PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK CYMRU
E-BULLETIN
MAY 2023

WORKPLACE HEALTH IN WALES

Welcome

Welcome to May's e-bulletin. This month we have a range of articles which highlight workplace projects, initiatives, and research that supports people's health and well-being as well as articles which focus on increasing participation in fair work, for health, well-being and equity.

Do you have any projects, research or case studies to share with the wider public health community in Wales? Send your articles to Publichealth.network@wales.nhs.uk or @PHNetworkCymru

Let us know what you think of our e-bulletin by answering two questions.

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In this issue...

Articles

Commentary

Real living wage critical for health

Cerys Preece, Principal Public Health Pracitioner, Wider Determinants of Health Unit, Public Health Wales

Employers paying staff a real living wage or above can protect and support good health and well-being for both the individual and society as a whole, experts at Public Health Wales have said.

The wider determinants of health team at Public Health Wales have stated that supporting a living wage for employees is more important now than ever. Especially for workers faced with the cost of living crisis and for employers in the health and social care sector struggling to recruit and retain staff.

Sufficient pay is a fundamental part of 'Fair work' - where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive environment where rights are respected.

Fair work is a critical building block for good health and well-being, allowing people to eat healthier, afford better housing and make healthier choices in life.

And a healthy engaged workforce contributes to business productivity and societal prosperity.

Dr Ciarán Humphreys, Consultant in Public Health at Public Health Wales, said:

"Employment rates have risen in recent years, however with continued income inequality and lack of sufficient pay this has had little impact on levels of poverty in Wales. Between 2010 and 2020 for working households, the number of children living in relative income poverty has increased from five in 10 to seven in 10."

"In addition to mental health impacts, financial distress has also been associated with higher levels of absenteeism and presenteeism, especially among women, those with lower education or financial literacy and those separated, divorced or single".

"Employers providing sufficient pay can help solve these issues. Participation in fair work provides a sense of purpose and means that people have money and resources for a healthy life for them and their families. This reduces psychological stress, creates a stepping stone out of poverty and helps children have the best start in life. Fair work can contribute to an economy of well-being, improving outcomes for the whole population, including those most disadvantaged."

Local and regional agencies can support inclusive participation in fair work by following the recommendations outlined in Delivering fair work for health well-being and equity guide, - an easy to use guide launched earlier this year by Public Health Wales.

By public bodies and organisations taking these recommendations forward and implementing a 'Fair work' mindset as an integral part of their planning processes, they and the communities they operate in can make a real difference where it counts; improving equity, adding years to life and realising co-benefits of increasing productivity, staff retention and in many cases, the bottom line.

Research

Healthy Working Wales: Addressing Health Inequalities through the Workplace

Healthy Working Wales

With more than 70% of the working age population in Wales in work, employers play a key role in the health and wellbeing of their workforce and therefore of the population as a whole. Healthy Working Wales (HWW) supports and encourages businesses in Wales to promote health and create healthy working environments. This includes taking action to improve the health and wellbeing of staff, managing sickness absence well, and engaging with employees effectively. Why should employers invest their time and energy in this? Because ultimately these things can help to achieve a range of positive business and organisational outcomes.

Wales has the highest sickness absence rate of any UK region (Wales 2.8% vs UK average of 2.2%). The greatest burden of disease in working age adults is attributed to mental health and musculoskeletal disorders, and this is reflected in studies on the most common reasons for long-term sickness absence. In Wales, only 46.9% of the working aged disabled population are in employment (79.7% of non-disabled working aged people are in work, amounting to a 33% gap).

Mary-Ann McKibben, Consultant in Public Health, Public Health Wales, said: "Access to high quality, fair work has a positive impact on employee health and wellbeing, and conversely, unemployment undermines good health. Factors such as impairments and long-term health conditions act as barriers to people getting and being able to stay in work, exacerbating health inequalities. Now in its 15th year, HWW has a key role in providing expert health and wellbeing advice and resources to make a real difference for employers and employees in Wales."

One very important topic that HWW focuses on with businesses relates to managing sickness absences and staff returning to work as well as possible in order to support staff appropriately and ensure they do not fall out of work due to ill health. This also ensures employers can retain valuable talent and continue to meet business needs. Another important topic for HWW's work with employers is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and, as a key part of this, how they can contribute to recruiting and retaining more disabled people in the workforce.

