



Care & Repair Cymru

Managing Better

Three years of making a difference

Improving homes, Changing lives

R N I B

Cymru

Golwg gwahanol
See differently



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government



Since I had the handrail fitted to 2 steps up into the garden my quality of life has improved immensely. I can now go into the garden and see the flowers in “close-up” (I have impaired vision) but the good eye allows me to enjoy life. I can now sit under a tree when the sun is out and read or knit and enjoy the bird song and the sounds and smells of the season. Perfect!

Mrs R, Caernarfon



Foreword



I am delighted to introduce the Managing Better project's "Three Years of Making a Difference" Impact Report. It details the effort and the benefits that this project has achieved in the past three years, working to support older people who have sensory loss.

It is vital that we work in new and more innovative ways to deliver support for older people, across the health and social care sector, to meet the challenges we face here in Wales, with over 575,000 people having deafness or hearing loss, and an estimated 111,000 living with sight loss. This is why I am so pleased that the Managing Better project, which started in 2016, received financial support from the Welsh Government's Third Sector Sustainable Social Services grant. The grant was designed for, and has been used to support delivery, of our innovative Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force from April 2016.

The services provided and the benefits realised for service users have been built on the excellent partnership work of Care and Repair Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru and RNIB Cymru, and with this government funding, Managing Better is delivering a specialist and preventative service resource, that has helped over 6000 people to date.

Through its combination of healthy homes assessments; adaptations and repairs in the homes of clients; welfare benefits checks; and new and improved mechanisms of referral to local government and NHS services, such as Audiology and Ophthalmology Departments, Managing Better is demonstrating how the core principles of the SSWB 2014 Act, can be realised on the ground, making a real difference to people's lives.

Looking ahead, I want to encourage Managing Better and others to continue to embrace person centred care and support. Our landmark legislation and strategies, including A Healthier Wales, will mean continuing change to the shape of public services across Wales but by focusing on the principles of voice and control; prevention and early intervention; well-being; co-production and a multi-agency approach, we can all make a difference to the lives, not just of older people, but of everyone in Wales.

I wish the project continuing success.

Julie Morgan, AM

Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

Stronger together & new partners going forward

Over the last 3 years we have come together in an initiative which provides invaluable support to older people with sensory loss or who are vulnerable in other ways, helping them to retain their independence and remain living in their own homes, with an emphasis on joint working across Health, Social Care and the Third Sector.

The experiences on the ground, from our three-way partnership, were that in approaching preventative intervention, none of us were able to deliver to the high standards of our ambition, if we did it alone. We could, through working together, offer more to our NHS and Social Services partners, if we provided a greater investment into independent living, through combining more understanding of what personal challenges make life difficult to manage as we grow older, and how we could improve opportunities by making the home a better place to live.

Our “What Matters” conversations have consistently highlighted a desire to Manage Better as being a top priority for older people....to live in a house that meets their needs and to live a happy, healthy life in the community of their choice. Our Managing Better service has allowed us to explore together, through collaboration, how we can do things differently and put our clients at the heart of our service.

Through the direct experience of delivering our services in a new way we find we are more relevant to NHS and Social Care partners; intervening earlier and through making new connections, preventing smaller problems becoming significant barriers to independence. Making lives more manageable is helping to reduce demand pressures on our acute and statutory service partners.

Over the last 3 years we have learned so much about how sensory loss impacts on older people and their ability to live independently at home. In particular we have learned that many older people who have survived a stroke, or are living with dementia, are also likely to have associated sensory loss. With this in mind we have been working with the Stroke Association and the Alzheimer's Society to help shape the Managing Better service through their expertise in this field.

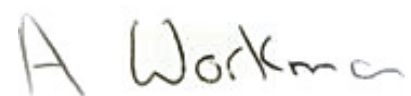
We hope the next phase of Managing Better will be even stronger, with input from our new national partners the Stroke Association and Alzheimer's Society complementing the skills, experience and knowledge of the current partnership - Care & Repair Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, RNIB Cymru and Care & Repair Agencies across Wales.



Chris Jones
CEO,
Care & Repair Cymru



Daisy Cole
Wales Director, Action on
Hearing Loss Cymru



Ansley Workman
Director,
RNIB Cymru

What is Managing Better and who does it help?

The Managing Better service is now in its fourth year and is funded from the Welsh Government's Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant. It is led by Care & Repair Cymru in partnership with RNIB Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru and Care & Repair Agencies across Wales, with new partners the Stroke Association and the Alzheimer's Society coming on board in 2019.

Our Wales-wide service is delivered out of the 13 Care & Repair Agencies, by 13 Managing Better Caseworkers who work proactively with Health and Social Care locally, to identify vulnerable, frail older people in need of help to achieve a safe, healthy home environment before they reach a crisis point and enter the statutory system with growing dependency on hospitals, GPs or residential care.

