Western Bay Area Planning Board

Tackling and reducing the harms associated with substance misuse across the region

What is the Western Bay Area Planning Board?

The Western Bay Area Planning Board (WB APB) was formed in 2015 by restructuring all of the Substance Misuse Action Teams (SMAT) across the Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea areas. It’s a partnership of all agencies across the region involved in tackling and reducing the harms associated with substance misuse. The Board is responsible for planning treatment services and coordinating funding from the Welsh Government and other sources to ensure that people have access to services that meet their needs and are designed to improve their personal wellbeing.

The WB APB is supported by a small team hosted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, that provides the secretariat for the Board and oversees the allocation of funding to and the delivery of Substance Misuse services in the area. The team is also responsible for local delivery of the Welsh Government Substance Misuse Strategy, as well as liaising with both the Welsh Government, South Wales Police and other agencies to help fund and develop a wide variety of projects/services throughout the region.

Recent achievements

Recent achievements the WB APB has implemented in conjunction with its partner agencies include:

- Publication of the WB APB Commissioning Strategy 2016-2020
- The creation of a WB APB Governance Framework for Board Members
- Developed a new optimal model for services in the region, which will be subject to recommissioning in 2018
- Held a series of stakeholder consultation events on the new model for key partners, service users and service providers
- Enrolment of a new needle exchange pharmacy service in the SA1 area of Swansea, an area previously identified as underserved
- Carried out a full review of the low threshold prescribing service (LTPS) situation in the region. This resulted in the APB agreeing that a new regional LTPS should be commissioned as part of the new Substance Misuse service model.

This is just a very small snapshot of WB APB’s broad programme of work. For more details, please visit their newly launched website:

[www.npt.gov.uk/westernbayapb](http://www.npt.gov.uk/westernbayapb)
“Being a Carer can be hugely challenging, therefore it’s crucial that those undertaking this important role have access to the right support, advice and information.

The event was an excellent opportunity for Carers from across the Western Bay region to share their experiences and hear about how their involvement has helped, and continues to help shape service planning and delivery”.

Chantal Patel
ABMU Carers’ Champion

Our last newsletter featured an item on a fun-packed event held by the ABMU Carers Partnership to celebrate the hard work and dedication of Western Bay’s Young Carers.

On 16th June, it was the turn of the adults to come together and celebrate the invaluable contribution of Carers from the Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea areas.

The event, entitled ‘You Said...We Did!’, gave Carers the chance to hear about the ways in which their ideas and suggestions have been put into action. It also featured a series of presentations from guest speakers including General Practitioners, and powerful digital stories outlining Carers’ personal experiences in their own words.

ABMU Health Board’s Carers’ Champion Chantal Patel chaired the event and praised the work of those involved, saying:

“You Said...You Did!”

Singing the praises of Adult Carers across the Western Bay region

Swansea Carers Centre Choir (pictured above), who brought everyone to their feet with an upbeat acapella performance of songs from around the world.

The event attracted over 70 delegates, including Carers, Elected Members and staff from Local Authorities, the ABMU Health Board and the Third Sector.

Feedback received during the evaluation was also extremely positive, with one attendee stating: “The day was very beneficial - loads of information!”.

Want to know more about the Western Bay Programme?

We have produced an introductory video which was created earlier this year to inform newly elected Councillors of the work of the Western Bay Programme.

Why not visit our YouTube channel and take a look? www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5KLuieq5Iw&t=335s
Meet the Board…

Getting to know the members of Western Bay’s Regional Partnership Board

Western Bay Regional Partnership Board was formally established in 2016 and is responsible for managing and developing services to secure strategic planning and partnership working between organisations across the health and social care sector.

To ensure a range of voices and perspectives are captured, the Board’s extensive membership includes Service User, Carer and Third Sector representation, and we’re pleased to be bringing you a series of features introducing our members and giving an insight into their role within the Board.

Emma Tweed - Regional Partnership Board Third Sector Representative (National)

In November 2016, Emma Tweed of Care and Repair Western Bay joined the Board as the national Third Sector representative. The Board’s membership also comprises a local Third Sector representative, acknowledging the broad remit of the sector on both a local and national level.

Having completed her studies in Social Policy and Child Welfare, Emma spent two years as a Social Research Assistant for a Swansea based children’s charity, before taking up a post in Care and Repair:

“I joined in 2002 as an administrator/case worker, then went on to various other roles within the organisation before becoming Chief Officer of Care and Repair Neath Port Talbot in 2014. There’s been a lot of change since then, as the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea branches have merged and are now known as Care and Repair Western Bay”. Emma went on to become Chief Officer of Care and Repair Western Bay, and has been in post for around 18 months.

