

2022 - 2023

WELLBEING LINKS REPORT



A Monmouthshire partnership with GAVO, ABUHB Primary Care and MCC

Following a mapping exercise in 2021, the Integrated Service Partnership Board (ISPB) identified the need for a Wellbeing Links Advisor role to work with GP surgeries in Monmouthshire.

Funding from Neighbourhood Care Networks and the Integrated Care Network enabled the project to be established in November 2021.

One full-time Wellbeing Links Advisor works with GP surgeries in South Monmouthshire and two part-time Wellbeing Links Advisors work with GP surgeries in North Monmouthshire.

Funding has continued and this report provides an overview of the project during this second year, 2022-2023.



"It's a fabulous addition to General Practice. It has been helpful for every patient I have referred to it. It is helpful for patients where a social need has a significant impact on them medically, and by improving this aspect of their lives helps improve their mental health and wellbeing. Patients feedback about how helpful this service is. Please continue it, and, if possible, expand it with more such support. Thankyou"
(GP)

WELLBEING LINKS

Connecting people with groups and services

GP surgery staff do not have the capacity time-wise to research community resources or have in-depth conversations with individuals regarding their social situations. The Wellbeing Links Advisor (WLA) is connected with surgeries but is community-based, continually making connections with local groups and services and updating their knowledge to be a 'living directory'.

People who could benefit from support and/or opportunities in the community are identified by GP surgery staff and consent is gained from the individual for the WLA to get in touch. The WLA acknowledges the request and makes contact with the individual. Meeting face to face in the community they put the person at ease, enabling them to relax and talk about their situation through a 'what matters' conversation.

WLA'S ARRANGE TO MEET INDIVIDUALS IN THE COMMUNITY, HELPING TO DE-MEDICALISE THE SITUATION



"Normally I prefer to speak over the phone and I can get a bit anxious meeting new people. Sometimes I know I have to force myself and actually, it was nice to get out of my flat. Feels more relaxed to meet outside of the surgery".

Request Received:

"This lady is having problems with housing which, as a result, is causing her to have problems with low mood. She has consented to be contacted by yourself"

Finances: Should this continue and income is reduced then you may be entitled to some benefits – local CAB would be able to advise and assist should you need it. Feel free to get back in touch if you need any help with this.

Sick pay and understanding employer? – "yes, they understand and I have sick pay at the moment"

Employment: "Due to all the stress of this I am signed off work and on the sick at the moment"

Anxiety: "I suffer with anxiety and all of this has just made it all worse. I feel as though it's all out of my control"

Resources to help – will send you website links for some information and self-help resources specifically around anxiety. [Sent info re MELO and Stepiu]

Counselling/Talking Therapy: Given information regarding Basecamp Counselling Service and informed that Surgery can also refer for counselling through NHS

MCC Housing Options Team for Advice and Guidance – "already contacted these and they are advising us through process"

Housing Issues: We privately rent and been given 4mths notice by landlord. We can't afford to rent anywhere else as rents are extortionate around here now"



Autism: "I also have a diagnosis of Autism, which isn't helped by this situation. Have previously linked in with Autism Society – would get back in touch again if needed"



Supporting GP Surgeries

WLAs have built up good relationships with surgeries and often meet medical students and new staff members as part of induction.

WLAs are increasing awareness of community-based options for patients and are embedding the approach in Primary Care teams.