There are 575,500 people in Wales who are deaf or have a hearing loss. That's the equivalent to the populations of Cardiff and Swansea combined. And, as the population ages, this number is set to rise.

If untreated, hearing loss affects the ability of people to communicate with others and can lead to social isolation and depression. There is also strong evidence of a link between hearing loss and dementia and in 2017, scientific findings gave the strongest indication yet of the link between dementia and hearing loss. Research, published in *The Lancet*, showed that even mild hearing loss doubles the risk of developing dementia, but people wait an average 10 years before seeking help.

In Wales, there are an estimated 111,000 people living with sight loss. This includes around 96,400 people living with partial sight and 14,900 people living with blindness.

These figures include people whose vision is better than the levels that qualify for registration, but that still has a significant impact on their daily life (for example, not being able to drive).

In Wales, 3.5% of the population are estimated to be living with sight loss based on age and gender.

The prevalence of sight loss in any area could potentially be impacted on where there are higher proportions of Black, Asian and ethnic communities and where there are higher numbers of people in low income households. It can also be affected by how accessible local healthcare services are.

What we achieved over the 3 years

We improved our confidence in communicating with people who have a sensory loss and built their confidence and trust to live independently;

We developed critical partnerships with NHS, Intermediate Care, Social Care and NHS Connector services to identify older people who would benefit from early intervention;

We developed an expertise in tailoring off-the-shelf interventions to meet the prescription of needs that really make a difference for people who struggle, not only with poor health but also with sight or hearing loss.



With a Healthy Homes Assessment



People helped who have sensory loss – **4,195 (69%)**



1,123 (19%) of clients were referred from health partners

£2,413,814



We helped **725** people to access additional welfare benefits worth over **£2,413,814**



We facilitated adaptations and repairs in the home of the people we helped worth **£1,600,299**

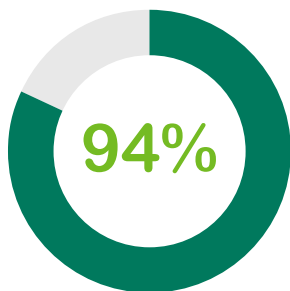
Based on a modest **15%** of beneficiaries managing better with home safety risks and avoiding an injurious fall...

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) is **£4.50** for every **£1** invested into delivering the service...with likely cost avoidance of **£10,500,000**

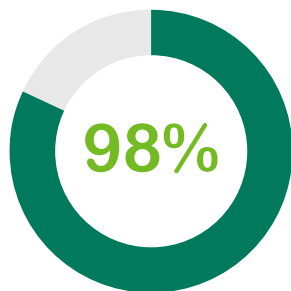
Co-production

What clients have told us

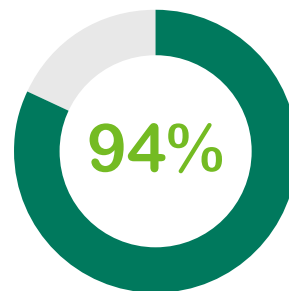
We spoke with 955 of our clients and this is what they told us:



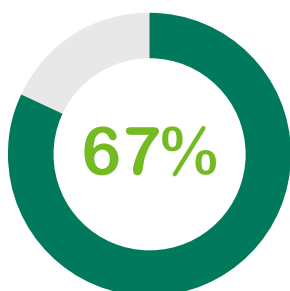
94% of clients felt the service provided had improved their quality of life



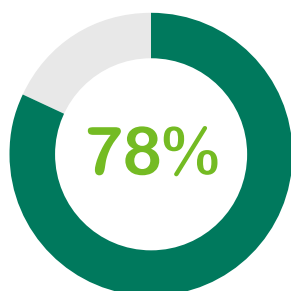
98% of clients would recommend the service to others



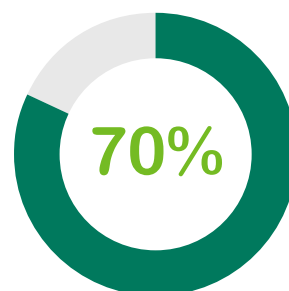
94% of clients were very satisfied with the services provided



