**Cwmtawe Cluster Mental Health and Wellbeing Model**

Background

The Cwmtawe Cluster Mental Health and Wellbeing model service initially came about following discussions and research with the public and feedback on where there were unmet needs. The Cwmtawe Pathway Service was developed in 2022, off the back of the social prescribing project that was already operational within the cluster.

The idea of social prescribing had been present across other parts of the UK for a while but something relatively in Swansea, and Wales in general. Social prescribing is more of a holistic approach to supporting people with health and wellbeing needs. Clinicians in the cluster were reporting being completely overwhelmed by the volume of work in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of patients.

It was noted that working with adults with quite complex needs was beyond what clinicians were able to offer within the service and so there was a need to find some way of delivering these services, not just for adults but, for children as well. Demand was increasing and the data was showing that it was not going to stop anytime soon. A health and wellbeing questionnaire was developed, and patients of the Cwmtawe Cluster were consulted with and about 20% of patients saying they were presenting at the GP practice with something that they felt actually could be better met by a non-medical source of support, rather than prescriptions and anti-depressants.

The Cwmtawe Pathway Service supports adults with complex and recurring needs and, in particular those with experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence which they might be using substances to cope with and manage. Whether alcohol or drugs, help was enlisted from a number of agencies around the area, within the hub model. The most important thing is the patient – they are very much at the heart of the model and as such there are different levels of support available to them.

Wellbeing Practitioners

The wellbeing practitioners are pretty much the linchpin of the service. They hold it all together. Sally-Anne and Vanessa provide a triaging service by invite. Most people want to see someone in person, and they are quite happy to come to Strawberry Place surgery , where the hub is.

The hub covers Llansamlet, Clydach, New Cross, and Strawberry Place surgeries, with access to the social prescriber and counselling services.

Family and Therapy

There is also access to play therapy for patients aged three and above; They have a specialist room set up for children to express themselves and their emotions and anything that they have been through the medium of play.

Family and Therapy love being a part of the Virtual Ward. They come together in a meeting every two weeks with all the other services within the Cwmtawe Cluster and discuss any of cases that could benefit from further support or from one of the other services getting involved. This enables follow up on any cross referral done to ensure that no patient is getting lost in the system, providing continuity of support going through a smooth transition.

Student Placement Program

Alongside the main therapists, there is a student placement program to allow Masters level students to work with the lower-level trauma clients. It allows the service to see so many more clients across the cluster.

Complex Needs Pathway Service

The model also brought together the Complex Needs Pathway Service provided by Cara and Emily. They deal with patients holistically and can work with people for short term and longer term where needed. Some people remain in the complex needs pathway service for up to a year – in which time they will be supported through their journey of support, helping to coordinate their care as well as delivering an element directly.

Collaborative working

In addition to these innovative roles, a wealth of other services are utilised that are in the region and the model has access to: these inform the hub model. It has removed barriers, so it is not about the third sector delivering this and the health board delivering that. It is about delivering care together as part of a true partnership which encompasses statutory mental health provision as well as third sector provision.

The beauty of the model and the hub is that it enables individual people to have access to multiple services, all under the one umbrella, so from a patient perspective, that actually improves their experience of the whole process; No need to repeat their story, particularly in cases of domestic abuse, where repeated disclosures to multiple people can increase the trauma they live with.

Evaluation

As part of the service evaluation for the Cwmtawe Pathway Service, an economic return on evaluation with Swansea University was created. There was a potential upstream cost avoidance of between £450,000 to £860,000. If those figures are applied across the whole of the number of patients seen year, that would give potential upstream savings in the region of £4.5 million.

The model was able to demonstrate that there was not just cost saving to health but also cost savings for other key stakeholders as well. Those savings go across the whole the public purse with criminal justice achieving the biggest saving of all, then health, then local authorities.

Recognition

This initiative has earned the cluster national recognition through the NHS Wales Awards. The feedback received when winning the award was that there was not another service like it, and the Health Board was so impressed with the flexibility in the approach, that the other remaining seven clusters within the Swansea Bay are now working to deliver their versions of a mental health hub.

This success demonstrates if people are able to invest in the model it will really help, not only staff, but just from the long-term costs alone, ultimately help more people as well.