

Annual report 2021-22

North Wales Research, Innovation and
Improvement Coordination Hub



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NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

Summary

The hub aims to coordinate research, innovation and improvement activity in North Wales to inform new integrated models of health and social care as part of the commitment in [A Healthier Wales](#).

In 2021-22 we launched the collection of [good ideas](#) and [engagement database](#) on our website. These resources will help to share good practice and improve the coordination of activities across North Wales.

We supported regional programmes with survey design, evaluations, data and literature searches to help them understand what works and target resources more effectively. This included carrying out surveys of what parents need and comprehensive searches of resources for children and young people to support a new framework for supporting emotional health and wellbeing. As well as updating the [North Wales Population Needs Assessment](#).

We carried out interviews, surveys and resource mapping to find out what needs to happen to support research and innovation and improve health and social care services. This work will shape how the hub develops over the next year.

We worked closely with the other regional hubs and national organisations to share, promote and develop new ideas. By the end of the year we had increased our Twitter followers to 300 and had 150 subscribers to the RIIC hub mailing list.

Time for a rebrand!

From April 2022 we'll start to rebrand as the

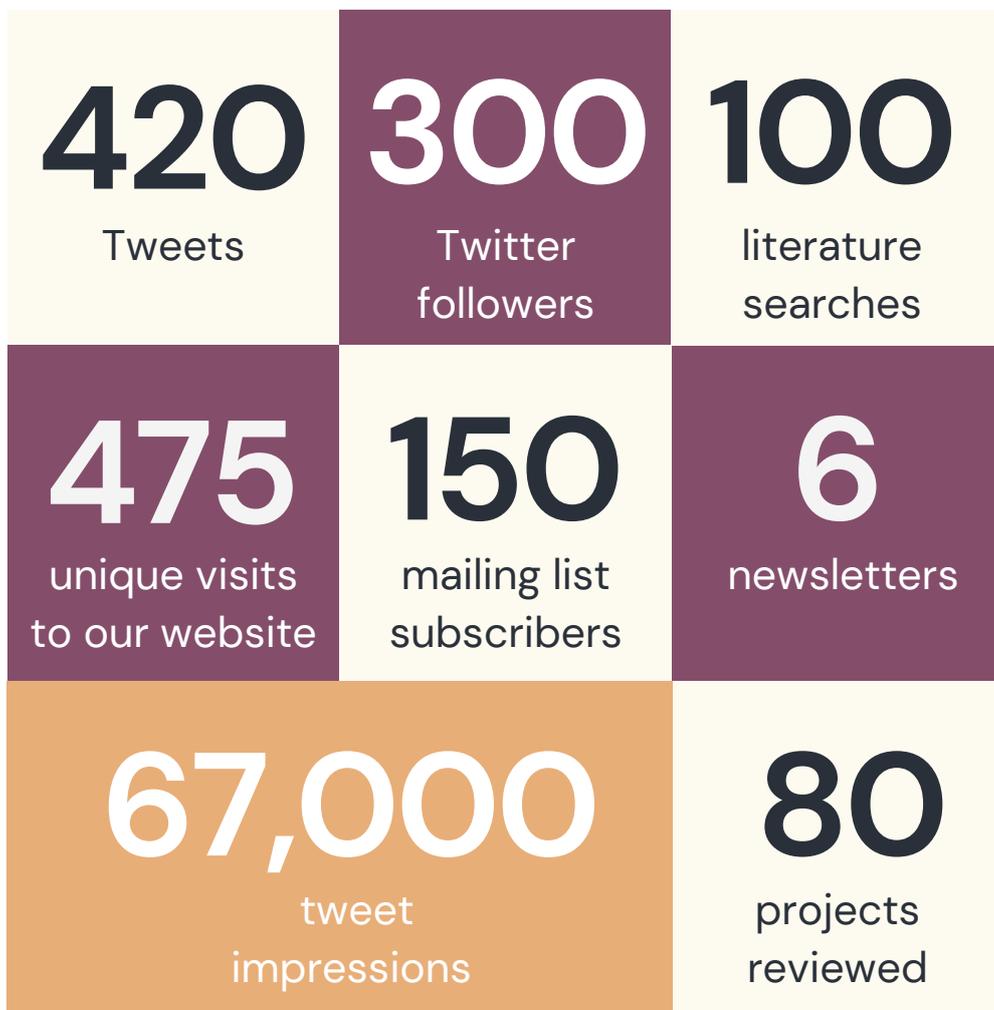
Regional Innovation Coordination (RIC) Hub.

The hub will keep its original mission as set out in [A Healthier Wales](#) to coordinate research and innovation and drive new ways of working to improve care and support. But the new name better reflects our role in the new Welsh Government Innovation Programme for health and social care.

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



The year in figures



What we discovered this year

The hub has been helping design, carry out and analyse surveys to find out how we can improve health and social care in North Wales. Here's a quick snap shot of some of the things we discovered.