67% of clients received the right information to address the issues



78% said we completely solved their problem



70% said their living accommodation better suited their individual needs



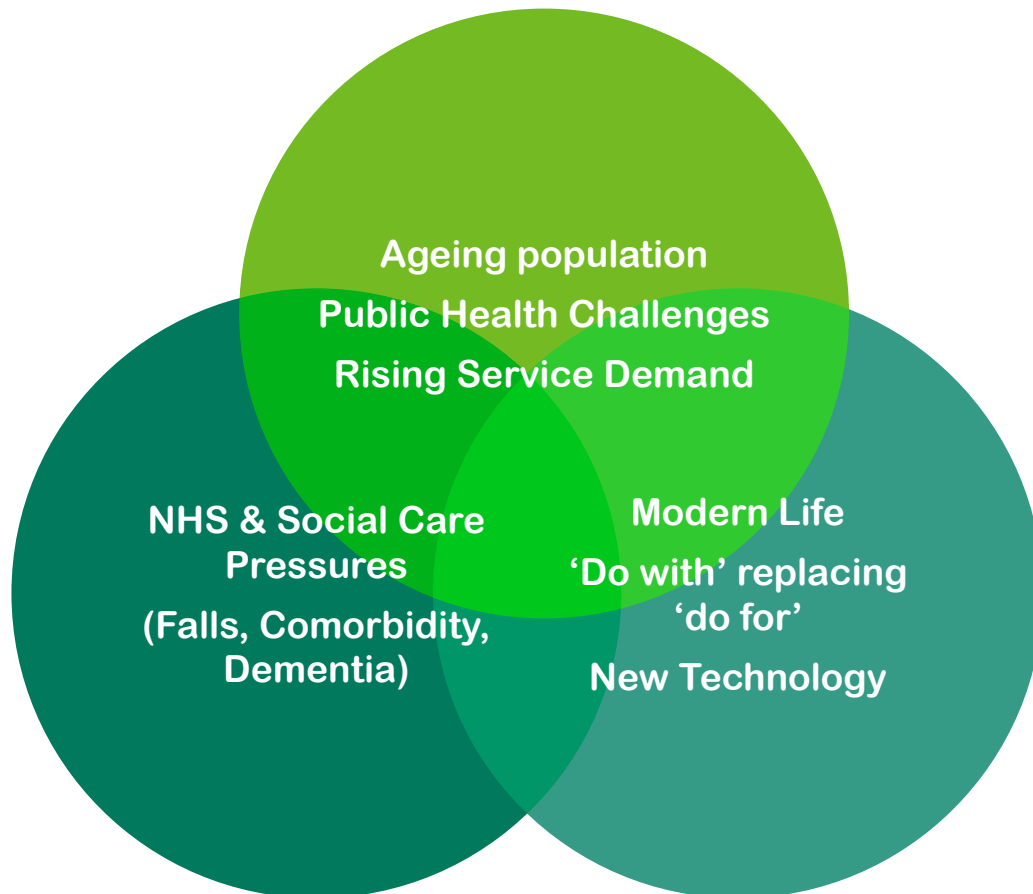
The loss of my eyesight has been very challenging. The help I've received has made me much more independent, I'm able to care for myself and feel safer. I'm able to use the handrails and lighting to move around my house more safely.

Mr G, Swansea





A perfect storm the challenges ahead



Wales has an ageing population and between 2016 -2041, we will see the population age 16-64 decrease by 4.2%. The population over 65 years of age will increase by 36.6%, an additional 232,000 older people.

The number of older people living with Dementia is estimated to rise by 31% by 2021, affecting 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 and 1 in 5 people age 80+ and these older people will be three times more likely to fall.

Each year in Wales 11,000 people have a 'stroke incident' and 75% of these are older people, while 6,000 people are new stroke survivors. We are also facing major Public Health issues in Wales, with obesity, diet, and alcohol all being contributory factors.

Every day 3 people in Wales lose their sight and 1 in 9 over 60-year olds live with sight loss.

Visual impairment increases the risk of falls by 170% and the incidence of a hip fracture by 130%, but early cataract removal could reduce falls by 34%.

Every year in Wales, 122,000 older people will fall more than once in a community dwelling and for 7,000 of those it will lead to an injurious fall leading to a stay in Hospital.

Of these 2,600 will need a hip replacement and 1,300 will lose their independence leading to formal care. These rates suggest that within each month, 1.5 days of total NHS bed capacity will be required only for older fallers. To meet these escalating challenges, we are improving our service with new partners the Stroke Association and the Alzheimer's Society who have the associated skills and reach, to ensure we can provide the best possible service to clients with dementia and stroke and associated sensory loss.

We also work jointly across Social Care in Wales with Rehabilitation Officers Visual Impairment (ROVIs) and Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) and utilising this good practice and our national role and strong NHS partnerships to gain national consistency. The Managing Better service is a specialist preventative service resource for NHS and Social Services for people with sensory loss and is also complementary to Care & Repair's Hospital to a Healthier Home service that is currently evolving.



Managing Better

Putting Policy into Action

Recent years have seen the publication of landmark policies by Welsh Government. Key strategies such as, 'Prosperity for All', 'A Healthier Wales', 'The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act' (WFG) and 'The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act' (SSWA) are determining the shape of future public services. Managing Better has sought to help shape this policy landscape.

