

Project profile:

# Active Monitoring

A new mental health service for primary care in Wales.



Funded by the Welsh Government under  
Section 64 Third Sector Mental Health  
Grant (2015-2018).



Ariennir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

 **Mind Cymru**  
for better mental health  
o blaid gwell iechyd meddwl



If it weren't for this service, I wouldn't be alive now. Being able to see someone straight away and talk about what is going on was amazing.

# Introduction

We believe that anyone who is experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems should be able to get the help and support they need, when they need it. That's why we're working with GPs and Local Health Boards to roll out Active Monitoring, our early intervention service, across Wales.

One in four adults in Wales are likely to experience a mental health problem each year and it's estimated that this costs the economy £7.2 billion due to loss of earnings, treatment and welfare provision<sup>1</sup>.

However, Local Health Boards and their partners have struggled to meet targets around access to local mental health support set out in the Wales Mental Health Measure in 2010<sup>2</sup>. People with mild to moderate symptoms of mental health problems like depression or anxiety are often left waiting for many months as demand for services like psychological therapies significantly outstrips NHS provision. Antidepressant medication may be offered as the only treatment choice.

People not getting support when they need it, can result in a deterioration in mental health so that more costly interventions may be required at a later stage.

Active Monitoring was designed as an early intervention service to meet the needs of patients experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems.

We secured funding from the Welsh Government in 2015 to roll out Active Monitoring in Wales, introducing the service into at least nine GP surgeries through our network of 20 local Minds.

We're proud to have truly exceeded this target. The rapid uptake in Wales is a significant step towards making the Welsh Assembly's vision of a fully integrated network of care and support for people with mental health problems<sup>3</sup> a reality.

**This publication explores the scope and impact of our Active Monitoring project (2015 - 2018) focusing on the roll-out of Active Monitoring across Wales.**

<sup>1</sup> Mental Health Research Network. 2009. Promoting mental health and preventing mental illness.

<sup>2</sup> National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee. Post-legislative scrutiny of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010, published in January 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government. Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan: 2012-15.

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# About Active Monitoring

Active Monitoring is a new mental health service for primary care, originally developed by Tameside, Oldham and Glossop Mind in conjunction with a local GP practice.

Active Monitoring enables GPs to refer patients directly to a dedicated mental health practitioner (employed by a local Mind) as soon as they present with problems such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or stress.

The main focus of Active Monitoring is to improve a patient's awareness and understanding of their mental health problems and equip them with practical tools and resources to improve their mental health and wellbeing with self-care.

## The guided self-help course:

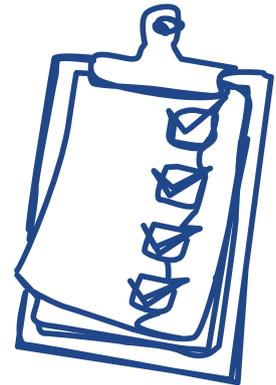
- Is delivered in five sessions over an eight week period. The first session lasts 40 minutes and the subsequent four sessions last 20 minutes each.
- Is located in GP surgeries, which means people are seen in familiar surroundings close to home.
- Is based on cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) approaches.
- Allows participants to select at least one of six pathways: anxiety and panic attacks, depression, low self-esteem, stress, feeling alone or managing anger.
- Has the added benefit of self-directed exercises using our suite of workbooks and materials.



# How Active Monitoring works



A person goes to their GP with a common mental health problem



- The GP refers eligible patients to the Mind practitioner in their surgery
- There is an initial assessment (face to face) within a week of referral, and an appropriate mental health support package is identified

Option to report to the GP on the patient's progress



The patient is signed up for Active Monitoring and receives:

- Five face-to-face sessions over eight weeks
- Self-guided wellbeing exercises and workbooks addressing common mental health problems such as:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety and panic attacks
  - Stress
  - Feeling alone
- Ongoing signposting options

Other options are offered:

- Referral back to primary care
- Other local services
- Other relevant agencies



# About the project

In 2015, we secured funding from the Welsh Government under its Section 64, Third Sector Mental Health Grant, to roll-out Active Monitoring to GP surgeries across Wales through our network of local Minds.

