



# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

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## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS AND THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Welcome to the latest edition of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership newsletter!

It's hard to believe we have another year of collaboration under our belts, but we have plenty of highlights to look back on, as well as exciting plans for the year ahead.

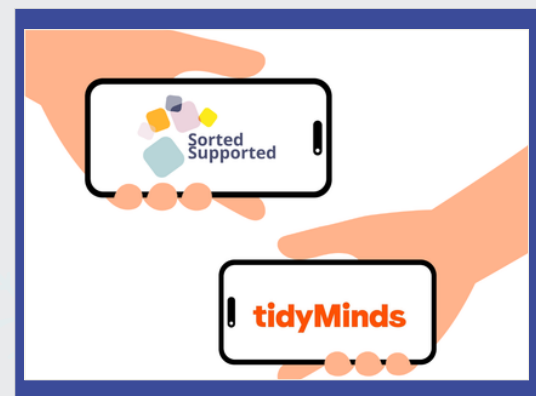
We've decided that the main focus of this issue will be our **volunteer representatives** and the impact of their incredible contributions all year round.

We also have news on how to get involved in the upcoming **'Together WeCare' Awards**, and a glimpse at the Welsh Government's very first **Pan-Wales RPB newsletter**.

### A SEASON OF SUPPORT...

It's important to recognise that the festive season can be a challenging time for some.

Pressures around family, finances and feelings of isolation can be amplified around Christmas, so helpful online resources such as **Sorted Supported** (for adults) and **tidyMinds** (for young people, parents, carers and professionals) are absolutely crucial.



Click on the links below to view these hugely valuable platforms, and please feel free to share with your networks operating across the West Glamorgan region.



[www.sortedsupported.org.uk](http://www.sortedsupported.org.uk)



[www.tidyminds.org.uk](http://www.tidyminds.org.uk)



# MEET HELEN AND PHIL – VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVES

Our volunteer representatives play a vital role in shaping and strengthening our work. In this edition of our newsletter, we are delighted to spotlight **Helen Horton** and **Phil Swinnerton** – a couple from Swansea who dedicate their time and expertise across a wide range of organisations!

Helen is an unpaid carer representative on our **Neurodiverse Programme Board**, and Phil is a lived experience volunteer on our **Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Programme Board**.

They are parent carers to four Neurodivergent children and young adults, and have lived experience of mental health themselves.



## Hi both, please tell us a bit about yourselves...

Hello, we are Helen and Phil and we are both volunteer representatives for West Glamorgan. We have been together since 2010 and met at a local group.

On top of volunteering for West Glamorgan, we like to keep busy by giving back to the community. Phil runs a variety of different men's groups, supporting men who are experiencing mental health issues. We both also run peer support groups on behalf of Bipolar UK for this region, for anyone who has any connection to Bipolar (you don't have to have been diagnosed to attend).

Other organisations we're part of include the Swansea Wellbeing Centre and the National Mental Health Forum (we're members of a new steering group).

## Do you enjoy what you do?

We absolutely love what we do! We like to give back to the community any way that we can. We mainly do this by sharing our knowledge and lived experience or offering support and signposting. We have a vast amount of knowledge and experience of both the Mental Health and Neurodivergence, and we love being able to share that with others. When it comes to the West Glamorgan Boards, we like to share our lived experience and knowledge to help develop and improve services across the region.

Our main mission is to help prevent people, especially men, from taking their own lives. If we can make services better, or offer direct support then we know we have helped someone.

## What is your favourite thing about volunteering with West Glamorgan?

*We see the results of what we do by speaking with others and sharing our knowledge and experiences*

Building our networks and connections – the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership has allowed us to expand our networks, which has been amazing.

We also love the social aspect of it, everyone in the team is really friendly and we feel as though we are all on the same level. Everyone listens to one another.

We really feel that the ideas that we put forward are being listened to and considered. We see the results of what we do by speaking with others and sharing our knowledge and experiences.

