



## Supporting hospital discharge in Neath and Port Talbot: An integrated approach to reablement

This case study takes a detailed look at the new Residential Reablement Unit at Gwalia Llys y Seren in Port Talbot. Opened in July 2014, it is an innovative service commissioned by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and is achieving impressive results.

The commitment is for community services, alongside health and social care to provide an integrated model of 24 hour care for patients clinically discharged from acute care who require reablement support and additional recovery time to establish appropriate discharge arrangements to suit individual needs.



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## Background

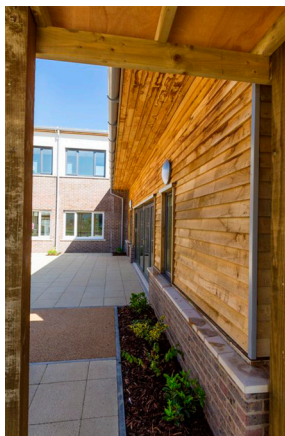


The Residential Reablement Unit at Gwalia Llys y Seren opened in July 2014 and is an innovative service commissioned by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU) and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The commitment is for community services, alongside health and social care to provide an integrated model of 24 hour care for patients clinically discharged from acute care who require reablement support and additional recovery

time to establish appropriate discharge arrangements to suit individual needs.

The notion of working with people in this way is truly person centred which encourages and enables them to maintain control of their lives and reach informed decisions about their future care. The service reached the finals in the “Excellent outcomes of care” category with the Care Council of Wales.

The unit is specifically designed and equipped to enable the fulfilment of person centred goals and is located on a designated suite within Gwalia’s Llys y Seren Residential Home. With nine fully equipped en-suite bedrooms, communal lounge, dining room and kitchen the unit provides the opportunity for individually tailored support and assessment of needs within activities of daily living.



Tailored support enables the maintenance and encouragement of independence through on-going assessments of progress. The Therapy room provides additional space for the assessment of mobility and physiotherapy sessions to aid progress within recovery and enablement.

## Collaboration and Multi-Disciplinary Working

The achievements attained with people who use the service result from a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach. The team comprises a variety of dedicated health care professionals working in close collaboration and partnership to meet the needs of people using the service.

ABMU provides core disciplines of District Nurse, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Workers and technical instructors.

Social Services provide additional support workers through its Community Resource Team Reablement support workers and fund the costs associated with the bed spaces, while Gwalia provides a team of dedicated Support Workers specifically trained who integrate with the reablement team.



## Aims and objectives of the service

With staffing spanning over the full 24 hour period people who use the service are encouraged and supported to maintain independence, gain confidence and progress toward their recovery. Further aims include:

- regaining skills and confidence that may have been lost,
- return to community life following a period of enablement,
- the prevention of hospital admissions,
- the provision of full and comprehensive needs assessments,
- the time for people to make their own informed decisions about their future care at the point of hospital discharge

Further objectives include:

- To improve functional ability and achieve optimal results
- Improved assessment opportunities for long term packages of care
- Prevention of admission to long term residential care
- To facilitate hospital discharge
- To prevent hospital admission
- To achieve a co-ordinated multi-disciplinary approach

## How it all works

As the unit is not an alternative to acute medical inpatient care, those admitted to the unit maintain the right to access Primary Health Care. Primary Health Care is provided by their own GP when the GP is in the Llys y Seren catchment area. Otherwise, Gwalia will register them as a temporary patient with a local practice.



There is a dedicated District Nursing Team available on weekdays able to provide specialist support, assess and manage areas such as skin integrity, wound care and continence issues for all people residing on the unit. The District Nurse will also monitor health checks such as blood pressures and administer medications such as intravenous antibiotics where required.





Staff employed at the service receive specialist training following the competencies provided by ABMU therapy staff which includes, though is not limited to, medical conditions, falls, fractures, joint replacement and stroke; introduction to the enabling approach including communication techniques; mobility aids; gait; stairs and exercise therapy. All staff are trained in using the specialist equipment provided to enable activities of daily living.

