



RHWYDWAITH IECHYD
CYHOEDDUS CYMRU
PUBLIC HEALTH
NETWORK CYMRU



**COVID-19: Mental Wellbeing
and Spirituality
May 2021**

Welcome

Welcome to the May edition of the e-bulletin which has a focus on Mental Wellbeing and Spirituality

The impact of COVID-19 and associated restrictions on people's mental wellbeing is now well documented and as part of recovery, enhancing individual and community mental wellbeing will become increasingly important. Spirituality can be particularly important during times of stress, ill-health or loss through enhancing coping and giving us a sense of purpose, value, connectedness and hope.

We have recently held two webinars, the first one on Self-isolation confidence, adherence and challenges and was presented by Dr Richard Kyle and Dr Kate Isherwood from Public Health Wales.

The second webinar entitled Leaving No One Behind: Placing health equity at the heart of the COVID-19 sustainable response and recovery in Wales was delivered by representatives from the WHO CC on Investment for Health & Well-being, 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

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

Contents

Click the heading to go to the page

COVID-19 Information 4

Headlines 6

Podcasts 14

Videos 15

The Grapevine 16

News 18

Calendar 19

List of PHNC Topics 20

Next Issue 21

COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS

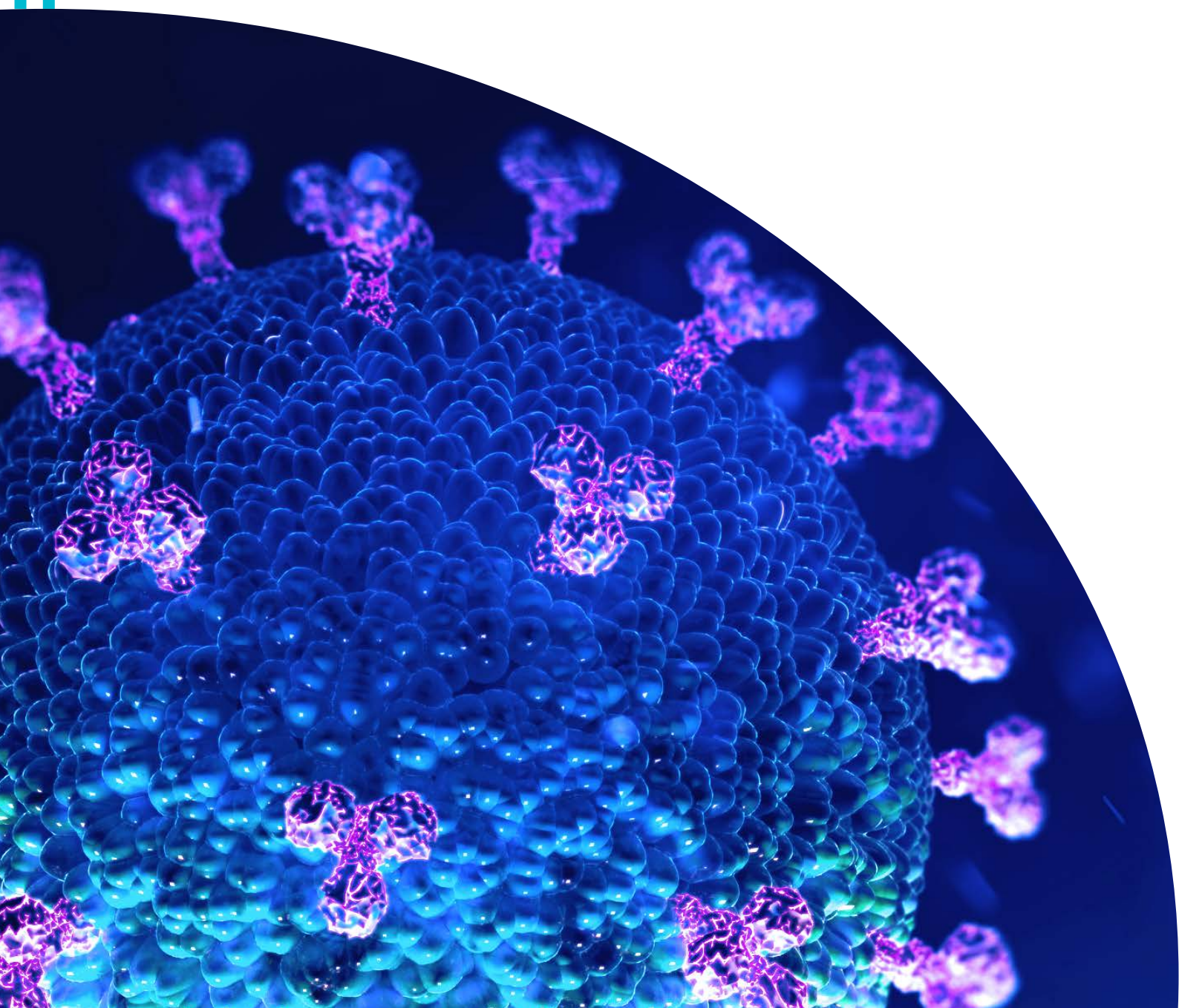
Latest information on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