## Active Monitoring aims:

1. To improve choice and availability of services for anyone with mild to moderate mental health issues in Wales.
2. To reduce pressure on GPs and the primary care system.
3. To contribute to an early intervention strategy for mental health.

Welsh Government funding is enabling us to:

### Provide training for local Minds



Active Monitoring practitioners and managers are trained to ensure an expert level of service is delivered in each community area. In addition, a peer support network means that practitioners and managers can share experiences and best practice in Wales.

### Promote and market the programme



We help local Minds build support for Active Monitoring with GPs and potential users by providing them with clear, branded resources and promotional materials including leaflets and posters.

### Build a network of support



We've focused on building and nurturing relationships with Local Health Boards and GP clusters across Wales. This network of support is further bolstered by our collaborative working partnership with the Wales Alliance for Mental Health in Primary Care and other key influencers.

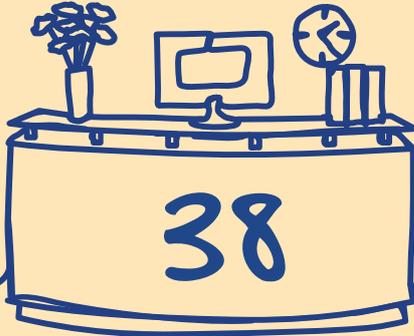
### Monitor and evaluate our work



Our model has been adapted and improved through a pilot scheme and regular evaluation. Active Monitoring is delivered under licence by local Minds so that we can ensure the quality of service is maintained. A Wales-wide reporting structure enables us to clearly understand uptake and effectiveness across the country.

# In numbers...

Rapid uptake across Wales since 2015 (Figures as of August 2017)



GP surgeries in South East, Mid and North Wales offer Active Monitoring to patients

# £372,000

invested directly by GP clusters and the Communities First Programme to operate Active Monitoring

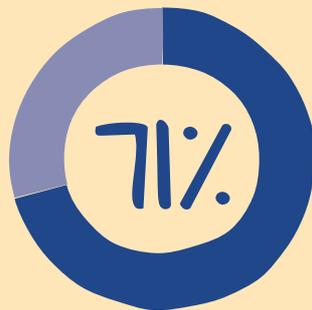
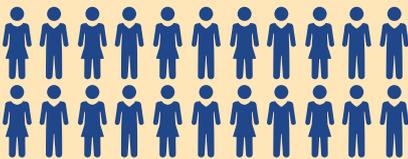


Positive impact on participants (Based on evaluation of four GP surgeries over 6 months)

# 433

patients engaged by Active Monitoring practitioners in Wales\*

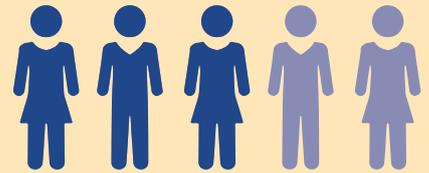
(September 2016 - March 2017)



of people experiencing clinical levels of **anxiety** and **panic attacks** fully recovered or reliably improved\*

# 54%

of people experiencing clinical levels of **depression** fully recovered or reliably improved\*



The most commonly accessed pathways in Wales were for anxiety (34%) and for depression (21%), with a further 22% of service users following a combination of pathways, according to their needs.

\*Based on evaluation of key sites in Merthyr and the Valleys, Vale of Clwyd and Brecon, September 2016 - March 2017. Percentages calculated using scores from clinical measurement tools for depression and anxiety (PHQ9 & GAD7), measured in the first and final sessions attended by participants.

