



RHWYDWAITH IECHYD  
CYHOEDDUS CYMRU  
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NETWORK CYMRU



**COVID-19 and Workplace Recovery**  
**April 2021**

# Welcome

Welcome to the April edition of the e-bulletin which has a focus on COVID-19 and workplace recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we work across all sectors in Wales and a year on, what started as an emergency continues to disrupt our lives. Workplaces have had to adapt and change over the last 12 months to support their employees, and certain measures have been taken to enable this to happen. This e-bulletin explores this in more detail along with an insight in to how workplaces are planning to move forward in the long term.

Our most recent webinar held in March was on Employee Health in the Public Sector which can now be viewed on our [website](#). The next webinar will be on Wednesday 19 May entitled *Self-isolation confidence, adherence and challenges: behavioural insights from contacts of cases of COVID-19 starting and completing self-isolation in Wales*. Further information about this webinar will be available soon.

## Contact us

You can contact Public Health Network Cymru in a variety of ways

Email us  
[publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk)

Write to us  
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Social media  
Twitter: @PHNetworkCymru  
Facebook: Publichealthnetworkcymru

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# COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS

Latest information on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

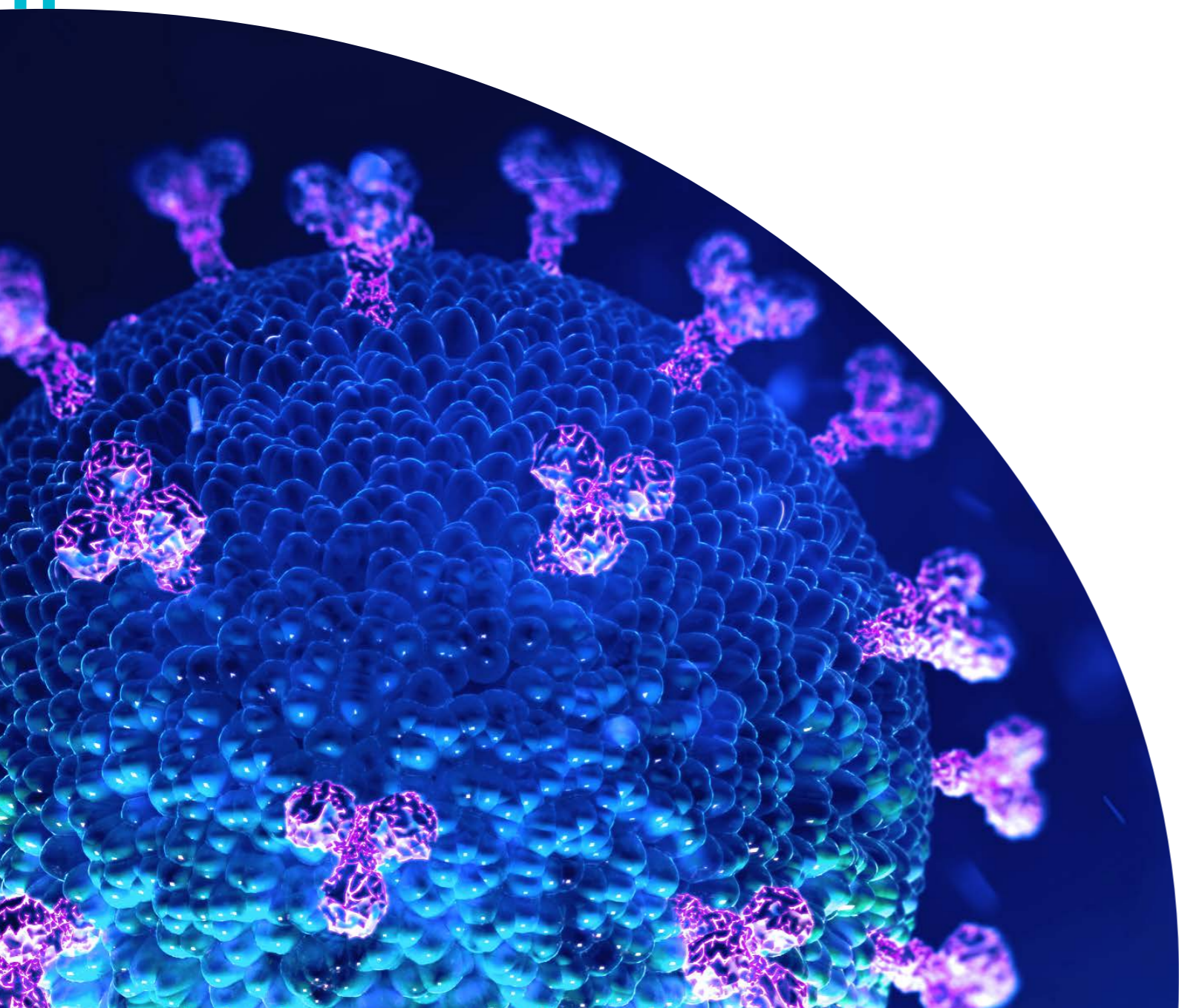
Public Health Wales is working closely with the Welsh Government and the other UK public health agencies to carefully monitor the situation and implement our planned response, with measures in place to protect the health of the public.