Current HWW guidance includes "Mental Health and Wellbeing" and "The Cost of Living Crisis." Launching soon will be revamped employer advice and tools on:

•   "Managing Sickness Absence," providing information and resources on sickness absence policies, sick pay, attendance management, and supporting a return to work after sickness; and
•   "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion," containing information and resources on protected characteristics, how employers can take action to create a more diverse workforce and prevent discrimination.

The HWW website contains a variety of health-related resources for businesses, including podcasts, case studies, reports and monthly e-bulletins. The website also provides guidance to enable employers to think about and review all aspects of their organisation (culture, environment, policies and practice) to help them take action on health and wellbeing. You can contact HWW at Workplacehealth@wales.nhs.uk.

Research

Priorities for future work amongst those in poorer health – insights from the COVID-19 pandemic

Dr Melda Lois Griffith, Senior Public Health Research Officer,
Public Health Wales and National Centre for Population Health and Wellbeing Research

This article reports findings from a paper co-authored by the following:
Dr Melda Lois Griffiths(as above), Dr Benjamin J Gray, Prof Richard G Kyle, Prof Alisha R Davies Full details for these authors can be provided on request.

People in poorer health face additional barriers in both obtaining and retaining work. With record numbers becoming economically inactive due to long term sickness, building our understanding of the ways in which we can support people in poorer health to stay in work is crucial not only for the labour force, but also public health.

Being in work, particularly good quality work, is better for health. COVID-19 related changes to ways of working may have impacted the quality of people's work (e.g. more flexibility when working from home; less financial security if on furlough). The disruption to working lives experienced during the pandemic may have forced people to more deeply consider what they truly need and want from their jobs. Understanding these reflections could help us ensure that jobs that embody the characteristics of work that are preferred by those in poorer health are available, and accessible to them.

Canolfan Iechyd y Boblogaeth
Centre for Population Health

Canolfan Genedlaethol ar gyfer Ymchwil **ar Iechyd** a Llesiant **y Boblogaeth**
National **Centre for Population Health** & Wellbeing Research

We set out to explore priorities for future work amongst the Welsh workforce using data from Public Health Wales' 'COVID-19, Employment and Health in Wales' study – a nationally-representative longitudinal household survey carried out during the pandemic. Workers in Wales, aged 18-64, were invited to participate at two time-points. The first being in May-June 2020, and the second, between November-January 2020/21. We asked respondents to tell us which characteristics of work were priorities for them, and what changes they might consider making to their work in future. We focused on comparing responses across those in better and poorer health. Our health measures explored self-reported general health & limiting pre-existing health conditions (using National Survey for Wales validated questions), and mental well-being (using the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale).

Across 592 respondents, we found that:
•   those who self-reported poor general health were about twice more likely to prioritise flexible working arrangements than those with better health, throughout the study period,
•   in Winter 2020/21, workers with low mental well-being were more than 5 times more likely to consider securing a permanent contract than those with better mental well-being,
•   people living with limiting pre-existing conditions were 4 times more likely to consider becoming self-employed than those without such conditions
•   people in poorer general health were 6 times more likely to consider retiring

Using these insights to shape policies could help keep those in poorer health in work, through ensuring that the work on offer can fit around their needs. Having flexible working arrangements can help those in poorer health retain their jobs (Beatty & Joffe, 2006), and in turn, protect them from the negative health impacts of unemployment (van Aerden et al., 2017). Self-employment is also a common route to establishing more autonomy in ways of working amongst those facing in-work difficulties due to their health (Beatty, 2012).

Promoting flexible working policies, and supporting those in poorer health to obtain work that offers more flexibility, security and autonomy could play a part in reducing the rise in economic inactivity associated with long term sickness.

Outputs from the COVID-19 Employment and Health in Wales survey:

[Seeking Good Work in the COVID-19 Recovery: Shifting Priorit... : Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (lww.com)](#)

[Exploring the Health Impacts and Inequalities of the New Way... : Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (lww.com)](#)

[Precarious employment and associations with health during COVID-19: a nationally representative survey in Wales, UK | medRxiv](#)

[https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/who-are-most-vulnerable-to-employment-changes-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-key-findings-from-a-national-survey/](#)

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Van Aerden, K., Gadeyne, S., & Vanroelen, C. (2017). Is any job better than no job at all? Studying the relations between employment types, unemployment and subjective health in Belgium. Archives of Public Health, 75(1), 1-10.

