

The **Gwent** Best Start in Life: Community of Practice Quarterly Newsletter

Giving **EVERY** baby and child the best start in life

Spring Edition 2026



Welcome to our Spring edition of the **Gwent Best Start in Life Community of Practice e-newsletter**! As the season of renewal arrives, we're celebrating the collective efforts across Gwent to support babies, children and families to thrive. Together, we can work to strengthen the early years system, recognising that supporting families truly **takes a village**.

Working in Collaboration Across Gwent

Delivering our ambition to **give every baby and child the best start in life across Gwent** is supported by a clear governance structure, bringing partners together to drive coordinated, system-wide action.

As shared in our Winter edition, you met our **Leadership Group**, who play a key role in driving this work. Working under this group, sits the **Regional Management Group**, which focuses on coordinated delivery and implementation across partners. Together, these groups play a key role in guiding the development and delivery of the regional BSiL agenda, including the **Regional Delivery Plan** (covered in more detail on the next page).

We are also working closely with the **Regional Partnership Board's Children and Families Strategic Partnership** to ensure alignment and a joined-up approach across this agenda.

Seeking Third Sector Representation

Are you a Third Sector Organisation working with babies, children or families? We are inviting expressions of interest for representatives to join the Leadership Group and/or Regional Management Group to help shape this work across Gwent.

The voice and experience of the wider voluntary and community sector play a vital role in shaping support for babies, children and families. By being part of these groups, you can bring your insight and experience to help guide how this work is developed and delivered across Gwent.

👉 To express your interest, please complete the **Expression of Interest Form** which will have been emailed to you on the 26 May.  Deadline for applications is **02 June 2026**.

Regional Delivery Plan

As referenced above, work is underway across Gwent to develop a **Best Start in Life Regional Delivery Plan**, focused on improving outcomes for babies, children and families and supporting them to thrive.

As part of this, **Six Priorities** have been agreed, setting out where focus will be placed to give every baby and child the best start in life. These will provide a clear, shared direction for action, with defined outcome measures to monitor progress and impact.

The **Six Priorities**, written in the voice of the child, ensure a clear child-centred focus:

1. Planning the best pregnancy for me and my family
2. Building strong emotional and mental health for me and my family
3. Supporting my family with my development from baby to child to help me be ready to start school
4. Ensuring my home is warm, safe and secure for me and my family
5. Helping my family to maximise their income to meet my needs
6. Helping me and my family access high quality, inclusive childcare

These priorities reflect a shared commitment across partners in Gwent to work together in a more coordinated and focused way, with an emphasis on prevention, reducing inequalities and keeping the voice of babies, children and families central to how services are shaped and delivered.

Next steps include identifying lead partners for each priority area, developing actions and approaches to support delivery, and engaging with families across Gwent to gather feedback and ensure their voices continue to inform this work.

The Big BEAR Event

The Building Early Attuned Relationships (BEAR) programme is an awareness-raising training initiative designed to support attuned relationships between babies and their caregivers, with a strong focus on infant mental health and the First 1,000 Days.

The **BEAR pilot** has now been completed across Wales, and a free Big BEAR Event is taking place to share learning from the programme and explore what this means for future delivery.

 Wednesday 10th June 2026  Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells

Find out how BEAR was co-produced and delivered across Wales, explore key learning from the pilot, and hear from guest speakers, with opportunities to experience elements of the training and help shape what happens next.

This full-day event is ideal for those in leadership, strategic or management roles across health, education, social care and the third sector, particularly within the early years and First 1,000 Days. 🐻 Register your free place here: [Big BEAR Event](#)



Stay Connected

Take a look at what's coming up across the region, from events and consultations to guidance updates and helpful resources.

Screen Time Guidance for Under 5's

Published in March 2026, the new [Screen Time Guidance for Under 5's](#) offers clear, evidence-informed advice to support healthy and balanced screen use for babies and young children. By acknowledging that screens are now part of everyday family life, advice is provided on how families can make confident, age-appropriate decisions about routines, boundaries and screen use that support development, wellbeing and relationships.

This topic will be explored further during our [August webinar](#); with a focus on how practitioners can have positive, non-judgemental conversations with families about screen time. See below for details on how to register your spot! Read the full [independent report](#) to find out more.



