



RHWYDWAITH IECHYD  
CYHOEDDUS CYMRU  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
NETWORK CYMRU



**COVID-19 Recovery and Increasing  
Physical Activity  
June 2021**

# Welcome

Welcome to the June edition of the e-bulletin which has a focus on COVID-19 Recovery and Increasing Physical Activity.

With the easing of restrictions and summer approaching, now is a great opportunity for people to motivate each other into being more physically active. Initiatives that aim to encourage people to be more physically active and engage socially in a safe way, particularly those population groups who are the most sedentary now have a role to play.

We also have a webinar planned for Wednesday 30th July discussing how COVID-19 has affected our children and will be delivered by Dr Claire Thomas, Public Health Wales.

Further information and the recordings of both webinars can be found on our [website](#).

## 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  
Public Health Network Cymru,  
Public Health Wales, Floor 5,  
Number 2 Capital Quarter,  
Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

Social media  
Twitter: @PHNetworkCymru

We would love to hear about any additional information, case studies or tips to share with the wider public health community in Wales in future e-bulletins and our website so please get in touch with us at [publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk)

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# COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS

Latest information on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

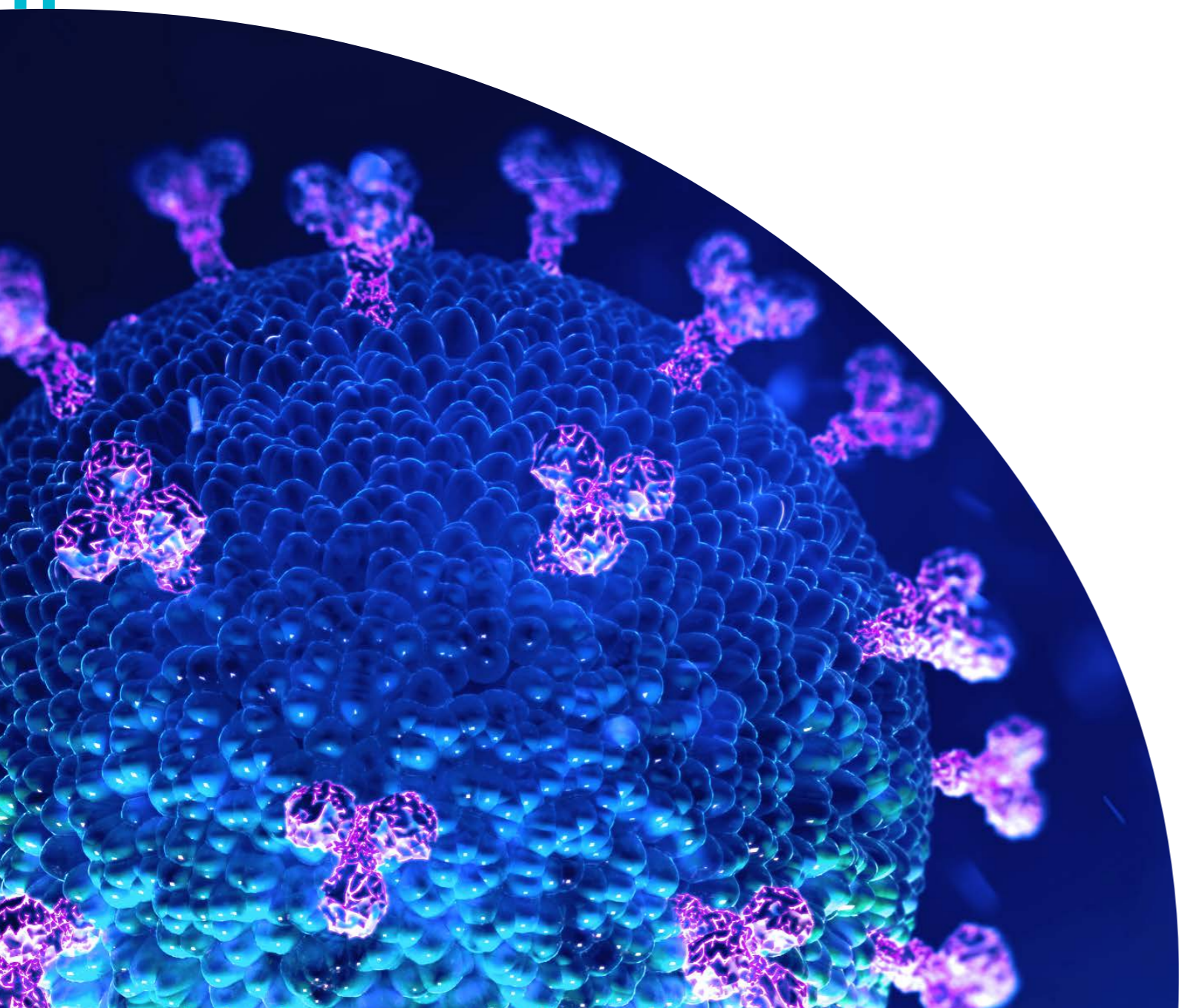
Public Health Wales is working closely with the Welsh Government and the other UK public health agencies to carefully monitor the situation and implement our planned response, with measures in place to protect the health of the public.

