

Delivering Inclusive Services in a Rural Area

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Context and Approach:

Finding a balance between digital first, digital only and in person health services in rural areas.

Starting by reviewing existing published research and data, the aim is to uncover common themes related to service accessibility and successful strategies for delivering health services in rural areas. Additionally, I will draw on insights from my professional network to explore approaches adopted at the local level across Wales. The outcome will be a multimedia toolkit comprising both video and written content, bringing together research from various regions and practical experiences from Powys. The toolkit is intended to assist rural services in evaluating the accessibility of their own services and identifying or addressing barriers. It will include a variety of techniques designed to support multidisciplinary teams across Wales in understanding how users perceive their services and in recognising opportunities for positive change.

Planned Activity:

What makes an accessible service in a rural area?

Research:	Leadership:	Education/teaching :
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Literature on accessibility in rural healthcare, summarise findings and identify local research gaps.• Create a multimedia toolkit based on research and local insights from stakeholder interviews and surveys• Simulation: Use immersive simulations to test ideas and gather feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead a pan-Wales Community of Practice for Digital Inclusion and Accessibility in Health and Social Care.• Simulation Leadership: Guide service team simulations and improvement planning.• Event Contribution: Present at conferences and events.• Toolkit Advocacy: Lead toolkit peer review and promotional efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blog & Media: Share progress and insights via blog and social media.• Simulation Training: Use immersive exercises for team learning and reflection.• Toolkit as Teaching Tool: Publish toolkit and paper, including reusable simulation framework as educational resources.

Progress to date:

- Engaged with local, regional and national stakeholders to source and share examples of good practice.
- Publishing regular week notes and research-informed journal articles documenting progress on Medium at <https://medium.com/@Timforchange> and LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tim-smith-915391341>
- Poster and presentation at USW Digital Transformation Showcase event 22/05/2025 highlighting opportunities of using e-learning and digital to change the way that services support their users.
- Prototype of the toolkit is currently being drafted, drawing together existing practical resources. Exercise planned with Powys Living Well Service to conduct service review/development activities in August 2025, including a full-day immersive simulation to be run at USW using Hydra Minerva suite.
- Supported PTHB "Attend Anywhere Workshop" to highlight opportunities to make services more inclusive.
- Shortlisted in the Leadership and Taking Responsibility category of the PTHB Staff Excellence Awards 2025.

Reflections:

- Challenge to remain focused on accessibility and inclusion of services in general terms – natural draw towards digital inclusion but recognising importance of offering a balance including digital.
- Some similarities/overlap with other Bevan Fellow and Exemplar projects, including those focusing on User-Centred Design (UCD) and redesign of treatment pathways.
- Huge opportunities to share good practice at local, regional and national levels to exploit the systems that we already have..