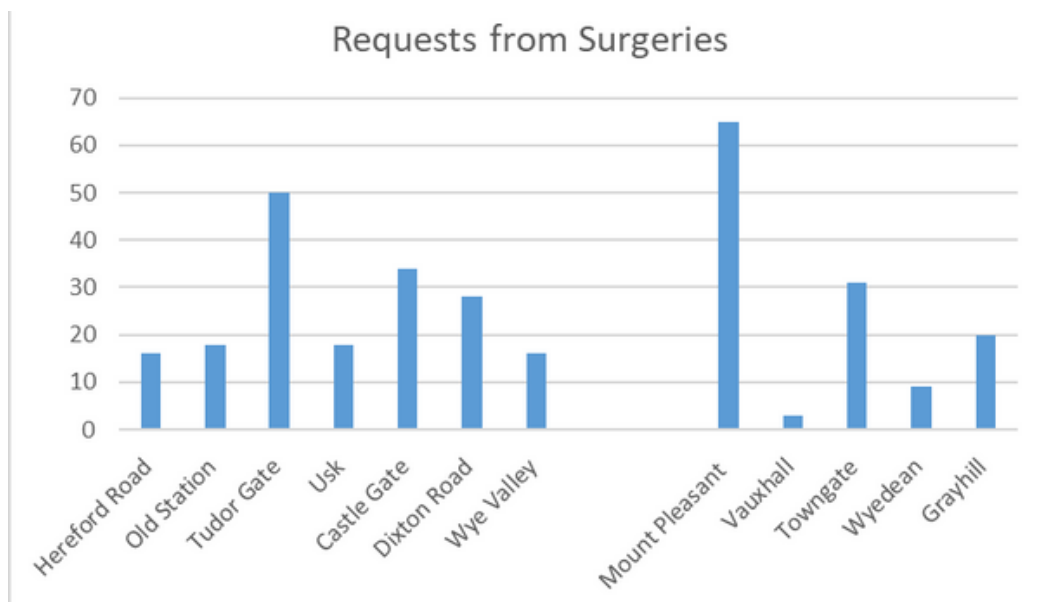
“I work as a PHP. I regularly see patients who require support with social difficulties such as social isolation, tenancy and benefit issues and I regularly refer to the WLA to support the patients with these difficulties. I believe that the joined-up work is essential for people's wellbeing. I offer support with psychological intervention and refer to WLA for social support. I have received such positive feedback from patients who have used the WLA service and I hope this service can continue to offer invaluable support to our patients and surgeries.”

REQUESTS RECEIVED THIS YEAR: 308

NORTH MONMOUTHSHIRE SURGERIES: 180

SOUTH MONMOUTHSHIRE SURGERIES: 128

On average 3 people each month do not engage immediately. We contact people by phone, text or email and try a number of times leaving messages to let the individual know we are available when they are able to return our calls.



THEMES AND LINKS

On average WLAs are making 110 links each month, connecting people with community services or opportunities

People tell the WLA about a wide range of concerns they have, for example:-

- Financial worries
- Addictions/ Substance
- Low Self- Esteem
- Anger

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

- Digital barriers
- Domestic Violence
- Relationship Breakdown
- Family Dynamics
- Harassment at Work
- Grief/Bereavement
- Clutter /Hoarding
- Housing issues
- Leasholding Issues
- Caring responsibilities
- Power of Attorney

WLAs have also met with people whose well-being and social life are affected by long-term physical health conditions such as: -

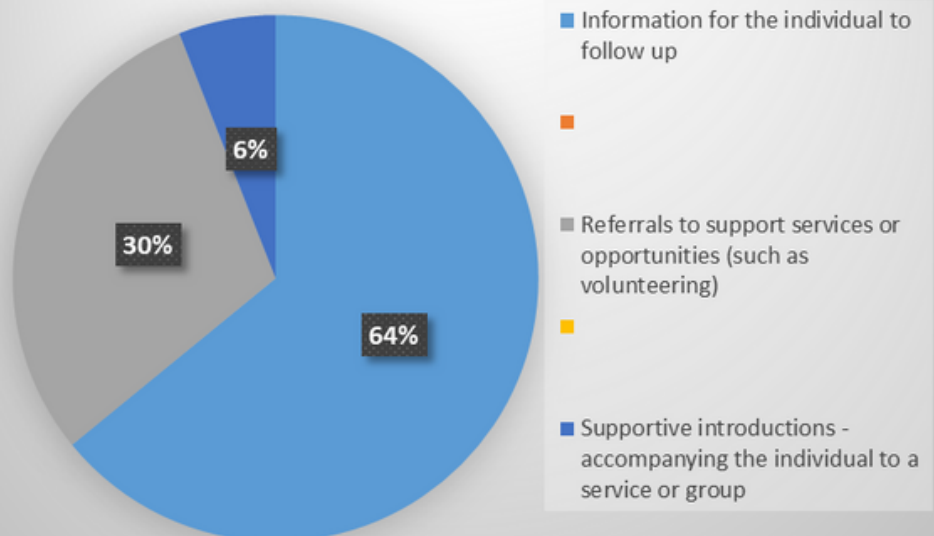
- Chronic Pain
- Physical disabilities
- Sensory impairment
- Limited mobility
- Diabetes
- ME & Fibromyalgia
- Temporal Lobe Epilepsy
- Memory loss

WLAs refer people to statutory services when necessary, for example, FISH / Duty referral for walking frame equipment and refer back to GP for review/advice re medication.

Example from WLA:

I referred an individual to Citizens Advice for Debt Management. She was supported to apply for a Debt Relief Order which resulted in the individual feeling less stressed and anxious. She said she was in a mountain of debt and now feels more able to cope. 'You have pointed me to the right help that I needed as my stress and anxiety were playing up so much that I could not see any solution or a way out.'