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

## Conwy Youth Service

Early studies show that children and young people are amongst the worst affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, and the vulnerable amongst them even more so. Stress, loneliness, depression and anxiety are set to be the biggest challenges facing the mental wellbeing of young people, and it is possible that the psychological effect of the pandemic will outlast the virus itself. The support young people and children will have received since March last year, and continue to receive today can not only improve their wellbeing now, but also reduce the long term effects of the pandemic on their mental wellbeing. For Conwy Youth Service, the COVID 19 restrictions meant that we had to adapt our way of working in order to continue supporting the young people who use and need our service. Since the easing of restrictions, Conwy Youth Service have now been able to offer these young people with outdoor sessions to help improve their physical and mental health. We work with children young people aged 11-25 within the whole county of Conwy and our activities and programmes include the following:

- Well-being walks in different areas of Conwy are really benefitting the young people. As well as the time spent with Youth Workers outdoors in the fresh air, young people are improving their physical and mental health.
- A gardening project took place in Llandudno over May half term where one of our community youth clubs are based. Here young people were able to help improve the outside area.
- Fitness sessions are taking place at Abergele leisure centre. Here young people are able to take part in different sports and fitness sessions on a Monday evening in a safe and structured environment.

- A bubble sports project takes place on a Friday night in Llanrwst and allows young people to utilise our brand new bubble sports equipment!
- Our 'StrideAway' Facebook group encourages and motivates young people to take part in monthly distance challenges!
- 'Picnic in the park' in Colwyn Bay allows young people to come and sit (socially distanced), chat with their peers and take part in small non-contact activities.
- Our high school based non-traditional sports and review group project enables young people to take part in a selection of different sports activities each week, while also achieving an Agored qualification.
- We take our mobile buses to some areas of Conwy and handing out well being bags to young people, which also includes some fitness equipment to help keep them active.
- A project in Kinmel Bay on a Friday night aims at helping to encourage young people to engage in different activities socially and have fun with their friends in a safe and expressive way.

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For more information please contact [chris.gledhill@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:chris.gledhill@conwy.gov.uk)



## Bridgend Inclusive Network Group (BING)

Bridgend Inclusive Network Group (BING) is a new and exciting social enterprise that supports the Bridgend Inclusive Community. All our volunteers have a variety of personal experiences, expertise, and in-depth knowledge of the voluntary sector such as charities, community groups, sports clubs and not for profit organisations in which we want to share. BING come together with an interest in promoting ability and inclusivity.

Our aim is to provide support for other organisations who are providing or want to provide inclusive activities, through delivering free training, activity days and taster sessions. We also provide an opportunity for those working within groups in our community to come together and share information.

We promote community activity opportunities and provide a voice for differently able people and their families, so that everyone can take part in physical activities that improve their health and wellbeing.

For more information you can find us on: [www.altogetherbridgend.co.uk/bing](http://www.altogetherbridgend.co.uk/bing)  
[bridgendinclusivenetworkgroup@outlook.com](mailto:bridgendinclusivenetworkgroup@outlook.com)



## Feel Good for Life - Leisure opportunities for people living with dementia, feeling lonely or low to be active and to socialise

Halo's Feel Good for Life programme aims to provide people living with dementia, isolation & depression, as well as carers in Bridgend County Borough, with opportunities to be physically active and to socialise. Weekly sessions consist of an hour of tailored physical activity, including swimming, curling, table-tennis, keep-fit, followed by one hour of social activities, such as scrapbooking memorabilia collecting, reminiscence and music. Creating this scheme, firstly required the organisations with an interest to come together in collaboration. This included, Halo and Bridgend County Borough Council, as well as the Alzheimers Society, BAVO and Awen Libraries working together, with input from the Local Health Board, then removing the barriers to physical activity.

