

Committee: **Social Services Scrutiny Committee**  
Date of meeting: **18<sup>th</sup> November 2021**  
Report Subject: **Regional Partnership Update**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**  
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	Oct 2021	04.11.21			18.11.21	15.12.21		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the work and decisions taken over the last 6 months by the Regional Partnership Board, developed under statutory guidance Part 9 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act) since the last report presented to Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The SSWB Act came into force in April 2016, Part 9 of the Act sets out statutory requirement for a Regional Partnership Board (RPB), along with the required minimum membership and a regional Citizen Panel, regional Provider Forum and regional Leadership Group (senior officer group) which have all been established.
- 2.2 The Regional Partnership Boards has been established on current local health board footprints – so the Gwent regional partnership board includes Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen local authorities.
- 2.3 The regulations also set out required membership of Regional Partnership Boards. The Executive member in each local authority, with responsibility for health and social care, sits on the Regional Partnership Board. In a similar vein, non-executive members of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board also sit on the Regional Partnership Board.
- 2.4 The Regional Partnership Board is an advisory body, that does not take away the existing responsibilities of the individual statutory bodies, but it is expected to take oversight of and provide direction to, any areas of integrated working across health and social care.
- 2.5 Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 13th March 2017 agreed for the Executive Member of Social Services and Director of Social Services to report back to Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. This approach was endorsed by Executive Committee on the 15th March 2017.

- 2.6 The Regional Partnership Board has met on 3 occasions since the last report to Scrutiny Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021. There has been a number of areas which have occupied the Regional Partnership Board at these meetings. Firstly, the continued response to the Coronavirus outbreak across partner agencies and the effect on services. Secondly, the continuation of the Integrated Care Revenue and Capital Funds and the Transformational Offer beyond 2022, Finally, it has been considering the crisis in health and social care with the inability to recruit staff to certain part of the system.
- 2.7 At each of the Regional Partnership Board meetings we have received updates on the hospital and community position on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, and more recently the progress on the vaccination programme being rolled out. This included feedback from the Citizen Panel on some of the issues that had been raised with them concerning access to healthcare. The Board have been reassured that although the pandemic has been worse third time round in terms of community transmission the hospital capacity and support in the community has been able to cope with the third wave locally and regionally which was very much due to the success of the vaccination roll out and collaborative working by all partners.
- 2.8 Although seeing higher community transmission rates across Gwent during the third wave the impact on hospital admissions has been much less, although there has been between 70 to 80 cases admitted a week with Coronavirus to Gwent hospitals. There has also been increasing outbreaks particularly with staff in Care Homes across Gwent although over 95% having received both vaccinations and 98% of all residents.
- 2.9 The Regional Partnership Board is the body who sign off and agree the Integrated Care Fund revenue and capital proposals. Members may recall that Welsh Government agreed to continue the Integrated Care Fund revenue and capital funding for 2021/22 at the same level as 2020/21, as a means of transition for any new administration to come in and determine how they wish to proceed with this funding following the Senydd elections in May 2021.
- 2.10 Therefore, this transition period for the Regional Partnership Board, will see the impending cessation of the current partnership funding model in March 2022, which is due to be replaced by a single coherent source of revenue funding to support transformation and integration. Gwent Regional Partnership Board have discussed and considered its priorities to support longer term planning during this transition period. These new priorities place significant emphasis on care closer to home for all priority groups for integration, and enabling an infrastructure within our partnership that supports delivery.
- 2.11 To facilitate this transition period, and to support continuous efforts to address the challenges within our system, Gwent Regional Partnership Board endorsed a programme transition plan for 2021-22 to support both

partnership and organisational financial planning, and ensure sufficient notice is provided to any initiatives that may need to conclude at 31 March 2022. This plan identifies all consideration activity of the existing portfolio to be complete by mid-November, by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board.

