

Carmarthenshire

Case Studies

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Case study: Safe and Well Visits

Background:

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service have carried out visits to people's homes for over 15 years and have now developed it to do more than look at fire risk within the property, which is why they are now called Safe and Well (SAW) visits rather than home fire safety checks.

In addition to fire safety information, staff will identify and provide guidance and signposting on the following areas

- Smoking cessation
- Home security
- Scamming
- Loneliness and isolation
- Falls
- Winter warmth / fuel poverty
- Living with dementia (see other case study)

These topics are in addition to other statutory duties to identify and report safeguarding issues and to ask and act on signs of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV).

Work undertaken:

As part of the expansion, all our staff have been trained to deliver messages and signposting to people on the above topics. Partnerships have been established with organisations who can provide additional support for those identified to need help.

This has been happening since 2017 although it has been evolving and changing right up to what it is today.

Benefits:

The SAW visits are built on the principles of 'Making Every Contact Count' so that one agency can provide multiple safety messages or additional support as soon as it is identified. It ensures that safety messages and signposting are delivered promptly and saves another agency from having to attend a property to deliver their own safety messages.

Lessons/Best Practice:

- It has allowed staff to deliver a better level of service to people they meet.
- It increases staff awareness of issues that need to be identified outside of the fire safety arena.
- It encourages closer working with partner agencies so that staff deliver accurate and up to date information.
- It opens additional referral routes for staff when they identify issues.

Case study – The Early Years Integration Team

Background:

The Early Years Integration Team was created in 2020 in response to the Welsh Government Early Years Transformation Programme. It is a joint project between Hywel Dda UHB and Carmarthenshire County Council, based in the rural Gwendraeth Valley.

The team aims to:

- Support parents to give their children the best start in life.
- Strengthen the community by supporting families to be confident and able to access support when wanted or needed.
- Create family support opportunities by identifying gaps then devising groups, activities, or one-to-one support at home
- Work in partnership with health, local authority, third sector and voluntary services
- Reduce health inequalities
- Support and enhance local Health Visiting and Midwifery services
- Devise and test new ways of supporting families
- Build resilience in families

What parents say:

"Before we contacted you we were exhausted, fed up, miserable, we were arguing constantly. We didn't know how to make our daughter sleep in her bed or stop the awful tantrums. You came and gave us very simple instructions to master bedtime. Now we are getting time together as a couple and having tantrum free days because everyone is rested. We can't thank you enough."

"The best thing I ever did was call, we were in a dark place before we saw the leaflet come through the door. You have been helpful, and we are over the moon. Thank you."

"I think that you coming to the house has helped me realise that the boys are very small and that they don't know how to express themselves, so they get angry and frustrated. I try better to understand what they're trying to say and that has made things much easier."

"Since starting Amser Canu he has started to sing and remember entire songs by himself, unprompted!"

“I was very alone because of covid. I couldn’t see my family for help, but you came and helped me understand about his development and I am now more patient.

“We always had a chat at the beginning and end, it was lovely just to see new mums.”

Lessons:

- Parents want support but do not always know how to access it
- Information and accessible support facilitate resilience in families
- Health staff are essential to working collaboratively across health, third sector, local authority and voluntary agencies
- Informing parents means informing universal health services so that they can effectively signpost or refer families
- Partnership working is a cost-effective way to support families
- Communication is key
- Professional relationships must be proactively constructed and maintained for effective partnership working.

Case study: Coping with an Unprecedented Demand for Wellbeing Support

Background:

Prior to the pandemic, the learner Wellbeing Support services at Coleg Sir Gar were operating at full capacity, offering mental health and general wellbeing support via mentoring and counselling services. On average, four hundred students per academic year received these services, mostly on a first come first served basis.

During the first period of lockdown the demands on these services escalated sharply,

Work undertaken:

A triage support system was introduced to cope with the increase, with a new referral and assessment process. All learners referred into the system were contacted and supported in some capacity, not held on a waiting list.

The learning support team created an 'at-risk' register and prioritised these learners for support. These were identified by known risk of self-harm, unsafe behaviours, substance misuse, unhealthy relationships, homelessness or unstable home environments.

As well as the traditional 1:1 support offered, new services were introduced such as group work, regular text communication service, recommended online resources and live online workshops, covering relevant topics including anxiety, resilience and coping with lockdown.

Emphasis was also placed on engaging learners in non-academic activity. Social groups were encouraged where students could get together in a relaxed online environment. This continued post-lockdown and is run 'face to face' (restrictions allowing).

Benefits:

The new approach enabled significantly higher numbers of learners to engage with the services. By June 2020, over 1000 learners had engaged with these options.

The new triaging approach has helped reduce delays and minimise waiting lists. In addition, the clear prioritisation of 'at-risk' learners has resulted in an average of 88% of this cohort of learners being supported intensively on a weekly basis.

The new process has further standardised and professionalised the ‘triage process’. In addition, a trained assessment officer with a clinical background has been recruited into the team.

