

Annual report 2020–21

North Wales Research, Innovation and
Improvement Coordination Hub



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**NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE**

Summary

The North Wales Research, Innovation and Improvement Coordination (RIIC) Hub was just about to launch in March 2020 when everything changed. Our new staff arrived at empty offices, grabbed their IT equipment and began their socially-distanced induction. The plans for the hub had to quickly be re-written to take account of this new world. Our first priority was to directly support the Covid-19 response, so the team helped to build an Enfys hospital, designed PPE calculators and supported vulnerable people directly.

Next, we looked at how we could coordinate research and innovation activity to support the emergency response. Our Specialist Librarian has been keeping up to date with the latest research and guidance and publishing a regular summary. We also started to capture the innovation that's happened as a result of Covid-19 in North Wales.

There have been huge changes in the way we use digital technology, from enabling home working and virtual meetings to rolling out Attend Anywhere to provide patient care over a secure video link.



The Regional Partnership Board provided care home residents and patients in hospitals across the region with iPads to help them keep in touch with friends and family while visits are restricted during the coronavirus outbreak. The idea grew out of a project run to provide iPads to support people in the community to help manage their health conditions and to reduce social isolation. This was a great example of quickly adapting and redesigning an existing project within the Community Services Transformation Programme and of joint working between local authorities, the health board, Macmillan and the Wales Co-operative centre. Other changes include extended opening hours, improved communications and partnership working along with a huge range of creative and innovative community support.

In the next phase we will learn more about how and why these changes happened and use this experience to build a better and more resilient health and social care system for the future.

Other highlights include supporting transformation projects to use evidence by carrying out literature searches, such as into resources to support children's wellbeing, and provided advice and support with setting up on-line surveys, data analysis and story-telling research methods.

We worked with Integrated Care Fund (ICF) projects to consider the themes of scale, good practice and innovation. We supported better coordination by identifying similar projects in different sectors/agencies and linking them up. We worked with national projects to avoid duplication locally and developed strong networks with other regional hubs. For example, working with Social Care Wales to look at evidence use within social care, sharing our COVID-19 literature searches with other regions and using our website to highlight the different approaches to promoting innovation (Living Labs, Health Hacks, Innovation Labs) within different sectors.

We organised a Social Care Innovation Lab with Bangor University with a focus on digital technology. We also worked with the Innovation Agency to develop the concept of a Living Lab and bring together health and social care practitioners and researchers to better understand the research, innovation and improvement landscape in North Wales.

We continued to promote events, funding opportunities and the work of the team through the website, Twitter account and regular email newsletters. This include live tweeting key regional events. By the end of the year we had over 170 followers of the Twitter account and 130 subscribers to the RIIC hub mailing list.

Please follow us on Twitter [@NW_RIICH](#) and/or [sign up to our newsletter](#) for more information.

The year in figures



Supporting the Covid-19 response

At the start of the year team members were redeployed to help with the response.

Projects supported included:

- Making regular calls to vulnerable people in Denbighshire to make sure they had the support they needed.
- Turning Venue Cymru into Ysbyty Enfys field hospital.
- Developing a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) calculator to support the care sector
- Collating quality sources of information about Covid-19
- Creating a guide to finding quality health information online

Capturing innovation

All kinds of innovation and new ways of working were developed to respond to Covid-19. Then lots of different surveys were shared to try to capture these changes and the lessons learned. The hub was asked by the Regional Partnership Board to coordinate these requests for information and summarise what had changed in North Wales. We carried out our own survey and collated findings from other surveys. We worked together with other teams completing similar projects in North Wales to share findings and avoid duplication, including working in partnership with the Primary and Community Care Hub to develop a joint approach and with the BCUHB Engagement Team to learn from findings from their 'Covid Conversations' project with people who use services. We also completed 25 'Most significant change' interviews to gather rich qualitative data about the experiences of people working in health and social care during the pandemic using a 'story-telling' approach. We carried out causal mapping of the interviews and piloted use of a new Causal Mapping app with Bath University.