# Improving mental health and wellbeing

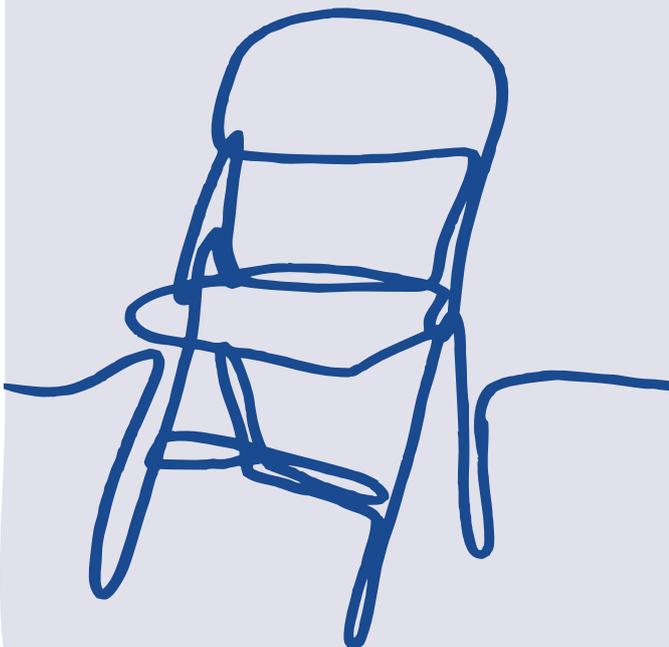
We've seen very positive results from patients who have been referred to Active Monitoring across Wales and evidence that this is contributing to an early intervention approach for mental health.

As well as reliable improvements or full recovery in 71% of people experiencing clinical levels of anxiety and 54% of people experiencing clinical levels of depression, the feedback from participants themselves tells the real story:

## Active Monitoring participant, South East Wales

"Before I started [Active Monitoring] I felt at the lowest point in my life. The last few years have been terrible."

**The stress and everything that was going on had me at breaking point. I couldn't see any way out of the black hole.**



"Talking to the practitioner has made me feel so much better.

Linda has not only been a valued counsellor, but also a good listener and a person who has given me such good advice."

**I can now see my way again, and although I know I've got some way to go before everything is better, at least I'm on my way.**

**Without this wonderful service I really don't think I would be here now.**

"I hope the service can continue and a lot of people will be helped as I have."

All scores in self-assessment questionnaires completed by the participant at the beginning and end of the programme showed a significant positive shift:

GAD7 (Anxiety) from 19 to 5

PHQ (Depression) from 24 to 8

WEMWBS (Wellbeing) 17 to 66

**I'm not  
crying all  
the time and  
getting out  
more**

**I'm stronger  
inside**

**I'm bonding  
with my baby  
much more**

**I have been helped  
to find the tools to  
deal positively with  
some very negative  
issues in my life**

**I can  
identify with  
my anxiety and  
help to control it  
more often**

**I can see things  
more positively now  
and didn't need to  
see the counsellor  
afterwards**

**I have not self-  
harmed for a  
long time now**

**I thought I was  
worthless, but  
it doesn't feel  
like that now**

# Reducing pressure on GPs and primary care

Clarence Medical Centre started offering Active Monitoring to its patients in 2016, in partnership with Vale of Clwyd Mind. Both GPs and the local mental health nurse have shared positive experiences of the service:



“I was an agnostic about the project before it began, but decided to give it a go. It has wildly exceeded my expectations. The practitioners are excellent at dealing with problems way beyond

the level of complexity I had anticipated. There has been positive feedback from patients and a drop in the number of referrals to the community psychiatric nurse. I can now say we are enthusiastic users of Active Monitoring.

One of the good things about the project is that because the practitioners are

based in the same building, if I feel uneasy about something it is easy to be able to talk to them about it – even a corridor conversation has been helpful.

When a patient is with me I get a light bulb moment – that this is the sort of patient I can refer to Active Monitoring. It saves me time – I can see the patient in 10 minutes, as opposed to the 20 minutes I would have had to spend.”

.....  
**“The ability to pass them on to someone who can help is fabulous for me – I save time and the patient gets a better outcome – quickly.”**  
.....