Lessons/Best Practice:

Record numbers of students continue to be supported, and each are assessed three times per academic year to gauge their progress. This also ensures that the support teams allocate the right support at the right time. Links with other partners such as schools, social services and local authorities have also improved.

This new process was recognised by Estyn, the inspection body for quality and standards in education and training in Wales, as best practice. It featured in their thematic report, ‘The work of further education, work-based learning and adult learning in the community providers during the COVID-19 pandemic’ in March 2021.

Case study: Momentum Course

Background:

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service has been fortunate to receive additional funding from Welsh Government to run courses aimed at supporting people who have been subject to domestic abuse. The funding currently allows us to run one course a year and for the first time, the course has been run in Carmarthenshire - in Carmarthen in January / February 2022.

Work undertaken:

The Momentum course is aimed at families who have experienced domestic abuse. The aim of the course is to provide the whole family with 2 hours per week over 6 weeks of activities designed to boost their self-confidence, self-esteem and in the process share their experiences and learn from each other. The course is facilitated by MAWWFRS staff and volunteers and has activities for both the mums and children of all ages and activities and creche facilities are provided to allow the mums to take a full part in their own activities without worrying where their children are. Food is also provided for all attendees.

Activities have included: -

- Stained glass workshop
- Pamper evening
- Ladder climbing / Fire service related activities
- Visit by FRS search and rescue dog
- Cake decorating
- Candle making
- Jewellery making

Benefits:

We have found the benefits to be wide ranging. From additional disclosures from all family members as they feel that they are in a safe space through to seeing all family members grow in confidence as they achieve success. For some it is the feeling of security and a meal for all the family at least once a week. Following one of the courses

run in a different county the participants set up a What's app group and continue to meet regularly.

Lessons/Best Practice:

- The need for creche facilities is a must if the mums are to be able to take full part in the activities.
- Having trained staff available who can deal with any additional disclosures (parents and children) and be able to link the person into additional services.
- Understanding that people will be at different stages of their journey out of domestic abuse, and that some will talk openly about their experiences whilst others will not – either is fine.
- Being clear that it is not a counselling or therapy service. It is an activity-based course where they can get a chance to do something different.

Case study: Safer Streets

Background:

Multi-agency work was enhanced in 2020 to address crime and disorder issues in Tyisha, as part of the ambitious collaborative 'Transforming Tyisha' project to regenerate the area through increasing community safety, developing housing and community facilities and improving the environment. This followed engagement with the local community to identify residents' key concerns and issues.

Work undertaken:

Funding has provided staffing resources to address specific problems, environmental improvements and provide crime prevention equipment. This includes Home Office 'Safer Streets' funding, secured by the Police and Crime Commissioner, working with partners including the County and Town Councils. The aim is to make residents feel safer and reduce acquisitive crime in Glanymor, Tyisha and Elli.

These areas have a high proportion of acquisitive crime, including house/shed burglary, theft, robbery, bike and vehicle theft and vehicle crime.

An Environmental Visual Audit made recommendations relating to the structure, surveillance, maintenance and physical improvements to deter crime. From this, Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) worked collaboratively with partners to deliver a high visibility campaign offering Crime Reduction Kits to all homes. These included marking valuable items with DNA making it identifiable to the specific address and owner. Door locks, outdoor sensor lighting and gate/shed locks were also provided. Vulnerable residents were referred to specialist Crime Prevention Officers for additional support and advice.

Community Wardens have been employed on the Carmarthenshire County Council's Transforming Tyisha project, using County Council and Safer Streets funding. This role has helped to provide crime prevention, use tools to combat anti-social behaviour and restore safety and reassurance to the community. The officers have had a successful Closure Order for a serious anti-social behaviour case, fixed penalty notices for fly tipping and reinvigorated local Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

Benefits:

Engagement with local communities has helped reassure local communities about public safety, tackle crime and protect residents by reducing opportunities to become victims of crime. This has included offering crime prevention advice and safeguarding equipment.

It also enabled the police to gather intelligence to better understand local residents' concerns and issues. This has then informed the work of the police in targeting resources and problem solving.

Far more collaborative working has progressed with partners including Dyed Drug and Alcohol Service and the Fire and Rescue.

Crime prevention kits were provided to over 800 properties.

Lessons/Best Practice:

Approximately 400 properties declined the crime prevention kits. It is also known that many of the property marking kits have not been used.

NPT officers have now received additional training for better delivery which will be of benefit when further areas are ready to receive the kits.

Case study: Vaccine Equity in Hywel Dda

Background:

Equity in immunisation reduces the risk of vaccine preventable diseases among vulnerable individuals and communities who are at a higher risk of poor health outcomes from contracting the disease. Reducing inequity in immunisation is an important part in supporting communities to achieve their full health potential regardless of geography, demographic, social or economic status

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted a gap in the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine especially in those groups that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those at socio-economic disadvantage living in communities with high deprivation or social exclusion including the homeless, those with mental ill health and those from traveller communities.

The reasons for this inequity are multifaceted, however, understanding the root causes and developing targeted services to meet the needs of those that are unvaccinated or under-vaccinated is a fundamental part of the work delivered by the Hywel Dda multiagency Vaccine Equity Group.