Research

The effectiveness of Virtual Reality technology in promoting emotional well-being amongst NHS staff

Laura Fleetwood (Assistant Psychologist) and Bethan Huffstickler (Jones) (Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner), Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Could Virtual Reality (VR) technology be the solution to difficulties accessing well-being support for NHS staff? Mindfulness interventions can support the well-being of healthcare professionals (Lomas et al., 2017; Burton et al., 2016), however a lack of time to attend these interventions is problematic (Byron et al., 2014). The opportunity for staff to borrow a VR headset installed with guided mindfulness practices to use at home could therefore be a promising solution.

Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of using VR technology to enhance mindfulness (Navarro-Haro, et al., 2017) and to provide beneficial relaxation interventions for healthcare staff (Michael et al., 2019). However, 91% of staff expressed a difficulty in accessing VR sessions during breaks in work (Michael et al., 2019). Less data is available on the use of VR technology to enhance mindfulness in healthcare staff at home.

In July 2021, the VR headset service was launched by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board Wellbeing service. Staff can request to borrow a VR headset installed with guided mindfulness practices and relaxation techniques for use at home in their own time for up to 8 weeks. When requesting a headset, staff are also invited to take part in a research project measuring its effectiveness in improving depression, anxiety, stress, sleep and professional quality of life. On consenting to take part in the study, participants complete a series of questionnaires (DASS-21, ISI, ProQol) which are then repeated again once the 8-week loan period has ended. Research participants also complete qualitative questions exploring reasons for requesting the headset as well as their experience of using it. Staff feedback, research outcome data and the consistent popularity of the service demonstrates the positive impact the VR service has made to staff well-being since July 2021, with 175 staff requesting a headset to date. When providing feedback, 75% of respondents rated the headset as helpful or very helpful, 100% of respondents said it was easy to select content that worked well for them and 93% said that they would recommend it to a colleague. Furthermore, preliminary results drawn from 20 research participants show a statistically significant decrease in post-intervention scores for insomnia (p<.001), anxiety (p=.022), stress (p<.001) and burnout (p=.035).

Early analysis suggests that VR technology may be a useful intervention for improving NHS staff well-being. The current research findings, along with the financial benefits of providing a service that requires minimal clinician time, provides strong evidence that VR is an innovative, viable, cost-effective intervention that overcomes the need for releasing staff from clinical areas to access well-being support.

Recruitment of participants to the research project has remained a challenge throughout. Creative promotion and communication to staff, alongside an emphasis on the potential benefits the research project may provide has improved recruitment. Further work is ongoing to increase engagement.

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Commentary

Reducing misogyny and improving sexual safety in the ambulance service

Bron Biddle, Organisational Development Manager, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST)

'Our People, Our Network, Our Voices', WAST Voices Network, 2023

We have been empowering and amplifying the voices of lived experience through the launch of an employee led network (inclusive of students and volunteers). The purpose of the network and appointment of advocates is to enable a learning approach to change throughout our geographically dispersed organisation, better understand and remove barriers to speaking up, identify harmful power imbalances, signpost to appropriate support, and provide a safe space for colleagues to be seen and heard. Any experience of misogyny or breach of sexual safety, impacting all genders, which may be in the form of non-verbal, verbal, or physical harassment, is unacceptable and we have a responsibility to protect those working within our organisation from experiencing such behaviour at work.

To explore our climate of misogyny, we carried out a workplace experience survey asking questions specifically around experiences of sexism and sexual harassment. Our externally delivered cultural audit identified pockets of associated behaviours and an increase in related concerns led us to undertaking the survey

Key learning points include:

- Descriptions of sexual harassment (both non-recent and recent) were predominantly colleague towards colleague and male perpetrated.
- Students are a vulnerable group of colleagues and more attention is required to address abuse of power.
- A high prevalence of systemic sexism and intersectional discrimination were highlighted.
- We already have robust processes and policies in place to investigate concerns raised, but the absence of a safe to speak up culture which includes a lack of trust from affected colleagues, is having a silencing effect.
- Dominant social norms have normalised discriminatory behaviour masked as banter.
- The strong sense of identity and belonging present in our culture can create fear of social rejection.
- The importance of taking a 'top down' approach to learning to avoid 'othering' and performative allyship.