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.



Headlines

Learning from the community response to COVID-19 in Wales

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic we know that communities across Wales have come together in many different ways to support and help each other through the crisis. Record numbers of people in Wales have had a strong desire to help and to do something, and have given up their time freely to help others in need in their community – through acts like shopping, picking up medicines, cooking a meal, dog walking or providing some care and emotional support. This community-led action and support is really important when it comes to building strong and supportive communities and for the wellbeing of individuals.

The Research and Evaluation Division at Public Health Wales, in partnership with University of Bristol and Wales Council for Voluntary Action, have launched an online, **national survey to hear from volunteers and those who have informally given up their time to help** their communities in response to the pandemic.

Public Health Wales are inviting anyone who has volunteered in any way – from volunteering formally, through local group-based action, to informally assisting a neighbour – to answer our short survey. We would like to hear about **your personal experience** of giving up your time to help others during the pandemic.

You can take the survey here: [Snap Surveys](#)

We would like to learn about the different ways in which you have supported your community during the pandemic, whether you were new to volunteering or community support or had previous experiences, what the benefits of supporting your community were and any barriers you encountered, and whether you think you will continue giving support in any form in the future or if not, why this is.

We would also really appreciate your help in helping us to reach others who have been involved in supporting their community in any way, by sharing this survey link across your networks.

The findings will help Public Health Wales and its partners to better understand and inform their planning to improve population health in Wales. It will also help to ensure community-led volunteering can be better supported in future.

You can read more about our research here: phw.nhs.wales/communitysurvey



Charlotte Grey, Lucia Homolova, Alisha Davies
Research & Evaluation Division, Public Health Wales
For more information contact:
lucia.homolova@wales.nhs.uk

This project is supported by the Health Foundation.



Mental Health Awareness Week – Public Health Wales

May 10th marked the launch of [Mental Health Awareness Week](#), the UK's national week to raise awareness of mental health.

The week, which is hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, was in its 21st year and ran from 10-16 May.

This year, the theme for the week was 'Nature'. Across the country, people celebrated the mental health benefits of being around nature in their local community in a range of digital and creative ways.

At Public Health Wales there was a series of activities to encourage further conversations about mental health and encourage staff at all levels to open up about their own experiences and also become more aware of the different challenges their colleagues around them may face.

Every day for a week Public Health Wales published a different story from each of its staff diversity networks. We're very grateful to those that have very openly and honestly shared their experiences with us, and if you have experienced something similar, please know that support is available.

The People & OD team also arranged listening sessions specifically for younger staff to come together and talk about issues important to them and how the organisation can support them.

