



Annual Impact Report

2019 - 2020

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About Us

GAVO is the longest-standing and largest County Voluntary Council (CVC) in Wales. GAVO represents the Third Sector at local, regional & national levels and is part of the umbrella infrastructure for the Third Sector in Gwent.

Our mission: To support, facilitate and broker positive change in the well-being of people & communities through collaborative approaches.

We are also part of the [Third Sector](#)

[Support Wales \(TSSW\) network](#) and our shared goal is to enable the Third Sector and Volunteers across Wales to contribute fully to individual and community well-being. Collectively we deliver four pillars of support: Volunteering; Good Governance; Sustainable Funding; Engagement & Influencing.

@GAVOHQ for Third Sector news, events, funding, volunteering opportunities & more!



Foreword by the Chair & Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to the GAVO Annual Impact Report for 2019-2020.

This year has seen some fantastic achievements by GAVO and the Third Sector in general, but it's also been tinged with difficulty and uncertainty of the future, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the virus taking hold in February, and our working practices changing dramatically, even though it only affected a small part of the financial year this report covers, it would be wrong not to acknowledge COVID-19; in particular the loss of life across the UK; the difficulties facing the economy and the huge impact on the Third Sector and our Public Service partners, to name a few.

It would also be wrong not to mention how admirable the Sector has stood up, faced the adversity and shown itself to be a vital part of our society. Working together has been key to these solid foundations & the catalyst for the positive response. One thing is for sure, the country would be a different place if it hadn't have been for the fabulous efforts of the Third Sector, and for that, we thank you.

We continue to work towards our robust Strategic Plan, that is in place until March 2022, ensuring organisational direction & focus. The Senior Management Team, Staff & Trustees, have worked collectively

towards this to ensure we achieve the overall GAVO mission.

The voice of the Third Sector is pivotal to the delivery of the evolving Well-being priorities, and GAVO are ever present to ensure the Sector is positively represented.

This report highlights the scope & public benefit of GAVO's activity - of which is paramount - we cannot thank our Staff enough for their invaluable contributions & hard work that they do for our communities.

We would like to make a special thank you to Martin Featherstone, our previous CEO, who left GAVO for pastures new in March 2020. Your support, direction & commitment has been clear for all to see and you leave a legacy for GAVO to continue to ensure communities are supported & represented in the way they should be.

Thank You very much to all our Partners across the Statutory, Private and Third Sectors for their continued support & involvement during 2019-2020 and we extend our appreciation and gratitude to our Trustees, Local Committee Members, Staff and Volunteers, for their commitment and valued contribution during the year.

Edward Watts MBE DL
Chair

Stephen Tiley
Chief Executive Officer

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 March 2020

				31.03.2020	31.03.2019
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Pension deficit recovery funds	Total funds	Total funds as restated
	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS					
Donations and legacies	315	8,215	-	8,530	6,980
Charitable activities	706,808	2,373,921	-	3,080,729	2,872,953
Other trading activities	11,835	3,999	-	15,834	36,576
Investment income	753	-	-	753	443
Total income	719,711	2,386,135	-	3,105,846	2,916,952
EXPENDITURE					
Expenditure on charitable activities	675,881	2,387,385	(17,358)	3,045,908	2,932,168
Total expenditure	675,881	2,387,385	(17,358)	3,056,908	2,932,168
Net income/(expenditure)	43,830	(1,250)	17,358	59,938	(15,216)
Loss on revaluation of fixed assets for Charity's own use	(11,000)	-	-	(11,000)	-
Net movement of funds	32,830	(1,250)	17,358	48,938	(15,216)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward	340,665	1,250	(98,816)	243,099	258,315
Total funds carried forward	373,495	-	(81,458)	292,037	243,099

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 March 2020

	31.03.2020		31.03.2019
	£		Total funds as restated £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible fixed assets		350,000	381,375
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	336,035		192,674
Cash at bank and in hand	273,594		152,014
	609,629		344,688
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR			
Net current assets		23,495	(39,460)
Total assets less current liabilities		373,495	341,915
PROVISIONS			
Pensions and similar obligations		(81,458)	(98,816)
Net assets		292,037	243,099
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted pension deficit recovery fund		(81,458)	(98,816)
Unrestricted fixed asset funds		278,927	305,187
Unrestricted funds		94,568	35,478
Total unrestricted funds		292,037	241,849
Restricted funds		-	1,250
Total Charity funds		292,037	243,099

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. These financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 3rd February 2021, and are signed on behalf of the Board by:

Mr E Watts
Trustee

Mrs S Smith
Trustee

Volunteering

What we do: We work closely with organisations across Gwent, to facilitate quality volunteering opportunities & support individuals with finding the perfect volunteering role.