Links Provided by the WLA





INFORMATION/ GROUPS/ SERVICES/ AND OPPORTUNITIES

Building relationships with local organisations: WLAs attending an event with Cyffanol Womens Aid (above).

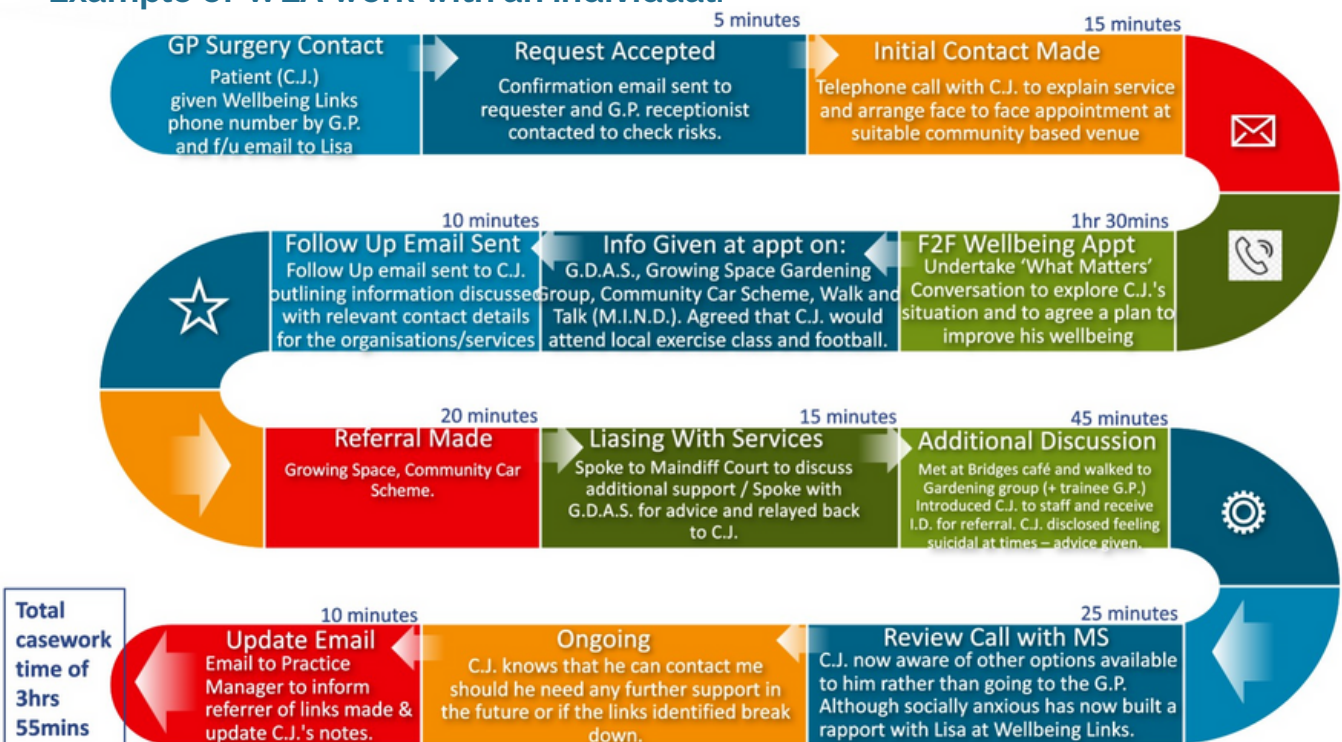
Examples of some of the groups and organisations we link with:-

"I find this a particularly useful resource and have found patients present less frequently after having been in touch with you as they are finding ways to improve their social network to feel less lonely or are able to find ways to navigate their lives more smoothly. Often a social referral is all that is needed, but people are just unsure of how or where to start and so come and see the GP. Unfortunately, we do not have all the resources up our sleeves and your knowledge of the local area/groups/services available is very useful, also your time spent with the patient is more than what we can provide. I feel overall this is an excellent resource to have for a GP."