The difference that the programme makes to people's lives has been recognised as the Feel Good for Life programme was awarded the prestigious Community Leisure UK award



for 'Community Impact through Physical Activity'. The programme has now supported over 120 people affected by Dementia, Anxiety, Depression, Isolation and Age related impairments, inc. mobility and sensory impairments. Self-reported health improvements after three months indicate that 80% had increased levels of activity, 78% had reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation and 73% had improved mental & physical wellbeing. The following quotes also help to demonstrate the impact of the programme:

- "He is always in such good spirits after the sessions which makes my job as a carer a lot easier, it makes me so happy to see him happy." - Linda (Unpaid Carer)

- "Talking to the staff and other carers that are going through similar difficulties to me, gives me a great deal of support" - Frances (Unpaid Carer)

During the Covid pandemic, the programme was adapted and sustained by moving to an interactive, on-line format, and providing internet enabled i-pads free of charge. Given

the way in which this successfully engaged vulnerable people in the more remote parts of the county borough and who had been sedentary and digitally excluded, Halo will be working to be able to continue the on-line provision as part of a blended approach to the Feel Good for Life programme. An overview of the programmes digital element has been captured in the following [digi-story \(Welsh Subtitled version\)](#)

Further details and contact information can be found here: <https://haloleisure.org.uk/feelgoodforlife/>

## Let's Move with Versus Arthritis

Versus Arthritis is the UK's largest charity dedicated to supporting people with arthritis. Cymru Versus Arthritis is here to make sure that people with arthritis in Wales have all of the support and information they need to live well with their condition and to ensure that the needs of people with arthritis are a priority with policymakers in Wales. Cymru Versus Arthritis runs a number of different services for people of all ages with arthritis, ranging from activity sessions for young people to practical support and information for those with arthritis.

Let's Move is a programme for people with arthritis and related musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions who want more movement in their lives. Created by Versus Arthritis the programme is designed to support people to get active through a variety of digital content including tailor-made movement sessions, expert tips and advice and the sharing of personal stories. All content is designed to help people find the level of movement that is right for them and to help build confidence both in their own body and the day-to-day management of their condition.

Our [website](#) hosts a variety of expert information on exercise, including exercises for arthritis and related conditions as well as a chatbot which can answer questions on physical activity.

**In your area activities** - [Wales | Versus Arthritis](#)

**Blogs** -

[How can strengthening and stretching help your arthritis? \(versusarthritis.org\)](#)

[How to stay motivated to exercise? \(versusarthritis.org\)](#)

[Keeping yourself healthy when working from home \(versusarthritis.org\)](#)

[Tips for gardening with arthritis | Versus Arthritis](#)

[Why is swimming good for people with arthritis? \(versusarthritis.org\)](#)

[Living with arthritis: 6 steps to better mornings \(versusarthritis.org\)](#)

[Exercising with arthritis | Top tips, specific exercises \(versusarthritis.org\)](#)

**Animations** -

[What happens when you exercise? - YouTube](#)

[How to get started with exercise - YouTube](#)

[Guidelines for Physical Activity - YouTube](#)

**Peer support**

[Let's Move Versus Arthritis | Facebook](#)

[Cymru Versus Arthritis - Home | Facebook](#)

For more information please contact Rhian Horlock [r.horlock@versusarthritis.org](mailto:r.horlock@versusarthritis.org)

## COVID-19: Recovery and Increasing Physical Activity - Sport Cardiff Initiatives

**'Healthy & Active at Home' project**

Following the recent success of the 'Active at Home' project, Sport Cardiff have partnered with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's 'Healthy Living Team' and Newydd Housing Association, via the HAPI project, to provide residents living across Cardiff & The Vale of Glamorgan with the opportunity to apply for a 'Healthy & Active at Home' pack.

The project aims to provide over 300 households across Cardiff & Vale with healthy food hampers and activity packs to encourage children, young people and adults to become more physically active and eat healthily.

