



# Healthcare Technology Centre (HTC)

## Health and Social Care Research, Innovation and Improvement Landscape

November 2021



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe



Uned Gomisiynu  
Cydweithredol Cenedlaethol  
National Collaborative  
Commissioning unit



Cyflymu  
Accelerate

Canolfan Technoleg Gofal Iechyd  
Healthcare Technology Centre

## Executive Summary

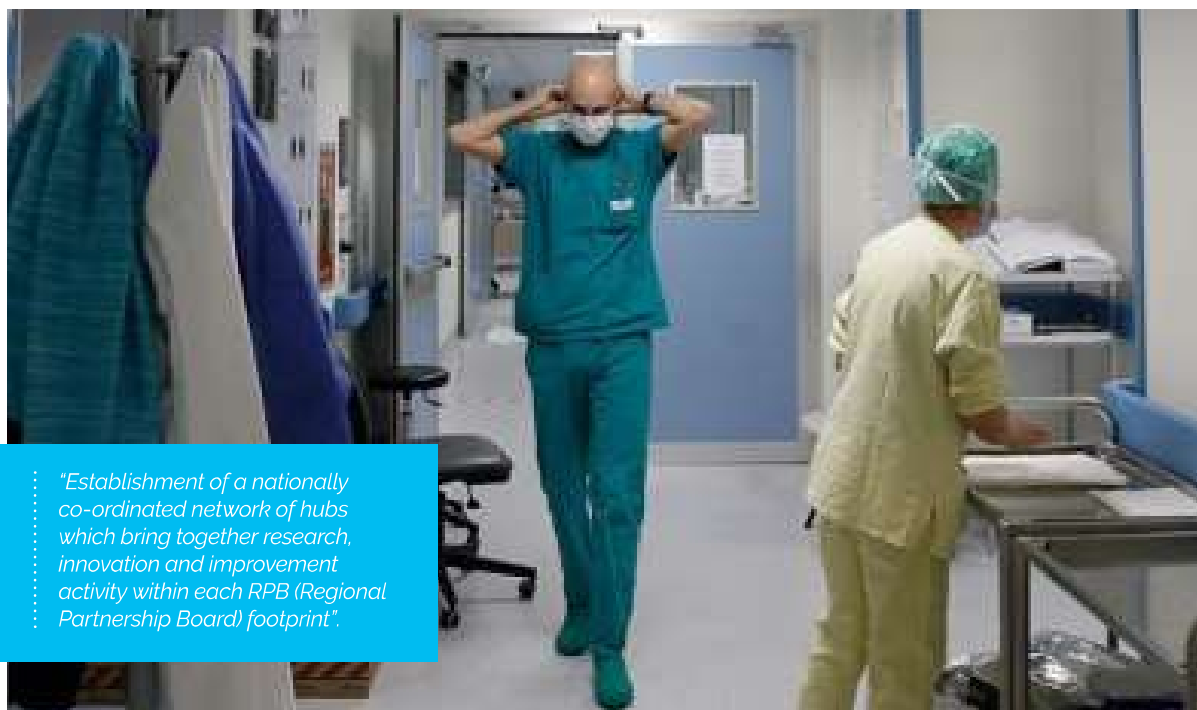
The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) through means of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Research, Innovation and Improvement Co-ordination Hub (RIICH) recently commissioned the Health Technology Centre (HTC) at Swansea University to provide an overview of the Health and Social Care Research, Innovation and Improvement (RII) landscape in the region. This work aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of all Health and Social Care RII assets and activities present or ongoing in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) area. The objective of the research was to provide an evidence-base that could subsequently be used to inform the development of the emerging strategy of the newly established Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH, whilst also serving as a common resource for wider regional stakeholders.

The study team based at the Health Technology Centre at Swansea University spent nine months undertaking an in-depth review of the Health and Social Care RII ecosystem in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

The research study design incorporated desk-based research approaches, along with interaction with key stakeholders from across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, through means including surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Stakeholders that engaged in the research process transcended the broad spectrum of Health and Social Care domains, including:

- Primary and Community Care
- Secondary Care
- Social Care
- Academia and the
- Third Sector



## Primary and Community Care in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Findings suggest the Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) region demonstrates both areas of strength and opportunity across Primary and Community Care related RII domains (**see section 6**). Strengths in this domain are evidenced by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's Primary Care cluster activity, which demonstrates a wealth of RII initiatives, including change-related programmes such as the establishment of new workforce roles; the development of new primary care services including social prescribing activities; the creation of new models of service delivery; new approaches to patient education; improved collaborative working and new infrastructure developments. Additionally, CTMUHB's new operating model, which is built upon a life course approach, developed through systems groups and Integrated Locality Groups (ILGs) (see section 5) holds significant potential for greater integration between Primary Care and wider corners of the Health and Care ecosystem, including both Secondary and Social Care.

