

## **Gwent Career College Consortium**

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With:

## **Gwent Regional Partnership Team**

### **Coleg Gwent**

### **Care Forum Wales**

### **Mirus**

## **Background**

The Gwent Career College Consortium is a unique, holistic partnership approach to supporting the recruitment, development and qualification of health and social care workers in Gwent. Established in August 2018, the Consortium has developed a new structure of collaboration between the local FE College, the regional health board, local authorities, regional employability projects and private providers of social care. All stakeholders involved in this work programme are committed to recruiting and developing a compassionate, skilled and diverse workforce that can make a positive difference to the citizens of Gwent who require care and support provision.

**A Healthier Wales** sets out a long-term future vision of a 'whole system approach to health and social care', which is focused on health and wellbeing, and on preventing illness. Attracting people to work in the care sector is critical to workforce sustainability and the delivering on this plan.

There is a national crisis in health and social care recruitment and the Gwent Career College Consortium is a practical response

to addressing this 'threat'. By increasing, developing and stabilising the workforce in Gwent we hope to maintain the support available to vulnerable people, improve workforce sustainability and capacity and build a compassionate and skilled workforce for the future.

## **Project Aims**

- Bring together key partners to develop a skilled and compassionate health and social care workforce across Gwent by creating seamless career pathways and work based opportunities within the health and social care sector.
- Provide a more informed, co-ordinated and co-produced health and social care study programme that better meets the needs of the population and sector workforce requirements.
- Provide a greater insight to the number of roles and career pathways available in the health and social care sector and raise the aspirations of students in order to fulfil these roles.
- Raise the profile of health and social care careers across Gwent to attract a more diverse mix of students and citizens to consider health and social care as a viable, valuable and rewarding career.
- Bridge the gap between education and employment so students are not 'lost' to other sectors once studies are completed.

## **Challenges**

The scope of the project is large and brings together two very large organisations (Coleg Gwent and ABUHB) as well as the five local authorities of Gwent. The first 12 months of the Consortium's work was largely exploratory, finding out what key stakeholders could offer and understanding how we could link these together to maximise opportunities and remove barriers to the sector. The Consortium has overcome these challenges through a series of structured meetings that enabled both a review of current recruitment practices and a shared passion to

achieve mutually agreed outcomes that would benefit students and the population.

## **Key Outcomes**

The consortium's main objective is to create a seamless pathway from college into health and social care creating a skilled and compassionate workforce that meets sector requirements.

Image: Coleg Gwent design students developed and designed a logo for the public facing elements of the project: Gwent Care Career Pathway.

Developing relationships between key stakeholders so a holistic, integrated approach to qualification and recruitment can be developed.

Adding value to current courses while developing new, innovative courses that meet the future recruitment needs of the sector.

By working in partnership, we have been able to share funding opportunities and avoid duplication of effort. Since its inception, the project has benefited from £98,000 of ICF funding. This has funded a joint employability post to support the operational delivery of our ambitious work programme as well as a DBS payment scheme for the current health and social care student cohort.

Coleg Gwent teaching staff have been provided access to the Social Care Workforce Development Partnership training programme across Gwent to promote further development of a consistent approach to the professionalization of the workforce.

The project was featured in the WeCare Wales national attraction and recruitment campaign:

## **Team Feedback**

"I have strongly supported the development of a consortium approach to health and social care development in Gwent. I have personally engaged with students at the college campuses to

provide advice on careers in health and care professions including widening access for medicine. Extra work experience opportunities for students with interview practice have been sourced and a charitable fund has been established to support students through medical school. An Access to Medicine Course has been developed between Coleg Gwent and Cardiff University Medical School and it is anticipated this will provide routes to train more local doctors and promote social mobility.”

*Professor Paul Edwards  
Consultant Surgeon and Associate Medical Director, Aneurin  
Bevan University Health Board.*

