

Gwent Well-Being Plan Update Report			
Report Subject	Best Start in Life: Update Report on PSB Partner Organisation progress against key recommendations	Complete	Project / Action completed
		Green	Current progress on target
		Amber	Progress behind target but still achievable
Date(s)	11/09/24 Gwent PSB Scrutiny Committee	Red	Progress behind target, significant issues
	19/09/24 Gwent Public Services Board	N/A	Progress not directly applicable
Delivery Lead	<i>To be agreed by PSB</i>	Area of Focus	Give Every Child the Best Start in Life

Objective(s) from Gwent Well-being Plan 2023-28	Overall BRAG	Commentary
We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all		<p>This report specifically is aligned to this well-being objective and directly supports the outlined step to <i>'take action to address inequities, particularly in relation to health through the framework of the Marmot Principles'</i>.</p> <p>The report outlines progress made by partner organisations against identified recommendations to support a <i>'Best Start in Life'</i> approach from the Building a Fairer Gwent report.</p>
We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations.		Updates not directly associated to this well-being objective.

Background

The Gwent PSB and its member organisation have signalled its collective ambition to address inequity and its root causes. A significant amount of work has taken place on behalf of the PSB, resulting in the publication of Building a Fairer Gwent: Improving Health Equity and the Social Determinants. Following this, a report was PSB received and the Board re-stated and re-confirmed its ambition to address inequity and its root causes and integrate the eight Marmot Principles into its Well-being Plan approach.

Following further consideration of the evidence from the Well-being Plan and Building a Fairer Gwent report, the PSB identified the four 'at-scale' Areas of Focus (AoF) to start to take this approach forward. These AoF were specifically identified to align to the Well-being Steps and eight Marmot Principles, demonstrating clear integration across a range of well-being priorities (see supporting Integration Matrix).

An initial mapping process of delivery against each of the AoF involved an extensive range of partners across Gwent with over 200 individuals and over 20 organisations responding to surveys or participating in the workshops. This included an initial mapping of current delivery structures that are relevant to these areas. The feedback gathered has been analysed, and there are some potential actions and outcomes that came from this process that are additional to the Marmot focused recommendations from 'Building a Fairer Gwent', which may be worth considering as part of the response and long-term delivery.

Area of Focus: Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life

To begin the journey to establishing an up-to-date picture of delivery across Gwent against the recommended actions from the Building a Fairer Gwent report (referred to throughout this report as the Marmot recommendations), it was agreed by the PSB in May 2024 to carry out an initial exercise to monitor progress by PSB partner organisations (individually and collectively).

Firstly, the Marmot recommendations were categorised into the 4 Areas of Focus (AoF) for the PSB to monitor progress and identify any gaps or opportunities for regional delivery.

Subsequently, Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GSWAG) officers initially engaged key representatives across the Health Board and Gwent local authorities to seek any related progress against the Marmot recommendations relating to the 'Best Start in Life' AoF for the 2023/24. Officers were requested to provide relevant information in a spreadsheet format with an appropriate RAG rating (as for this report).

Based on the assessment of progress against the Marmot recommendations across Gwent, several key points have emerged. Whilst there has been notable progress in some areas, i.e around the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme and educational initiatives targeting school absences and inequalities, the overall picture is mixed.

Good Progress	Some Progress	Unknown	No progress
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Marmot Recommendations	BRAG	Commentary
<p>MP1.1 - Define best start and school readiness in Gwent in partnership with parents, early years staff and health.</p>		<p>PHW in collaboration with ABUHB are developing a shared framework which will support the prioritisation of future action across the early years system in Wales.</p> <p>One of the key steps will be to define what ‘best start in life’ means for Wales and how this might be measured. There is evidence of need for a consensus on strategic terms like "best start in life" and "school readiness."</p> <p>While some progress has been made in developing a strategic approach within the Health Board, a more holistic definition that is agreed by all stakeholders i.e. across Health, Education, Early Years & Children’s Services should be pursued. This will ensure consistency in future reporting and action.</p>
<p>MP1.2 - Assess impact of staff shortages on the delivery of Flying Start in areas of higher deprivation.</p>		<p>No related information on progress received from the initial exercise.</p>
<p>MP1.3 - Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school scheme identifies actions across seven health topics and shift aim to reduce inequalities in every nursery.</p>		<p>Schools in the most deprived areas are actively participating in the support scheme linking with Healthy Schools and Community Focussed Schools Teams to prioritise pupils in areas of higher deprivation.</p> <p>Some schools in the most deprived areas are using the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Tool to implement the statutory framework and enhance emotional and mental wellbeing for staff and pupils.</p> <p>The new Welsh Network of Health and Wellbeing Promoting Schools (WNHWPS) minimum standards are awaiting approval by the Welsh Government and publication by Public Health Wales.</p>