Cross-cutting themes across all these acts are, making Wales a healthier, more equal place to live within resilient and cohesive communities. The SSWA and 'A Healthier Wales' pose challenges to public services around how to measure progress against the high-level ambitions of the WFG. So, in practical terms our service has contributed against 5 Core Principles of the SSWA:

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'If we are to realise the full potential of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, then integration and collaboration between services, with an early intervention and people-centred approach, is essential to delivering long-term outcomes.'

Prosperity for All, Welsh Government

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Principle	Outcome
Voice and control	We have made every effort to base our service on what matters, ensuring vulnerable older people have a safe environment to support care needs or avoid an escalation of dependency. Our approach is based on doing with rather than for beneficiaries. Our assessment is always linked to informed choices and a clear basis for making good decisions.
Prevention and early intervention	We have worked with NHS partners and community-facing rehabilitation or day clinics to identify beneficiaries who are facing life transitions or slipping into dependency.
Wellbeing	We are very responsive to the wellbeing of our beneficiaries and how they have commented on the experience of using our service. We have focussed on ensuring homes are appropriate to need, that circumstance improves, poverty is addressed, and rights are accessed.
Co-production	Co-production is the vehicle for us achieving our outcomes. All our interventions are based on effective communication and service access, providing bespoke, individually tailored solutions, and ensuring our beneficiaries have helped to design the services they receive.
Multi agency	Nationally and locally we have shaped our service around partnerships with RNIB Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, older people, Rehabilitation Officers, Eye Clinic Liaison Officers, Audiology, and Ophthalmology departments.

The Impact of Learning from Managing Better (Phase 1)

Over the first years of delivering Managing Better we have gathered much experience which has shaped both the way and what we deliver, providing some clear direction for what we must do into the future.

Bringing External Evaluation into Service Development

In July 2018 the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care (WIHSC), University of South Wales provided independent evaluation of the Managing Better programme. The report identified three key findings.

1. 'Relationships between organisations were most effective where the Managing Better caseworker was perceived to have the necessary training and expertise to effectively support older people with sensory loss. Trust in the caseworker to not cause any harm and step over the boundary of what they are trained to do is crucial to successful partnership working and cross referrals.'

What have we done...we have worked at developing more sophisticated partnerships with Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) and Rehabilitation Officer for Visual Impairment (ROVIs) to explore complementary working, remove gaps and build mutual trust. We are developing a programme of joint-training, more consistent protocols and a national operational template, placing the beneficiary at the heart of this joined up approach.

2. 'It was identified in the evaluation that there are local barriers and enablers to a new service becoming embedded within existing pathways.'

What have we done...we have sought to remove barriers from natural resistance to working together, through clarifying our role to Leads for Adult Social Care. Working consistently with operational partners that saw us initially as a commissioning threat, we have worked hard at developing joint approaches. We are defined by our professional expertise in housing support and have worked jointly to fill strategic gaps in a flexible way and improve pathways for older people.

3. 'The implementation of the Act has caused a change of working culture within some statutory services and a change in the nature of delivery partners; In that the local authority looks firstly to the individual, family or community services meeting the needs of the individual. The increase in partnership working represents an opportunity for the third sector, such as Managing Better, to develop collaborations with statutory services to best meet the needs of the community.'

What have we done...we have been able to contribute to the collaborative culture encouraged by the 'Act' in a number of ways. Firstly, we are championing the rights of beneficiaries that have a sensory loss, ensuring a 'What Matters' conversation is meaningful for the person involved. Secondly, we have exploited our unique selling point (USP) around independent living to provide otherwise unrecorded intelligence to statutory service partners. Thirdly, we are a vehicle, through home assessment, in the delivery of key public health messages on behalf of our partners, as the basis for preventative intervention.



Managing Better is perceived to have a crucial role in providing 'intelligence' to other partners and to help stop people falling through the gaps of the system. There is a need to continue to improve the partnerships and relationships, at least as far as it is possible for Managing Better to achieve this. Whatever follows, the relationships will be building on solid foundations.

Professor Mark Llewelyn,
Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care



Learning How to Co-Design Services with Partnership Expertise

We have developed two cohorts of partners for the Managing Better service, our national collaboration with RNIB Cymru and Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, and Local NHS and Social Care partners. Without their expertise translated into Care & Repair independent living services outcomes would be limited.

Understanding the Citizen Journey

Our frontline caseworkers have received a programme of intensive training to equip them to effectively offer access to our services and improve their understanding of the challenges posed by sensory loss. RNIB Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, Sense Cymru and the Thomas Pockington Trust have all assisted this development. Some of these modules are being repeated as refresher training to underpin our expertise as practitioners.