The packs are designed to be inclusive and people can apply for physical activity equipment and/or healthy food packs. There is a separate child & family pack and teenage & adult packs for households that are most in need of support to become more physically active and eat more healthily.

Residents of Cardiff & Vale are able to apply [on-line](#) or via telephone until Sunday 4th July 2021.

For further information regarding the Healthy & Active at Home project please contact Ben Williams (Move More Manager) via e-mail: [bwilliams2@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:bwilliams2@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

**60 Plus Active Leisure Scheme (Cardiff)**

We are excited to launch another programme which forms part of our ongoing 60+ project, providing accessible opportunities to those who sit within this age demographic, at local venues across Cardiff!

This new provision will run in partnership with Better (GLL), within five leisure centres throughout the city. These centres are Eastern Leisure Centre, Fairwater Leisure Centre, Western Leisure Centre, Maindy Leisure Centre and Star Hub. Each centre offers a range of activities including *walking football, Yoga, 'Rise', body conditioning, table tennis and much more.*

The program runs for 8 weeks and places can be booked right now via the landing page below, with the sessions beginning from Monday 14th June.

The below landing page links, will enable people to identify what activities are taking place at each centre and to book onto sessions, by firstly registering for a booking card or via the Better UK app (both of which are accessible at the bottom of the landing page):

English - <https://leisureoffers.co.uk/sport-cardiff/60plus-project/>

Cymraeg - <https://leisureoffers.co.uk/sport-cardiff/60mwy-o-brosiect/>

For further information regarding the 60 Plus Active Leisure Scheme in Cardiff please contact Kyle McCarthy (Move More Co-ordinator) via e-mail:

[kmccarthy@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:kmccarthy@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

**SPORT  
CARDIFF**

**Cardiff Met Developing Sport**

**CHWARAEON  
CAERDYDD**

**Met Caerdydd yn Datblygu Chwaraeon**

Sport Cardiff and Better

# Physical activity for older adults



If you are looking to keep active and stay sociable, our 60+ activities offer something for everyone. Come along, meet likeminded people, have fun and make friends while enjoying various activities and classes.

For more information or to book on visit:  
[60plus project – Sport Cardiff Leisure Offers](#)

or email: [SC60@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:SC60@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

**SPORT**  
CARDIFF  
Cardiff Met Developing Sport  
**CHWARAEON**  
CAERDYDD  
Met Caerdydd yn Datblygu Chwaraeon

**BETTER**  
the feel good place

sportwales  
chwaraeoncymru

## MonLife

### MonLife Background

MonLife is a service group delivering within Monmouthshire County Council including; leisure, youth, sport development, outdoor adventure, green infrastructure and countryside access, play, learning, destination management, arts, museums, attractions and active travel.

Our mission at MonLife is to promote healthier lives and inspirational experiences and promote the vibrancy of Monmouthshire as a great place to be. MonLife is a one-stop-shop vehicle for health, wellbeing and creating diverse opportunities for all of our communities.

### Why The Active 60+ Programme?

In October 2020, MonLife applied for the scheme with Sport Wales (funded by Welsh Government) to facilitate the Active 60+ Programme. The aim was to target those over the age of 60, tackle loneliness, improve condition and to improve fitness / wellbeing as a result of the pandemic. Monmouthshire has a very high demographic over the age of 60, for many the pandemic limited access to exercise and this had an impact on wellbeing. The Active 60+ programme provided a virtual app with live and on demand classes, as well as providing much needed social interaction. Those that took part received a home workout kit of dumbbells, bands and exercise mats. The classes provided were a mixture of gentle exercise, Tai Chi, Pilates and Yoga. The Active 60 plus scheme launched in January 2021 with a target of engaging 85 members by March 2021, a target that was reached. As part of the scheme participants were given a month's free membership to the Leisure Centre to support continued physical activity and sustainability of the project.

### Using Digital Systems To Track Progress

Members have their progress recorded through the means of digital reviews with fitness professionals and their activity recorded through the My Wellness App. The app records outdoor activity like walking, cycling, running and Live / On Demand classes. This a great way for MonLife to record progress of each active member. This also

indicates the usage of the digital ecosystem linking outdoor and virtual activity to the member's progress.