Marmot Recommendations	BRAG	Commentary
<p>MP1.4 - Assess and recommend improving maternity and parental leave policies and support for childcare in PSB member organisations</p>		<p>South Wales Fire and Rescue Service indicated that their Maternity and Parental Leave and Breastfeeding at Work policies have been recently reviewed and updated so that all employees are eligible for up to 52 weeks full maternity pay. Staff who are breastfeeding are placed on non-operational duties whilst continuing to breastfeed and are provided with designated facilities to express and store breastmilk whilst at work.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Council has recently committed to review its Breastfeeding at Work policy as part of its 'Get Blaenau Gwent Breastfeeding' campaign action plan and have agreed to work with local partners on via the Local Delivery Group (BG Local Well-being Partnership).</p>
<p>MP1.5 - Identify areas of low childcare provision and map to deprivation and assess quality of provision.</p>		<p>Feedback relating to identifying areas of low childcare provision in areas of higher deprivation indicates that this work is already conducted by Local Authorities through the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, a statutory duty since 2008.</p> <p>This may need to be revised to focus on the provision of 2-year-old childcare in areas of low deprivation, potentially linking it to the rollout of Foundation Stage childcare.</p>
<p>MP2.1 - Reduce the gap in year 11 attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals(FSM) and other pupils in every school and create the culture for every pupil to thrive with skills for life.</p>		<p>Each Local Authority approach to addressing the attainment gap for FSM-eligible pupils focuses on challenging and supporting schools to enhance teaching and learning quality. This is done through bespoke support plans and tailored professional learning (PL).</p> <p>Each Local Authority develops a School Improvement Support Plan that outlines actions to evaluate and improve the use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). Nearly all schools have shown that the PDG positively impacts pupil progress.</p>

Marmot Recommendations	BRAG	Commentary
<p>MP2.3 - Focus the pupil development grant to improve attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals to reduce the gap in attainment.</p>		<p>Each Local Authority's School Improvement Support Plan details the actions that will be taken to evaluate and improve the use of the PDG.</p> <p>Many schools can demonstrate how the PDG has had a positive impact on pupil progress.</p>
<p>MP2.4 - Assess inequalities in affordable travel to school, improve data collection.</p>		<p>No related information on progress received from the initial exercise.</p>
<p>MP2.6 - Healthy Schools scheme in primary and secondary schools shifts to proportionate offer to schools that have higher number of students eligible for free school meals and where there are pockets of deprivation.</p>		<p>See related update MP1.3 above.</p>
<p>MP2.7 - In partnership with young people, businesses and the Third Sector, assess provision of career guidance and aspiration approaches in primary and secondary schools.</p>		<p>Only 'RAG' status provided. No related information on progress received from the initial exercise.</p>
<p>MP2.8 - Work with young people to better communicate available youth services and future youth services.</p>		<p>All local authorities are working and engaging with children and young people to shape current and future Youth Services to a certain extent, as part of their existing Youth Services provision. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is also focussing on offering a broad spectrum of youth intervention activity. This includes interventions for young people referred from Youth Offending Trusts and Pupil Referral Units, as well as targeting activity in areas of high ASB and fire setting and have future plans for Youth Forum participation to consider a range of community safety topics.</p>
<p>MP2.11 - Reduce duplication and provide consistent offer of mental health support in schools.</p>		<p>Proportionate offer of support according to number of students eligible for free school meals and where there are pockets of deprivation.</p>

Marmot Recommendations	BRAG	Commentary
<p>MP2.12 - Assess and reduce inequalities in school absences.</p>		<p>Each Local Authority's School Improvement Support Plan outlines the specific actions that will be taken to share best practices in addressing inequalities in educational attainment.</p>
<p>MP2.13 - Schools and Education Achievement Service share best practice and leadership in addressing inequalities in education attainment.</p>		<p>See related update MP2.12 above.</p>
<p>SY17 - In early years adopt shared system records between health and social care.</p>		<p>Early Years Team sits in Education in Caerphilly and do share information between Education and Social Care as needed. An Information Sharing Protocols has been developed and approved but not yet started for sharing information between Health and Education.</p> <p>The Early Years Team will continue to work with relevant Health Team to ensure information can be shared to support all families across the borough, with an aim for antenatal notifications to be shared by October 2024.</p>

Performance Measures, Indicators & Metrics



The Health Board's Gwent Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) Team have agreed to provide data to support establishing a regional baseline against the 'Best Start in Life' AoF, as well providing historic values/trends for those indicators where available (Provided in Appendix 3).

Risks and Barriers to Delivery	Risk Level	Commentary on mitigating actions / support required
The exercise has shown that the 2023-24 Marmot recommendations from the Building a Fairer Gwent report have not yet been fully embedded into working practices or action plans throughout PSB organisations.	Medium	Efforts should be made to raise awareness and ensure that these recommendations are integrated in organisational strategies and service area work programmes across PSB organisations.
There were six National recommendations associated to Best Start in Life aimed at national organisations like Welsh Government and Public Health Wales.	Low	As the PSB progresses interaction with relevant national bodies should be prioritised.

Next Steps & Plans for next reporting period

That a 'Best Start in Life' report is presented back to the PSB after six months (circa Mar 2025) by the identified Lead to outline further progress made for this Area of Focus.

OVERARCHING INTEGRATION MATRIX

					PSB Area of Focus 				
					Give every child the best start in life	Everyone has the same economic chances	Everyone lives in a place they feel safe	Everyone lives in a climate-ready community where environment is valued and protected	
Marmot Principles 	Give Every Child the Best Start in Life		Create Fair Employment and Good Work for All		Tackle Racism, Discrimination and their Outcomes		Pursue Environmental Sustainability and Health Equity Together		
	Enable all Children, Young People and Adults to Maximise their Capabilities and have Control over their Lives								
			Strengthen the Role and Impact of Ill-Health Prevention						
	Ensure a Healthy Standard of Living for All								
					Create and Develop Healthy and Sustainable Places and Communities				