The NHS Wales COVID-19 Innovation and Transformation Study

A pan-Wales collaboration study that captures the novel and innovative practice emerging from across NHS Wales in response to COVID-19.

# Delivered through a Team Wales approach

The COVID-19 Innovation Study has been developed in partnership, with leadership and resources provided from the project team below, each member has brought the expertise and support of their own organisation.

Plays to Wales' strengths as a well networked nation, with partners willing to collaborate within an integrated policy environment for health and social care.

Wide range of support, from NHS leaders, Welsh Government but from unexpected sources…

Jamie Roberts supported our promotion of the study as an innovation fellow in C&V UHB
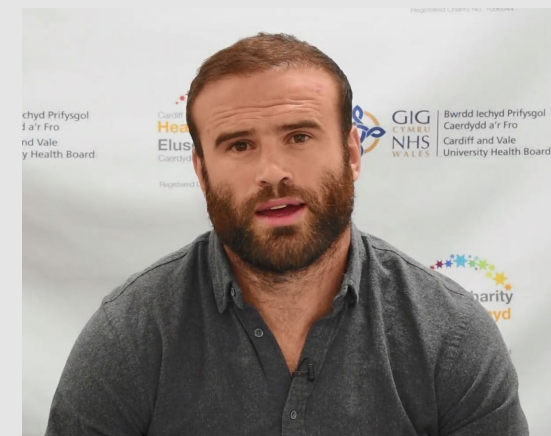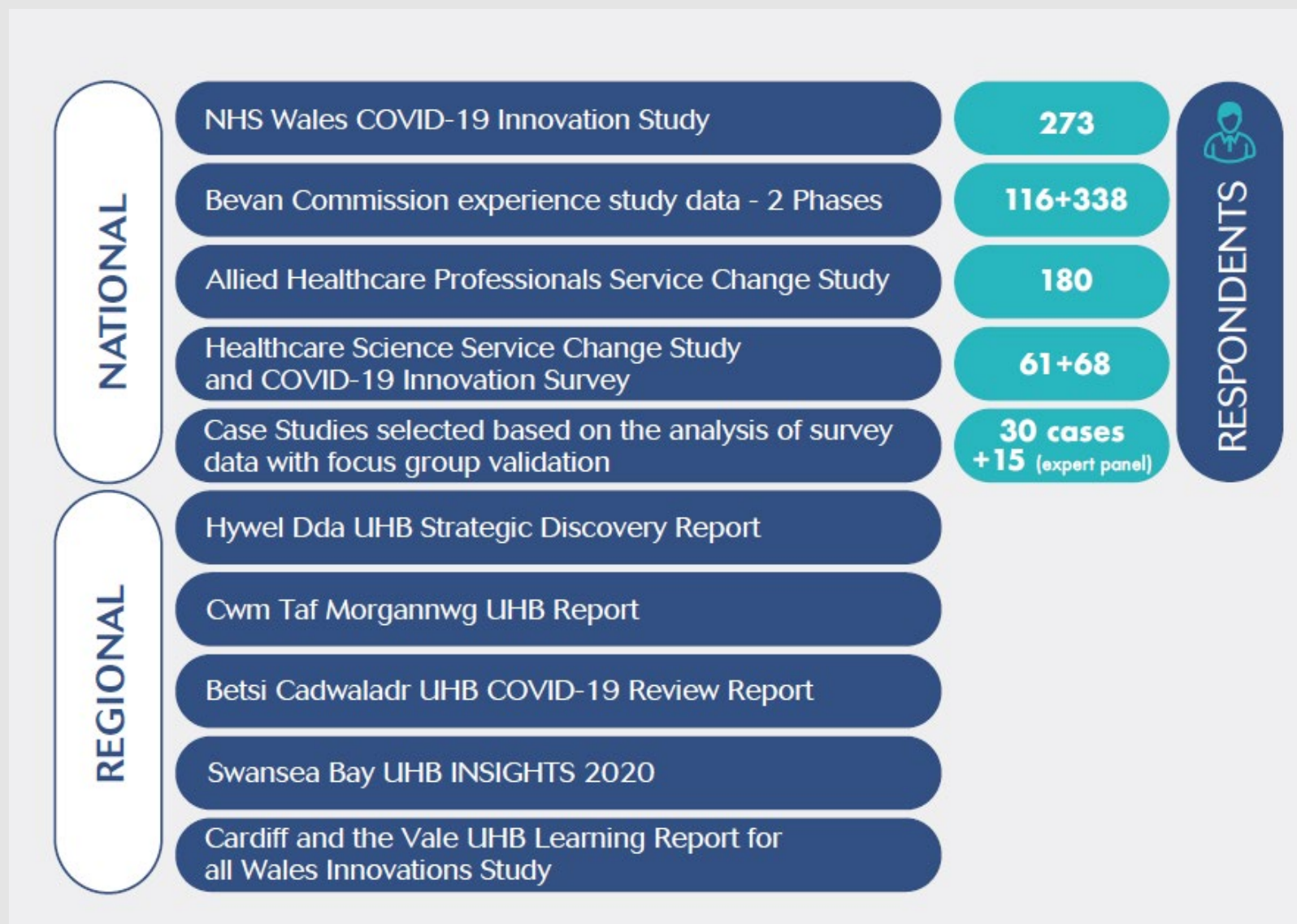
Approach