2.12 The £2million previously utilised for WCCIS implementation within the ICF revenue funding stream has been repurposed for a new priority area 'Safe accommodation for children with complex, high end emotional and behavioural needs'. This priority area has been introduced in direct response to the Children's Commissioner for Wales' report, No Wrong Door and in line with current Ministerial priorities. Welsh Government invited expressions of interest from Regions, Gwent submitted a proposal to Welsh Government to develop a children's residential home at Windmill Farm, Newport, setting out the opportunity of exploring joint commissioning methodologies for a wider cohort of children with complex needs. Welsh Government approved funding for this purpose and work has commenced using ICF capital together with the ICF revenue funding stream to deliver this proposed integrated model.

2.13 Members may recall from previous reports that the Regional Partnership Board had successfully submitted a 'Gwent transformational offer' to Welsh Government in response to 'A Healthier Wales' which set out a new £100 million transformational programme. The new transformation fund was intended to provide additional funding to catalyse 'whole system change', driven through the Regional Partnership Boards with an expectation that each region develops a 'transformational offer'.

The offer in Gwent related to four areas, these include:

- The development of early intervention and prevention services (Integrated Wellbeing Networks);
- The development of primary and community care services (Compassionate Communities);
- The redesign of child and adolescent emotional and mental health services (Iceberg model);
- The development of an integrated 'Home First' discharge model;

2.14 The programme was awarded £8,313,131 for 2021/22. Sustainability being the primary focus in this final year, bringing together successful elements alongside successful ICF programmes, to create a framework of services within a model of 'Place Based Care'.

2.15 All four programmes, have embedded well and the evaluation reports demonstrate both financial efficiencies and improved wellbeing outcomes for citizens have been achieved.

2.16 Welsh Government have commenced the development of a new funding model in coproduction with the Regions. The principles within this emerging funding model propose to address the challenges that have been highlighted within the existing partnership funding arrangements, namely linked to project sustainability, local area needs and longer term strategic

planning. Ministerial commitment has been made to a 5 year partnership funding model that will provide a single revenue funding source for regions for the following purposes:

- Acceleration funding: up to 90% financial support for the testing and development of new ways of working. A maximum duration will be applied to acceleration initiatives, currently anticipated to be 2-3 years.
- Embedding funding: funding to support the scaling and sustainability of successful initiatives. This funding source will require a tapered match funding from alternative budgets.
- Resource funding: funding to provide regional capacity to support RPBs in their activities, programme development, area needs and planning. Regional match funding will be required and appropriate resource thresholds are currently being discussed with Welsh Government.

- 2.17 Since June 2021, Social Services have been increasingly reporting workforce issues to the Regional Partnership Board. What we have seen is restrictions being eased and more sectors re-opening, an exhausted workforce taking well deserved holidays, staff off sick and those self-isolating either because they have caught Covid19 or been 'pinged' as being in contact with someone who has tested positive.
- 2.18 We have seen a shortage of staff across health and social care sectors, but particularly within the domiciliary care and residential care sector, as we have seen many staff leave to obtain better paid jobs which they have described as easier and with less responsibility in the hospitality and retail sector, than what they had been doing in social care. We have also had great difficulty in recruiting to vacancies across the sector leaving the sector short of staff to deliver vital services.
- 2.19 This crisis is multi-faceted, with blockages in hospital because of no capacity in the domiciliary care market to meet new packages of care for those coming out of hospital. We believe that the difficulty on some people being able to obtain a GP appointment may have increased the demand at Accident and Emergency units. The shortages of beds and increased demand at Accident and Emergencies has resulted in ambulances waiting outside hospitals to discharge patients into hospital. The lack of ambulance to attend incidents has then been severely reduced, resulting in Police having to transfer patients from incidents to hospital resulting in officers having to spend time in Accident and Emergency to discharge patients into hospital or be seen by Accident and Emergency staff.
- 2.20 This resulted in the Blue Light Services (WAST and Gwent Police) in August asking the Gwent Strategic Co-ordination group(SCG) to convene as they felt this had become a public emergency situation. The SCG then set up a Tactical Co-ordination Group to look at a set of short term interventions to alleviate immediate pressures and longer term re-design how the system can work more effectively to reduce cyclical pressures.