The guidance on the measures needed in response to Coronavirus changes rapidly. It's worth always checking the [latest information from Public Health Wales](#). The pages include a wide range of comprehensive information for public and professionals.

You can find links to a wide range of sources on Public Health Network Cymru's Coronavirus (COVID-19) page [here](#).

Public Health Network Cymru welcomes feedback on this selection, and suggestions for additional sources that may be of interest to the public health community in Wales.

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# Headlines

## Working From Home Guide and An Ideal Future Model for NHS Wales

By Gemma Johns, Sara Khalil, Sashin Ahuja, Mike Ogonovsky & Prof. Alka Ahuja

Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Cymru Centre, NHS Wales

Pre-COVID, the concept of NHS working from home (WFH) in many specialities was frowned upon. It's commonly expressed that "we weren't trusted before to WFH..." (Speech & Language Therapist). But, since the pandemic, this change in attitude within NHS Wales and management has meant more staff can now WFH and still continue to offer the same level of care to their patients. As a Paediatric Consultant states: "Some people like going into work and like the face-to-face, but to me there's benefits for both, it's a benefit doing it from home and it benefits the patient".

WFH clearly provides many benefits to the NHS service, staff and patients, including cost and time savings on travel, parking and the environment [3]; improved flexibility and work-life balance; reduced stress and anxiety; and easier work/school/childcare arrangements [4]. In addition, WFH can be an incentive to increase recruitment and retention in Wales, and potentially attract the retired workforce to return to employment. As a Consultant Psychiatrist states: "Recruitment and retention have been ongoing challenges for the NHS and initiatives like homeworking can make jobs attractive and support work-life balance, then chances are we will have a happier workforce".

These changes in work patterns can however contribute to personal expenses. However, during COVID-19, there were tax relief incentives available to help cover WFH expenses, such as heating, metered water bills, home contents insurance, business calls

or broadband connections [5].

There are other challenges associated to WFH such as the inability to link patient notes to WFH devices e.g., using electronic records. There are also concerns on the mental health and wellbeing impacts of WFH such as the risk of social isolation and loneliness and physical impacts related to WFH [4], in that a spinal surgeon argues that "We are seeing much higher rates of younger patient referrals for back pain... this is related to inadequate homeworking set-ups".

To better understand the benefits and challenges of WFH during the pandemic and to provide future recommendations based on the voices of the NHS professionals themselves, TEC Cymru have been running 21 virtual design workshops with NHS Wales staff throughout March 2021 to design an 'Ideal WFH Future NHS Wales Model'. There is also a survey still running, so please share your experiences and views here: [surveyMonkey.co.uk/r/MCHGF7E](https://surveyMonkey.co.uk/r/MCHGF7E)

In addition, TEC Cymru have developed a WFH Guide in partnership with Psychiatry & Spinal Surgery services in Wales with useful hints and tips. [Home Working Guide: Protecting Mental & Physical Health](#)