**Dr Simon Dobson, Lead GP at Clarence Medical Centre in Rhyl, Denbighshire (November 2016).**

“I was asked to be involved from the start and was invited to be on the interview panel when the two practitioners were recruited. I still had concerns that GPs would wrongly refer to the project people with more serious problems, who would then ‘fall through the net’.

In fact there have been few referrals to the project of cases of a more serious nature – and the practitioners have spotted this immediately and referred them back to us.

What is significant is that it has taken up the slack in other ways which has proved really helpful.

For example, the project has had lots of people over 65 who we would not normally see.

This age group, who have problems with loneliness and isolation, has never had a service like this before.”

.....  
**“GPs have referred people to the project with [mild to moderate] problems who they would not have referred to us because they would not hit our acceptance criteria – and many of these people have been helped a great deal by the project.”**  
.....

**Mandy Roberts, Primary Care Mental Health Nurse based at Clarence Medical Centre in Rhyl, Denbighshire (November 2016).**

**We always receive positive feedback from patients. It's a quick and efficient service**



Merthyr and the Valleys Mind has built positive relationships with local GPs, nurses and midwives who have actively referred patients to Active Monitoring since 2015.

The primary care mental health practitioner at Cwm Taf Local Health Board has experienced how Active Monitoring can assist the delivery of mental health services by reducing waiting lists for mental health assessment clinics:

“There has been a big reduction in referrals to our clinic from Morlais Surgery since Active Monitoring began. I discussed a figure within the team meeting, and it was agreed that 75% would be an accurate rough figure, but again, this is based on our experiences.

Before Active Monitoring was in place, my clinic always had a waiting list; sometimes of six weeks. There has been no waiting list since introducing Active Monitoring.

I no longer see patients who require signposting or redirecting and I rarely see simple or straightforward cases.

The cases I now see usually require, or are suitable for follow up from our service.

Before Active Monitoring, I experienced many absences. This is now unusual.”

.....  
**“Our experience of Active Monitoring is entirely positive. Team members are keen to convey that they would like a similar service within all practices.”**  
.....

“Again, I am sure there are many ways in which we could work together with Active Monitoring to continue to maximise resources and provide an improved mental health service to primary care.”

**Primary Care Mental Health Practitioner, Cwm Taf Local Health Board (2016).**

# A network of trained practitioners across Wales

Our Active Monitoring practitioners and managers are passionate about their work and the real difference they are making to the lives of people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems. Elizabeth has seen the positive impact Active Monitoring has had on the people she works with:

“It was when I began volunteering for Merthyr and the Valleys Mind that I became aware of Active Monitoring. The more I heard about it, the more intrigued I became. So I met with one of the practitioners who explained the ethos behind the service, so to speak.

From that point on I was passionate about the possibilities an early intervention service could offer people and considered the time a few years ago when I found myself stuck in my own ‘mental health mess’, and how it may have changed the course I took at that time. I am convinced it would have helped me to recover a lot quicker than I eventually did.

After some excellent training from Mind, I am now delighted to be the wellness practitioner delivering the service for Brecon and District Mind.”

.....  
**“I’ve worked with people all at different points of their journey, many of whom tell me how much more aware of their feelings and emotions they are since starting work with me.**

**This not only gives me some validation that Active Monitoring ‘works’ but an immense sense of achievement when someone starts to notice a change in themselves.”**  
.....



“I have amazing support from the staff here at Haygarth, it feels almost like being part of a big extended family which makes it a pleasure to come to what is called work but what I prefer to call ‘doing something I love with financial reward’.