Weekly MDT meetings facilitate discussion around the on-going or longer term care needs and can facilitate discharge back to the community. Where this occurs support can be provided to access appropriate packages of care. Care managers are also invited to attend MDT meetings to support discharge arrangements. When discharge is agreed the process is co-ordinated by the unit team in consultation with the person using the service, their family members and other services as appropriate with a comprehensive handover to community services to aid the transition.

## Achievements

Since opening in July 2014, the unit has seen 78 admissions of whom 70% were able to return to their own homes. Of those people returning home almost 9 out of 10 would ordinarily have been on the pathway to residential care were it not for the intervention of the Reablement Unit at Gwalia Llys y Seren.

## Case Study

Mr. Arnold Williams, a former resident at the Llys y Seren Reablement Unit shares his story with us.

*“My name is Arnold Williams. I am an amputee and I lost my leg following a road traffic accident back about 20 years ago and then, in December 2014, I decided that I would go to Jersey for a holiday. One minute I was going forward the next I was going backwards and I fell backwards onto my bum. As I had fallen so often I thought that I’d probably bruised myself again and we called for ambulance. So I spent 4 weeks in a Jersey hospital but I was lucky that there was a bed in Neath and Port Talbot in Ward C, so I got flown back by private jet.*



*My stay in Neath Port Talbot was a long one as you can appreciate because I had shattered my pelvis back and front. There was no operation it was just stick the pain and loads and loads of medication. After about 9 weeks in ward C, a bed became available*

*in Llys y Seren. I think from then that was the turn-around for me the staff were really, really helpful, supportive but the physiotherapy department was really exceptional, because I couldn't stand because of pain and she designed exercise for me that built my muscle and built my confidence. After about 9 weeks I came home and I have been really, well, yes, I have been coping, without the help I had from Llys y Seren I wouldn't be here. The facilities in Llys y Seren were excellent, the room I had was en-suite, nice big room, big telly on the wall absolutely superb and they got me back looking after myself. The discipline of making your bed when you get up, showering yourself, but the staff were absolutely excellent, very helpful, do anything for you – they went really out of their way to do it. The exercises I had were to strengthen my leg, strengthen my upper body, to allow me to transfer from the wheelchair to anything. Now at the minute I can transfer to anywhere.”*

## Conclusion

The Reablement Unit has demonstrated genuine joint working between the statutory and third sector with the focus on the benefits to those who pass through it at its heart.

It has been a learning curve for the 3 organisations involved – from ensuring rigorous information sharing protocols are in place to agreeing paperwork, recording and documentation that meets all regulatory requirements. It has not been without its challenges but these have been managed and overcome by effective communication and a willingness to learn about and understand the pressures and drivers of three different large and complex organisations.

The Reablement Unit has had support at every level. There was a clear commitment from senior management within each organisation which was cascaded to all involved including the staff on the ground doing the hard work. The working relationships between the Residential Care Home Manager, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy leads, District Nursing staff and hands on staff are hugely important and without this the unit may not have had such positive and successful outcomes for people.

## Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

## About Gwalia

We are a leading provider of housing, care and support services in south and mid Wales and employ around 1500 staff across the business. We manage over 10,200 properties and operate one of the largest directly managed care and support services in Wales. We provide care and support services for over 6,000 people and on average, over 2,600 hours of domiciliary and extra care per week. Our work includes the management and provision sheltered and extra care accommodation, residential care and home care services for people over 55.



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## About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is the leading 'learning lab' for a growing network of housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales involved in planning, commissioning, designing, funding, building and managing housing, care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults with long term conditions.

Previously responsible for managing the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund, the Housing LIN is called upon by a wide range of statutory and other organisations to provide expert advice and support regarding the implementation of policy and good practice in the field of housing, care and support services.

Further information about the Housing LIN Cymru's comprehensive list of online resources can be found at: [www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/Wales/](http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/Wales/). We are grateful to the Welsh Government and housing with care providers in Wales for their support.

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