Better Join Up, Better Outcomes for Child Poverty

[Better Join Up](#), led by Public Health Network Cymru, shows how services can work more effectively together to better support families, particularly those experiencing poverty. You can use the findings to reflect on how you collaborate with partners, reduce siloed working and improve how support is coordinated around families.

Practical tools and examples are included to help you strengthen partnerships and embed lived experience in your role. Explore the findings and identify practical changes you can make to strengthen joined-up working.



Have Your Say: Supporting Families to Access Nature



[Home-Start Cymru](#) are developing a new project to support families & children to access and benefit from nature, and they are looking for views to help shape this work.

They are inviting feedback from both families with children aged 0–5 and practitioners working with families across Wales. The surveys explore experiences of spending time outdoors, barriers, and what support could help families engage more with nature.

For families (parents and carers): 🗳️ [Little Explorers, Big Ideas: Family Outdoor Survey](#). As a thank you, participants can enter a prize draw to win an Amazon voucher.

For practitioners, this offers an opportunity to share professional insight and help shape future support: 🗳️ [Little Explorers – Have your say](#).

Home-Start Cymru would really value your support in sharing this opportunity across your networks and taking part if it is relevant to you & your role!

Local Pride Events

Below is a list of Pride events taking place across Gwent, alongside Cardiff's larger Pride event. These offer welcoming, family-friendly opportunities to come together and celebrate diversity, creating a space where **kindness, respect and belonging** can be experienced by all.

We encourage you to share these events with the families and colleagues you work alongside, helping to raise awareness of local opportunities to connect, celebrate and experience inclusion in everyday life.

In future editions, we will explore how **small, meaningful actions** can help create environments where every child and family feels **seen, valued and respected**. We recognise that there can be a worry about "getting it wrong," but being open, listening and learning together makes the difference.

- **Blaenau Gwent Pride** | Bedwellty House & Park, Tredegar | Saturday 6 June | 12:30pm
- **Monmouth Pride** | Monmouth Castle | Saturday 6 June | 11:30am
- **Cardiff Pride** | Cardiff Castle | Saturday 13 June | 10:30am
- **Abergavenny Pride** | Abergavenny Castle | Saturday 27 June | 11:30am
- **Caerphilly Pride** | Caerphilly Castle | Saturday 4 July | 11:30am
- **Caldicot Pride** | Caldicot Castle | Saturday 15 August | 11:30am
- **Newport Pride** | Riverfront Theatre | Saturday 5 September | 11:30am

U.K Pride 2026

- 🔍 The Welsh Government has published a [National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse in Wales \(2026–2036\)](#), setting out a long-term, whole-system approach to prevention, early identification and support. The strategy emphasises collaboration across services and places the voices, rights and wellbeing of children and young people at its heart. A [young people's version](#) is also available.
- 🍏 Updated statutory guidance has been published to support the [Healthy Eating in Schools \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#), coming into force on 31 October 2026. The guidance strengthens food and drink standards in maintained nursery and primary schools and supports positive environments that promote health, wellbeing and lifelong healthy eating habits. Find out more and explore what this means for your setting.
- 🌱 The [Family & Community Community of Practice](#), hosted by EXchange Wales, brings together professionals and communities to share learning and strengthen whole-family approaches. The platform hosts blogs, case studies, research insights and events that support collaboration and evidence-informed practice. Explore and get involved.