### References:

- Technology Enabled Care Cymru Cited at [digitalhealth.wales/tec-cymru](https://digitalhealth.wales/tec-cymru)
- Welsh Government: aim for 30% of Welsh Workforce to Work Remotely. Cited at [gov.wales/aim-30-welsh-workforce-work-remotely](https://gov.wales/aim-30-welsh-workforce-work-remotely)
- Johns, G., Khalil, S., Ogonovsky, M., Ahuja, A. Video Consulting Contributes to Carbon Neutral Healthcare. BMJ 2020; 371 doi: [doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m4300](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m4300) (Published 06 November 2020)
- Technology Enabled Care Cymru 2021 Data [digitalhealth.wales/tec-cymru/how-we-can-help/evidence](https://digitalhealth.wales/tec-cymru/how-we-can-help/evidence)
- Government UK Claim Tax Relief for your job expenses. Cited at [gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home](https://gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home)

\*NHS Staff Quotes captured in interviews by the TEC Cymru Research, Innovation & Improvement Team 2021 (data from a larger study).

TECHNOLOGY ENABLED CARE

tec

CYMRU



Gwasanaeth Ymgynghori  
Fideo GIG Cymru

NHS Wales Video  
Consulting Service

# Disparity Begins at Home: How home working is impacting the public's health

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) has released a report looking at how working from home has affected the public's health and wellbeing. The report includes a snapshot survey of the public who had been working from home for the first time. Just under half of all respondents said that they felt working from home was better for their health and wellbeing, and cited saving money and having a better work/life balance among the benefits, and just 6% of people said they wanted to return to the office full-time. However, they also found evidence of negative impacts of working from home, including social isolation, less exercise, musculoskeletal problems, and disrupted sleep.

Their report identified inequalities in how working from home affects people's health and wellbeing, with those who live in a house-share with at least one housemate more likely to experience musculoskeletal problems, undertake less exercise and feel more isolated than people who live with their partner. Similarly, people aged 35 and over were a lot more likely to think that working from home was better for their health and wellbeing compared to 18-34 year-olds.

You can read the report in full [here](#)

## A COVID-19 pandemic world and beyond: The public health impact of Home and Agile Working in Wales

Click here to view the full report

[View Report](#)

## A COVID-19 pandemic world and beyond: The public health impact of Home and Agile Working in Wales

Supporting Information Report



Liz Green, Richard Lewis, Laura Evans, Laura Morgan,  
Lee Parry-Williams, Sumina Azam, Mark A Bellis

November 2020



# Podcasts

Welcome to our new Public Health Network Cymru Podcast Page of the Ebulletin. Here you can listen to the the previously released Podcasts.

Our recent Podcast is with Anne McGowan who is a Nurse Consultant in the Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme at Public Health Wales, and member of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Anne talks to us about how Wales has performed with vaccine uptake historically, and now, during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Anne also discusses some of the challenges that the population of Wales faces with vaccine hesitancy and the effectiveness of national interventions in improving vaccine uptake.

The podcast is available to listen to on SoundCloud.

If you are interested in recording a podcast with us in the future, please contact us via email: [publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk)

Vaccine Hesitancy in Wales



## More Podcasts

The Impact of COVID-19 on Children



Nutrition: Early Years with Andrea Basu



International Health: Migrant Health



View our full list of Podcasts on our website

Visit our webiste

# Videos

Welcome to Press Play, here you can get the latest PHNC videos from youtube!



## Employee Wellbeing in the Public Sector

COVID-19 has changed the way we work throughout the public sector. As widespread vaccination raises hope of a path to a new normality, there remain major challenges ahead on any road to recovery.

Press play to watch the video on the Public Health Network Cymru YouTube channel.

## More Videos



## The Unequal Pandemic: COVID-19 and Health Inequalities

Professor Clare Bamba of Newcastle University outlines how inequalities in COVID-19 are related to existing inequalities in chronic diseases and the social determinants of health.



## COVID-19 and BAME Communities – the Welsh Government Response

Describing the work of the First Minister's Advisory Group on health inequalities due to COVID-19 in Black Asian Minority Ethnic #communities and the Welsh Government response, with Dr Heather Payne.