Effective Assessment of Need

Initially we engaged with beneficiaries during a home visit using a standard Healthy Home Assessment tool. Through experience we have worked with partners, including the Visual Impairment and Learning Disability service (VILD) team from RNIB in Scotland and accredited by Glasgow Caledonia University, to improve our assessment. This has helped with underpinning knowledge of sight, hearing loss and dementia.

Prudent Healthcare

Managing Better caseworkers have a “Make Every Conversation Count” opportunity to offer prudent healthcare advice to beneficiaries, around early intervention to prevent degenerative eye and hearing conditions. Our knowledge has increased in the sophistication of support with more detailed knowledge of various sight conditions, even with rarer conditions like Charles Bonnet Syndrome. Our knowledge of light intensity is vital to the application of many home adaptations that might otherwise be ineffective.

Impact on Secondary/Acute Care

Our Managing Better service operating in Bridgend was provided with additional funding to pilot a Dementia and Stroke service. This has worked alongside our flagship Hospital to a Healthier Home service and provided valuable insights into how we might provide improved interventions for people living with dementia. Also working from Stroke Wards, the sudden impact of stroke trauma and the significance of early intervention for rehabilitation was a crucial learning experience. Alongside this, the significance of NHS nursing staff requiring a ‘specialist’ approach to managing with sensory loss, has significant implications in the future.

We have developed a partnership in Wrexham Maelor Hospital to look at improved pathways, combining sensory loss, stroke care and independent living. A similar project with Audiology in the Royal

Gwent Hospital has improved pathways between sensory loss and independent living services. Having a valuable insight into how well older people manage in their homes is important intelligence for NHS staff not widely made available.

Specialist Occupational Therapy

The Dementia Pilot in Bridgend brought Managing Better in contact with the Older People and Mental Health Community Support team, and this has improved critical joint-working with a specialist team working with people living with dementia that have complex living needs.

Making Co-Production the Best Way to Deliver Services

Over the first years of Managing Better we have used our experience of providing a listening, person-centred and needs-led approach to improve our service and suggest ways we can make a real difference into the future.

Effective Communication

Our ability to identify real issues was sometimes undermined by ineffective attempts to communicate effectively. If our beneficiaries are to access their rights and assist us to shape the relevant service outcomes, we need to set the highest communication standards. We worked with

partners to access British Sign Language (BSL) translation services, which made all the difference for our beneficiaries, and indicates new ways of working.

Bespoke Solutions to Individual Problems

Fitting older people into service boxes does not work and leads to ineffective solutions and wasted resources. Our tailored approach to individual need is an effective complement to statutory services and includes the beneficiary from the start in determining the end outcomes they would like. Considering light, sound, tones, shades, contrasts, patterns, alerts, amplification; helps to modify an off-the-shelf approach that invariably fails to recognise what the beneficiary really needs.

Client Surveys and Co-production

Our initial approach to surveying our beneficiaries was by leaving customer satisfaction forms, which is common practice in our Core service. The results were undermined because we had failed to consider other means to engage with people with sensory loss such as telephone follow-ups, focus groups, user-friendly formatting, e-mail, consulting carers and third-party advocacy/translation. These are now being used to much greater effect.

Service Gaps

Key to getting our service offer right from Managing Better (Phase 1) to Managing Better (Phase 2) is facing up to one big challenge and a central gap in our service - new technology. There are increasing numbers of beneficiaries asking about new technology across a spectrum of approaches and currently we are not equipped to answer questions, offer advice or help to provide solutions to everyday problems.

Meeting Future Challenges

The way we respond to future challenges is very much based on the experiences we have gained from delivering critical services to older people and for health outcomes relevant to NHS and Social Care partners.

The top three challenges we have identified from delivering to vulnerable older people are:

- New technology is not fully recognised or understood as a vehicle for health improvement
- Gaining understanding of how services can address the needs of older people with a sensory loss, of necessity needs to consider the cross-over impact of dementia, stroke and other co-morbidity

- Interventions need also to be understood across a wider support network, including both formal and informal carers; and around how rights are accessed

The top three challenges identified from our work with NHS and Social Care partners are:

- Approaches across Health Board boundaries are inconsistent and priorities at a Local Government level vary, thus we need a Good Practice Template
- The consistency of care pathways for people with a sensory loss, living with dementia or surviving a stroke, integrated with independent living services is variable
- Specific expertise of working with sensory loss conditions is an important resource for patient management, unscheduled care and providing safe transitions from hospital care

The top three challenges identified from working collaboratively with Third Sector partners are:

- We need to expand collaboration to include the Stroke Association and Alzheimer's Society and ensure there is active on-going investment into the quality of our service
- We need to consider how to increase the benefits of cultural osmosis and transfer basic awareness as a mainstreamed benefit, e.g. RNIB Cymru's Visibly Better design principles, Dementia-friendly service accreditation

- What third sector partners can learn from Managing Better to assist improvement to our other services.