### Next Steps

Moving forwards the membership has extended to join in the MonLife classes on site as well as attending virtual classes, creating a wider offer.

This membership offer is 1 month free and £16.00 thereafter and for the first 120 people that sign up to this programme, as well as being given the equipment packs. This allows for options to exercise at home and at the leisure centre, providing greater flexibility when Leisure restrictions are eased.

### How The Programme Helped One Customer

"I have taken part in quite a few of your virtual classes and thoroughly enjoyed them all; Stretch and Tone, Gentle Exercise and Tai Chi. The classes are excellent and I'm amazed how well you can guide and monitor our individual progress throughout the sessions. They are all very well-planned, timed and focused on a particular aspect of our developing fitness with a clear explanation of how these exercises will benefit us. They have definitely made a difference to my health; I feel stronger and fitter, my flexibility is much improved and my back is less painful. I feel supported, encouraged and have a sense of achievement. I feel proud when I tell my grown up children, who live so far away, that I have engaged in a session and I know that they are delighted.

Apart from a fairly regular walk, I was taking no other exercise. Going forward, it will be difficult for me to find an opportunity to leave my husband who has dementia and attend a Leisure Centre. As it is, my husband sits in the room, happy to see me and hear it all going on in the background. It certainly helps me to feel less isolated.

I have recommended 60+ to others and will continue to do so.

In truth, it has been a godsend and I congratulate and thank everyone who has put the scheme together."

### Delivery Feedback from Monlife Active 60+ team

Since our Monlife Leisure Centres have re-opened, there has been a welcomed response from new Active 60+ members across all four leisure centres. There has been a good increase in numbers over the last month of 43 members; currently at a total of 126 overall

These members have been using the MonLife digital eco system. This involves use of leisure centre, our live and on demand classes on the My Wellness App - recording walks, cycle /swims on our Monlife Strava group that connects to the member's My Wellness

Account. This is a good measure to see trends of exercise so that members get the best experience and improve fitness, mobility and wellbeing. The instructors have also recorded members pre-test and 8 week post-test for; sit to stand, IPA and SWEB - the instructors found improvements across all areas.

[MonLife offers online 60 plus fitness package - Monlife](#)



## If Physical Activity were a Pill ... the use of Physical Activity Prescription Pads in Primary Care

The many health benefits of physical activity (PA) are well known and promoted by health professionals, especially within primary care. Brief interventions (i.e. discussion, negotiation or encouragement) and exercise referral schemes (i.e. patients being formally referred to a PA professional) are the two dominant approaches to promoting PA within primary care. These cost-effective interventions can generate positive changes in health outcomes and PA levels in inactive patients who are at increased risk for non-communicable diseases. Key enablers include motivational interviewing, social support and multi-disciplinary approaches. (Lion et al., 2018).

Cardiff and Vale local Public Health Team have created a resource in support of this approach in the form of a Physical Activity Prescription (PAP) pad. Branded with our locality logos, this A5 piece of paper provides key motivational style conversation prompts for conversations around PA. Paired with a [Making Every Contact Count \(MECC\)](#) conversational style approach, GPs can utilise this resource with appropriately identified patients and easily provide local social prescribing information for different activities, which can be handed to the patient after the conversation.



In Wales, social prescribing has been identified in recent years as an important approach to improving population health at a policy level (Emmerson, 2021). Therefore, it was important that we included our community partners as well as providing useful information about local walks, green spaces, leisure facilities and community classes. Below are some example partner activities that are included.

[Parkrun](#) is a positive, welcoming and inclusive experience where there is no time limit and no one finishes last. Set over a 5k marked route, everyone is welcome to participate, whether they decide to walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate. [Cardiff parkrun](#), the first to be set up in the capital city, is located in the beautiful surroundings of Bute Park, situated on the Taff trail and now has an impressive amount of runners and volunteers taking part every Saturday morning. By including parkrun on our PAP pads, we are helping to facilitate the setup of more local parkrun events within communities across Cardiff and the Vale so that all residents have equal accessibility to an event near to where they live. One of our most recent successes is [Trelai Park parkrun](#), which was set up during March 2020 and run by volunteers from local GP practices across the South West cluster area. In the limited time it had to take place before the pandemic hit, it has seen a great success with 200 finishers and over 30 volunteers in attendance. GPs in this cluster have played a huge part, helping to provide motivation and create a supportive environment. For the patients they are seeing on a daily basis, this is encouragement for them to try out their first parkrun, and is an invaluable resource which stems from a PAP pad conversation.