Watch our full COVID-19 Webinar series on YouTube

Watch on YouTube

Enjoyed watching a webinar? We would appreciate your feedback in this [short survey](#).

# The Grapevine

## COVID-19 - Community Assets and Recovery

Cast your mind back to the very start of the first lockdown in 2020 – remember how the situation felt so very worrying and scary for all of us? In response to that, Mid & North Powys Mind wanted to reach out and acknowledge what we were all feeling and help our community in any way that we could, as so many did back then and still do now.

Mid & North Powys Mind continued to provide in-person support for those who needed it, but only on a one-to-one basis because of the restrictions, so the only way to reach a larger audience in an interactive way, was on-line. We wanted to give people positive messages to counter the fear out there. And practical, down to earth and accessible information about how people could look after their mental health and wellbeing.

We also realised, our attention spans seemed to have shortened – we were all constantly scrolling the news feeds for the latest updates. So something short and visual, seemed the best way forward. Something that people could watch live or anytime later.

Becca Oakley our Administrator was key in bringing these ideas together, coming up with regular Facebook Live broadcasts, utilising the huge amount of knowledge and experience from within our staff team. Initially there was some reluctance from staff about being on-screen, but they have absolutely and resoundingly risen to the challenge, to produce some high quality, informative and varied content.

At points over the last year, we were recording up to four videos a week, on subjects such as mindfulness, relaxation, tai chi, creative

writing, 5 ways to wellbeing, movement and getting outdoors, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Silvercloud and THRIVE coping mechanisms. Videos on average are 10 minutes long. Some are with a sole presenter and other are more of a discussion format.

You can find them all on our Facebook Page: [facebook.com/mnpowysmind](https://facebook.com/mnpowysmind)

The amount of views per video have increased as we have done them, as we have built a following of viewers and the feedback has been really encouraging. It is now 85,000 minutes of content watched across all videos. We regularly get 1,500 views per video. In the last 28 days our reach has been 25,000+ people.

The videos have been really popular and I think that is because we have concentrated on what we are good at and what people know us for – mental health and wellbeing and we have shared the videos on town and community Facebook pages.

Below are some of the comments we have received from the community:

"The support and virtual offer from North and Mid Powys Mind has been invaluable during COVID-19. Watching Wednesday session with Jean Paul as a catch up on Saturday afternoon has been so welcomed to help with relaxation and restoration whilst working within the NHS"

"Didn't realise how stressed I was until I found this site"

"Very reassuring at unsettled time"

"It's nice to see friends and make new ones the content of the courses are great and easy to follow"

"Video's have kept my Mental Health at bay, during these odd times, feel reassured"

We are really proud of our pandemic response and feel we have helped our local community cope with the pandemic, raise awareness of mental health, build community resilience and relationships. To develop them further

we are planning some co-produced broadcasts with our clients and we are hoping to produce some joint ones with other organisation in our local area as well.

Over the last year nearly everyone has struggled with their mental health at one point or another and if there are any silver linings to it, the pandemic does seem to have made everyone aware that good mental health is not a given, sometimes we need to do things to look after it.



# Case Study: Ceredigion Flying Start, Tîm Teulu, Family Centres

## Hywel Dda University Health Board and Pathfinder Integrated Working to tackle isolation and support emotional wellbeing and parenting skills through COVID 2020-21

On March 1st 2020, Welsh Government funded Flying Start, Pathfinder and Families First set out their delivery plans to commence delivery of groups and courses on 1st April 2020. These included a broad range of groups and courses to engage families and build links with their local communities as well as addressing any identified needs in terms of growing their resilience, skills, confidence and knowledge. Courses and groups were planned in partnership with third sector organisations for delivery in a range of council and third sector settings face to face in people's local communities.

On March 20th, 2020 the first lockdown was announced. Staff had smart phones and laptops and were able to carry on some support virtually through WhatsApp. All families were contacted to see if they wanted 'keeping in touch' calls.

