

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

GAVO Quarter 2

July - September 2024



Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
Cymdeithas Mudiadau Gwirfoddol Gwent

Working with Communities since 1927

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GAVO: Empowering Communities Across Gwent

GAVO is an organisation dedicated to supporting and strengthening the third sector in the Gwent region of Wales. With a commitment to empowering communities, GAVO provides a wide range of services, including funding support, volunteer placement, organisational development, and advocacy for the third sector's crucial role in health and social care.

This document will outline GAVO's impact across the region, highlighting its work within each local authority area and the strategic leadership provided by the Senior Management Team.



Senior Management Team: Influencing and Engaging for the Third Sector:

- **Third Sector Partnership Agreement:** GAVO is actively engaged in discussions regarding the Third Sector Partnership Agreement, particularly in Newport, where a pilot Agreement is being considered in collaboration with the local authority.
- **Financial Transparency and Strategic Planning:** The organisation emphasises financial accountability with completed trustee reports and auditor's accounts. Strategic planning is underway, including the development of a new strategic plan and the annual impact report.
- **Inclusive Collaboration:** GAVO actively participates in various regional and national structures, including the Third Sector Support Wales architecture, Gwent Public Service Board, Regional Partnership Board, Climate Action Forum, and Resilience Forum. This collaborative approach ensures a strong and unified third sector voice.
- **Team Support:** GAVO prioritises support for its staff, providing resources such as financial procedure and HR guidance and CRM training.

Regional Impact: Tailored Support for Each Local Authority

BLAENAU GWENT:

- **Development:** GAVO's Community Development Officers in Blaenau Gwent provide governance and financial support to organisations, adapting to the growing demand for services. They have allocated over £78,000 in funding, with an additional £31,500 pending, and provided tailored support to groups like Friends of Pen-Y-Pont Care Home, Waundeg Tenants and Residents, and Gwent Valley Evangelism.
- **Volunteering:** The Adult and Youth Volunteering Officers in Blaenau Gwent facilitate volunteer placements, manage the Cash4U project, and organise the Volunteering Awards. They also work closely with the local authority to promote the W9 Shared Prosperity Fund training for community groups.
- **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing:** While the Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing Partnership Officer post is currently vacant, GAVO is actively working to fill the position to continue supporting the Wellbeing Agenda and ensuring the third sector's integration into health and social care initiatives.

CAERPHILLY:

- **Development:** Development Officers in Caerphilly have created a Development Officer training package, fostering collaboration among groups like Smart Money Cymru, Bug Life Project, and Disability Can Do. They have assisted organisations such as Fit for Living Gym and the White Rose Resource Centre with governance changes and explored Community Wealth Building Partnerships.
- **Volunteering:** Volunteering Officers in Caerphilly have organised volunteer engagement events, participated in VPN and TSSW meetings to update education guidance, and engaged in local youth pathways and apprenticeship working groups. They have been part of the whole team effort to organise the Volunteering Awards.
- **Early Language Programme:** This programme supports early language development through parent and child sessions, providing advice, guidance, and connections to other services. The team has collaborated with the Early Years team in Caerphilly, provided resources and activities, and established a partnership with St John Ambulance to offer free mini first aid sessions.
- **Participatory Budgeting:** This project supports Integrated Wellbeing Networks with focused funding, with £36,000 allocated to eight community-voted projects in the Upper Rhymney Valley. The second round is set to begin in October.



MONMOUTHSHIRE:

- **Development:** Despite staff sickness, GAVO has ensured development work continues in Monmouthshire. The team has reconnected with stakeholders, supported a new cycling group, and organised a funding surgery with the National Lottery.
- **Volunteering:** Volunteering Officers in Monmouthshire have assisted in collating SPF data for TogetherWORKS, organised the Volunteer Awards, collaborated with MIND Gwent on young volunteer engagement, and continued involvement in community initiatives.
- **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing:** The Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing Officers in Monmouthshire has established partnerships with health teams and voluntary sector groups, launched Community Conversations to address local health needs, and expanded support for carers and dementia patients.
- **Wellbeing Links:** This project links GP surgery patients with third-sector services, reducing demand on practices. During Q2, the service received 117 requests, made contact with 106 individuals, and provided approximately 400 links to information and support services.
- **Community Spaces Outreach Officer:** This Shared Prosperity Funded role bridges gaps in rural Monmouthshire. GAVO is involved in developing a mobile outreach vehicle, engaging with rural Community Councils, providing governance advice, and supporting new community projects.
- **TogetherWORKS:** A collaborative project between GAVO, Monmouthshire County Council, and other partners, TogetherWORKS has been central to the community, providing activities such as Games and Grub nights for families, a community freezer, craft and friendship groups, and hosting support services.

