



## Gwent Becoming a Marmot Region

### Situation

At the Gwent Public Service Board (the PSB) meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, the PSB considered the available indicators of health inequalities and agreed to incorporate them into the Gwent Wellbeing Assessment process. The indicator sets considered and discussed by the PSB included the original set of Marmot Indicators, which prompted a discussion about the possibility of becoming a Marmot Region.

The purpose of this paper is to ask the PSB to agree that the six Marmot principles should be the framework for action to reduce health inequalities across Gwent and to agree to formally open discussions with the Institute of Health Equity about the potential benefits of working with them as a Marmot Region.

### Background

The original 'Marmot Review' of health inequalities in England '*Fair Society, Healthy Lives*' (2010) proposed six principles that if followed would lead to a reduction in health inequalities. The Building a Healthier Gwent (2019) report incorporated those principles which are:

**The Marmot report identified 6 guiding principles for achieving greater equity of health:<sup>3</sup>**

1. giving every child the best start in life

2. enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives

3. creating fair employment and good work for all

4. ensuring a healthy standard of living for all

5. creating and developing sustainable places and communities

6. strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

The six principles provided the framework for the analysis published in '*Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On*' (Instituted of Health Equity, February 2020), which concluded that as in 2010, the more deprived the area, the shorter the life expectancy, but this social gradient had become steeper over the last decade.

*Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review. The Pandemic, Socioeconomic and Health Inequalities in England* (Institute of Health Equity 2020) again used the six principles framework to analyse the impact of the pandemic on health inequalities in England. The report concluded that 'COVID-19 has exposed and amplified the inequalities we observed in our *10 Years On* report and the economic harm caused by containment measures – lockdowns, tier systems, social isolation measures – will further damage health and widen health inequalities'. The report made short, medium and long term recommendations for evidence based action under each of the six principles. Many of the recommendations require action at the UK and Welsh government level, but the principles are generalisable to the Gwent region.

In June 2021, the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) published a further report '*Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester: Health Equity and Dignified Lives*' (the Greater Manchester report). The purpose of the report was 'to provide evidence of the health inequality challenges the (Greater Manchester) City Region will face post-pandemic and to make recommendations to monitor and reduce them'. The six Marmot principles are threaded through the report but with partially revised wording:

- Communities and Place
- Housing, Transport & Environment
- Early Years, Children & Young People
- Income, Welfare & Debt
- Work & Unemployment
- Strengthening the Role & Impact of Ill Health Prevention

## **Assessment**

### Why should Gwent become a Marmot region?

Inequalities will continue to widen without concerted, sustained action to implement the things that work to reduce inequalities. The series of Marmot reports provide a comprehensive guide to the evidence of what works.

Adopting the six Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce health inequalities would build on the decision the PSB made at its first meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to incorporate the available indicators of health inequalities into the Gwent Wellbeing Assessment process. The available indicator sets include the original set of Marmot Indicators (Appendix A) which were developed to measure progress against the six Marmot Principles

The six Marmot Principles are threaded through the *Building a Healthier Gwent* report and the subsequent Healthier Gwent programme. The PSB adopting the

Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce health inequalities would formalise the current approach.

Becoming a Marmot Region would be a statement of intent to implement evidence based action to reduce health inequalities and could be a natural next step to build on adopting the Marmot Principles and monitoring progress through the Marmot Indicator set.

### When should Gwent become a Marmot region?

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the urgent need to reduce health inequalities. As we move from pandemic to endemic COVID-19, the inequality in uptake of the vaccination and in the risk factors for COVID-19 causing serious illness mean that COVID-19 will continue to exacerbate health inequalities.

The formation of the Gwent PSB has created a unique opportunity to seize the initiative and do things differently as we recover from the impact of the pandemic. Becoming the first Marmot region in Wales would attract attention and raise expectations, but bringing in the external support of the Institute of Health Equity would almost certainly help the PSB to accelerate progress towards the strategic ambition of reducing health inequalities across Gwent.

### How does Gwent Become a Marmot Region?

There is no single process for becoming a 'Marmot region' or place. It varies in each of the areas the Institute of Health Equity works. It often depends on what the commissioning organisation wants. The Institute of Health Equity (IHE) and the commissioning organisation work together to assess what is wanted and what the IHE can offer within the funding available.

### What might Gwent Becoming a Marmot Region Involve?

The support provided by the Institute of Health Equity has been different in each of the areas they have worked. At the moment, the IHE is working with a few areas in the North West and in London. The IHE's previous work with Greater Manchester and Coventry has finished but they stay in touch, recently attending the Coventry Marmot meeting.

If the Gwent PSB wishes to explore becoming a Marmot region further, the next step would be to open formal discussions with the Institute of Health Equity to assess what support the PSB needs and what the IHE can offer. Those discussions would inform a proposal for consideration at the next meeting of the PSB. That proposal would include potential sources of funding and what the IHE could provide for the potential funding available.

## **Recommendation**

- 1) Gwent PSB adopts the six Marmot principles as the framework for action to reduce health inequalities across Gwent**
- 2) Gwent PSB agrees to open formal discussions with the Institute of Health Equity about Gwent becoming a Marmot Region to inform a proposal for consideration at the next Gwent PSB meeting.**

Dr Sarah Aitken, Director of Public Health & Strategic Partnerships, ABUHB

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**Appendix A****The Marmot Indicators**

- Healthy life expectancy at birth – males and females
- Life expectancy at birth – males and females
- Inequality in life expectancy at birth – males and females
- People reporting low life satisfaction
- Good level of development at age 5
- Good level of development at age 5 with free school meal status
- GCSE achieved (5A\*-C including English & Maths)
- GCSE achieved (5A\*-C including English & Maths) with free school meal status
- 19-24 year olds who are not in employment, education or training
- Unemployment % (ONS model-based method)
- Long-term claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance
- Work-related illness
- Households not reaching Minimum Income Standard
- Fuel poverty for high fuel cost households