We continue to support organisations with advertising their Volunteer roles on the **Volunteering Wales** website - giving top tips for creating engaging adverts & how-to guides for getting the most out of this free Volunteer Management Tool.

<https://gwent.volunteering-wales.net/>

2,460 Newly registered & supported Volunteers during 2019-2020



of which a staggering **1,392 people** (56%) registered in March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic really hit, to support essential services!

People volunteer for many different reasons; for those out of work Volunteering is a great step towards employment. It can help boost your self-esteem and gain invaluable experience, whilst doing something positive to help others.



Case Study - Adele

What do you do as a Volunteer? I'm a Gateway Advisor, when a new person comes into CAB, I help direct them to the right Advisor by finding out what they need help with specifically.

How did you first get involved? GAVO's Communities for Work referred me to the Volunteering Team. I'd been out of work for a while, and very bored. I wanted to help other people & get some experience at the same time.

What difference has your volunteering made to you and others? It's given me more confidence and it's made me feel part of the local community where I live. Some people would be homeless and have no money without CAB - it's positive help for people with serious problems, who

have nowhere else to go. I've recently started a job with Python IT and I still volunteer at CAB on a Friday. Volunteering at CAB gave me the confidence to apply.

How did the Volunteering Team help you? They were really helpful and kept in touch all the way, I didn't expect that - I assumed they would find me a placement and that would be it! Really appreciated the keeping in touch part.

Can you describe volunteering in one sentence? A life changing experience, makes you feel good helping other people and you're doing it because you want to.

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer, drop us an email via volunteering@gavo.org.uk or visit <https://gwent.volunteering-wales.net/>



Our Volunteering Team had a packed Volunteers' Week, promoting and celebrating Volunteers across the GAVO footprint.



We toured libraries in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly, providing information & advice on volunteering and chatting to members of the public about their experiences.

We heard some powerful stories about how they love volunteering in their communities and the positive impact it has had on their lives.

We had a lovely 'Selfie Frame' photo with Dawn Bowden (AM), who gratefully thanked Volunteers for all that they do.



...we held an 'Open Day' with plenty of tea & cake at Sessions House (our new base in Monmouthshire), manned an information stand at the very busy Usk Country Market and took part in Monmouthshire County Council's (Mon CC) Volunteering Conference held at the County Hall.



We were approached by Raglan VC Primary School on Facebook, with a request for Volunteers' Week Certificates

for their fabulous PTFA Volunteers. Sarah said:

“Once you start recognising Volunteers, you realise how many people help our school to run! Thank you for such a lovely way to thank our Volunteers”



...and in Newport, we focused on **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**; we organised a Volunteer Day for the Intellectual Property Office at Duffryn’s Forest Children Centre - they donned their overalls, rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in painting several rooms.



We also linked up Siemens Rail Automation staff with the Glebelands

Miniature Railway Society, where they carried out various maintenance activities including brush cutting, path clearance & clearing a large area free of brambles, to expose a hidden collection of ornamental bushes.

These Volunteer Days are such a brilliant ‘team-building’ alternative and a good way for Businesses to support their local communities and the Third Sector.

Through our CSR programme we have built fantastic relationships with businesses; this recently allowed us to pass on a refurbished computer donated by a business we’d worked with, that was gratefully received by Maindee Library.

If you want to find out more about our CSR programme, or are an Organisation / Community Group / Project looking for hands-on help, get in touch via:
volunteering@gavo.org.uk



Lastly, we sent Thank You cards to our Cash 4 U Grant Panel Members for their continued support and to the 26 successful Projects, awarded funding from the 2018-2019 pot, for doing a great job in encouraging volunteering & creating new opportunities for young people.

Recognition

We have seen a steady increase in registrations for our Volunteer Recognition Scheme across Gwent but particularly in Monmouthshire and Newport; in previous years there has been very little take-up in these two areas. We worked closely with Mon CC to improve the take-up in Monmouthshire and their support has been a great help in getting the word out there.

