



**Caring Together
Western Bay**
Health and Social Care Programme
**Gofalu Gyda'n Gilydd
Bae'r Gorllewin**
Rhaglun Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol

Well-being in Action

Well-being in Action: Neath Port Talbot

Festive Fun in Ystalyfera

Spirits were high on 21st December 2015 as Kirstie Richards, Neath Port Talbot's Local Area Coordinator for Ystalyfera hosted the very first festive community lunch at popular local café Y Gegin Fach.

Local Area Coordination is new to Neath Port Talbot, but is already making its mark. Its ethos is based around building stronger communities and supporting people who are vulnerable or socially isolated.

"The key purpose of Local Area Coordination is to bring people together and help them achieve their own personal well-being goals", said Kirstie.

"The Christmas lunch is an ideal opportunity for residents to come together to share a bite to eat and connect with each other. We've also had a lot of support from locals who've come along as volunteers to entertain the diners with Christmas songs and carols on the piano."

Since starting in her role in November 2015, Kirstie has engaged with a variety of local services and community groups, including 'Dragon Arts and Learning' in Pontardawe - an organisation that provides a range of arts based opportunities to local people of all ages and abilities.

Community resilience and asset based models that focus on prevention are developing across Western Bay: in Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Local Area Coordination is up and running, and in Bridgend they have developed an approach called Local Community Coordination.

The Coordinators have a broad knowledge of local groups and services and support people to find locally based solutions.



Kirstie Richards
**Local Area
Coordinator for
Ystalyfera**



Well-being in Action: Swansea



Local Area Coordination supports people and communities to develop skills and ideas that help them to avoid crises, find practical solutions to everyday issues and problems, stay strong and build a 'good life'. The whole approach is about developing sustainable solutions with people and communities that will help to prevent problems from reaching crisis point.

In **Swansea**, the first three Local Area Coordinators started on June 1st 2015. Local Area Coordinators are recruited by local people, for local people—inclusion, contribution and co-production in action. They act as a single point of contact in the community for people of all ages with mental health conditions, learning disabilities or physical disability, and for older people, families and carers, supporting them to stay strong, safe and connected.

Sheila's story

The power of relationships-overcoming isolation and nurturing contribution

The Local Area Coordinator is introduced by a District Nurse to Sheila, a 70 year old woman who lives alone since her husband died. Sheila is a poet who still writes but is having problems with her computer which she must use due to her health condition. In addition, Sheila's garden, once her husband's pride and joy, is rapidly becoming overgrown and she fears 'letting the neighbourhood down'.

The Local Area Coordinator takes time to get to know Sheila and is able to connect her with a local church group who tend older peoples' gardens. One of the group of gardeners is Barbara, a young woman who is interested in creative writing but who has suffered with anxiety and depression. She also happens to have expert knowledge about computers. The Local Area Coordinator is taking time to get to know Barbara via the gardening group and both she and Sheila have indicated that they would like to be introduced to each other. The plan is for Barbara to help Sheila with her computer problem, and for Sheila to share her considerable skills in poetry and writing with Barbara. Both women have something to offer each other in a reciprocal, positive and natural way.

This has helped two people avoid the need for more expensive services and is building their long term resilience in their local community.

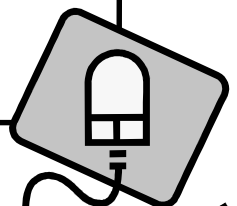
Building more welcoming, inclusive, supportive communities, spotting and creating new opportunities

A piece of derelict land has become an eyesore in a local community. The land is adjacent to 2 restaurants, 2 supermarkets and near to the local Comprehensive school. The Local Area Coordinator knows through his work that there are several isolated people who would love to be connected with others to do some gardening and perhaps grow some vegetables. He has contacted the supermarkets and restaurants who are all interested in the idea of selling and using local produce, and the Comprehensive school who would like to incorporate the healthy eating message in to the curriculum. He is working with the local Councillor to bring these interests together so that the piece of land can be transformed by local people to become a 'kitchen garden' resource which enhances the wellbeing of everyone in the community.

Transforming local systems

In one community in Swansea there is no local surgery offering blood tests to its older or disabled patients, who then have to travel to a distant surgery or the local hospital for this service. This is resulting in increased home visits and higher service costs. Through connections with local organisations, the Local Area Coordinator has linked the District Nurses with an under-used community centre to develop a local, accessible and cost-effective alternative. **Helping people make good use of necessary services and uncovering solutions that are straightforward, local and sustainable.**

For more information on the Local Area Coordination model, please visit www.lacnetwork.org



Well-being in Action: Bridgend

Local Community Coordination

Laura Semmens is the Local Community Coordinator for the Bridgend locality. Her role involves supporting people who may need some extra help to achieve their own personal wellbeing outcomes. Those who are referred to the service may need help for any number of reasons, including social isolation or issues with physical or mental health.

Here she tells us about her journey with one service user who's starting to make some positive changes thanks to this new, person-centred way of working.



Laura Semmens
LCC for Bridgend

Mary's Story...

Mary is in her 50s and has suffered with agoraphobia, severe anxiety and depression for many years. She has a lot of practical support from her daughter, who does the shopping, sometimes cooks her meals and deals with all of her correspondence as Mary is unable to read or write.

The feelings of intense panic Mary experiences when leaving the house mean she only does so when it's absolutely necessary (usually for medical appointments). She has previously been referred to the local Mental Health Team, but has been discharged. Mary was referred to me by the local Job Centre.

Personal Well-being Goals

I've met with Mary on a number of occasions now and we've drawn up a plan of action to achieve her own personal well-being goals. She would like to be able to visit her daughter's house one day – something she's been unable to do due to her anxiety around leaving the house.

Mary also used to go walking with her late husband and has expressed an interest in taking up country walking again.

In addition to these goals, Mary has needed support to apply for the correct benefits and practical help to deal with her social housing landlord with a few queries she has about her tenancy.

I successfully supported Mary and her daughter to claim their full PIP and Carer's Allowance entitlements. Mary has also been referred to a telephone befriending scheme run by 'Mental Health Matters Wales'. She now receives a phone call from a

volunteer every Wednesday and has told me how chatting to someone outside of the family has helped reduce her feelings of loneliness and isolation.

It's clear from speaking to Mary that her problems with literacy weigh on her mind, so I've made a referral to the Community Companions scheme and hope to find a volunteer who can support her in her learning.

In the meantime, I've supported Mary to register with 'Booklinks'; a local audiobook loaning scheme and have sourced a relaxation CD which is helping her to manage her anxiety.

Looking to the future, I'm pleased that Mary has agreed to come along to a relaxation class that I'll be arranging in the new year. I also hope to be able to introduce her to another resident who enjoys walking and also suffers with severe anxiety – with the goal of the two of them starting a walking club for women who've experienced similar issues...watch this space!

Mary did achieve one key goal she set herself recently, which was to attend a health event arranged by the Job Centre. I mentioned that I would also be attending and was delighted to see her walk through the door having faced her fear.

Onwards and upwards over the next few months!

My Local Community Coordinator is an outstanding worker. She's one of the best!

Mary, Bridgend

LCC / LAC are being delivered as part of the Western Bay Programme's Prevention and Wellbeing project, and are clear examples of how services are doing things differently to help maximise the independence and well-being of individuals.