Drawing on ideas for improvement shared through the survey, the WAST Voices Network and Organisational Development Team have introduced reverse mentoring (connecting senior leaders with lived experience), the development of a sexual safety charter, delivery of bespoke learning sessions that include active bystander training and facilitating topical group discussions at all new colleague welcome events.

Organisations who have previously committed to 'stamping out' such behaviour have failed, as demonstrated in the Casey, Afzal and Atherton reports. Cultural awakenings are continuing to take place across different industries and sectors, largely driven by Generation Z (people born between 1997-2012) activism. A healthcare contextual factor also influencing how we raise awareness throughout our organisation, is a belief that shifting attitudes will have a positive impact on patient care and the overall gender health gap in Wales.

The Organisation has been recognised by the College of Paramedics, and the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives as leading the sector with our approach and commitment to future proofing our culture by taking full ownership of the past and present.

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Fighting workplace flu absences

Bethan Roberts, People & Development Assistant,
The Development Bank of Wales

The Development Bank of Wales organises a range of well-being activities for staff that cover financial, physical, social and mental well-being.

From blood pressure checks to live yoga / pilates sessions, all our well-being events are well received, but by far the most popular is our annual flu clinic. We've been working with Bupa since 2019 to provide clinics on site, where a Bupa Nurse comes in to administer the vaccine and for those that can't attend one of the clinics we offer vouchers, which they can redeem at a local pharmacy.

It's our busiest day in the offices, with people citing the convenience of having the vaccination at work a huge benefit. The Nurse comes to us and does everything and Bupa provide the online booking system that arranges appointments directly with the individual.

Knowing that our employees are well prepared for flu season helps relieve worries of future sickness absence.
Vaccination gives the best protection against flu. Flu vaccines help protect against the main types of flu viruses, although there's still a chance you might get flu. If you do get flu after vaccination, it's likely to be milder and not last as long. Having a flu vaccine may help stop you spreading flu to other people who could be more at risk of serious problems from flu.

It's worth considering that the flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to adults who:
- are 50 and over (including those who will be 50 by 31 March 2023)
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who is more likely to get a severe infection due to a weakened immune system, such as someone living with HIV, someone who has had a transplant, or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis

So not everyone will wish to have the flu vaccination at work, but the impact it has had for us has been so beneficial. Arranging the flu clinic has seen incredible reductions in flu related absences:
- 80% reduction in the number of occurrences
- 77% reduction in the number of days lost
- 72% reduction in the cost of the impact

You can find out more on the NHS website about the flu vaccine Flu vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk) or if you are interested in the flu services offered by Bupa Employee Flu Vaccinations | company flu jabs | Bupa UK or call their flu team on 0808 291 5028.

For further Information please contact: Bethan.Roberts@developmentbank.wales

Practice

Narratives of Personal Renewal

Phil Jones, Aberystwyth University's Centre for Creative Wellbeing

With NHS staff experiencing some of the worst strain and pressures faced in the organisation's 70-year history, can days of movement, crafts and creative writing offer support and respite? This is the question that Narratives of Personal Renewal seeks to answer, a new programme offered to all Hywel Dda University Health Board staff. Designed as a break from the usual patterns, the programme caters to the whole person and offers positive paths to recovery, resilience, and regeneration.

Narratives of Personal Renewal is a new partnership between Aberystwyth University's Centre for Creative Wellbeing and the Fathom Trust (www.fathomtrust.com), working in cooperation with the Hywel Dda University Health Board.

Writers at the Centre for Creative Wellbeing at Aberystwyth University have been running a number of projects investigating effective ways of using writing and language as interventions in healthcare and well-being settings. The Fathom Trust works with individuals and groups in Powys suffering with stress, fatigue, and physical and psychological conditions. It provides workshops, materials, teaching and marketing opportunities through craft hubs. The two approaches (writing and craft) are brought together in Narratives of Personal Renewal to find out whether the combined activity produces more effective well-being outcomes.

In March 2023, three days of movement, crafting and creative writing activities were held in beautiful surroundings at Rhosygilwen in Pembrokeshire, The National Botanic Garden's Pantwgan Farm in Carmarthenshire and Strata Florida in Ceredigion.