Public Health Wales ran a 'Listening Project' for Time to Talk Day in February. This short series of podcasts reinforces the power of conversation and provides a range of wellbeing ideas from our staff.

Public Health Wales has a page where you can access support and further information on mental health via the Mental Health Cymru page.

Patient Wellbeing Team in Ysbyty'r Seren, Field Hospital, Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board (CTUHB)

Ysbyty'r Seren, Bridgend, is the Field Hospital for patients recovering from Covid-19. From October 2020 until March 2021, Cwm Taf Morgannwg RII Hub coordinated a Patient Wellbeing Team from a range of hands on services that support mental, physical, emotional and spiritual needs as a holistic wellbeing service.

The Team was made up of:

- Mental Health Matters
- Age Connects Morgannwg
- Artists
- Creative Writing Facilitator
- Musician
- Acupressure/Touch Practitioner
- Movement Psychotherapist
- CTMUHB Chaplaincy

Some of our feedback:

Mental Health Matters

A vast range of daily activities was offered including family Ipad calls; art/craft; film afternoons; celebrations; games; cards; bedside chats; sing-alongs; knitting/crochet; haircuts and nails painting.

"I can't explain how much better I felt after having my nails painted and my hair cut. I've never been pampered like that before. It's the first hospital I've stayed in that offers those types of things".

"Best hospital I've stayed in and the range of people who support patients is unbelievable"

"It's funny sleeping next to someone and not knowing anything about them. This has given me a chance to get to know the person lying next to me"

Arts and Creative Writing

Artists ran group and one to one sessions on a weekly basis. Activities included drawing classes, reminiscence workshops using art donated by the National Museum of Wales, and creative writing workshops.

A 93 year-old patient drawing from observation, after writing about the feel and taste of a fresh tangerine. She also described, shared and illustrated a favourite journey she remembered as a child

"You have enabled me to do things I've never done before"

Shiatsu/Acupressure

A Shiatsu Practitioner visited patients twice a week and provided 20 minute bespoke treatments on the bed or in chairs. Responses included:

"Tremendous"

"Can I have another dose please?!"

"It feels like a hug"

"It feels like your hand is taking all the pain away"

Chaplaincy

Support was provided to all staff and patients in the Hospital through one to one conversations and engagement activities.

"Planting daffodil bulbs led patients to focus on the coming of Spring which gave hope that they would return home in time to see their own bulb come to maturity."

A patient said he felt 'out of sorts'. We spoke instead of his love for gardening and how he misses it. The following week we had a

great time of reminiscence about his village, his late wife and his daughter. The gardening project was the link to seeing him come back to life."

Supporting our own wellbeing

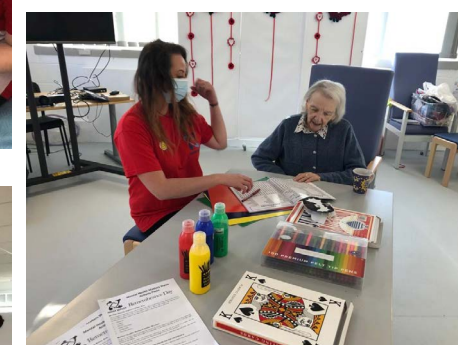
The Team supported over 200 patients in total, and worked through the height of the pandemic, in what, on times, could be a highly stressful environment.

To keep ourselves healthy and well, we held monthly team meetings, Reflective Practice Group sessions, a Whatsapp group and a number of art sessions. Chaplaincy provided one to one support.

The Future

This model of social prescription in secondary care is innovative, and is undergoing current research and evaluation. It has received wide spread commendation from patients, staff and CTUHB management.

Social prescribing is well established in Primary Care In Wales and across the UK, but has limited reach into Secondary Care and this trial was perceived as an innovative model of care with the potential of replication across the Health Board.