NEWPORT:

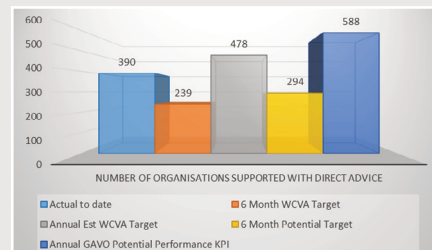
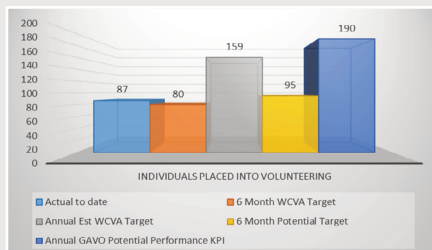
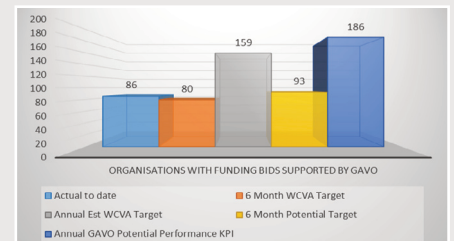
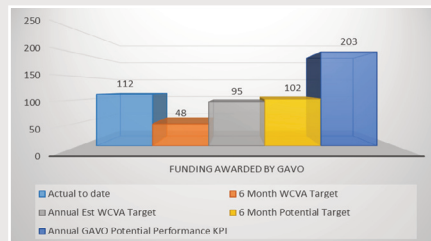
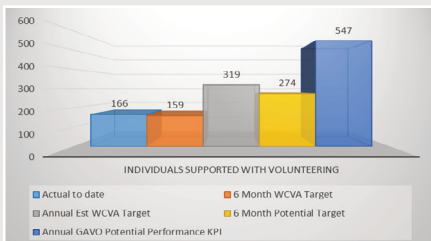
- **Development:** The Development Officer in Newport have focused on community engagement and education, supporting groups like Caerleon in Bloom, organising monthly funding surgeries, and increasing engagement through newsletters and promotional videos.
- **Volunteering:** Volunteering Officers in Newport have organised the Newport Cash 4 U panel, conducted extensive outreach, provided personalised support to young volunteers, and planned the Newport Volunteer Awards.
- **Health, Social Care and Wellbeing:** The Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing Officer in Newport has collaborated with ABUHB, supported the Food Poverty steering group, engaged with the Gwent Carers Board to enhance support for unpaid carers, and participated in establishing five Dementia Hubs across Gwent.
- **Food Sustainability Project:** This project supports food projects in Newport with grants, advice, and networking opportunities. The team has engaged with various community groups, conducted a

mapping exercise for food poverty, collaborated with Public Health Wales on food workshops, and received positive feedback from a meeting with the Blaenau Gwent food coordinator.

GWENT WIDE:

- **The Education Programme for Patients project (EPP):** Offers a variety of self-management health and well-being courses for individuals living with health conditions or those caring for them. Highlights include the successful completion of a six-week pain management course and the launch of a pilot "Living with Lymphodema" course, with plans to expand offerings due to growing demand. Collaborations with GP practices and health centres have been vital to the project's success, allowing for a broader reach, particularly in diabetes care. Looking ahead, the project aims to expand its services, including new courses for neurodiversity and cancer care, and secure national support for broader outreach across health boards.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and other information:



Number of Interactions with organisations providing direct advice	390
Average number of times each organisation has used GAVO	0.99
Funding awarded by GAVO to date (2 quarters)	£846,882
Target value of funding supported by GAVO	£793,620
Actual value of funding supported by GAVO (2 quarters)	£834,817
% of organisations being supported for funding (based on organisations supported or funded against the number of organisations supported in total)	21.83%
Average number of volunteers against organisations supported (based on volunteers supported/placed against the number of total organisations)	0.6

What is GAVO's areas of focus for the next quarter?

BLAENAU GWENT:

- **Visibility:** GAVO is set to enhance the visibility of all its services, with a special focus on introducing the new Youth Volunteering Officer to the area. This will help boost youth engagement and strengthen community connections.
- **Cash4U:** GAVO continues its work with the Cash4U funding panels to support local youth initiatives.