The literature searches carried out by our Specialist Librarian for the project were shared with other regions to inform the Covid-19 rapid reviews. The findings from the report were shared with the North Wales Health and Care Recovery Group, Regional Partnership Board and Welsh Government Social Care Stabilisation and Reconstruction Board.

[Read the Covid-19 Rapid Review](#)

Communication and engagement

Coordinating and sharing information is a key function of the hub. This year we've been setting up systems in Welsh and English to help us get information to the people who need it. This includes:

- New team webpages: so far we've had 935 unique visits
- Blog posts
- Mailing list that people can sign up to through our webpages: 130 people had signed up by the end of March
- Twitter account: by the end of March 2021 we had 170 twitter followers and 23,000 tweet impressions
- Regular newsletters about funding opportunities, events and the latest research, innovation and improvement activities happening across North Wales. We produced 9 newsletters during 2020-21.
- Meeting people to introduce the work of the hub, make connections and find out about good ideas we can help promote across the region.

This year we had 75 introduction meetings with people working across 35 different organisations. For example, meeting with researchers about the Kidney BEAM project and the Mencap oral histories project to discuss ideas and provide contacts to help share their findings with policy makers in North Wales and meeting with the Business Regional Manager in Welsh Government Department for Economy and Transport to discuss how the hub can support medical technology innovations.



Making connections across Wales

There are seven regional research, innovation and improvement hubs and three strategic leads covering Public Health Wales, Wales Ambulance Services Trust and Velindre NHS trust. It's been great getting to know the other hub leads during the year, sharing plans and ideas and finding out about the excellent work taking place across Wales. We've also been involved in national projects, helping to make sure that key people in North Wales are taking part and raising the profile of the region.

These projects included:

- Working with Social Care Wales on a project with the James Lind Alliance to set research priorities for social care and on a project with SCIE to look at evidence use within social care.
- Working with Social Care Wales and SCIE to look at evidence use within social care.
- Membership of the DEEP (Developing Evidence-Enriched Practice) steering group
- Membership of Co-production Network for Wales
- Membership of the Welsh Government Social Care Stabilisation and Reconstruction Board.
- Discussing work plans with Rural Health and Care Research Wales to look at opportunities to make links and work together.
- Worked with Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust and Public Health Wales RIIC leads to support a social prescribing project for paramedics across North Wales. The hub helped to link the project up with existing social prescribing/community navigators across North Wales and carried out a literature search for similar projects we can learn from. Supported the Virtual Community Hub Exploratory Project and attended panel meetings. Worked with PSB to look at links between Well-being Assessments and Population Needs Assessments and share information.
- Joining the national Innovation Group Meeting.
- Giving feedback on the new Daffodil projections website.
- Adding more social care data to the SAIL databank to support research.

Supporting the transformation programme

The hubs were set up to help drive new models of health and social care as part of the wider Welsh Government transformation of health and social care services as set out in A Healthier Wales. Supporting the North Wales transformation programme and Integrated Care Fund projects with research, innovation and improvement is a priority of the hub. This includes supporting the programme with literature searches and providing advice and support with setting up on-line surveys and data analysis. Including emotional health survey, Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) outcomes collection and data/research about people with learning disability and employment.

Community support services

The hub has created an online survey to help identify requirements of and access to digital technology for people working within health and social care. This will help inform plans to support the workforce to use digital technology in their working lives. We worked with the Community Services Transformation Programme to help coordinate local needs assessment projects to maximise the use of resources.

Children and young people's transformation programme

The hub is supporting the Emotional Health and Wellbeing 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' project. The project aims to develop an online collection of resources to support children's wellbeing. We developed a survey to allow the project to prioritise the initial focus of the new provision and is supporting with searches to ensure it includes evidence based resources. The searches are being used to identify resources for parents to support their children and to determine if any of the resources have been evaluated. We also provided support with collecting outcomes from the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) project.