Resilience and the importance of mental wellbeing

Resilience enables us to prepare for, adapt, respond to, and cope with adversity (for example, the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as being able to cope with and thrive in everyday life. We know that resilience in individuals is dynamic and can change over time, reflecting fluctuations in intrinsic factors (e.g. individual coping strategies which can be biological, psychological, or behavioural processes) and extrinsic factors (e.g. social networks, healthy relationships extending across families, schools and communities, and social and cultural links), as well as circumstances throughout the life course of an individual and the resilience of the community in which people live in - as we contribute to and draw from assets in our communities.

Resilience in individuals can be considered as having three core overlapping and inextricably linked elements: wellbeing, mental capital, and social capital.

Wellbeing comprises two elements, feeling good (mental wellbeing) and functioning well (physical wellbeing; including maintaining good health and healthy lifestyle). Wellbeing

and mental capital are closely linked and affect each other, and can be enhanced by positive behaviour. Wellbeing can be changed as a result of learning or experiences, and affected by the social and physical environment. Mental capital confers considerable protection, and includes psychological factors associated with cognitive, social and emotional skills (e.g. emotion regulation), affecting an individual's behaviour. Other contributions include promoting personal resources and coping skills, flexible and efficient learning, and emotional literacy and intelligence, a sense of security, good self-esteem (and self-image), sense of self-efficacy (sense of control over our lives), and problem-solving ability.

Finally, an important feature of both individual and community resilience is relationships and social networks. The individual characteristics that support strong interpersonal relationships are building blocks of individual social capital. These include bonds such as family or social level relationships, bridges that connect communities, and the links with those with power to influence change. All of these relationships and connections also

contribute to community social capital.

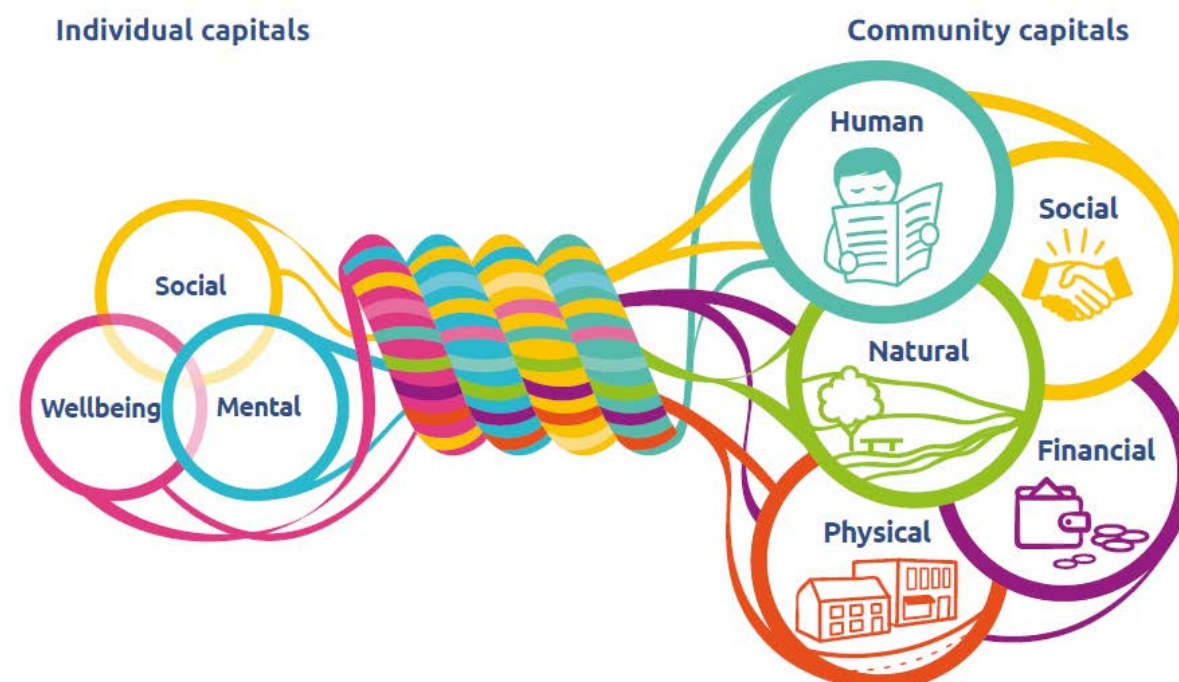
Applying asset-based approaches is effective in focusing on an individual's and community's capacity to create and sustain good health and wellbeing, and is key for building individual and community resilience. Interventions to enhance individual resilience largely focus on enhancing skills and resources across three core elements (wellbeing, mental capital, and social capital), and have a specific focus across four key domains: 1) building positive relationships and strong social capital; 2) promoting positive health and wellbeing; 3) building mental capital, and 4) creating opportunities for active engagement within the community. Enhancement of skills or protective resources in one domain can have a positive spill-over effect on the others. The focus on these four