GP

- Music Memories
- Walkers are Welcome
- Mind Monmouthshire
- Care & Repair
- Autism support
- Disability Can Do - Employment Support
- Bridges - Volunteering for Wellbeing
- U3A
- Gwelcol website
- Basecamp
- Homestart
- Alzheimers Society
- Citizens Advice
- Growing Space
- Adferiad Carers Support
- Housing Gateway
- Support groups for stroke, dementia, care
- Cruse and St Davids Bereavement support
- ESOL Classes
- Food bank and free lunches

Example of WLA work with an individual:-



COLLABORATION

Working with organisations and networks

"Working collaboratively with the Wellbeing Links Team has ensured the sharing of information relating to support available in the community which has greatly benefited those we support."
Housing Support Gateway officer

Building strong working relationships is key to achieving our shared goal of improving mental health and wellbeing of Monmouthshire residents. We appreciate the important role that GAVO plays in delivering these vital services, and we're proud to work alongside you, Monmouthshire County Council and other statutory bodies and community organisations to make a positive impact on people's lives. Together, we can continue to make a real difference in our community.
Basecamp cooperative

"I have worked closely with the WLA for the past 6 months and she has referred women who are experiencing domestic abuse to Monmouth Outreach and to the Own My Life Course that Cyfannol provides. It has been really beneficial to have this joint working relationship and the WLA is keen to ensure her clients are signposted to the most appropriate service to them".
Cyfannol Womens Aid Worker

"Since the role of Wellbeing Links Advisor has been in place, receiving referrals from GPs and surgeries for 'social prescribing', I have noticed a reduction in referrals to social services for information, assistance and advice where there is no additional indication for someone to have an assessment of their needs or social services intervention. This is more streamlined for patients and avoids duplication and the patients having to repeat themselves to multiple agencies.

Working alongside the Wellbeing Links Advisor as a Social Care Assessor supports my role through information sharing on what is happening in the community, services that are available, group discussions to find better solutions for patients, and also providing peer support to strengthen our resilience as a community conversation group, ultimately improving the experience of patients."
Social Care Assessor

WLAs build relationships with groups and organisations through local

'Community Conversations'. These are 'place-based' networks bringing together services with a focus on

Early Intervention and Prevention.

WLAs also attend the countywide 'Wellbeing Network'

which is a forum highlighting new services and identifying gaps in provision and potential partnerships to meet population needs.



NEXT STEPS

Identify gaps in provision and develop services to meet needs

For example, we are aware that there are insufficient support and opportunities for people with autism and ADHD and unpaid carers. Working collaboratively with appropriate partner organisations to develop groups and services to meet the needs of local people.

Funding

Continuing to work in collaboration, GAVO, the NCNs and MCC/IWN will aim to secure further funding to provide the service in 2024/25

Engagement

We will continue to try to connect with people who have not yet engaged with us. We recognise that some may find it difficult to engage for a range of reasons, for example, they have reached a crisis, they have demanding and overwhelming situations, they lack confidence to meet new people or they have felt 'let down' by support services in the past. As a Marmot Region, in Gwent we aim to make it easier for people in all our communities to live their lives in good health. We will design a new poster and flyer to promote the service within surgeries, reflecting the pressures winter causes for many people.

Share the model

We will be available to share good practice and learning to support other areas of Gwent to develop similar partnership initiatives.



Gather feedback and Evaluate

To help direct the service going forward we will continue to ask individuals, GP surgery staff and community organisations for feedback. Reviews are usually done via a phone call after 6 weeks of the face-to-face meeting but by this time people tend to have 'moved on' to the groups and services they have been linked with so it has been difficult to get feedback after linking them with support.

GP surgeries may want to gather information regarding the patients they have put in touch with the WLA to identify any patterns or changes such as fewer visits to the surgery or a reduction in medication.

MEET THE GAVO /GP SURGERY WELLBEING LINKS TEAM.....

Wellbeing Links Advisors have excellent skills in engagement. They are active listeners with strengths in emotional awareness, empathy and compassion. Investing time to build relationships with local organisations, they have a vast knowledge of local groups and services which can be called on to provide positive options to individuals who have asked for advice at their GP Surgery.

WLAs are available to share information about preventative support with health and social care colleagues and can be the first point of contact for all things non-statutory.



Lisa Hopkin - Monmouth and Raglan

Surgeries:-

Castle Gate
Wye Valley
Dixton

lisa.hopkin@gavo.org.uk
07908 480713



Lyra Vaz - Abergavenny and Usk

Surgeries:-

Tudor Gate
Usk
Old Station
Hereford Road

lyra.vaz@gavo.org.uk
07483 128050



Angela James - Chepstow and Caldicot

Surgeries:-

Towngate
Vauxhall
Mount Pleasant
Grayhill
Wyedean

angela.james@gavo.org.uk
07483 128087

For more information about the Wellbeing Links Service
please contact Miranda Thomason
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