The ambitions for Managing Better (Phase 2) are to clarify our Unique Selling Point (USP), improve joint working across strategic partnerships, develop our niche expertise, embracing new technology and contributing to a consistent care pathway as an independent living service. The future must include new ways of working and a Managing Better service prepared for new challenges.

Our Ambitions to Meet Future Challenges

To meet the increasing challenges across Wales, outlined in this report, our strong partnership approach in delivering the Managing Better service means older people in Wales, vulnerable due to sensory loss, dementia or surviving a stroke, can have access to much needed support to enable them to live safely and independently at home. To make this happen Managing Better has built on the expertise of the traditional Care & Repair service and has embedded a specific and new level of expertise to independent living practice.

Our ambitions are based on delivering through collaborative partnerships and listening to the individual challenges faced by our beneficiaries over three years. Much has been achieved but there is much more to do:

- Contribute from a housing perspective into the integration agenda for Health, Social Care and Housing collaboration: working together, strategically, we can achieve so much more
- Utilise the assessment of the potential impact of sensory loss issues on traditional areas of home adaptations, home safety, welfare benefit checks, digital & financial inclusion and enabling access to other go-to services
- Advocate more confidently for clients needing independent living aids and home adaptations to adopt RNIB Cymru's Visibly Better design principles
- Further develop the skills and work collaboratively to advocate on behalf of clients experiencing barriers to accessing the mainstream and specific services they need

The difference Managing Better makes

Using British Sign Language made “What Matters” conversations more effective

Mr & Mrs Shaw were referred to Managing Better after attending their local D/deaf* club. Both are in their 80s, profoundly deaf and use British Sign Language (BSL).

The Managing Better caseworker arranged for a BSL interpreter to accompany her whenever a home visit was made.

During the initial home visit the caseworker carried out a Healthy Homes Assessment and found that both Mr and Mrs Shaw were frequent fallers at home due to increasing balance problems and arthritis. They found it increasingly difficult to use their bath, toilet, stairs and front door.

The caseworker arranged for a RRAP (Rapid Response Adaptations Programme) grant which paid for grab rails for the bath, toilet and front door, and a second banister rail for the stairs. A referral was made to the Fire Service for a visual smoke alarm and to Social Services for an Occupational Therapist to assess for Telecare and furniture raisers.

Having the support of our partner, Action on hearing Loss Cymu, gave us access to high quality BSL interpreters who visited with the caseworker and the Handyperson when the grab rails were fitted. Having the BSL interpreter allowed Care & Repair staff to communicate effectively with Mr & Mrs Shaw and ensured they were properly informed about the options available to them. They were in control of the situation and could express to the caseworker what mattered most to them.

** The term D/deaf is used to describe people who are Deaf and use sign language to communicate.*

“

**A great service. It's helped me to be more
independent around the house.**

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Building new partnerships enabled people's needs to be at the heart of our service

Mr Dunne was referred to the Managing Better service by the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer. He had recently been registered severely sight impaired. His sight loss had happened very quickly and both he, and his partner, were struggling. Their home was not appropriate for them anymore and they were both very worried about the future.

The Managing Better caseworker visited, and it was apparent that Mr Dunne's partner was very anxious about the situation. She had reduced her hours at work which had a huge impact on their income. On the days that she worked Mr Dunne did not feel confident and was reluctant to use the phone due to his sudden sight loss. She explained that she was in a constant panic that something would happen.

Mr Dunne's sight loss, along with other health issues were putting him at a high risk of falling and worrying them both.

The caseworker identified that Mr Dunne needed practical support and a referral was made to Social Services for vision support and a care package is now in place. A referral was also sent to Sight Cymru to support with using technology so that he could use his phone.

Both Mr Dunne and his partner needed reassurance more than anything as they admitted that they "felt lost". They felt their housing situation was critical, and the caseworker supported them to make an application to the Local Authorities' Social Housing Adapted Properties list for re-housing.

It was apparent during the first visit that Mr Dunne's partner was very overwhelmed with her caring responsibilities and this was having an impact on both her and Mr Dunne. After discussing her worries and concerns with the Managing Better caseworker she agreed for a referral to be made to her local Carers' Hub. She is now able to chat on the phone when she feels overwhelmed or visit one of the Hubs which has helped relieve a lot of her stress.

Our partnerships make the difference

Rebecca Colclough, Eye Clinic Liaison Service Manager for Wales, RNIB Cymru.

“Managing Better is an essential element of support offered to people across Wales living with sight loss. The service both complements and enhances the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) service, based in eye clinics, and other community and statutory sector services. Without it, the holistic supportive environment for people in Wales living with sight loss would have a huge hole in it.