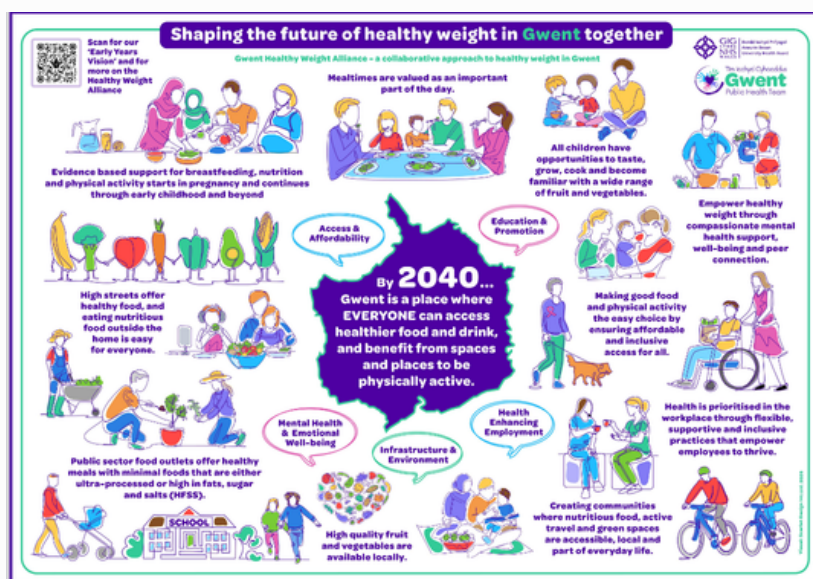
More to Explore

Get Involved: Gwent Healthy Weight Alliance

The Gwent Healthy Weight Alliance brings partners together to support healthy weight and wellbeing across the life course.

Members explore local challenges and opportunities, share learning and take collaborative, preventative action to help communities and families build healthy habits over time.

The Alliance is particularly keen to strengthen Early Years representation, recognising the vital role that early relationships, settings and services play.



Join the Conversation

 Next meeting: 7 July 2026 (9am-1pm) 📍 | Caerphilly Miners' Institute

If you want to have a voice, share practice insight and be part of shaping this work, we'd love you to get involved!

✉ Sarah.Davies91@wales.nhs.uk | 🗨 Explore the [GHW Alliance Padlet](#)

- 🌱 **Start Strong** is a newly developed UK-wide early childhood platform, led by [Sally Hogg](#) (Director), sharing blogs, research and reflections on practice. Register your interest to stay informed and get involved in shaping the movement.
- 🎧 **Cascade's Parent Research Advisory Group** has released a new podcast highlighting the importance of meaningful public involvement in social care research, centring lived experience voices and sharing practical insight on how to support public contributors throughout, and beyond, the research process. Listen [here](#)!
- 🛡 **Gwent Safeguarding** has updated its **Was Not Brought** guidance, which encourages professionals to consider when a child or young person at risk depends on a carer to attend appointments, focusing on 'was not brought' rather than 'did not attend'. Read the updated guidance to find out more.
- 💖 **Melo** offers a wide range of quality-assured self-help resources for parents-to-be and new parents, including trusted information, practical advice, courses and links to helplines and services. Dedicated **Pregnancy** and **Parents** pages support mental health and wellbeing throughout the perinatal and early parenting journey. Share with the families you support.

The Gwent Best Start in Life Community of Practice Quarterly Newsletter



Spring Edition 2026

Coming Up: Best Start in Life Webinars

We're delighted to invite you to our upcoming Best Start in Life webinars. Together, we'll explore practice through a lens of equity and inclusion, considering which children and families that are left behind, the barriers they face and how small changes in our approach can make meaningful differences.

The webinars offer space to reflect on how we can strengthen what we do in our roles, close gaps in support and better respond to what babies, children and families need to thrive.

How Gwent Early Years Professionals Can...

Support Secure Attachments with Babies & Young Children

 10 June 2026 |  10:00am

 Delivered by: Belinda Lyndon | Music Therapist and Trainee Parent-Infant Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist | ABUHB [Gwent Parent Infant Mental Health Service](#) (G-PIMHS)

 Register [HERE!](#)

Support Healthy Screen Time

 13 August 2026 |  10:00am

 Delivered by: Charlie Cowtan | Clinical Psychologist | [ABUHB Child & Family Community Psychology](#)

 Register [HERE!](#)

 Missed a session? Catch up on previous webinars on our dedicated [BSiL CoP YouTube channel](#).



Join the Community

If you haven't joined our Community of Practice yet, now's the perfect time! Complete our [membership form](#) to get involved.

Contribute to our Autumn Edition

Have resources, insights or practice to showcase? Send us your content via our [online form](#) by the 31 August 2026.

Any Questions?

Email us at ABB.BSiL.CoP@wales.nhs.uk

Together, we can ensure **EVERY** baby and child has the best start in life.