Learning disability transformation programme

The hub supported the programme with literature searches and support to identify data about employment opportunities for young people with learning disabilities. We also worked with the team to develop the Social Care Innovation Lab event, where the team promoted the fantastic Learning Disability Digital Strategy.

Mental health transformation programme

We worked with the ICAN team to gather stories about how the services had changed during Covid, using the Most Significant Change methodology.

Integrated Care Fund (ICF)

We are working with seven projects funded by ICF to consider the themes of scale, good practice and innovation. We have consulted a network of university researchers to bring the latest internationally recognised methodologies and evaluation techniques to practitioners on the front line.

Literature searches

Here are examples of the searches we have carried out throughout the year:

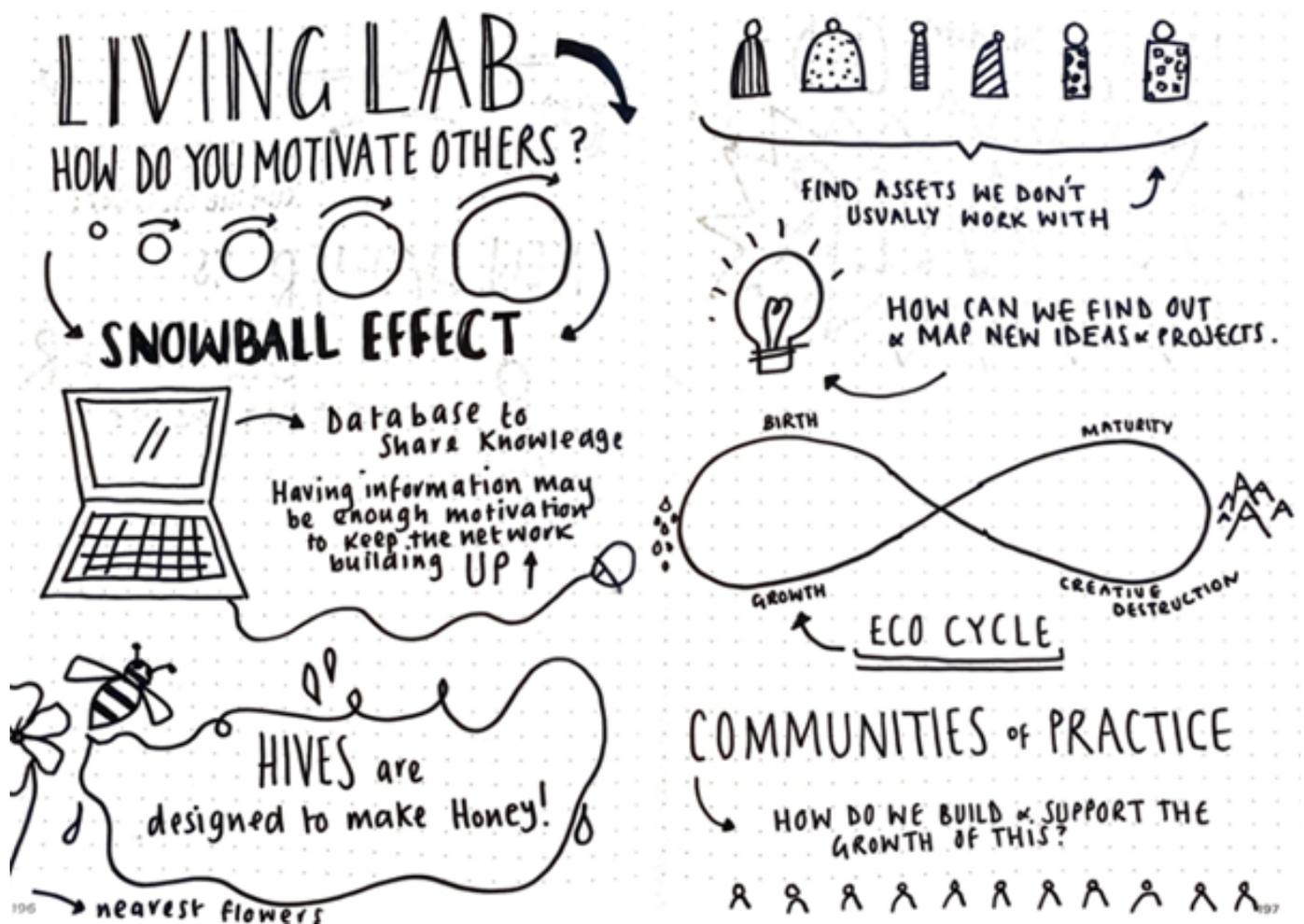
- Destination data and post education supported employment and life skills support for those with learning disabilities
- Frailty services for rural areas
- Digital divide and accessibility
- Co-production takes time to achieve
- Examples of Co-operatives that have been successful
- Loneliness during Covid
- Community initiatives to help combat loneliness and isolation during Covid
- Barriers to digital training for care home and domiciliary staff
- GP Surgeries in North Wales
- Use of Alexa and other devices to support the elderly
- Why do people misuse emergency services?
- Initiatives to reduce misuse of emergency services