2.21 The SCG and TCG will try and develop short and long term measures to alleviate the pressures. It will be the Regional Partnership Board responsibility to implement these measures to try and resolve the current crisis we find health and social care in.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The options for consideration are:

**Option 1** – to scrutinise the report and to support the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board:

**Option 2** – to scrutinise the report and propose an alternative approach to Executive Committee in relation to the options taken by Regional Partnership Board.

### 4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The report is fulfilling our statutory functions under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and accompanying regulations. The report is also fulfilling a number of the Social Services aims within the Corporate Plan:

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.

A number of the areas being progressed by the Regional Partnership Board will support us to achieve two of the Wellbeing Plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone;
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the place that they live, learn, work and play.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 Option 1 - The Regional Partnership Board have statutory responsibilities laid out within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and Ministers expect to see the Regional Partnership Boards, maturing into a vehicle for more integrated commissioning, transformation and improvement across health and social care, with an emphasis on providing more care closer to home, maintaining independence and reducing unnecessary hospital admissions. Therefore, by implementing the Gwent transformation offer the Regional Partnership Board are complying with the legislation and

Ministerial expectations.

Option 1 – Welsh Government have also determined that the use of the Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund, the new Transformational fund and any Integrated Winter Planning funding will have oversight by the Regional Partnership Board. All these funding sources are to assist with the integration of health and social care across the Gwent Regional footprint. It is essential that the Regional Partnership Board has oversight of funding proposals and subsequent use of these funding streams, and have approved the proposals before they were submitted and agreed by Welsh Government.

Option 2 – The Regional Partnership Board are made up of a number of organisations who collectively make decision for the good of the region. If Scrutiny were to recommend alternative approaches, then it would need the support of neighbouring authorities and the health board to obtain consensus. Failure to do this would mean being in breach of legislation and could result in Welsh Government intervention. Whilst failure to comply with the requirements of the Integrated Care Capital Fund and Revenue Fund, Transformational fund and Integrated Winter Planning fund could result in the withdrawal or ability to receive funding for the Blaenau Gwent and Gwent region respectively.

## 5.2 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no immediate impacts on the budget, the Integrated Care Capital Fund is provided on an annual basis to fund innovative projects within Health and Social Care which has been extended for a further 12 months during this transition year. The transformation fund is to develop new models of transformation at pace and has been agreed for a further 12 months during transition as well. These are all additional funding coming into the system.

The Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund provides significant investment to develop a number of projects across Blaenau Gwent and Gwent as a whole and should this funding be removed at the end of the proposed transition period will have significant consequences going forward. In addition, the transformation fund is a time limited fund intended to replace or reconfigure existing services not adding an extra layer; therefore, there is an expectation that these models will be funded from core budgets going forward.

Welsh Government have indicated their intent to develop a new fund to replace both the Integrated Care Fund and Transformation fund and are currently developing this new funding stream and working with partners.

## 5.3 **Legal**

The Legal department becomes involved in considering and advising on any legal agreements before signing such as the Section 33 Agreement.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Gwent Transformational Team support senior officers and elected members to deliver and implement the priorities of the Regional Partnership Board. In addition, they administer the Regional Partnership Board and Leadership Group. The Gwent Transformation Team is hosted by Torfaen County Borough Council.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not applicable.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The role of the Regional Partnership Board is to ensure more seamless provision of health and social care services across Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Regional Partnership Board has involvement from the third sector and representation from the Citizens Panel to ensure engagement and involvement in its direction.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Regional Partnership Board provides the opportunity to work collectively and have a long term vision to progress integration and partnership across the Gwent region.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Regional Partnership Board within its strategic intent statement will be considering how Health and Social Services can work together in a more preventative way.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The role the Regional Partnership Board is to work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The purpose of the Regional Partnership Board is to foster integration between Health and Social Services.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The report contents do not relate specifically to this agenda; indirectly local employment supports to ensure:

- People having the opportunity to work closer to home;
- The public can access services closer to home;
- Employment and service provision locally relates specifically to the decarbonisation agenda.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

The report relates to a number of jobs which support employment locally, a loss to funding for these jobs would have a negative impact and may increase social and economic inequalities

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

Not applicable

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The monitoring arrangements for the Regional Partnership Board are through the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- N/A