Woven textiles artist, Laura Thomas, taught the groups handlooming to prompt new ways of approaching, managing and articulating physical or psychological health issues. Poets Clare Potter, Christina Thatcher and George Sandifer-Smith guided the groups to address and express complex experience and emotions through poetry and life-writing. Movement and grounding exercises bookended the day to help bond the group together in safe, but active space, for exploring well-being.
The theme of "Narratives of personal renewal' struck a chord with the groups. After the session, one NHS staff member said they felt "more human than I had felt for some time".

Another said: "The organisation has turned into a processing system, with staff operating as robots. The system has disregarded patient and staff well-being or opinions, which is creating more work as patient's holistic needs are not met therefore they are either falling to the side or re-entering the system. The session reminded me that I am human with relevant experience and opinions."

Narratives of Personal Renewal has begun the work of creating a new hub of creative practitioners based at the Centre for Creative Wellbeing. The aim is to develop this hub for delivering well-being activity, with interdisciplinary exchange offering an exciting new avenue for addressing the needs of the whole person.

Please contact Dr Jacqueline Yallop - jay4@aber.ac.uk for more Information.

You at Your Best: Strengths Based Approaches For Healthcare Professionals

Dr Rachel Ann Jones C.Psychol AFBPsS,
National Learning Disability Programme Lead, Improvement Cymru;
Quality, Safety and Improvement, NHS Wales Executive

Health and care professionals experienced the COVID-19 pandemic through a unique lens. These experiences could be viewed as critical life incidents or trauma, with significant persistent uncertainty, where the stakes and consequences could not have been higher. Psychological theory describes different responses to such experiences, from the post-traumatic stress response through to the post-traumatic growth response.

As a team we undertook a simple evidenced based exercise called 'You at Your Best'. Its aim was to encourage a shift in narrative and help foster a post-traumatic growth response. The exercise was not about avoiding the negative experiences but concerned with approaching the strengths we all displayed during the pandemic and strengthening the positive account. The exercise itself has broader applicability than this, as it can be used in a broad range of circumstances to improve subjective-well-being of employees.

The 'You at Your Best' exercise originates from positive organisational psychology theory and strengths-based interventions. Theory describes how small acts undertaken in teams that increase positive emotions in the workplace can impact upon performance outcomes for organisations and individuals. As described by Green et al. (2017) evidence consistently demonstrates that by fostering positive emotion in teams we can reap a variety of benefits including cognitive flexibility, intrinsic motivation, creativity, problem solving, generosity, helpfulness, inclusivity and sense of self.

One of the most promising approaches to boosting positivity in the workplace is through the use of strengths (Green et al. 2017). The emphasis of the strengths movement in positive psychology is that subjective well-being will be increased when one is able to recognise their strengths and use them in a variety of ways (Boniwell 2012). Research has shown that people who are thriving are able to use their strengths on a regular basis within their work (Rath & Harter 2010).

Strengths approaches are multi-dimensional and there are a variety of exercises that can be utilised at an individual, team or organisational level. The 'You at Your Best' exercise is a simple strengths gifting activity. The activity can be done virtually or in person. The only resource beyond an hour's time is strengths cards, both in virtual card decks and in hand cards are available. The exercise involves asking individuals to think over the last few months and share a time when they were 'at their best'. Participants simply identify a strengths card either by an image or word that captures them, they then share their recollections of the attributes they drew upon. The listeners in the group then gift them strengths cards, highlighting what they have heard. Participants leave the exercise with a collection of strengths that they have identified in themselves or have been gifted by others. As simple as this sounds, being gifted strengths in this way is shown to facilitate positive emotions which reaps further benefits in terms of performance from an organisational perspective. Key for our team it is also thought to encourage a growth response from trauma.

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Research

"It's work Jim, but not as we know it!" Managing employee mental health and well-being in the post COVID-19 workplace

Professor Stephen Mellalieu (Professor, Cardiff Metropolitan University)
Mr Paul Sellars (Research Associate, Cardiff Metropolitan University)
Miss Val Scholey (Senior Lecturer, Cardiff Metropolitan University)
Professor Rich Neil (Deputy Director of Research, Cardiff Metropolitan University)