key domains remains across the life course (from children and young people, adults, to older adults), but some are more critical than others, influenced by the challenges likely to occur at a particular life stage. Although early years are critical in creating the foundations for health, wellbeing, and resilience in later life - it is important to recognise that resilience is not a fixed state, and it can be modified throughout life, largely depending on circumstances, context, and type of threat presented.

Davies AR, Grey CNB, Homolova L, Bellis MA (2019). Resilience: understanding the interdependence between individuals and communities. Cardiff: Public Health Wales NHS Trust.

Link to the report:

[Resilience - Public Health Wales \(nhs.wales\)](https://www.nhs.uk/publications/resilience-understanding-the-interdependence-between-individuals-and-communities/)



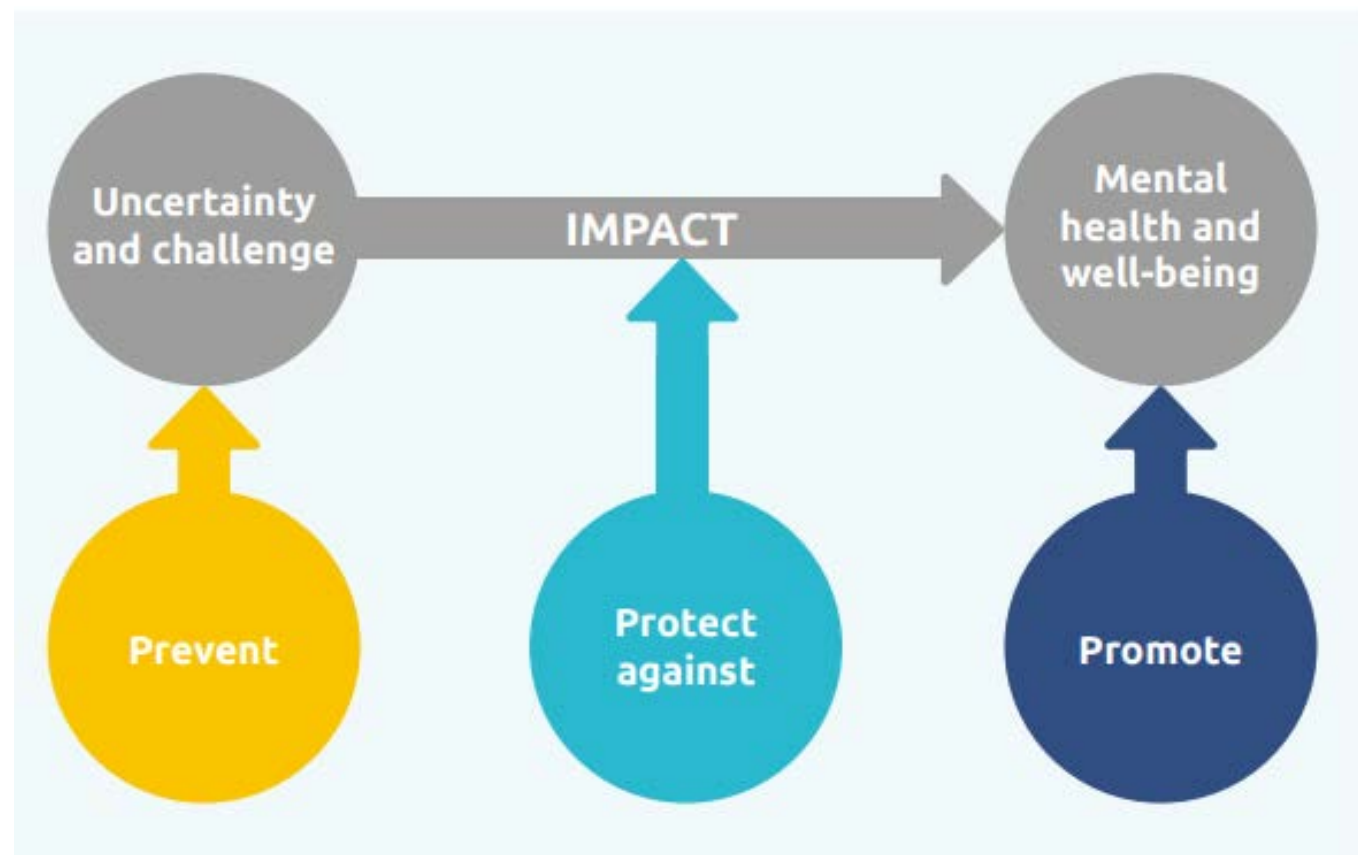
Supporting mental health and well-being of farming and fishing communities in Wales through uncertainty