“This is exactly what we were thinking of, it’s really helpful and succinct. The inclusion of the data is also really helpful.”

“Just a massive thank you for the info sent today – its already been a big help as the report from Warrington is a great example of the type of activity and feedback we could do quickly and also the Oxfordshire website is fantastic. So clear and easy to navigate. Really helpful so a big thank you”

Living labs

We worked with the Innovation Agency to develop a series of workshops to explore the concept of a Living Lab in North Wales. The workshops aimed to develop partnerships across health and social care, a shared language and understanding to inform a strategy for research, innovation and improvement to build on and coordinate with the BCUHB research and innovation strategy. We held 6 workshops between December 2020 and February 2021.



Social Care Innovation Lab

We worked with Bangor University to develop Social Care Innovation Labs to bring together practitioners and researchers around different topics.

The first one focussed on digital technology on 16 March 2021, in partnership with M-Sparc and Bangor University. The event included presentations about the Learning Disability Technology Strategy, the latest research about current and future technologies available to support care and support at home, lessons from the all Wales personal technology community of practice and Health Technology Wales speaking about supporting digital technology in care. There were 33 participants representing academia, practice, policy and interested members of the public. The event was very over-subscribed so we recorded it and shared the recording with people who could not attend.

During discussions the participants shared some useful links, including:

- The Insight App shares information about lots of online activities available for people with learning disabilities. It's being promoted across North Wales and was highly recommended by the presenters at the event. For more information you can: watch a video demonstrating how it works, read an article featuring a YouTube video or contact Paul.Mazurek@flintshire.gov.uk
- All Wales Personalised Technology Community of Practice. Please email karen.warner@ldw.org.uk if you would like to join.
- Lorna Tursley is a researcher looking at digital technology use by wheelchair services, many users have learning disabilities – please contact her on ltuersley@bangor.ac.uk if you'd be happy to talk about experiences /views on digital technology used with these. Also, if anyone has experience of developing ways of completing forms online using smart phones.
- The event was live tweeted by Beccy Roylance, follow [@NW_RIICH](https://twitter.com/NW_RIICH) to find out more.

What's next

In 2021/22 we want to build on the relationships and structures we've developed so far to make sure that our work has an impact and leads to improvements in the health and well-being of people across north Wales.

We will **map research, innovation and improvement activity** across north Wales and assess how well it aligns with regional and national priorities.

We will develop a **research, innovation and improvement strategy** to develop shared priorities for social care and health research.

We will continue to **support the transformation programme** and other partners to develop their research, innovation and improvement activity. This will include more Social Care Innovation Lab workshops to bring people together from diverse sectors to share ideas.

We will continue to **work with partners** from across Wales on shared projects, such as ways to commercialise innovation.

We will develop our **website** as a place where people can find the resources they need and examples of good practice from across the region. We will also explore better ways to share findings from consultation and engagement so that they have a greater impact. We will promote this work through our regular newsletters and Twitter account and aim to increase the number of people signed up to receive information from us.

Contact us

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