Volunteer Recognition Scheme certificates are a nice way for organisations to show their appreciation to their Volunteers. It’s also a great way for individuals to demonstrate how they have dedicated their time; which can be really useful when applying for College, University and employment.

Our certificates are awarded for 50, 100, 200, 500 & 1,000 hours.

Individuals and organisations can register for the Scheme, visit:
www.gavo.org.uk/recognition



Our prestigious annual Volunteer Award ceremonies were held in each area during Autumn 2019. The Awards provide an enjoyable evening, recognising dedicated local people and groups. This year we were honoured to present seven fantastic and exceptionally committed Volunteers with

‘1,000 hours’ certificates signed by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent.

Special thanks to the Local Authorities in Caerphilly and Monmouthshire for their continued support & partnership working and to all our sponsors; all of whom enable the Awards to go ahead each year.

Room to Reward

We recently nominated Helen, one of our fabulous Education Programmes for Patients (EPP) Volunteer Tutors, to receive a Room to Reward break, to say ‘thank you’ for all her hard work and commitment to the Programme.

After attending one of our ‘Living with Long Term Health Conditions’ course to help her better manage her own condition; she got so much personally out of the course, she was inspired to train to become one of GAVO’s EPP Volunteer Tutors.

Her confidence improved and she overcome her own health challenges to do this to help others. Since becoming a fully trained Tutor, Helen has selflessly given up her time to deliver several courses per year (each one requiring 35 hours of volunteering).

Helen’s is now our Diabetes Lead and travels across Gwent, delivering our inspirational ‘Living with Diabetes’ programme, helping others to live well with this condition.

Not only does Helen work to provide an accurate supportive programme, but she engages with Diabetes UK; speaks at Diabetes Forum meetings promoting the EPP courses; and works with Practice Managers and other Diabetes Leads within surgeries, thus reducing pressure on primary health care systems.



We are so proud of her and her input into these vital services, that we just had to nominate her for a well-deserved break to recharge her own batteries. Well done Helen!

You can find out more about the unique volunteer-recognition charity 'Room to Reward' via their website:

<https://www.roomtoreward.org/>

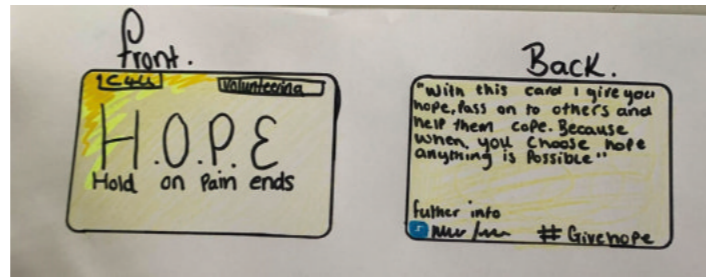


£29,790.66

Was granted by our fabulous Youth Panel to 22 projects in Gwent - through our Cash 4 U (Volunteering Wales) Grant.

This funding is for projects that exclusively recruit young volunteers aged 14-25 years old. Projects funded included Volunteering

Matters' Well-being Cards Workshops, where young people came together to design 'Hope' (Hold On, Pain Ends) cards which could be handed out to other young people across Gwent, who are struggling with their mental health.



The cards featured an uplifting quote, decided upon by the young people, and information on where to find further support. Attending the workshops & working together as a team, helped the Volunteers to improve their confidence and their own mental health.

"These cards will positively impact young people by representing that hope can be passed on from one person to another. Helping each other is at the core of the Mind Matters project & this is a fantastic grassroots project testifying the power of peer support" - Eden-Mae Davies (Volunteer Manager, Mind Matters).

It was great to see Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili's brilliant 'Young People Welsh Language Video Gaming Club', which we funded the previous year, win a Highly Commended award at WCVA's Welsh Charity Awards held in November 2019.

Sharing Good Practice, Ideas & Finding Resolutions to Issues

We are actively involved in representing

local Third Sector organisations that have Volunteers, through Wales Council for Voluntary Action's (WCVA) **Volunteer Practitioners Network**.

We take local volunteering-related issues, good practice & success stories to these Wales-wide meetings and share information gathered back to our Third Sector networks.

We continue to be part of WCVA's **Digital Implementation Group**, discussing ways to improve the Volunteering Wales website with Web Developers, Admin Users, Volunteer Managers and Volunteers alike; we endeavour to make it as user friendly as possible.