“Most people feel safe and at ease in their own home environment. It is also through visiting patients at home that the reality of how people are coping day to day is exposed and can therefore be addressed. I cannot overstate the value my ECLO team find in having such an excellent and high-quality service which visit patients at home. It is this home visiting element, combined with a fast response rate, a genuine understanding of the needs of people with sight loss, and an ethos of partnership working which underpin the huge success of the service. The service is best summed up by ECLOs who use it week in, week out:

“This service is essential to me as an ECLO. They contact our patients quickly and can usually get out to see them within 2 weeks. This has proved essential for people I see in clinic that are really struggling at home or not coping with the stress of being newly diagnosed” Janet Nicholls, ECLO, Ceredigion

“I always get extremely positive feedback from patients who have been supported by Managing Better” Ruth Rhydderch ECLO Cardiff and Vale

“From the beginning the service operated in a genuinely collaborative way, facilitated greater joint working across the sector in Wales, and added great value for patients and professionals alike.

“Managing Better is a service which really is so much more than the sum of its parts. As a team across Wales we are hopeful that the positive collaboration with ECLOs and the wider sensory loss sector in Wales will continue and grow.”



Ian Moran, Chair, The Welsh Rehabilitation Officer Forum

“A Rehabilitation Officer works with individuals who have sight loss or a congenital vision impairment. Our main aim is to promote independence, reduce the risk of accident and injury and improve a person’s emotional wellbeing.

“Rehabilitation is most effective at the early stages of sight loss and many workers are situated in early intervention and preventative teams. In many cases the general public are not aware this service is available. Our work can entail extensive input and time, and in some cases other work can be addressed by our partners at Care & Repair.

“The Managing Better caseworkers work alongside and complement our role. They act as a safety net for people who do not know about rehabilitation and can refer straight into many services in Wales.

“Since the Managing Better scheme started 3 years ago there have been many examples of good practice and partnership working. The Welsh Rehabilitation Officers Forum has encouraged close partnership working aimed at getting the best outcome for people with sight loss. Referral pathways between the different services have developed and improved with some fine examples of joined up working.

“Joint training with all our Rehabilitation Officers, Eye Clinic Liaison Officers and Managing Better caseworkers has resulted in a better understanding of roles and how we can work together to get the best outcomes for blind and partially sighted people. The Managing Better service supports and complements the rehabilitation process, providing a more streamlined, holistic approach.

“We look forward to building meaningful relationships with our partners at Care & Repair to provide the much-needed service to the 111,000 people living with a significant vision impairment”.

Negotiating local investment to provide flexible solutions

Mr Thomas (53yrs) lives with his wife, their daughter and 18-month-old granddaughter. Mr & Mrs Thomas are both registered deaf; both contracted meningitis as young children and lost their hearing, resulting in them having speech impairments due to their hearing loss at such a young age. They communicate through BSL. Mr Thomas has limited mobility due to a hip replacement and operation on his back and had recently fallen in the back garden.

Mr Thomas was referred to Managing Better by the local Sensory Services Team following his recent fall.

The Managing Better caseworker visited Mr Thomas and his mother attended to provide BSL interpretation. The Healthy Home Assessment identified the two sets of steps at the back of the property were potential fall hazards and would need handrails. These were installed three days later, giving Mr Thomas the confidence and security he needed to access his garden.

The assessment identified a Hard of Hearing Smoke Detector was installed at the property, but the CO alarm was a standard alarm which neither Mr or Mrs Thomas could hear. This was of concern as Mr Thomas looked after his granddaughter during the day. The caseworker contacted Action on Hearing Loss Cymru who identified a suitable CO alarm with a large blue flashing light.

Using Intermediate Care Funding, which the Local Authority had ringfenced for work identified through the Managing Better service, the caseworker arranged for the purchase and fitting of the new CO alarm.

Our Healthy homes Assessments improve independent living

Mrs Donald has Macular Degeneration and is partially sighted. Her sight loss was impacting on her daily life and she was finding it more and more difficult to move safely around her home.

Mrs Donald contacted the Managing Better service after seeing a leaflet in her local library. The Managing Better caseworker undertook a Healthy Home Assessment during the initial home visit and found Mrs Donald was struggling to negotiate the stairs safely and the lighting in the kitchen, bathroom and on the stairs was very poor and totally unsuitable.

Using a RRAP grant, an additional stair rail was fitted along with two grab rails by the front door to help Mrs Donald manage the steep stairs and negotiate the high front doorstep, reducing the likelihood of a fall.

The lighting in the kitchen, bathroom and on the stairs was improved by fitting LED bulbs. Mrs Donald was referred into the Low Vision Service and has received an assessment together with an assortment of magnification aids and lighting which will enable her to use her remaining sight to its maximum.