The weeks progressed amid increasing anxieties about parents' wellbeing and pressure to find more ways of supporting them online. The teams agreed that it was a priority to adapt and deliver courses and groups online with relevant books sent to parents in support. Baby Massage was the first group to be reinstated virtually and through this the first feedback was received regarding difficulties with joining online – one mum who wanted to join would have had to use all her credit in order to do so. It was agreed that a second priority was to find a way of ensuring that digital connectivity issues should not be a barrier for families wanting to access support.

**March 2021** Over 250 parents from across Ceredigion have attended the 36 courses organised virtually. Demand dictated delivery and times of courses were organised to suit parents. The most requested courses were

those supporting emotional wellbeing – with 63 participants attending the 10 courses arranged. Baby Massage and Ante natal – Preparation for Parenthood was also very popular and well received with 36 parents attending the four courses organised.

"Just to say thanks so much for inviting X and I to the baby massage classes, little stars and all the other classes that you've run. It's been so lovely to be part of the classes, I've learnt really useful information from them and in particular having the support and advice from the classes during Covid... the support from the groups have been invaluable."

'Just wanted to say it has been really great, it has been so wonderful to have company and support, to make us grounded and bring our presence to the baby etc having this special time for ourselves and the baby, Thank you! Diolch, x'

Digital connectivity was supported with the purchase of 16 iPads and a contract with Digital Communities Wales to provide telephone support and advice as well as training to staff to support them to be Digital Champions. 39 staff across the county have now received training.

Following positive consultations with staff and participants, we are now planning a 'blended' approach going forward.

Rhian Rees  
Ceredigion Flying Start Manager  
[Rhian.rees@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:Rhian.rees@ceredigion.gov.uk)

# News

## New study finds Coronavirus transmission highest in households and hospitality

Households are the most significant source of infection, while working in the hospitality sector or visiting the pub are also significant risks. Smoking or vaping appears to have a small but significant effect on transmission too.

[Read more](#)

## People in Wales who cannot work from home encouraged to use lateral flow self-tests

All those who cannot work from home are being encouraged to access lateral flow self-test kits as they are rolled out across Wales.

[Read more](#)

## Please give me space - Helping people with dementia and social distancing

Please give me space is a new initiative from the makers of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard scheme. It is designed to support people with non-visible disabilities, such as dementia, to socially distance during the coronavirus pandemic.

[Read more](#)

## Walking Friends Wales

Living Streets are working with Healthy Active Fund (HAF) on Walking Friends Wales (Cyfeillion Cerdded Cymru), a project to help people over 50 in South Wales increase their walking activity.

[Read more](#)

## One million people receive first vaccine dose

One million people across Wales have had at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine, meaning almost 40% of the adult population now have a level of protection from COVID-19.

[Read more](#)



# Events

Next steps for R&D in Wales - funding, developing collaboration between Welsh HEIs, raising the international profile, and contributing to economic recovery

14 May

This conference will examine next steps for R&D and international research partnerships in Wales. Areas for discussion include funding, collaboration, place, research skills and infrastructure, COVID-19 and Welsh R&D on the world stage.

[Read more](#)

The European Mile

05 June

The European Mile is a free event celebrating the joy of moving again at your own pace – by running, walking or rolling a mile. Create your own event or donate your miles during 2021 to take part, and move together with people around Europe for the main celebration on 5 June 2021.

[Read more](#)

World No Tobacco Day 2021: Commit to Quit

31 May

WHO has launched a year-long global campaign for World No Tobacco Day 2021 – “Commit to Quit” . This campaign aims to support 100 million people worldwide in their attempt to give up tobacco through various initiatives and digital solutions.

[Read more](#)

Supporting young people's Mental Health and Wellbeing

10 June

The course aims to explore the various difficulties young people experience with mental health and how to build resilience and improve wellbeing. The course will examine the different types of mental health, the behaviours that can accompany them and how to support the young person.

[Read more](#)

View the full list of events on our website

[Visit our website](#)

# Topics

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[Alcohol](#)

[Arts and Health](#)

[Gambling](#)

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# Next Issue

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COVID-19: Mental  
Wellbeing and  
Spirituality

