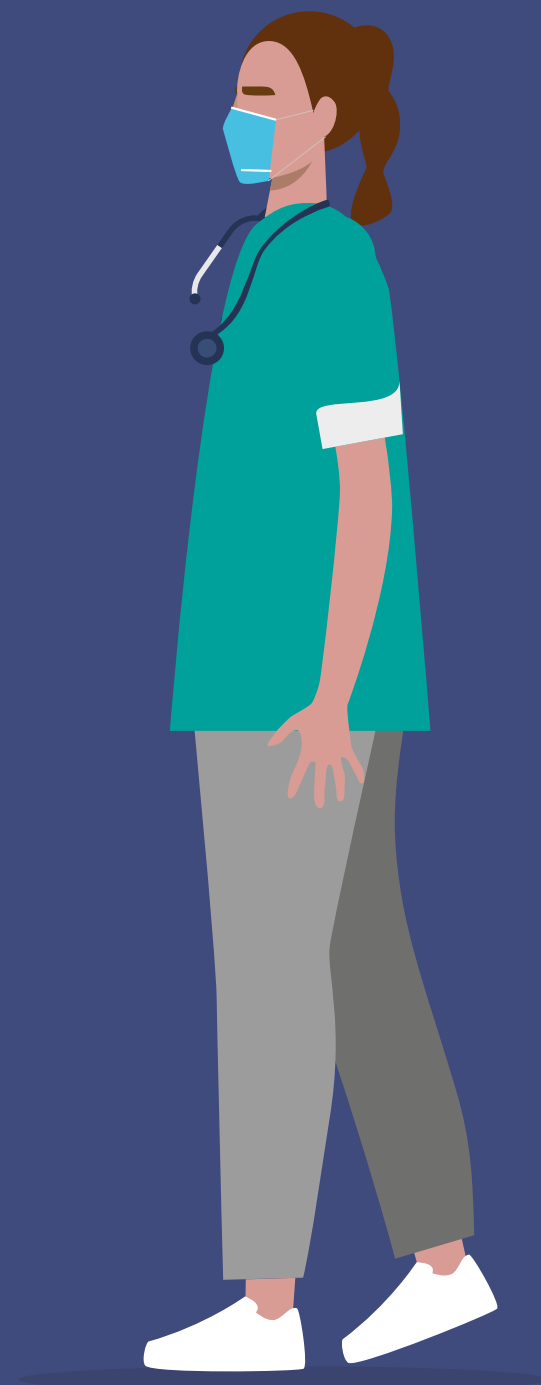
'Joint school' is a programme for people about to have a major joint replacement. Our experiences have been that attending a 'joint school' results in people feeling better prepared, better informed and less anxious about their surgery. It also helps people to be actively involved in their treatment choices.

Historically, at our three main hospitals - Ysbyty Gwynedd, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Wrexham Maelor Hospital, our joint schools provided face-to-face sessions in a group clinic environment. Unfortunately, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, clinical teams were unable to continue to provide these invaluable sessions.

Working together with experts in virtual and group clinic models of care at ELC-Redmore, and supported by Welsh Government, our Orthopaedic team at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor, is leading the way in Wales in the development of a pioneering virtual-based joint school. It is planned that the first of these sessions will take place during September 2021.

The virtual model will include a combination of on-line educational videos and patient journey videos as well as interactive sessions in dedicated virtual group clinics. They will provide the patient, their carer or relative with the ability to access this vital education prior to their operation. It also offers an opportunity for them to meet with and ask questions of the clinical team, and learn from the experience of others from the comfort of their home.

Patients and their carers or relatives benefit from a reduced number of journeys to hospital and it allows staff more time to fulfil their clinical duties. The aim is to replicate the virtual education model across the Health Board, and share the learning Wales-wide.



Q:

Do you agree that our aims for hospital care are still the right ones?

What would it mean for you if you were asked to travel further to get treatment sooner or more specialised care?

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In Living Healthier, Staying Well, the promotion of equality and human rights was agreed as an underpinning principle for delivering our long term goals.

This means:

- Identifying and addressing barriers to accessing services
- Providing culturally appropriate services
- Making reasonable adjustments and working towards improved outcomes for people from protected characteristic groups and those with lived experience of stark inequalities.

Our equality objectives are set out in the Health Boards Strategic Equality Plan: This outlines key areas of focus, for example, implementation of the Race Equality Action Plan: An Anti-racist Wales.