The caseworker also did a Welfare Benefits check and completed an Attendance Allowance application for Mrs Donald. She was awarded the High Rate Attendance Allowance and due to this had her Pension Credit increased and received a reduction in her Council Tax. As a result, Mrs Donald's income has been increased by £8,871 per year.

So much more than just a housing service

Mr & Mrs Smith are a very outgoing, sociable couple with a young outlook on life. They love their home, garden, walking and socialising with others. Mr Smith was diagnosed with Alzheimer's three years ago.

Mrs Smith contacted Care & Repair because Mr Smith was becoming unsteady on his feet, especially in the garden where there were steep steps between the different levels.

The Managing Better caseworker visited and found the existing steps in the garden were in good condition but there were no handrails. Mrs Smith explained that when she was hanging out washing or tending to the garden, Mr Smith liked to help and would follow her up the steps, but she was fearful he would fall due to his poor mobility.

The caseworker arranged for rails to be fitted to the open sided garden steps to provide safe access for Mr Smith to all parts of the garden which has improved their health and wellbeing.

Since Mr Smith was diagnosed with Alzheimer's they had struggled to find suitable groups or activities to give them the active lifestyle they both wanted but in a safe environment. They felt that many groups were aimed at much older people and didn't feel that they fitted in. Being a carer can be a demanding and sometimes lonely role without support from others in a similar situation and Mrs Smith had found this was impacting on her general health and wellbeing.

The caseworker made a referral to Social Services' Community Connectors to help put Mr & Mrs Smith in touch with local groups and to help them find suitable activities which they could both enjoy.

A referral was also made to the local Carers Group for Mr & Mrs Smith so that they can meet with others for support, socialising and take part in regular trips and events. Mr & Mrs Smith are now members of the Carers group and meet up weekly at a local coffee shop for a chat which they both enjoy.

They also know Care & Repair and the Managing Better caseworker will continue to support them should they need further help in the future as Mr Smith's condition deteriorates.



Summary

The narrative from around Wales from our NHS, Social Services and Third Sector partners, as well as from our beneficiaries, is that lives would be more challenging, caseloads would increase and systems would be less effective, without Managing Better. There is still much to do and so much valuable learning and experience to share.

In terms of assisting the Social Services & Wellbeing Act become a reality, we are continuing to contribute to improving the lives of older people and making genuine co-production a reality. 'A Healthier Wales' is now Wales' vision for a better place to live, where people can grow old in dignity and with good health opportunity.

'Over the next decade, we will see a shift of services from hospitals to communities, and from communities to homes. People will be supported to remain active and independent, in their own homes, for as long as possible. A lot of this change will be as a result of maintaining good health, through more emphasis being placed on prevention.' ('A Healthier Wales'- (2018)

'We will embed change, so that it is better able to meet future challenges and opportunities, and to be sustainable for future generations... Stronger national leadership and direction will support these changes, enabling us to grasp the full potential of our integrated system and our planning approach, but our real test will be in the delivery of services and improved outcomes across Wales.' (Andrew Goodall, CEO NHS Wales)

Managing Better has a proven track record and is ready for this challenge.

If you would like to know more about Managing Better please feel free to contact Stephen Thomas, Project Development Officer.

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Managing Better Case Study

https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/6715/3968/6221/Case_Study__Managing_Better_E.pdf

Managing Better Good Practice Guide

https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/6415/3987/2171/Good_practice_guide_FINAL_E.pdf

Managing Better – The first-year report

https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/7115/0642/3866/Impact_Report-web.pdf

Managing Better Digital Stories, The first year digital story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU3rd8K2yal&t=131s>

Managing Better case study, How a Managing Better caseworker helped a client

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vaRT6zOkmM

Managing Better case study, Managing Better caseworker & a Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment (ROVI) working together to help a client

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5RV7IJVQLY&t=18s>

Moving towards integration, Examining the relationships between Managing Better and its key stakeholders, Final Report, by Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of South Wales

https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/8815/6379/4412/FINAL_REPORT_-_Managing_Better_-_WIHSC.pdf

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https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/6115/6379/2122/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_-_Managing_Better.pdf

Welsh Government Policies, Prosperity for All: economic action plan

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-02/prosperity-for-all-economic-action-plan.pdf>

A Healthier Wales: our plan for health and social care

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/a-healthier-wales-our-plan-for-health-and-social-care.pdf>

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: guidance

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<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>

Hospital to a Healthier Home service

https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/files/2715/6578/0045/Hospital_to_a_Healthier_Home_Winter_Pressures_Pilot_Evaluation_E.pdf

The Lancet, Dementia prevention, intervention and care

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)31363-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)31363-6/fulltext)



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