Furthermore, academic institutions within the region and wider academic partners outside of the region exhibit strength and capacity across this sphere, including the PRIME Centre (Cardiff University and the University of South Wales) and the Wales School for Social Prescribing Research (University of South Wales). Primary Care appears to be a leading research focus in the health boards research portfolio since 2018 (**see section 7**). However, opportunities for future development, although acknowledging comparative regional size, do present themselves about the potential for greater participation in Pan-Wales innovation support programmes that incorporate Primary Care RII activity, such as the Primary Care Pacesetters Programme and the Bevan Commission's Exemplars Programme.

## Secondary Care in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Secondary Care services in Cwm Taf Morgannwg delivered by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board also demonstrate wide-reaching Health and Social Care related RII activity (see section 7). RII focus across Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board appears to be in areas including, as forementioned, Primary Care, as well as Cancer, Surgery and Cardiovascular Disease. This is also supported by strength and capacity in the field of Wound Healing and Cell and Gene Therapy, evidenced through the presence of the Welsh Wound Innovation Centre (WWIC) and the Welsh Blood Service (WBS) within the region. More broadly Cwm Taf Morgannwg University



Health Board also demonstrates research capacity and focus across many other medical specialisms, including: Critical Care, Dementia and Neurodegeneration and Anaesthesia, Preoperative Medicine and Pain Management, however other areas such as Trauma and Emergency Care and Hepatology appear to receive less focus (see section 7). Findings also demonstrate a general plateau in health board research publication rates, aligning with other trends across Wales. Accompanying this, as suggested previously, although again acknowledging comparative regional size, there appears to be an opportunity for greater focus and participation in the Bevan Commission's suite of innovation programmes, including the Bevan Exemplars programme and the Bevan Commissions Adopt and Spread Programme. Health Board project numbers across these programmes appear to consistently lag behind other health boards in Wales suggesting potential for further focus moving forward. However, despite this, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board appears to be highly active in terms of working with other parties on innovation projects, such as the Accelerate programme. In terms of its improvement activities, although a recognised area of weakness over recent years, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board has begun to establish strong infrastructure in this area (Improvement CTM), including key leadership positions and wider capacity to drive the agenda across the health board. Aligning with this, Improvement CTM is currently pursuing multiple improvement projects across many different disciplines (see section 7.12).



## Social Care in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Local Authorities in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region also exhibit a range of Social Care related RII activity with the potential for many such approaches to be exported to other regions across Wales. This includes new approaches to the delivery of social services, supported through means including the national Integrated Care and Transformation funds, including the Stay Well @ Home model, the Bridgend Super Agers initiative and the establishment of local community development hubs (see section 10). However, experiences of the research team throughout this study in some instances demonstrated a lack of engagement and willingness from some Local Authorities to partake in RII activity, a sentiment which has also been echoed by other stakeholders across the region.

Findings also suggest that although acknowledging progress made since the merging of regional boundaries, there is further opportunity for greater integrated working between and within Local Authorities and other partners across the region. Furthermore, aligning with similar patterns across other regions in Wales and although acknowledging good practice and growing momentum in this arena, much regional focus and support is still directed towards medical and healthcare-related RII. Findings thus suggest that potential remains to engender similar urgency and approaches to support RII activity across Social Care domains in Cwm Taf Morgannwg including developing RII personnel, infrastructure and related training mechanisms.

## Academia in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Academic institutions in Cwm Taf Morgannwg (The University of South Wales) alongside wider strategic partners of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (Cardiff University) also demonstrate leading RII activity and expertise across a broad spectrum of domains related to Health and Social Care (see section 11). Particular areas of strength identified by this research across related institutions include amongst others; Cancer, Dentistry, Neurological Disorders, Social Prescribing, Primary and Emergency Care, Public Health, Mental Health, Pharmacy, Infection, Genetics, Children's Health, Health and Care Policy, and Sports and Exercise Science (see section 11).

Alongside this, these universities are also involved in a wealth of Health and Social Care related RII support programmes (for example the Accelerate programme, The South East Wales Academic Health Science Partnership (SEWAHSP), the newly established Intensive Learning Academies (ILA), RCBC Wales and CEMET). Complimenting this, Cardiff University is also undertaking vast RII infrastructure developments, through its £300m innovation campus development, which includes a first of its kind, social science research park (SPARK).