The UK economy has a high rate of absenteeism due to ongoing mental health and well-being challenges, with an estimated 1 in 6 employees reporting mental health issues each week in work. The COVID-19 pandemic served to heighten the threat to workforce mental health and well-being, bringing additional challenges for employers in how to effectively support their employees to cope with the demands resulting from new working practices. This project undertook an academic-industry collaboration to identify the challenges faced by leaders from a Welsh based private sector organisation to enhance employee resilience, mental health, and well-being as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

Cardiff Metropolitan University | Prifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd

As part of a Welsh Government ERDF Smart Expertise knowledge transfer project we conducted focus groups with 52 line managers and leaders from a large UK private sector organisation with Welsh based worksites. Participants represented a range of different management grade, experience level (1-35 years) and location (field/office based) within the organisation. Four main themes were identified from the focus groups relating to the challenges leaders experienced promoting resilience in a post-COVID-19 landscape to support staff mental health and well-being:

1)   Post-pandemic working - increases in work volume and performance expectations, and mixed practice regarding the application of hybrid (office/home) working policy.
2)   Loss of human connection - hybrid working practices reduced physical interaction and spaces to interact in, challenging relationship formation and maintenance, reducing feelings of organisational belonging, and increasing reliance on managing virtually.
3)   Caring for the carers – leaders reported needing to prioritise their own personal mental health and well-being, engaging in self-care through strategies such as work decompression and building and using support networks (e.g. peer communities of practice).
4)   Helping others to help themselves – challenges were associated with navigating various formal and informal organisational resources and pathways available when attempting to support employees to manage their mental health and well-being.

The collaboration between the research team and the private sector organisation, in conjunction with a Welsh-based management training company, has led to the development and delivery of a bespoke resource to train leaders and line managers to better support staff resilience, mental health and well-being. The resource has already been delivered internally to its first cohort in the organisation. With the support of the research team the management training company are using the methodology developed from the project, and subsequent knowledge developed, to shape further leader training resources for other Welsh public and private sector organisations.

•   Key Messages: Hybrid working policies require ongoing evaluation by employers with regards their content, implementation, and impact on employee well-being and the wider organisational culture.
•   Staff well-being requires organisational support not only through explicit policies but also by proactively valuing or 'living' its importance through demonstration of supporting actions and behaviors from those gate-keeping an organisation's culture.
•   Leaders require ongoing education, training, and support to develop the skills to promote employee well-being.
•   Successful industry-based collaborative knowledge transfer activity requires consideration of the time and resources needed to undertake project administration (pre and post-award) and coordination of the knowledge translation research itself (e.g., data security and sharing).

Further information is available from:

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Practice

Psychological safety standards – preventing mental health problems and promoting well-being in the workplace and beyond

Paul Wilson, Staff Wellbeing Manager at Cardiff University

In 2022, Cardiff University became the first higher education institution (HEI) in the UK to achieve compliance with a new international standard of psychological safety in the workplace: ISO 45003. This demanding new standard, a product of the British Standards Institute (BSI,) challenges organisations to demonstrate how they create psychological conditions that minimise mental health issues amongst staff and maximise their well-being. This is an important advance on traditional thinking about health and safety in the workplace – an area of work where the UK can be said to have led the world.

One of the most successful pieces of legislation ever passed by the UK parliament was the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). This effective legal framework dramatically reduced workplace deaths and injuries. It is an excellent example of preventative practice. A comparison of fatal workplace injuries, undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in its publication 'Historical Picture Statistics 2021', showed that between 1974, when the Health and Safety at Work Act was launched, and 2020/21, fatal workplace injuries fell by 90%.

While the downward trend in fatalities and physical injuries continues, the UK workplace has seen a marked rise in psychological injuries. According to the HSE, stress, anxiety and depression accounted for 50% of all self-reported, work-related sickness absence in the UK during 2020/21 – the first full year of the COVID pandemic. Even before the pandemic, mental health related sickness absence, presenteeism and avoidable recruitment were costing UK employers around £45 billion pounds per annum (Deloitte and Mind, 2020) and impaired mental health, impacting upon all parts of society, cost the UK economy an estimated £117.9 billion per annum (Mental Health Foundation, 2022).

Cardiff University's focus upon psychological safety is, in part, a response to these statistics. It is also informed by an idea of what the workplace should be. At its worst, the workplace can be a haven for exploitation, bullying and abuse. But at its best, work can be a way to achieve well-being. It is through good work that we can earn a living, gain a sense of belonging, acquire new skills, rise in self-esteem and professional stature, and take pride in our employer's social purposes.