Work undertaken:

- Employed Community Outreach Workers to engage with minority communities on health and social issues through building trust and raising awareness of the services available to them.
- Use the Mobile Vaccination Vehicle (MVV) to run pop-up vaccine clinics in areas of socio-economic deprivation, traveller sites, rural communities and at colleges/ universities and workplaces.
- Sharing links to FAQs and information on the vaccine in Easy-Read, languages other than Welsh or English, BSL videos and information produced by homeless and learning disability groups
- Providing direct translation and interpretation support
- Targeted project to reach unpaid carers.
- Adapted delivery model at Mass Vaccination Centres to allow certain groups to access the centre at specific times so that additional support could be provided. This included providing additional support to pregnant women who could directly access the duty Midwife.

Benefits:

- Increase in uptake of COVID-19 vaccine in target groups
- Early set up of the equity group with multiple agencies and organisations in attendance was a significant step in improving and ensuring implementation of the vaccine equity agenda.
- Partnership working through the MVV has been extremely beneficial and successful and will be used for future campaigns.
- Provision of timely information and data
- On-line meetings have meant that people are able to join for an hour on a regular basis which has improved representation from across different target groups. This has enabled better sharing of information, a greater ability to discuss problems, compare experiences and provide solutions. Those in the group gained confidence in talking to others about the vaccine and dispelling misinformation.

Lessons/Best Practice:

The relationships built within the Vaccine Equity Group will have benefits in other areas too especially in establishing a process and pathway for future collaboration. This group will be used to ensure equitable access to the COVID-19 booster and will also support the influenza vaccination programme. It also has the potential to be a very useful forum for discussing and improving access to other health care services in future.

Case study: Use of Volunteers

Background:

New volunteering roles have been introduced by the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to respond to the pandemic - Vaccination roll out volunteer / Safe and well check volunteer

Work undertaken:

Ten volunteers have supported the pop-up vaccination units which MAWWFRS provided to Hywel Dda. Our volunteers, as well as two of our engagement vehicles, were utilised by the Health Board to reach people in these communities that could not make it to the vaccination centres. One engagement vehicle was used as an area to administer the vaccination, while the other was used for people to sit in and wait for their vaccination.

Our volunteers engaged with members of the public to ensure they knew where to go, checked on their well-being and provided them with fire safety advice, offering them a safe and well check. These volunteers worked alongside ten Fire and Rescue Service staff.

In order to backfill the roles of some of the Fire and Rescue staff who were helping with the vaccination rollout, we also had 3 volunteers help our community safety team in the community carrying out safe and well checks. They have provided members of the public with safety advice and fitted alarms with our personnel.

This support has been provided by volunteers from 1 July 2021 to the present day.

Benefits:

The benefits for the volunteer have been to be part of the team or as we say “our fire family”. They have gained experience and confidence with engaging with a varied audience and have made connections with partner agencies.

The benefits to us as a service have been that we have been able to support Hywel Dda Health Board with less resources, freeing up other members of staff to carry out their normal duties. The volunteers have enabled our personnel to carry out checks in two's, helping with lone working. Our volunteers have also signposted us to their networks to help more people in our community who would benefit from a safe and well check.

Lessons/Best Practice:

It has shown how beneficial volunteering can be for all involved and from this trial in Carmarthen we will be expanding this in 2022 to all divisions. The enhanced partnership working has identified further opportunities to assist with the vaccination programme going forward.

We are considering the increased use of volunteers in our service in the future.

Case study: Dementia Support – Herbert Protocol / Message in a bottle

Background:

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) has identified that our staff provide home safety visits to many elderly people who are living with dementia and wanted to support them and their families to live better lives.

Work undertaken:

For the last four years, MAWWFRS has worked in partnership with the Lions club to make use of their ‘message in a bottle’ scheme encouraging people to keep personal and medical details in their fridge for emergency services to find if needed. Staff will set it up where they find a need.

We have also combined this with the Police ‘Herbert Protocol’ for people living with dementia. The Herbert protocol is a questionnaire that can be completed by the FRS with the person living with dementia and their family or support worker / carer. It is also placed in the fridge and identifies any locations that the person may have historical links with as well as a description, a recent photograph and other pieces of information that may be of use to the police should they be called upon to search for the person living with dementia if they leave the property.

Completing the Herbert protocol allows the police to gather essential information to inform the search in a timely manner without having to overly question distressed family members who may be upset. It is particularly useful if the partner is also showing signs of short-term memory loss.

Emergency services are therefore able to easily access the information without having to rely on the distressed family members from finding where they may have placed the completed forms.

Benefits:

It allows police to carry out a more targeted search for the missing person and the Herbert protocol has been proven to significantly reduce the time a person is missing and therefore reduces the scale of any associated health issues such as hypothermia.

Lessons/Best Practice:

Completing the forms with the family, carers etc in a safe and comfortable way ensures that the information can be accurately gathered and provided reassurance to the family that any searches for the person living with dementia will be more successful.