- Digital technology is widely used to help make services better for people receiving care and support in North Wales. The biggest challenge was making sure staff had equal access to technology. For example, most care social staff use their own digital devices for training and this tends to be a Smartphone. Find out more: [Digital skills and access for social care staff](#)
- There are examples of care and support services working well across North Wales but services need more staff, better funding and to work better together. Find out more: [Population needs assessment consultation survey report.](#)
- Support, funding and leadership are needed to promote research, innovation and improvement activities in health and social care. Find out more: [Improving health and social care - what needs to happen](#)

Finding out what works: literature searches

This year 106 literature searches were completed including multiple searches to support the emotional health and wellbeing 'five ways to well-being' project and for the population needs assessment.

Topics included children, older people, mental health, sensory disabilities, autism, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and carers.

Other searches included; dementia and hearing, dementia and Welsh speakers, dementia and rural issues, dementia and learning disabilities, dementia statistics, population statistics, community resilience and social enterprises.

Finding out what works: Preventative health and social care

As part of the North Wales Population Needs Assessment, Public Health Wales produced a map of the evidence available for a list of preventative services commonly used across the region. We've been working with Public Health Wales to promote these findings and encourage colleagues to take a look at the evidence available when developing preventative services. There is also plenty we can learn from the review about the kind of evidence we need to collect to find out whether new ways of working are having the impact we want.

Find out more: [What works and what doesn't in preventative health and social care](#)

Finding out what works: Integrated Care Fund (ICF)

We completed seven detailed reviews and 76 desktop reviews of ICF projects to support the identification of projects that have the potential to scale up. This generated a lot of useful information to help decide which projects to expand, retain or change. It also taught us a lot about how useful the different ways of measuring the impact of projects were at making these decisions. We used this as a basis for a workshop we held with ICF leads about measuring outcomes. We will also use this learning when setting up systems to monitor the new Regional Integration Fund projects so that we have clear information about what works well and where we need to improve.

Finding out what works: Children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing

The hub is supporting the Emotional Health and Wellbeing 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' project, developing an online collection of resources to support children's wellbeing. Surveys were conducted for parents of 0 to 3, 4 to 7, 12 to 15 and 16 to 18 year olds regarding their children's well-being (the pilot survey completed last year was for parents of 8 to 11 year olds). Survey reports were created to present the data and key findings for the 'five ways to well-being' project. The findings were used to support the development of the well-being app for ages 8 to 11 and will be used in the development of the app for the other age ranges. Our Specialist Librarian was also part of the project group working with developers to help create the app for children age 8 to 11, their parents or trusted adults and professionals.

Collection of good ideas

We collected lots of good ideas for improving social care and health from across North Wales and have published them on our website. The new database can be searched or filtered by the topics you are interested in.

If you want to find out what's happening, get inspiration for a new project or just have a good old browse you can check it out here: [Collection of good ideas](#)

If you have a good idea you'd like to share please let us know NWRICH@denbighshire.gov.uk

Coordinating engagement activities

There is a vast amount of information collected each year about people's experiences of health and care services but much of this is used for a single purpose and then discarded. This means that people who use services are often asked similar questions repeatedly for slightly different purposes, which is a waste of everyone's time and goodwill. It also means we are missing out on all kinds of good ideas to innovate and improve services. We want to fix this.

Step 1 We collected as much information as we could about the results of recent engagement activities relating to care and support services in North Wales.

Step 2 We created an online database where we published summaries of all the results. Anyone can search, filter or browse the database to find out what's already been asked and answered.

Step 3 We're working with colleagues from local authorities, the health board and other partners to develop a strategic network where we can coordinate and improve the way we engage with our communities.

If you have information you'd like to be added to the database, we'd love to hear from you.

[Browse the directory of engagements](#)

Spotlight on dementia engagement

We are reviewing dementia engagement activities to identify any gaps and areas where we can improve. This involved gathering information from contacts in local councils, health services and the voluntary sector. Information gathered to date shows a range of engagement directly with established groups as well as wider survey activity both local and national.

Early indications are that the engagement is mainly with people who are willing to engage and are already actively taking part in activities. These are groups who are easily engaged and mainly willing to participate in such engagement activities.

There are some themes emerging such as reaching people who are not as engaged or actively involved in communities for various reasons, co-production including learning from good practice, Welsh language and young onset dementia.

Population Needs Assessment 2022

We successfully completed a full review of the North Wales Population Assessment in partnership with local authority and health board leads, supported by colleagues in the Regional Collaboration Team and Public Health Wales.

To prepare the report we collected information and data, looked at statistics, spoke with our communities and made use of a wide range of information collated by local councils, health services, charities and other organisations that provide services.

The report is helping us to develop our regional priorities and to plan and improve services across the region.