Farming and fishing are important contributors to Wales' rural economy and cultural identity. Rural farming and fishing communities in Wales have been highlighted as particularly vulnerable to uncertainty and change from Brexit, with likely impacts to mental health and wellbeing in these groups. There is a need for policy to understand how help these communities to better cope with change, through action for supporting both farmers and fishers in Wales that is centred on mental health and well-being to strengthen resilience.

For both groups, the available evidence was explored and wide stakeholder engagement undertaken. The literature showed us that evidence-based programmes supporting farmers tended to be centred on health promotion, mental health literacy, and

cross-agency partnership development; and for fishers, support was centred solely on health promotion. Further, qualitative engagement with stakeholders representing both communities uncovered the wider challenges these groups faced in Wales alongside barriers to seeking and accessing support, and identified assets available to each group.

The evidence from the review and engagement was then brought together to create an action framework for supporting both farming and fishing communities in Wales with recommendations for action. This common framework for action aims to support health and well-being by preventing uncertainty or challenge (where possible); where we cannot prevent adversity, then we need to protect against its potential impact



on mental wellbeing; and lastly for a longer-term approach we need to look to promote the health and wellbeing of our farming and fishing communities. Drawing on this framework offers the opportunity for Wales to build on the legacy of the farming and fishing sectors and be an innovator in addressing the key issues of mental health and well-being amongst both communities.

Following on from the work with farming communities, the next step for Public Health Wales has been to take a leading role in establishing the ADR UK-funded AD|ARC (Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection) programme – a collaboration between UK academics and Government researchers to establish a linked data research collection – to enable Wales to establish a research and monitoring programme to

examine the impact of specific policy changes on health outcomes, including mental well-being, and farm businesses.

Davies AR, Homolova L, Grey CNB, Fisher J, Burchett N, Kousoulis A. (2019). Supporting farming communities at times of uncertainty: an action framework to support the mental health and well-being of farmers and their families. Cardiff: Public Health Wales NHS Trust & Mental Health Foundation.

Homolova L, Grey CNB, Burchett N, Davies AR. (2020). Building resilience in the fishing sector in Wales. Cardiff: Public Health Wales NHS Trust & Mental Health Foundation.