## The Third Sector in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

The third or voluntary sector in Cwm Taf Morgannwg also represents an active and diverse segment of the Health and Social Care RII ecosystem in the region. Organisations within this sector play an important role in supporting the delivery of a variety of health and care related services across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, championing often less supported or stigmatised agendas such as mental health issues and support for people with disabilities. Alongside their core day-to-day activity organisations within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg third sector are also involved in undertaking a range of Health and Social Care related RII activities (see section 12), ranging from developing innovative services in the community to new programmes supporting safe discharge from hospitals.

These organisations are supported by the activity of the three County Voluntary Councils (CVCs), namely; Interlink RCT, Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) and Bridgend Association for Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), who are also involved in wide-ranging RII activity, much of which is associated with the delivery of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) and Transformation projects across the region. However, despite the demonstrable value and a willingness to engage in regional RII activities, findings suggest stakeholders from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg third sector often feel undervalued and the potential remains to further integrate such organisations into wider regional working.



## Barriers and Enablers to Health and Social Care RII in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

Aside from developing insight about the Health and Social Care RII assets and activities existing within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board boundaries, this research study also sought to understand the wider qualitative narrative surrounding Health and Social Care RII in the region. This involved examining stakeholder views about the perceived barriers and enablers to undertaking Health and Social Care RII related activities in Cwm Taf Morgannwg (see section 4).

Findings from the research identified many key challenges that influence stakeholders' ability to pursue RII activities in the region. Key challenges or barriers reported by participants included issues such as; Resources (both in terms of financial resource and time and capacity for health and care professionals to pursue related activities); cultures towards RII activity; inhibitory organisational processes; knowledge, awareness and skills gaps; and challenges related to engagement and collaboration, with participants (in cases) identifying the presence of siloes within and between organisations.

Alongside the barriers identified, stakeholders also report a range of enabling factors that supported their ability to undertake Health and Social Care related RII activities in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. Key enablers identified by participants resembled similarities to the barriers previously reported. These included factors related to; Resource availability (funding); supportive organisational processes (particularly about ring-fencing time for health and care professionals to pursue RII activities and support for such); awareness of RII assets and activities ongoing across the region; the availability of education and training opportunities to enhance workforce skills; positive cultures towards RII (with participants noting the positive impact Covid-19 has had on this); and collaborative opportunities and regional networks. Furthermore, stakeholders also identified a supportive RII ecosystem and related RII infrastructure as potential enablers of Health and Social Care RII activity.

## Health and Social Care related RII Priorities in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

This study also sought to understand stakeholder perspectives on regional Health and Social Care RII priorities (see section 4). This related to areas across Health and Social Care where stakeholders within Cwm Taf Morgannwg believed RII related activities were most urgently required.

Drawing upon insight captured through surveys and semi-structured interviews alongside the use of thematic analysis approaches, stakeholders in Cwm Taf Morgannwg identified seven major thematic categories or priority areas where further RII activity was considered most necessary:

- Mental Health Services and Wider Support
- Paid and Unpaid Carers
- Children and Young People
- Communities and Hospital Discharge
- Integrating Health, Social Care and Third Sector Services
- Loneliness and Isolation
- Technology Enhanced Health and Care

Other areas of urgency identified by research participants included; Social Prescribing; Covid-19 (particularly concerning peoples lived experience); Learning Disabilities; Dementia; Early intervention and prevention-based approaches; Health and Social Care systems more broadly; as well as other factors such as reducing health inequalities.



## The Role of the Research, Innovation and Improvement Co-ordination Hub

In relation to the potential future role of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH, findings from the research suggest that there currently appears to be a lack of understanding and wider coordination across the Health and Social Care RII ecosystem in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

This finding thus details the important role the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH could have to play in ensuring a more integrated and coherent approach to Health and Social Care related RII activity regionally. Benefits that might be associated with the effective establishment and functioning of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH could include; developing appropriate RII support mechanisms and packages; further supporting the development of a conducive Health and Social Care RII environment in the region, whilst also working to reduce regional duplication thus ensuring reductions in wasted time, effort and resources. From a more granular perspective, research findings (see section 4) also demonstrate many more specific roles regional stakeholders believe the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH might assume to add additional value to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RII ecosystem.