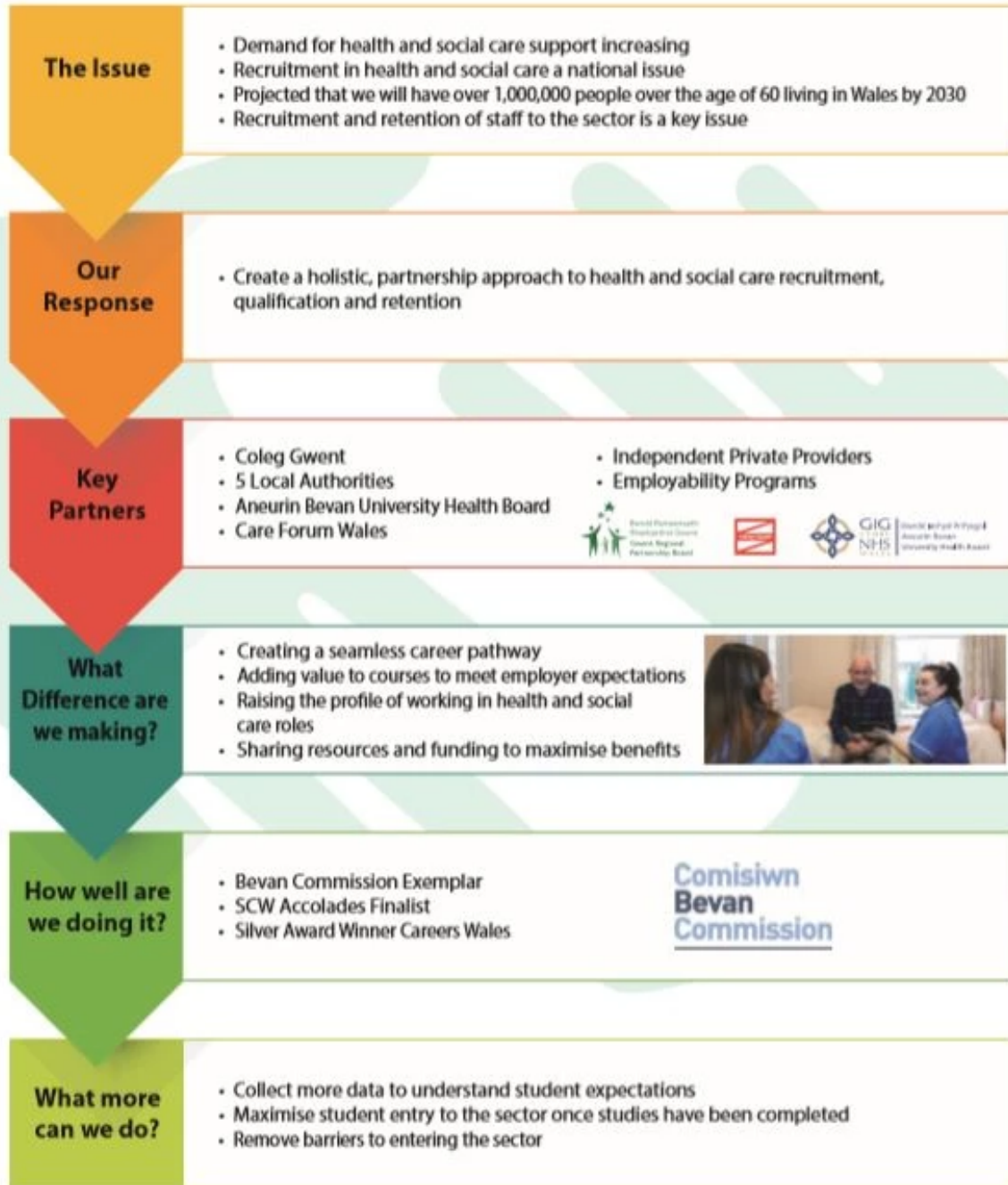
## **Next Steps**

The programme continues to adapt to current workforce issues. Through the consortium we were able to support a number of Coleg Gwent students onto ABUHB’s resource bank at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Coleg Gwent have recently moved to a faculty wide delivery of their health and social care courses which will support the consistent delivery of this programme while providing the opportunity to link with other courses that, in turn, link to the wider well-being and person centred care agenda.

A partnership is currently being established with ABUHB’s Person Centred Care Team to reduce isolation and loneliness for patients, particularly during these times of limited visitors, by providing activity placements to students. These opportunities will provide the work based learning element of the student’s qualification at a time when these are difficult to facilitate.

Consortium members are currently scoping the development of a shared simulation and training suite that could provide entry level clinical skills and the moving and handling passport to both students and the wider health and social care workforce.



**Figure 1**

A single column of text boxes, each containing a header and series of bullet points. Each text box points to a the one beneath it with an arrow.

#### Header 1: The issue

- Demand for health and social care support increasing.
- Recruitment in health and social care a national issue.
- Projected that we will have over one million people over the age of 60 living in Wales by 2030.
- Recruitment and retention of staff to the sector is a key issue.

#### Header 2: Our response

- Create a holistic partnership approach to health and social care recruitment, qualification and retention.

#### Header 3: Key Partners

- Coleg Gwent
- 5 local authorities
- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Care Forum Wales
- Independent Private Providers
- Employability Programs

#### Header 4: What difference are we making?

- Creating a seamless career pathway
- Adding value to courses to meet employer expectations
- Raising the profile of working in health and social care roles
- Sharing resources and funding to maximise benefits

#### Header 5: How well are we doing it?

- Bevan Commission Exemplar
- SCW Accolades Finalist
- Silver Award Winner Careers Wales

#### Header 6: What more can we do?

- Collect more data to understand student expectations
- Maximise student entry into the sector once studies have been completed
- Remove barriers to entering the sector

End of description

## **Our Future**

In the future, we expect to see:

- A high percentage of students coming into and remaining in the health and social care sector once studies are completed
- A high percentage of students reaching their identified career destinations
- A reduction in live vacancies
- Improved retention rates
- More opportunities for work experience placements/internships across the sector
- Development of bespoke career opportunities e.g. work experience for people with learning disabilities
- Delayed Transfers of Care (DTOC) figures reduced
- Further alignment of this project with HEIW's and SCW's 'A Healthier Wales: Joint Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care.'

## **Our Exemplar Experience**

Being a Bevan Commission Exemplar has provided the opportunity to gauge the distance the project has travelled since its inception. It has provided the space to step outside of the project and streamline some of our thinking. We thoroughly enjoyed the workshop opportunities and it is a shame that further face to face networking opportunities were curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Contact**

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