“I’ve lived in Swansea all my life, and have worked in both Swansea and Neath Port Talbot for a number of years, so I have a good knowledge of the landscape and how the sector works.

The merger has been a great opportunity for us as it’s enabled us eliminate the postcode lottery that clients were facing in terms of being able to access certain services. We’re also working closely with colleagues in Care and Repair Bridgend on some new and exciting cross-border projects, so there’s lots going on for us across the whole region”.

The Value of Joint Working

Emma is pleased to be involved with the Regional Partnership Board and sees real value in joint working, saying:

“At a time when resources are stretched and an ageing population is increasing service demand, I think effective collaborative working is an absolute must.

Having Third Sector representation on the Board demonstrates that we’re being recognised as a key strategic player, and shows a clear commitment from all partners to pull together and do the best we can for the people and communities we serve.

Ultimately, everyone around the Regional Partnership Board table shares the same ethos, which is to help maximise people’s independence and support them to stay well and achieve their personal well-being goals.

It’s still early days, but we’re already making great progress and I’m really pleased to be on board”.

Western Bay Safeguarding Boards

What’s been happening?

It’s been a busy few months for the Western Bay Safeguarding Boards as preparations are underway to mark National Safeguarding Week 2017 (13 to 17 November 2017), so please keep an eye out for more information in our next Newsletter.

Business plans for both the Adults’ and the Children’s Safeguarding Boards have also been updated, with the following areas identified as key priorities:

Western Bay Safeguarding Children’s Board:
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Neglect
- Missing Children and Young People

Western Bay Safeguarding Adults’ Board:
- Governance
- Establishing links with partner agencies
- Engagement with Citizens, Providers, Carers and Staff.

www.wbsb.co.uk
Local Community Initiatives ensure that people with care and/or support needs can be supported in place by accessing the strengths within themselves, their families and communities. The evidence base for this model is well documented, and shows that this approach reduces the demand for care services. They are long-term, preventative approaches to supporting people (both adults and children) who may be isolated, excluded or who face challenges due to their age, physical health or mental health.

In Western Bay, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea subscribe to the ‘Inclusive Neighbourhoods’ model of Local Area Co-ordination (LAC). Bridgend County Borough Council’s approach is being progressed as Local Community Co-ordination (LCC).

What difference has it made?

One example of a successful project is ‘Strictly Cinema’ - a Maesteg based initiative which started life as a short-term pilot scheme in 2015.

Strictly Cinema was initiated by LCC in partnership with Awen Cultural Trust with the aim of helping to reduce social isolation. Funding was secured via Film Hub Wales and Bridgend Communities First, and a team of volunteers were recruited to help plan and deliver monthly sessions, which include a film screening, followed by activities such as a tea dance, live music or bingo.

Since its inception two years ago, the project has gone from strength to strength, and is now overseen by a fully constituted committee of volunteers.

Further funding has now been secured from a variety of organisations, and the initiative continues to grow and evolve, giving more and more people the opportunity to get out and about in their communities and enjoy the company of their peers.

Evaluating Progress

In 2016, a formative evaluation of Western Bay’s Local Community Initiatives was undertaken by the Institute of Life Science at Swansea University.

Its focus was primarily on the set-up and initial activities undertaken in each Local Authority area, with a particular emphasis on emerging outcomes for individuals and communities, as well as early indications of financial benefits.

The evaluators analysed the case load of seven Local Area/Community Co-ordinators working across the Western Bay region, and assessed the impact of their work in line with a series of categories. These included Safety and Security, Housing, Older Persons’ Care, Health and Social Services Interventions and Education.

The report outlines a significant prevalence of loneliness and isolation, mental health problems and issues associated with older age. There is also a notable level of ‘complex life situations’, whereby people are experiencing a multitude of challenges.

Although LAC/LCC are still relatively new, the evidence gathered concludes that strong and effective linkages are being created between resources and supported individuals across all participating areas. Co-ordinators have been instrumental in establishing extensive networks of people and resources, which are building solid foundations for cohesive and productive communities. The report features a number of anonymised real-life case studies which outline the positive impact on the lives of those engaging with the initiative.

The evaluation’s findings have also demonstrated a positive return on financial investment, indicating that Local Community Initiatives are adding value across a range of public services.

If you have any comments or queries about the items featured in our Newsletter, please email western.bay@swansea.gov.uk or telephone the Western Bay Programme Office on 01792 633805