# MEET HELEN AND PHIL – CONTINUED...

## Is there anything you think could be done better?

It would be good if things were simplified. The regional work can be really high level and complex, it would be good if it could be brought down a bit, so it is easier to follow and understand. Accessibility is so important.

We would also like some more time in between meetings to allow for more in-depth discussions. The Board meetings can sometimes be quite daunting.

## Finally, why do you think it's important to have Volunteer Representatives on the Regional Partnership Board?

You can't beat real life, first-hand experience. It is important to listen to and have people involved who are actively on the ground, talking to people across the region about the issues that they face. We see and experience first-hand what goes on on the ground in our communities, and we want to bring that to the attention of the Regional Partnership and its partners. It is so important to have us there!

We're hugely grateful to Helen and Phil for their contributions. The partnership space can be tricky to navigate, but the input of all of the representatives ensures the voices of those with lived experience are always at the heart of what we do.

If you would like any more information on the various groups Helen and Phil run, please get in touch via the contact details at the end of this newsletter and we'll connect you. They are also regulars at the monthly One Stop Info Shops at Swansea's Waterfront Museum – feel free to drop in for a chat ([click here for details](#)).

## A FESTIVE CHEERS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



Spirits were high on Monday 15th December as volunteer representatives, members of the West Glamorgan team and colleagues from partner organisations came together for a festive gathering at the Secret Bar and Kitchen on Swansea seafront.

This year has seen some fantastic progress, including **Neil Williams** taking on the role of Chair of the 'Easy Read' workstream.

This new piece of work comes under the **Well-being and Learning Disability Programme**, and is a great step forward in terms of having a volunteer representative with a learning disability to lead the way in ensuring information is accessible to all.

Everyone was also pleased to spend some time with **Gaynor Richards**, who is retiring from her role as Director of Neath Port Talbot Community Voluntary Service at the end of this year. We can't even begin to describe the impact of Gaynor's contribution to regional working since the very beginning. She has been brilliant as Chair of the Regional Carers Partnership and will be sorely missed by everyone who has had the pleasure of working with her. Diolch am bopeth, Gaynor!

You can view Gaynor's retirement announcement on the NPTCVS website by clicking [here](#).

# ALL-NEW NATIONAL NEWSLETTER!

Earlier in December, we were thrilled to feature in a brand new RPB-focused publication produced by the **Welsh Government's Partnerships and Integration team!** This is the first of its kind and it aims to platform the great work being undertaken across all seven RPBs in Wales.

**[Click here](#) to view a copy, which is also available in Welsh.**

In this very first edition, we have chosen to showcase **'Westfield House'** – a specialist step-down care service tailored for older adults living with dementia, who have recently been discharged from hospital and require extra support and assessment before transitioning back home or into longer-term care.

Funded through the Welsh Government's **Regional Integration Fund (RIF)**, Westfield House has supported 83 hospital leavers to regain their independence since its inception in 2023.

Our Communications and Engagement Team paid a visit to the service to speak to staff and residents about their experiences. You can view the digital story they created by visiting our **Vimeo channel**:



**[vimeo.com/910163424?fl=pl&fe=sh](https://vimeo.com/910163424?fl=pl&fe=sh)**

We'd like to say a big thank you to Welsh Government colleagues for compiling the newsletter, and we look forward to contributing to future editions!



## 'TOGETHER WECARE' AWARDS – NOMINATE NOW!

WeCare Wales, Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council have collaborated to launch the inaugural **'Together WeCare' Awards!**

This new initiative aims to lift up and celebrate the social care, childcare, play, and early years workforce across the West Glamorgan region.

### NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN...

Nominations across a broad range of categories are open until **31 December 2025**, so there's time to get your submissions in!

Visit the WeCare Wales website for details on the criteria and how to nominate – **[click here to view](#)**.

The ceremony itself will take place in Swansea's Brangwyn Hall on 13 March 2026.

**A partnership initiative:**



For more information on the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership, please get in touch via email at [west.glamorgan@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:west.glamorgan@swansea.gov.uk)

This Newsletter is available in different formats - please contact us with details of your requirements.