CAERPHILLY:

- **Participatory budgeting:** Continue the development and delivery of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Risca, ensuring that local voices shape funding decisions. Additionally, we promote ward-based Community Wealth Building Partnerships, fostering collaboration and resource sharing within neighbourhoods.
- **Development Workshops:** To support community initiatives, organise Operational Development workshops, equipping local groups with the skills they need to thrive.

- **Events:** All areas will be focusing on the annual Volunteer Awards and in Caerphilly, the additional V Fest event, celebrating the invaluable work of volunteers.
- **Promotion:** Promote the Early Language Team project and provide training sessions for parent and toddler staff, enhancing early language development in our communities.

MONMOUTHSHIRE:

- **Communication:** Work to enhance communication with local groups through regular check-ins to tackle non-responsiveness.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:** Collaborating with Community Councils to sustain winter activities.
- **The Monmouthshire Volunteer Awards (MVA):** Recognising volunteer efforts in partnership with Monmouthshire Housing Association.
- **Volunteering:** A steering group with Monmouthshire County Council will improve volunteer recruitment for the Abergavenny Wellbeing Information Centre.
- **Dementia:** Focusing on support for individuals with dementia and engaging with community leaders to assess rural needs.

NEWPORT:

- **Radio Promotions:** GAVO enhances community engagement through weekly radio segments featuring award nominees, and by facilitating the Warm Hub, Food Sustainability Grant, and Small Grants Scheme with Newport City Council.
- **Events:** Actively participate in key events like the Gwent Dementia Hub, Section 16 event, and Wellbeing Activity Conference. Additionally, GAVO is leading the creation of a steering group for the Newport Dementia Hub, promoting third-sector collaboration and information sharing.

GWENT WIDE:

- **Pilot Training:** We're piloting our second online lymphedema programme and launching diabetes and foot care courses on October 22nd.
- **Reporting:** Finalising a report for Tredegar Health Centre on their EPP pain course.
- **Collaboration:** Our team is collaborating with local autism services for the national neurodiversity conference and organising autumn courses with GPs, while supporting outreach for the Ebbw Vale lymphedema pilot and delivering cancer training for ABUHB tutors.

What are some of the challenges facing the third sector in Gwent?

BLAENAU GWENT:

- **Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF):** The uncertainty surrounding SPF poses potential challenges for our sector and its future initiatives. As we navigate these unknowns, we remain committed to supporting the community despite the financial uncertainties.
- **Volunteering:** Volunteer recruitment continues to be a challenge so we are actively exploring ways to address seasonal shifts and maintain volunteer engagement year-round.

CAERPHILLY

- **Community asset Transfer (CAT):** The Community Asset Transfer process is a new initiative that presents both opportunities and challenges across the borough. With a significant decrease in funding options, it is crucial for stakeholders to navigate this process effectively.
- **Participatory Budgeting (PB):** There is a pressing need to enhance understanding of Participatory Budgeting (PB). Ensuring that stakeholders are well-informed about the capabilities and limitations



of PB will empower them to make informed decisions and maximise the potential benefits for the community.

MONMOUTHSHIRE

- **Communication Review:** Effective communication poses challenges for many groups, exacerbated by a lack of follow-up after initial guidance.
- **The Getting on Board Programme:** The closure of the 'Getting On Board' organisation has created a resource gap for succession planning and trustee training, leaving uncertainty around events like the 'Festival of Trusteeship.'
- **Volunteering:** Finding placements for young volunteers with support needs remains difficult, and there's a growing demand for voluntary sector services to assist individuals with complex health and care needs.

NEWPORT

- **Collaboration:** Efforts will be made to strengthen collaboration among food groups in Gwent, with a meeting planned to facilitate this.

GWENT WIDE

- **Unavailability of EPP Tutors:** Several tutors are currently unavailable, which has reduced our teaching capacity. To maintain course delivery, coordinators have stepped in to teach, limiting their ability to focus on administrative tasks. As a result, the waiting list for courses is rapidly increasing but we are focused on reducing these for the benefit of those in need.

Conclusion:

GAVO's work across each region demonstrates its unwavering commitment to building strong, resilient communities. Providing tailored support, collaborating, and advocating for the third sector, GAVO is making a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities in the Gwent region. The upcoming quarter will see continued efforts to expand services, address challenges, and build on the successes achieved.

Contact us for more information or to support our work, please visit our website or contact us directly.



Membership:

If you wish to become a member of GAVO, our membership form is located on the website at <https://www.gavo.org.uk/membership>. As a third sector we are stronger together so would encourage you to join.

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