[Elderfit](#) is a Community Interest Company founded by friends Tom and Gareth, who between them have over 30 years' experience in the fitness industry. Using their extensive health and fitness knowledge, they designed a session to improve strength and balance for individuals that need it the most. The classes draw on a variety of techniques, including mobility exercises, resistance bands and hand/leg weights. All exercises are adapted to suit individual' s needs, to ensure that participants feel the full benefits of the classes. Although the main aim of the session is to reduce the risk of falls, Elderfit also aims to strengthen upper body muscles for participants, so if a fall does happen they will be more able to pull themselves back up. Creating independence is a key element to the classes, therefore helping people re-discover their confidence and stability to allow them more freedom to be more physically active in their daily life.

As we begin to start our recovery out of the



Covid-19 pandemic, we hope that the continued roll out and implementation of the PAP pads across Cardiff and Vale GP services will begin to gain momentum. We have adapted a Covid-19 specific PAP for electronic use in the meantime, which GPs can access via the Cardiff and Vale Health Pathways website.

Looking forward, we are hoping to build a series of case studies from patients whose physical activity participation has increased as a result of having a conversation with their GP. This would be a fantastic resource, and provide motivation for other practitioners to utilise the idea of a PAP with their patients. Having a physical piece of paper with some information on about physical activity options, paired with a MECC style initial discussion with their GP, may eventually replace some patient prescriptions which may have otherwise automatically been for medication, therefore benefiting the NHS system as a whole and also the patient as an individual in the long term.

Whether you are recovering from COVID-19, have been shielding, or haven't been able to remain as active as usual due to COVID-19, it is likely that your physical health has been affected. You may need to build up your fitness to get back to completing the same activities that you used to enjoy prior to the pandemic. Use the links below to help build your confidence back up and start to improve your fitness levels at your own pace.

#### Gardening is a great way to be active.

- Don't have a garden? Are you interested in gardening with other people?
- Find out if there is a community gardening project in your area  
[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)



#### Going for a brisk walk each day can improve your fitness and wellbeing.

- Sit less and stand up every 30 minutes and walk around.
- Take the stairs instead of using the lift.
- Make use of the parks and green spaces in Cardiff: [www.outdoorcardiff.com](http://www.outdoorcardiff.com)



#### Cycling is a fun way to get around the city.

- Cycle trails will help you avoid busy roads: [www.keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk](http://www.keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk)
- **Nextbike** is a bike share scheme with stations across the city. Users can hire a bike to get around Cardiff: [www.nextbike.co.uk](http://www.nextbike.co.uk) (> Locations)
- **Pedal Power** have a range of specially adapted trikes and bikes designed for children and adults with impairments as well as regular bikes for hire: [www.cardiffpedalpower.org](http://www.cardiffpedalpower.org)
- For safety consider wearing a cycle helmet.



#### Online exercise classes for all fitness levels.

- The 'Keeping Me Well' website contains a section on 'Strength and Stamina' which start with basic exercises and become increasingly challenging as you step up through the levels. Your starting point could be on any level, so start where is comfortable for you: [keepingmewell.com](http://keepingmewell.com) (Covid19 and Me > My Physical Recovery > Strength and Stamina)
- Health Board physiotherapists have developed some self-management advice and resources that you can use at home including some Tai Chi exercises:  
[cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/resources-for-use-at-home](http://cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/resources-for-use-at-home)



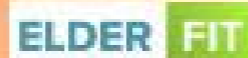
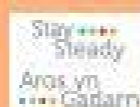
#### Running is a great way to be active and it is free!

- 'Couch to 5k' is a free running plan which is designed to get anyone running 5km in 9 weeks: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) (Live Well > Exercise > Couch to 5K > C25K programme)
- All parkrun events in Wales are currently suspended. However, (not)parkrun is something you might be interested in, visit [parkrun.org.uk/notparkrun](http://parkrun.org.uk/notparkrun) for more information.