[View the Population Needs Assessment on the regional collaboration website.](#)



Mapping research, innovation and improvement

The first mission of the hub was to map all the health and social care research, innovation and improvement activities across North Wales. To achieve this huge task, we brought in help from colleagues at the Health Technology Centre at Swansea University who had carried out a similar exercise in other regions. This means we can compare the findings across Wales to see where our strengths and weaknesses are as well as opportunities for working together better.

The review found many strengths in research, innovation and improvement activity in health and social care across a wide range of partners including health, social care, voluntary sector and universities. Priority areas identified as needing more research, innovation and improvement activity were:

- Mental health services and wider support
- Paid and unpaid carers
- Care homes
- Children and young people
- Integrating innovation throughout health and social care

In a survey about what staff thought needed to happen to support research and innovation many of the participants shared examples of what's working well now:

- Support for research, innovation and improvement.
- Collaboration and communication.
- Dedicated time to do research and evaluations with support of senior management.
- Funding to get new projects started and provide training and development opportunities to staff and students.
- Culture and organisational structures that help facilitate improvement.
- Engagement and co-production.

There was also plenty of room for improvement in all these areas too.

Living Labs: Next steps workshop

To help people navigate this web of support, we've developed a series of [research innovation and improvement pathways](#) on our website.

The Innovation Agency also carried out a series of interviews, a focus group and workshops to help develop a vision and charter. The findings from the final workshop were captured in the virtual minutes below.

This mapping work highlighted the important role the hub has in coordinating and helping people to navigate the complex web of organisations, resources and networks. It helped us develop shared values and an approach where we bring people together around a topic of interest, using research and innovation as tools to help us work together to improve the wellbeing of people and communities in North Wales.



Research skills

Another piece of mapping work we carried out was to look at what research skills are needed within local councils in North Wales to carry out and use research evidence to tackle the social causes of poor health and reduce health inequalities. We worked closely with academic partners to see how local universities can support this activity. This included linking with the ALPHA Academy at Bangor University, part of the Welsh Government funded network of Intensive Learning Academies (ILAs) and with the Wrexham Glyndŵr University Research and Insights Partnership.

The driver for this work was a funding opportunity from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to develop a Health Determinants Research Collaborative within a local council. Our bid was unfortunately unsuccessful, but the process of putting it together was really beneficial for making new connections and clarifying our strengths and opportunities for improvement as a region.

Communication and engagement

In 2021-22 we continued to meet lots of people and make connections to help share new ideas and good practice across the region and beyond. This included an opportunity to present our work at the Rural Health and Care Wales Conference and to speak to students at the Bangor University Social Care Policy course. We also provided advice on the [Using evidence to inform improvement guidance](#) prepared as part of the new performance and improvement framework for social services.

Website

We continued to develop our webpages including research, innovation and improvement pathways, the collection of good ideas and engagement database. This year the hub homepage received 475 unique page views and the Population Needs Assessment work we promoted received 1,600 unique page views.

Newsletters

We shared 6 newsletters during the year full of information about research, innovation and improvement activities and the number of subscribers increased to 150.

Twitter update

Over the year followers on our Twitter accounts increased by 122, impressions increased by over 36,000, link clicks increased by 104, retweets increased by 161 and likes increased by 135. The Twitter accounts have been used to share good ideas, ongoing projects, innovations from across the UK, relevant events and live tweets from conferences. They have also been used to promote the support our team and other organisations can offer, to help with health and social care projects in North Wales. Our biggest increase in followers was during May 2021 where we had lots of engagement with the stories we shared as part of dementia week. In May 2021 we were also part of a social media takeover by Mencap to share the findings from their oral history project 'Our Social Networks' about people with learning disabilities and their friendships and romantic relationships.

What's next

In 2022-23 we will:

- Improve the way we use **data, insight and intelligence** across the region to identify where change is needed. This work will build on the lessons learned from the Population Needs Assessment and improve systems for the collection, collation, analysis and presentation of data about the needs, outcomes and experiences of people receiving care and support.
- Improve the way we **coordinate engagement** by developing a regional strategic network supported by our online engagement database. The aims of this network will be to improve the way we collect, analyse and use findings from engagement activities so the work has greater impact.
- **Improve access to evidence** through the work of the Specialist Librarian and collaborations with Social Care Wales and the Developing Evidence Enriched Practice (DEEP) programme.
- **Enable innovation** by working closely with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and developing links with national bodies such as the Life Sciences Hub Wales, Improvement Cymru, the Small Business Research Initiative Centre of Excellence, Bevan Commission Exemplars and Health Technology Wales.
- Provide **support with designing, commissioning and conducting robust evaluations** to identify what works. This strand will work closely with the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) to ensure key findings are captured, shared and scaled as appropriate.
- **Promote what works** by adding to the online 'collection of good ideas' as a resource to share what's working well across North Wales and promote through our website, social media and mailing list.

Contact us

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