- Based directly on the views of staff working right across the Welsh health and care system

- Respondents show a sample of most staff groups, although less from the frontline

- Initial focus on innovation, but quickly grew in breadth as staff from all NHS Wales organisations responded and other evidence sources have been brought in

- Produced a wide breadth of qualitative learning and case studies, bringing in the wider theme of transformation

- Seven emerging themes coming out of the analysis, with approx. 35 case studies from across NHS Wales that provide real world examples of these themes in practice

A broad, multi-layered evidence base

The COVID-19 Innovation Study report pulls together a broad range of national, regional and local evidence (mainly qualitative) from a number of Welsh health and care sources.

From these data sources, there are seven emerging themes.

NATIONAL		RESPONDENTS
NHS Wales COVID-19 Innovation Study	273	
Bevan Commission experience study data - 2 Phases	116+338	
Allied Healthcare Professionals Service Change Study	180	
Healthcare Science Service Change Study and COVID-19 Innovation Survey	61+68	
Case Studies selected based on the analysis of survey data with focus group validation	30 cases +15 (expert panel)	

REGIONAL
Hywel Dda UHB Strategic Discovery Report
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB Report
Betsi Cadwaladr UHB COVID-19 Review Report
Swansea Bay UHB INSIGHTS 2020
Cardiff and the Vale UHB Learning Report for all Wales Innovations Study

Accelerated decision making

- With revised governance arrangements, staff reported accelerated decision making (described by some as 'reductions in red tape') made an impact and was welcomed by many

- Staff felt more empowered to make decisions based on their knowledge and experience and try new and different things, leading to shifts and changes in service provision

- Staff views highlighted a real need to capitalise on this momentum to change and transform 'the way we do business going forward'

- Many staff feared a return to 'old ways of working', where they are not able to make the changes to services they feel are needed

Staff well-being

- Huge focus on staff well-being, with a range of interventions noted
- Impacts vary across a wide and diverse workforce – need to offer a wider range of personalised interventions alongside representative organisations e.g. Royal Colleges (GPs / EM) and Unions
- Recognises frontline staff need different support, provided in more accessible ways.
- Clear view that more still needs to be done to support staff wellbeing

Working together

- A sense of real pride was noted, particularly how staff pulled together in a difficult, high pressure time
- Staff reporting feelings of empowerment in being able to design and implement new approaches
- MDT and networked approaches being used more widely to use our varied skills to tackle new challenges
- Positive community spirit, cohesion and resilience reported, particularly alongside patients and third sector

More agile use of resources

- Significant reallocation of resources took place, some reported this as being very easy, others saying it could be hard going and process heavy

- Barriers were particularly identified in redeploying staff

- More streamlined models in place to move staff to key priorities in future will help to make the best use of the staff resources NHS Wales has

- This will support business continuity and inform continuous improvement

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Sustaining the pace of innovation and change

- A feeling of confidence and ability to try new things and provide services in new ways was a major theme
- Strong views that NHS Wales needs to capitalise upon the 'COVID-19 platform' and current change receptive state to make the changes to services that are needed, based on what has worked so far

Digital access and confidence

- Many reports of the effective uptake and usage of digital technologies by staff, both in patient services and internal working
- Digital technology also provides more choice and control to patients over preferred service use and self treatment / management
- Digital skills assessments should be considered to support wider digital inclusion
- Poses the question of 'digital services by default' vs 'digital services by choice'

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Embracing new technology

- The systematic and rapid adoption of digital technologies has been critical in responding to the pandemic

- All NHS Wales organisations should set out how they intend to use technology in responding to the backlog challenge and for ongoing service delivery

- A clearer lead role should be considered for the central assessment and mandating of new infrastructure technologies, on a once for Wales basis

Wider themes

- COVID-19 provides a platform for us to change and transform our services, in line with the recommendations of *A Healthier Wales,* learning should be a key component of recovery

- NHS Wales has a significant role to play in carbon reduction, particularly through the use of technology and should measure the impacts of changed services on the environment

Key milestones

- Emerging themes and summary report presented to NHS WEB on 16 March

- Report launched in June 2021, communications plan led by Welsh NHS Confederation and supported by Welsh Government and others

- Range of media interest from BBC and ITV Wales

- Shared nationally through a range of Welsh Government, NHS Wales, Welsh NHS Confederation and Regional Partnership Board channels, plus webinars and BMJ / HJS articles

- Taken to NHS Wales boards for consideration and implementation, through innovation leads

- Range of follow on activity, submitted to Wales COVID-19 Evidence centre, presented in a range of national fora outside of Wales, wider specific group activity such as Healthcare Science and Allied Health Professional programme events