We know that Covid-19 has worsened many inequalities for people with protected characteristics and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. The evidence shows that older people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and some disabled people in particular have been affected. It is now more important than ever that equality and socio-economic considerations are placed at the heart of our work and that we create opportunities for your voice to influence our plans.



Q:

We are interested to learn more about your experiences. Are there any areas where you think we could respond better to inequalities?

INVOLVING PATIENTS, CARERS AND THE PEOPLE OF NORTH WALES

When we developed Living Healthier, Staying Well we involved many people in thinking about what was important, what was working well and what could be improved. It's really important that we continue to involve people in our plans to improve health and well-being and how we deliver healthcare services. We want to do this more consistently and do more to design services together.

One issue we want to address is making sure that we design our services to support people seamlessly from start to finish of their health and well-being experience – the pathway of care.

We can learn from what people are telling us through a range of methods. Individual patient and carer experiences can be used to improve services. Local communities can help shape what services are available in their area. And we can do more to ensure that the decisions our Board makes are based on what people are telling us.

Recent feedback through our Patient Advice and Liaison Services showed that what people said was good about their experience of healthcare included staff attitude and approach; quality of care; communication and assistance.

What could have been improved included general facilities, nutrition, communication, waiting times, and coordination of care – and also staff attitude (Ref: BCUHB Patient Feedback: Themes and Trends 2020 / 2021)

It's really important that we continue to involve people in our plans to improve health and well-being and how we deliver healthcare services.



COVID-19

Since the start of the global pandemic, we have been working to protect our population and staff, and to respond to health needs.

Important new services were developed such as Test, Trace and Protect, and the temporary Enfys hospitals in Deeside, Llandudno and Bangor. Technology was used much more to support people with advice and care.

Many services had to change how they delivered care and support and some services were suspended or reduced until we could safely open these up again. Urgent and essential services were kept going throughout the pandemic.

We also know that some people did not come forward for health care because they were fearful of the risks caused by Covid-19. There have been real concerns about mental health and well-being, for people of all ages.

Covid-19 pandemic in North Wales as of July 2021:

- More than 1,020,000 Covid-19 tests
- More than 46,000 positive test results
- More than 1,500 hospital admissions
- 940,000 vaccines given

Many people are also being affected by Long-Covid. This condition affects people who have had Covid, and now find they have symptoms which might include fatigue, muscle weakness, breathlessness, sleep difficulties, anxiety, depression or “brain fog” and more. We are working to introduce new and better support for people and we are working directly with people living with Long-Covid to design services.

We have developed the first Education Programme for Patients in Wales specifically designed for people with Long-Covid.



It has helped me no end and I now feel far better equipped to continue my journey to a full recovery.

A report describing the response in Wales to the first phase of Covid-19 has been produced by the Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

The vaccination programme in North Wales started in December 2020 after the approval of the first vaccines.

By mid July more than 421,000 people had both doses; and nearly 90% of the eligible groups have had at least one vaccination.

More recently more than 1,000,000 vaccines have been given to people in North Wales.

Now, we are facing the challenge of how to tackle the backlog of care and keep services running as the Covid restrictions are lifted.

We have already run a survey of people's views on service changes made during the pandemic. 556 people responded, with both positive and negative experiences of services. Words frequently used were stressful, frustrating, challenging – but also understandable and necessary.

The findings from the survey offer a number of insights into people's experience of accessing some of our health services during the Covid -19 lockdown. Although many non-urgent appointments were cancelled and services stopped operating the survey findings show that people adapted to the changes and reported many positive experiences. The switch to telephone

consultations, the support of local pharmacies, emergency services, the appreciation of the work of frontline staff and range of information come across in the responses.

There are however a number of themes emerging that have caused negative impacts during this period. The cancellation or postponement of appointments and planned operations has resulted in the worsening of conditions for some people. Restrictions in visiting family in hospital and physical access to services such as dentists or GPs created anxiety and stress for many people

A summary of the survey findings can be read [here](#).

Now we would like to know more about the impact on your health and well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Q:

Given the challenges that COVID-19 has brought about over the last year, are there any goals you think the Health Board should now prioritise more than others?



HOW YOU CAN HAVE YOUR SAY

You can tell us your views in a number of ways:

- Complete the [Smart Survey](#)
- Our [website](#)
- By emailing us at BCU.Getinvolved@wales.nhs.uk
- By calling us on **01745 586 458**
Please leave a message and we will call you back so you do not have to pay for the call.

Your views will be used to help refresh our long-term plan. We will publish a summary report of your feedback and how we have taken it into account.