Links to the reports:

[Report 1](#)

[Report 2](#)

International Day of Yoga 2021 – The Mentor Ring

The COVID-19 pandemic has put great pressure on individuals to take care of physical and mental wellbeing with gyms being shut and work commutes becoming non-existent. This has created an influx in those desiring to practice yoga as a form of self-care and exercise.

The theme of this year's International Yoga Day (21 June) is "Yoga at home and Yoga with Family". Celebrated since 2015, the aim of this day is to bring greater awareness to the mental, physical and spiritual benefits the practice of yoga provides. To list a few, daily yoga practice can improve heart health, reduce stress levels and promote sleep quality.

The Mentor Ring welcomes you to join our 1-hour beginner's yoga session, between 10-11 AM on Monday, 21 June hosted over Zoom. This will be a great opportunity to be introduced to the practice of yoga in the comfort of your own home. For those who are eager to practice on a daily basis and join

a community of other yoga enthusiasts, we also host yoga sessions every day in which everyone is welcome to join.

If interested please email:

sangeetha@MentorRing.org.uk



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

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!



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

More Videos



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.

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

UKPHR launches Employer Toolkit to promote practitioner registration

The UKPHR has launched an [Employer Toolkit](#) which is aimed at employers of Public Health Practitioners to help support staff to register with the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR).

The UKPHR is the regulator of the UK's public health professionals and describes public health specialists and health practitioners as "Public Health Heroes" due to vital part they play in the UK's response to COVID-19 and their contribution to making the UK a safer and healthier place to live.

The Toolkit aims to encourage employers to enable more public health workers to become registered as professional public health practitioners and specialists. Registration gives accreditation to staff, and assurance to employers and the public that those working in public health are being trained and developed to do the best job possible to improve and protect the health of our population.

Save the date WAST Engaging Carers Event



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Ymddiriedolaeth GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru

Welsh Ambulance Services
NHS Trust



Welsh Ambulance Service Engaging Carers

Wednesday 9th June 2021, 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Are you an unpaid carer?

The Welsh Ambulance Service wants to understand what you need and expect from us when using the services we provide.

Come and meet us, talk to our staff and participate in workshops that will help shape how we deliver services to carers across Wales.

Due to ongoing coronavirus restrictions, this event will be virtual and held online event.

Please complete [this online form](#) to book your place.

For further information you can also:

Email: peci.team@wales.nhs.uk or **Tel:** 01792 311773

www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk

News

Addressing young people's employment challenges important for good health after pandemic

Young people, and those in precarious work have been identified as being especially vulnerable to employment changes caused by the pandemic, with mental wellbeing and struggles to find or keep work cited as major concerns.

[Read more](#)

Survey reveals people's mental and physical health declined during pandemic

[Read more](#)

Two million vaccine milestone passed

[Read more](#)

New report explores Youth Social Prescribing in Wales

[Read more](#)

Calling for a 'Summer of Play' for all children across the UK

[Read more](#)

Back to Community Life Project

[Read more](#)

Welcome to the IMPACT research study

[Read more](#)

Events

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](#)

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](#)

Designated Safeguarding Lead: "Keeping Our Children Safe"

16 June

This course is aimed at people acting in the 'Designated Person' role working in a variety of organisations including schools, children's daycare and residential settings, also services providing support to children and families in the voluntary and private sector.

[Read more](#)

Student Mental Health: Responding to the Crisis Conference

23 June

This conference will explore the diverse impact(s) and disruption of lockdowns and COVID-19 measures on university students.

[Read more](#)

View the full list of events on our website

[Visit our website](#)

Topics

Accident and Injury Prevention

Alcohol

Arts and Health

Gambling

Health and Social Care

Human Rights

International Health Development

Mental Health

Noncommunicable Diseases

Nutrition

Obesity

Oral Health

Physical Activity

Policy

Sexual Health

Sleep and Health

Smoking

Substance Misuse

Sun Awareness

Violence and Abuse

Next Issue

COVID-19 Recovery and Increasing Physical Activity