#### Ways to ensure your core strength and balance is maintained.

- Strength and balance exercise can help to reduce the risk of falls.
- Elderfit run online strength and balance classes which are easy to follow and carry out at home. Check out the website: [elderfit.co.uk](http://elderfit.co.uk)
- The Stay Steady Virtual Clinic is available free of charge to provide tailored advice on reducing falls risks. To contact the team to arrange a free virtual assessment for you, call 029 21 83 25 52 or email your details to: [Staysteady.cardiff@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Staysteady.cardiff@wales.nhs.uk)



# ValePlus: More More in March Challenge

In March 2021 we organised a small fundraiser for our Charity ValePlus. ValePlus supports adults with additional learning needs, providing them with training opportunities and lifelong learning skills.

Our fundraiser was called Move More in March Challenge. Our initial intentions were to encourage people to exercise for 30 minutes each day in March, with the idea that starting the day with physical activity would help with mental well-being and also have a positive impact on the rest of the day, and in turn if we could raise some money from the challenge through sponsorship that would of course be a bonus for the Charity.

We ended up having 25 participants, including 2 members of staff that were supporting the fundraisers. We set up a What's App group and sent daily ideas of 30-minute workout to the group chat. We were very lucky that one of the staff members is a qualified Level 3 Personal Trainer and ex-gym owner. We were able to record a few 30 minutes work out, which included rolling a set of exercise dice, one with the exercise and one with the repetitions on. This was a lot of fun as our exercises were literally decided by the roll of a dice! Our participants loved these workouts and both staff have continued to record these in their spare time to share with students.

The fundraiser had to be open to all abilities, so there were no restrictions as to what exercise people could do as long as it was for 30 minutes, many of our participants choose to walk, whereas some helped in the garden, trampolined, did online fitness work outs, some even have exercise bikes in their houses which they used.

The WhatsApp group created a small community where people could post pictures of where they had walked, but also encouraged others, which was great to see. Our challengers thoroughly enjoyed themselves. One lady also took part purely to motivate herself, so she could help control her diabetes. From feedback we have received since the March Challenge many people are still keeping up with the 30-minute walks and exercise, and one of our students has also

lost an incredible amount of weight which we are all proud of her for. As a fundraiser, the Charity was blown away as we had so much community support, we raised just under £10,000, which as you can imagine for a small charity, hit by the pandemic was an incredible amount of money.

From our experience to help increase physical activity, we have included some bullet points that you might find helpful.

- Be mindful of your own abilities
- Start out small, set your own targets
- Challenge yourself, for a local cause
- Have an exercise buddy or a walking pal.

For further information contact Mark Mitchell: [MarkM@valeplus.co.uk](mailto:MarkM@valeplus.co.uk)



# Swansea Health Walk Leaders

The benefits of walking to both physical and mental health are well reported.

Walkers are spoilt for choice in Swansea and Gower. There is everything from level promenades and parkland for an easy stroll to more strenuous hikes over beaches, moorland and through ancient woods.

The Health Walk Leader programme in Swansea is co-ordinated by Swansea Council's Sport and Health team and funded through Sport Wales. We are experiencing a post lockdown boom in walking across the City. The Facebook group Swansea Walking Forum has increased membership sevenfold in the last year. The Forum is key in identifying progression walks and other activities for health walkers who have achieved their initial aims.

One day Health Walk Leader courses have been delivered since the pandemic started, with a total of 150 leaders now trained. During the pandemic the course has been delivered online, including practice walks from delegates' homes.

Delegates are predominately volunteers, but include sport and health care professionals. Most are now involved in health walks around Swansea and Gower. Some of the walks are open to anyone in the community. Others are for specific groups including the isolated and chronically sedentary, post-health care, mental health, and local groups with a common interest in improving their physical and mental wellbeing, inevitably, some new walkers are overcoming their fear of venturing out again into a Covid world.

Health Walk Leaders often work with existing organisations. Many partnerships have been forged - charities, NHS support, Friends of Parks, Social Prescribing, Local Area Coordination, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services, ParkLives, Actif Woods, and many others.

All of Swansea's Sport and Health staff have been trained as Health Walk Leaders and are incorporating health walks into their programmes. The Sport and Health team are assisting in mentoring new volunteer leaders as they start their own walks. Several new health walks have started this year and more are on the way.

Walking Development Officer John Ashley commented, "Health and recreational walking is almost entirely dependent on volunteers. The need to recruit and support these volunteers was identified early. Without them we could not have achieved what we have in Swansea."