Cardiff University is still in the early stages of its aim of creating a psychologically informed workplace. However, we have just been re-audited, and the auditor found evidence of significant progress since we first achieved compliance with ISO 45003. We have also been recognised by the University Health and Safety Association (USHA) for our work on workplace health and well-being. These developments are pleasing but are no grounds for complacency. We, like all employers, have a long way to go.

The direction of travel is clear. Organisations that prioritise psychological safety and promote employee well-being will prosper. They will recruit better, retain staff longer, and reap lasting reputational rewards that will give them a competitive advantage. They will also be making a positive contribution to society, by reducing mental health issues and costs, and producing instead a valuable social resource – well-being – alongside their products and services.

Consequently, I would urge any employer to increase their psychological understanding using standards such as ISO45003.

[ISO 45003 - Psychological Health in the Workplace | BSI (bsigroup.com)](#)

Further Information is available from: [Wilsonp11@cardif.ac.uk](#)

The Grapevine

Merthyr PIPYN: supporting children and families in Merthyr to achieve a healthy weight

Shelley Powell, Dietetic Professional Manager and Rachel Reed, Senior Public Health Practitioner – Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board Public Dietetics Team

The Merthyr PIPYN pilot project aims to support children (aged 3-7) and their families achieve a healthy weight in Merthyr Tydfil. Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's Public Health Dietetics team have received funding for the project from Public Health Wales (PHW) to support the Welsh Government's Health Weight Healthy Wales Strategy (). Merthyr Tydfil along with Cardiff and Anglesey has been selected as a trial region for the nationally led initiative due to the high prevalence of children being above a healthy weight in these areas.

Last month, the Merthyr PIPYN team celebrated the launch of this new children and families programme by climbing Pen Y Fan and accessing the free local services for families at Cyfarthfa Park.

They were joined by families, key stakeholders for the programme and their local project ambassador Kerry Morgan, from Active Merthyr. The team hopes to help as many young children and families in the Merthyr area to access free support around the 10 steps to a healthy weight.

PIPYN families will be offered a package of interactive, fun family sessions tailored to each family's unique circumstances. Merthyr PIPYN will even come and help at the supermarket, guiding families through a budget friendly healthy food shop.

In addition to the work PIPYN do directly with families, they are also supporting local primary schools, play and childcare settings, and partner organisations to support the healthy weight agenda.

With over 35% of children entering primary school in Merthyr already overweight or obese (PHW, 2021) and 77% or adults in the same category (NSW 2023), it is not enough to work with individual families to support them to make healthier choices and implement healthy behaviours when so many barriers within their day to day living prevent this.

The Merthyr PIPYN programme supports the family around their personal lifestyle choices, barriers and challenges to health promoting behaviours, and takes a whole systems approach to healthy weights.

Merthyr PIPYN had over 100 local stakeholders attend a recent launch event, seeking to gain each organisations 'PIPYN promise' to local children and families. This is to signpost families to the PIPYN team and share key health promoting behaviours through their services, and to link together to co-produce community based services. PIPYN takes a collaborative based approach that supports healthy behaviours and take a collaborative settings based approach across agencies to create a consistent, positive and supportive environment for families.

For more information on the Merthyr PIPYN programme, email CTM.PIPYN@wales.nhs.uk.
You can also follow their Facebook page by visiting Merthyr PIPYN Facebook.
For further information on the Cardiff PIPYN programme, email Nutrition.Skillsforlife.cav@wales.nhs.uk
For further information on the Anglesey PIPYN programme, email BCU.CFPAnglesey@wales.nhs.uk

References:

Public Health Wales NHS Trust (2021). Child Measurement Programme for Wales 2018/19. Accessed at: https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/child-measurement-programme/cmp-2018-19/child-measurement-programme-for-wales-report-2018-19/
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Welsh Government (2021) Healthy Wales Healthy Wales Strategy 'Our long term strategy to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales'. Accessed at: Healthy weight strategy (Healthy Weight Healthy Wales) | GOV.WALES
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Welsh Government (2022) National Survey for Wales 2021/2022. Adult lifestyle in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (UHB). Accessed at: National Survey for Wales: April 2021 to March 2022 | GOV.WALES
Accessed on: 18/05/2023

Videos

Workforce health in Wales
Public Health Network Cymru Webinar

Pandemics, recessions, rising levels of ill health and increasing economic inactivity are just some of the challenges facing employers and the workforce in Wales. Whilst making prominent headlines, what does all this mean for workforce health in Wales? What does the latest research tell us? How can we support employees to access fair work and create healthy, thriving workplaces?

