

Committee: **Partnership Scrutiny**

Date of meeting: **7th February 2023**

Report Subject: **Regional Partnership Update**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Hayden Trollope, Cabinet Member People and Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Tanya Evans, Interim Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	19.01.23	27.01.22			07.02.23			

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the work and decisions taken by the Regional Partnership Board since April 2022.

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.

2.2 Regional Partnership Boards have 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 Cabinet member in each local authority, with responsibility for health and social care, sits on the Regional Partnership Board.

2.4 The Regional Partnership Board (RPB) is an advisory body, that does not take away the existing responsibilities of the individual statutory bodies, but it is expected to have oversight of and provide direction to, any areas of integrated working across health and social care. To support the work of the RPB there are a number of boards and partnership arrangements that sit underneath and focus on specific areas of work. This governance landscape can be seen under **Appendix 1**.

2.5 The Regional Partnership Board has met on 4 occasions since April 2022. The Board has focused on the following areas

- Oversight of the Regional Integration Fund
- Oversight of the Winter Pressures Plan
- The sign off of a Gwent Market Position Statement
- The Eliminating Profit from Children's Services

2.6 This report will now give more detailed information on each of the areas highlighted above.

3. Oversight of the Regional Integration Fund

3.1 The Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund (the RIF) is now a 5-year fund to deliver a programme of change from April 2022 to March 2027.

3.2 The RIF builds on the learning and progress made under the previous Integrated Care Fund (ICF) and Transformation Fund (TF) and seeks to create sustainable system change through the integration of health and social care services

3.3 The total allocation of the Regional Integration Fund for Gwent Regional Partnership Board is £26,858,840. Whilst the funding is provided at the outset of the financial year (to be allocated as determined by the Regional Partnership Board in line with RIF guidance), part of the financial allocation is ring fenced for specific use, or for specific priority groups where minimum investment levels are identified.

3.4 The ring-fenced elements of the Regional Integration Fund relate to the Dementia Action Plan (£1.611m), Memory Assessment Services (£0.565m), the Integrated Autism Service (£0.458m) and ring-fenced carers funding (£0.191m).

3.5 The aim is, by the end of the five-year programme we will have established and mainstreamed at least six new national models of integrated care so that citizens of Wales, wherever they live, can be assured of an effective and seamless service experience in relation to.

- Community based care – *prevention and community coordination*
- Community based care – *complex care closer to home*
- Promoting good emotional health and well-being
- Supporting families to stay together safely, and therapeutic support for care experienced children
- Home from hospital services
- Accommodation based solutions

3.6 In addition to working towards these models of integrated care the programmes that are funded by the RIF are working towards the priorities developed as a result of the population needs assessment which the RPB is required to undertake. These priorities can be found under **Appendix 2**

3.7 In September 2022 the Regional Partnership Board agreed the Financial Programme of work to be undertaken using the Regional Integration Fund. However, as part of the guidance issued by Welsh Government there was an expectation that the programmes being delivered would move to being funded from the RIF to local authority and health core budgets over the 5-year period with funding tapering off year on year. The Regional

Partnership Board lobbied Welsh Government hard to stop the tapering for 2023/24 due to the significant budget pressures. Late December Ministers agreed to pause the tapering element until 2024/25. This means that the current programme can continue for a further 12 months.

4. **Oversight of the Winter Pressure Plan**

- 4.1 As stated in the terms of reference, the RPB is the key leadership body to oversee all integration work across health and social care and to formally represent the interests of the local authorities, the Health Board, and its key stakeholders. The RPB is responsible for monitoring progress and the ongoing delivery of integrated work programmes. The winter plan is one of those work programmes.
- 4.2 The Winter Plan gives consideration to the demands and capacity constraints within our system, identifying the need to avoid hospital admission wherever appropriate, and strengthen our discharge enablers and community capacity to ensure people are able to receive care at home or close to home wherever possible.
- 4.3 The July meeting of the Regional Partnership Board received a report which reviewed how the 2021/22 winter plan had helped manage the health and social care winter pressures. It was acknowledged there were many aspects of the Winter Plan that could be repeated to provide the short-term additional capacity needed to respond to the expected rise in demand and increased staff shortages through illness during a winter period. There were also areas identified for further development, particularly those that were attempting to create additional capacity within the system to respond to the ongoing community workforce constraints
- 4.4 There is a balance to be sought between temporary short-term solutions to address additional winter demand, and longer-term sustainable solutions that will support ongoing system flow challenges.
- 4.5 As a region we were in the fortuitous position of having an underspend in the Regional Integration Fund which enabled the development of the 2022/23 winter plan without causing added cost pressures. The outline winter plan can be seen under **Appendix 3**