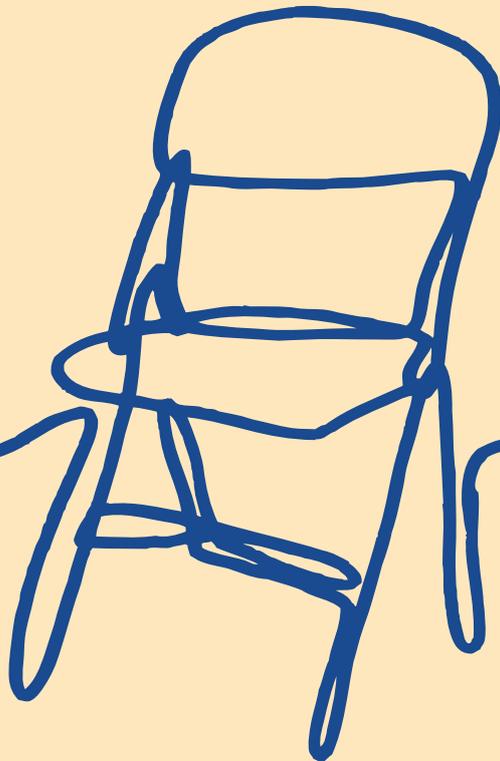
Even more than that I am lucky to be part of the team at Brecon and District Mind who also feel passionately that Active Monitoring has the potential to offer people an alternative approach to mental health matters, one that really can make a difference in a person’s life.”

**Elizabeth Bogunovic,  
Active Monitoring practitioner at  
Brecon and District Mind.**

**If I didn't have this intervention at the time that I did, it would have been a slippery slope.**

**If I had got any worse I would have attempted to take my own life or be on antidepressants. I hope many more people can access this service.**

- Active Monitoring Participant, South East Wales





## Leading the way forward

**With local Minds and GP clusters, we are improving the mental health and wellbeing of people with mild to moderate mental health problems.**

This project has been a learning process, and the unprecedented uptake of Active Monitoring in Wales shows a real commitment towards more integrated mental health care in local communities.

### **Developing sustainable models of funding**

We've worked with Local Health Boards and GP clusters to establish new funding structures for Active Monitoring that did not exist before. In collaboration with our stakeholders, we were able to identify these opportunities, but the challenge of negotiating sustainable funding is ongoing.

### **Towards more integrated mental health care in the community**

Active Monitoring has created trust between local Minds and primary care providers that paves the way for future joint working.

There are now opportunities for local Minds to provide additional services such as pain management courses and also to offer trainee GPs a community placement at their local Mind.

We've also relied on the strong relationships that we've built to help us understand local needs and used this knowledge to ensure that Active Monitoring is suited to demographical and geographical differences in Wales.

### **A Wales-wide approach**

There is an exciting opportunity to extend the coverage of Active Monitoring in Wales, reducing the pressure on GPs and further contributing to an early intervention strategy for people experiencing mental health problems.

We've developed a process to roll-out Active Monitoring faster and more efficiently than ever before and the trust that we have built with health care providers in Wales provides a strong foundation to support this.

# About us

We're Mind Cymru, your go-to mental health partner.  
We bring focused mental health expertise to our partnerships and services.

Through our network of 20 local Minds in Wales, we help people enjoy better mental health and support people with mental health problems to live well in their communities and at work. Together we are Mind in Wales.

We are able to draw on the best of our learning, information, expertise and evidence-based practice across both Wales and England to strengthen our support and projects in Wales.



This project is funded by Welsh Government's Section 54, Third Sector Mental Health Grant in Wales (2015-2018).

## Other publications in this series:

-  Project Profile: Digital Content and Support
-  Project Profile: Vulnerable Migrants
-  Project Profile: Workplace Wellbeing Wales
-  Project Profile: Long-Term Conditions

## Work with us

If you'd like to partner with Mind Cymru, or find out more about any of our projects in Wales, please contact us:

 [ProjectsCymru@Mind.org.uk](mailto:ProjectsCymru@Mind.org.uk)

 029 2039 5123

 [Mind.org.uk/projectsCymru](http://Mind.org.uk/projectsCymru)

We're Mind Cymru, the mental health charity.  
We're here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem in Wales has somewhere to turn for advice and support.

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Cardiff  
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[Mind.org.uk/Wales](http://Mind.org.uk/Wales)  
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Mind's registered charity number is 219830