Such roles outlined by research participants include:

- identifying good practice within the region that might be upscaled and spread;
- improving communication across all facets of the regional RII ecosystem;
- providing a single point of contact for organisations to engage with
- importing best practice from across other regions in Wales.

In addition, amongst other functions (see section 4), regional stakeholders also suggested that the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH might support greater signposting to other national bodies, organisations, initiatives and activities; work with all partners as 'true partners and equals'; provide a holistic understanding of all RII activities ongoing across all sectors and raise the profile of the third sector in the region and the value they bring to RII activity.







## Key Research Findings

Overarching findings from this research suggest that the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region is relatively well placed to contribute towards the goals of the Welsh Government's (2018) A Healthier Wales strategy. Findings detail a rich and diverse, although inherently complex, regional Health and Social Care RII landscape in Cwm Taf Morgannwg as with other regions across Wales. However, opportunities exist to ensure all partners from across the Health and Social Care RII ecosystem in the region are working together and communicating effectively. Aligning with this, there also lies an opportunity to ensure RII potential is maximised through greater coordination and improved visibility of regional RII assets and activities, alongside providing appropriate support and training mechanisms.

Analysis suggests regional RII strength or focus across Academia and/or Health and Social Care in areas including; Cancer; Primary and Emergency Care; Community and Older People; Neurological Disorders; Genetics; Mental Health; Pharmacy; Social Prescribing; Wound Care; Cell and Gene Therapy; Stroke; Oral/ Dental Health; Children; Health and Care Policy; Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities; Sports and Exercise Science/Medicine and Obesity; Education and Training. Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board has established strong innovative foundations for the future delivery of health and care services across the region through its Systems Groups Model and IMTP. The Health Board is also building capacity and capabilities in Quality Improvement (Improvement CTM). Aligning with similar findings from across other regions in Wales, there appears to be greater emphasis and focus placed upon supporting medical or healthcare-related RII activities when compared with Social Care and Third Sector RII. Although acknowledging demonstrable activity and progress being made in this arena, through means such as the Integrated Care Fund, findings suggest potential remains to engender similar urgency and design appropriate interventions to support RII activity across Social Care and Third Sector domains in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

A comprehensive account of all findings from the research study can be found in section 3 of this report, however, wider findings also suggest:

- Despite the existence of individual RII strategies, there appears to be a lack of an integrated regional strategy and sustainable resource sharing arrangements to ensure promote and support RII activity across both Health and Social Care.

- Findings highlight concerns from stakeholders related to the availability of funding to support RII and the timeframes in which some funds are required to be used. Furthermore, stakeholders from across health and care report a lack of time/ capacity to undertake RII activity, whilst RII knowledge and skills gaps are also evident.

- Local Authorities in Cwm Taf Morgannwg appear to have no formal recording or reporting systems to support the regional Health and Social Care RII agenda, whilst no integrated RII repository transcends regional organisational boundaries.

- Local Authorities in Cwm Taf Morgannwg also appear to lack capacity in terms of leadership roles and wider teams with a dedicated remit to drive and support RII activities.

- The Third Sector in CTM provides a range of support for local communities and are also involved in RII activity. However, there remains an opportunity to maximise the potential of such stakeholders by greater integration into regional working, with some organisations often feeling undervalued.





## Key Emerging Opportunities

Building upon the findings described above, there also lies many key opportunities for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region to support and further develop Health and Social Care RII activities across the region moving forward. Again, a comprehensive account of all emerging opportunities can be found in section 3 of this report, however, a number of these key opportunities identified by the research include:

- An opportunity for a central coordinating body, such as the Cwm Taf Morgannwg RIICH, to oversee and manage Health and Social Care RII activity across the region.
- The RIICH might also be well-positioned to bring partners together and provide a forum to ensure all partners are communicating and working together effectively to drive RII.
- Opportunities for the RIICH and wider partners to define an 'end to end system of RII support' in the region across both Health and Social Care domains.
- Opportunities to further develop RII infrastructure across Local Authority and Social Care domains, starting by establishing leadership roles and wider team structures within such organisations with a remit of supporting RII activity across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- Opportunities to develop an integrated, cross-sectoral database for RII knowledge management and reporting, enabling all partners to easily and effectively report and understand Health and Social Care RII activity ongoing across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.
- Opportunities to engage with regional skills development programmes such as the Intensive Learning Academies and embed RII training modules as a core element of workforce training programmes.
- Opportunities to develop long-term, sustainable integrated RII arrangements across the region. This might involve developing an integrated Health and Social Care RII strategy, whilst there may also be scope to develop shared funding mechanisms.