5. **The sign off of a Gwent Market position statement**

- 5.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Act requires Regional Partnership Boards to complete a market stability report (MSR) on a regional footprint to help local authorities and ABUHB understand the dynamics of the market for regulated services in our area. This MSR is structured in accordance with Welsh Government's '*Code of Practice and guidance on the exercise of social services functions and partnership arrangements in relation to market stability reports*'. The Code of Practice states that: "*Market stability reports are designed to give a high-level overview and assessment of the*

overall sufficiency of care and support, and of the stability of the market for regulated services.”

- 5.2 In September 2022 the RPB signed off the 2022 Market stability report.
- 5.3 This MSR highlights the current provision and helps assess issues such as the sufficiency, quality, and sustainability of regulated services within Gwent. A regulated service is those listed in the Schedule to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Currently these are:
- Care home services (adult and children's)
 - Secure accommodation service (for children)
 - Residential family centre services
 - Adoption services
 - Fostering services
 - Adult placement ('Shared Lives') service
 - Advocacy services
 - Domiciliary support services
- 5.4 A summary of the findings in the MSR can be found under **Appendix 4**. A briefing was delivered to Blaenau Gwent members in November 2022. The issues raised in the MSR will be picked up in the Area Plan and measures to mitigate threats to market stability will be outlined.

6. **The Eliminating Profit from Children's Services**

- 6.1 Welsh Government has made a policy commitment to remove private profit from the care of looked after children. A multi-agency Programme Board has been established to implement this commitment to rebalance the market so that the duties on local authorities in relation to looked after children are not contracted out to for-profit companies but remain with public sector and not-for-profit providers.
- 6.2 A consultation on this commitment was launched in August 2022 and closed in November 2022. The intention is to introduce primary legislation which would mean only residential and foster care services operating under a non-profit model would be eligible to register with Care Inspectorate Wales from 2027. If passed, new legislation would require providers to demonstrate a not-for-profit status, based on a new pre-defined definition of non-profit, by 1 April 2026.
- 6.3 The Regional Partnership Board is well sighted on this policy commitment and is in agreement with the principle of removing profit. However, the RPB is concerned this commitment will lead to the unintended consequence of further reducing the provision of foster care and residential placements for children in Wales at a time when there is clear evidence via the market stability report that current demand outstrips supply.
- 6.4 The Board will await the outcome of the consultation no doubt this will form part of the area plan going forward.

7. **Options for Recommendation**

7.1 The options for consideration are:

Option 1 – to scrutinise the report and to support the programme of work by the Regional Partnership Board.

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

8. **Evidence of how 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 work of the RPB is also supporting the following Corporate Priorities:

- Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place
- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent, and resilient

9. **Implications Against Each Option**

9.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

As already mentioned in the body of the report there would have been significant budgetary implications if the tapering had been applied to the Regional Integration Fund. Welsh Government has paused this for 12 months; however, this will be a risk going forward for all programmes.

9.2 ***Legal***

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

9.3 ***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.

10. **Supporting Evidence**

10.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not applicable.

10.2 ***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.

- 10.3 ***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.
- 10.4 ***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.
- 10.5 ***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.
- 10.6 ***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.
- 10.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
The purpose of the Regional Partnership Board is to foster integration between Health and Social Services.
- 10.8 ***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.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Regional Partnership Board Structure*
- *Appendix 2 – Priorities Gwent Population Needs Assessment*
- *Appendix 3 – Winter Plan*
- *Appendix 4 – Market Stability Report Summary 2022*