Watch
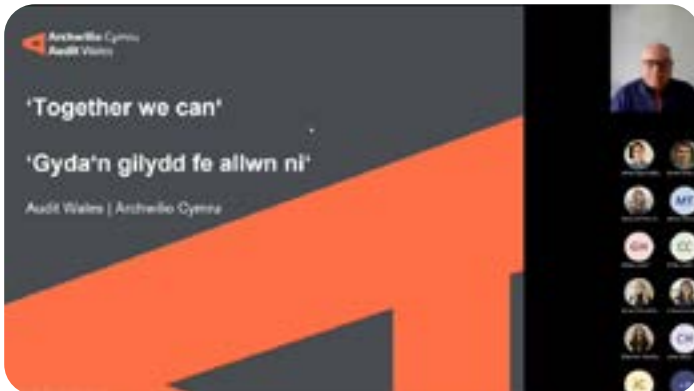
Community Resilience in Wales
Public Health Network Cymru Webinar

At this webinar we heard from Nick Selwyn and Euros Lake from Audit Wales. Against a likely backdrop of further reductions in public spending, local authorities are being challenged to help people who are struggling with increased costs. They shared how community resilience...

Watch

Why is Equality Better for Everyone?
Public Health Network Cymru Webinar

In this webinar Professor Richard Wilkinson, co-author of The Spirit Level and The Inner Level gave his perspective on why material inequalities make people more antisocial, make status and class divisions more powerful, increase stress, damage physical and mental health and are a barrier to sustainability.

Watch

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News & Resources

Older People's Champions helping to create an Age Friendly Wales

£4m funding boost for further education mental health and wellbeing support

Proportion of children with a healthy weight comparable to pre-pandemic levels but issues remain

23-05-2023

23-05-2023

23-05-2023

All News

Employers and the cost of living: Taking action to support your employees
Joseph Rowntree Foundation

WHO guidelines on mental health at work
World Health Organisation

All Resources

Topics

Prevention and Improvement in Health and Healthcare

Nursing Now Cymru/Wales
Mental Ill Health
    Mental Health Conditions
    Suicide and self-harm prevention
Non-communicable Diseases
    Diabetes
Communicable disease
    Foodborne Communicable Diseases
    Influenza (Flu)
    Sexually Transmitted Infections
    Coronavirus (COVID-19)

People

LGBT+
Gender
Learning, physical and sensory disabilities
Maternal and newborn health
Offenders
Older adults
Ethnicity
Carers
Working age adults
Children and young people
Early years
    Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Health related behaviours

Psychoactive substances
    Alcohol
Food and Nutrition
Healthy Weight
Accident and Injury Prevention
Smoking and vaping
Physical Activity
Oral Health
Sexual health

Mental Wellbeing

Stress and resilience
Arts and health
Spirituality

Wider determinants of health

Poverty
    Income and debt
    Benefits
Housing
    Homelessness
    Fuel poverty
    Housing quality
Education and Training
    Preschool
    School
    Further, higher and tertiary education
Community
    Assets Based Approaches
    Social capital
Environment
    Climate change
    Natural enviroment
    Sustainable development
    Built environment
Employment
    Unemployment
    Precarious work
    Good, fair work

Health in all policies

Health Inequalities
Social justice and human rights
Wellbeing of future generations

Approaches and methods in public health practice

Communities4Change Wales
Systems thinking in public health
Evaluation
Behavioural Science

All Topics

Next Issue

TACKLING COMPLEX PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES – THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Public health issues such as the climate emergency or reducing substance misuse involve many causal factors which interact with each other often in unpredictable ways and policy initiatives which seek to tackle the issue can often have intended and unintended consequences. Tackling complex issues requires collaboration, leadership and dialogue across multiple organisations.

We are looking for articles for our next e-bulletin which highlight the successes and challenges of partnerships which seek to tackle complex public health issues.

We would welcome articles which demonstrate the importance of multiple perspectives, shared leadership and how partnerships can actively seek to understand each other's strategic priorities and the relationships between priorities.

Contribute