Photo description – The Morriston Health Walk was started by the Friends of Morriston Park after attending Health Walk Leader training.

For more information please contact:

John Ashley  
Walking Development Officer, Swansea Council  
[John.Ashley@Swansea.gov.uk](mailto:John.Ashley@Swansea.gov.uk)

[www.swansea.gov.uk/walking](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/walking)  
[Sport and Health Swansea - Home | Facebook](#)



# 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



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## LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant health, well-being and socio-economic impacts for people and communities, disproportionately affecting those most in need.

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

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## Self-isolation confidence, adherence and challenges

Public Health Wales' Research and Evaluation Division has been doing research to better understand the challenges experienced by contacts of cases of COVID-19 in Wales



## 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.

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# The Grapevine

## Coping strategies made a difference to young people's mental well-being during pandemic

A new report, published today (08.06.21) by Public Health Wales, identifies a range of activities and behaviours that helped young people deal with the difficult changes to their lives during the pandemic.

Spending time outside, keeping physically active, engaging in creative activities and hobbies, establishing routines, maintaining contact with friends online and being aware of the nature of Coronavirus and how to prevent its spread all helped reduce the negative mental health impacts of the pandemic.

Key findings of the publication included:

- The pandemic resulted in some positive impacts for some young people (for example, feeling relief from social pressure and bullying, spending more time with families, taking up new hobbies, and having the time to adopt healthier behaviours)
- However, evidence overwhelmingly points to a negative impact on all aspects of mental well-being among children and young people, including:

- Parents struggling to cope, and feelings of loneliness and isolation because of social distancing were associated with worse outcomes for young people.

- Educational disruption, school closures, and lack of access to support at school were responsible for many of the worries and anxieties children and young people have been experiencing

- Age was found to be one of the clearest Determinants of mental well-being. Adolescents and young adults exhibit depression, anxiety, and other adverse outcomes more so than older adults or younger peers
- Evidence suggests young women and girls were more severely affected by the pandemic than their male counterparts
- Increased calls to helplines indicate a possible rise in children who experienced abuse and violence at home during lockdown, which adversely impacted mental health
- Families on lower incomes and young people not in education or employment experienced the adverse impact of the pandemic much more severely
- Factors that served to mitigate some of the negative implications of the pandemic included spending time outside, establishing routines, and being aware of the nature of the virus and its spread
- The improvement in wellbeing measures for all age groups at the end of summer 2020 (when restrictions were eased and schools fully reopened), may suggest that some negative impacts of the pandemic could be short lived. However, further analysis of data from the most recent lockdown period is needed to fully understand the impacts.

Nerys Edmonds, Principal Health Impact Assessment Practitioner at Public Health Wales, said:

*"Although Coronavirus has undoubtedly had far reaching negative impacts on our younger population, it is important for us*

*to learn where these impacts have been the most profound and what has helped so far to mitigate these impacts.*

*"Our young people have shown remarkable resilience and we will be examining what can now be put in place to support their recovery, help them build a happy future, as well as ensuring that mental health and well-being are fully considered in future plans for public health emergencies."*

Public Health Wales commissioned Alma Economics to review the research evidence on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the associated government measures on the mental well-being of babies, children, and young people.

'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental wellbeing of children and young people in Wales: literature review' was

## Recite Me

To support people to have equal access to online health information, the NHS 111 Wales website now hosts 'Recite me', an easy to use toolbar that allows you to customise the website in a way that works best for you.

It offers a number of features including text to speech, reading aids and translation of pages of over 100 languages. Recite me supports visitors who may be visually impaired, have learning disabilities or speak English as a second language.

conducted using a series of existing survey data and published research studies, to identify mental health challenges that young people experienced and some of the protective factors that helped to safeguard their mental health and well-being throughout the pandemic

This report, along with evidence from talking to young people and teachers in Wales, will help inform a detailed Mental Well-being Impact Assessment (MWIA) Report, that will provide recommendations and is due to be published later this year.

[Children and young people's mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Children and young people's mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic – Research Briefing](#)

For more information on how to manage your symptoms, condition or for details of local health services including your nearest Pharmacy, visit the [NHS 111 Wales website](#) and look out for the Recite me logo.



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