If you would like to talk to us about using the Volunteering Wales website to assist with Volunteer management, we would be happy to help.

Also if you have any feedback or suggestions regarding the website that you would like us to put forward on your behalf, let us know.

We welcome your input - we are here to improve things for you!

volunteering@gavo.org.uk

During the year, we ran two **Gwent-Wide Volunteer Management Network** events, the first in Blaenavon in May and the second in Llanhilleth in November. We hosted keynote speakers from partner organisations including WCVA, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA), Digital Communities Wales and Volunteering for Well-Being.

We try and put these on at least twice a year; they are always free, and give

participants a chance to network, and learn more about best practice in Volunteer management.

"I found the workshop very informative and it has given me a whole new view on the Voluntary Sector!"



Training

In partnership with Mon CC's **Be. Community Leadership Programme**, our Monmouthshire Youth Officer wrote and delivered a training session on 'Engaging Young People as Volunteers'. This proved to be successful & we will continue to run these sessions to connect and support organisations wanting to get young people on-board.

We also delivered Volunteering Wales one-to-one training for 18 Organisations / Groups across the GAVO footprint, for those using or wanting to use the website for various levels of Volunteer management.

This service is available to anyone recruiting & managing Volunteers in Gwent.

Get in touch with the Team, even if you just need a refresher session. We are here to support you to use the national database for volunteering in Wales!

Community Development

What we do: We have one full-time equivalent Third Sector Development (TSD) Manager in each county, to support organisations & grassroots groups to develop their projects, improve their governance and support their financial stability. We also have a Community Links Co-ordinator in Blaenau Gwent, who supports Community Centres to develop and become more sustainable, whilst increasing participation and engagement.



Of the four pillars of TSSW activity, the Community Development Team largely focus on the Good Governance and Sustainable Funding elements, however, far more strategic involvement with local service planning and legislative changes that affect the Sector have crept into the work at a local level and this is reflected in the [Engagement & Influencing section](#).

We reported last year on the move toward Community Asset Transfer (CAT) across the GAVO footprint but specifically in Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. As we explained, our TSD Manager in Blaenau Gwent had overseen 21 sports clubs undertake CAT. These organisations, now established and working to manage their facilities on a day to day basis, continue to seek support from GAVO in varying degrees with their work.

The TSD Manager is supporting reporting

requirements linked to their governance structures, development of policies, expansion plans and funding bids.

In Caerphilly, whilst there has been some consultation around the Local Authority strategy for CAT of community buildings in their ownership, the onset of the pandemic slowed down the process. That being said, work has been going on in the Sports & Leisure Sector, with the authority approving the CAT process for sports clubs & community sports facilities separately. The TSD Manager is working with a number of groups as they work through a very complex CAT process.

The groups are expected to change their governance structures if they are not already registered as Charities, Companies Limited by Guarantee, Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) or Community Interest Companies (CICs). The complications are compounded by the status of the pitch or facilities in question; some are owned by the local authority and some are held by them in trust, adding an additional layer of ownership and intricacy.

The TSD Manager has been working with these groups, such as Hafodyrynys RFC & Abertridwr FC for some time as the process is a long one, and as a good example of teamwork, is being supported by our Blaenau Gwent TSD Manager, who now has vast experience of this process.

Something that the Team sees on a regular basis is how an initial enquiry or request

for support with a specific issue, can lead to incorporating much wider aspects of development work.

In mid-2019, Newport City Council decided to review its grants to the Third Sector and of these was to Shopmobility Newport, which provides scooters and wheelchairs to help disabled people get around the city centre. The council informed them that their grant, which they had received for over 30 years would be cut from April 2020. A Council Officer advised them to contact us to look at alternative sources of funding.

It soon became clear that this Organisation had not revisited its governance since being established as a registered unincorporated charity in 1988. Although it was providing an efficient & valuable service to the community and employing three members of staff, it was not in a suitable place to enable it to apply for any external funding.

Has it been a while since you reviewed your governance? Get in touch if you need help with this.



Firstly, our Newport TSD Manager helped them to put together a business plan, that was used to persuade the Council to extend their grant for a further a year, whilst the Organisation sorted itself out.

Since then, they have been assisted to re-register as a CIO, to afford the trustees limited liability; to have their annual accounts properly verified; been advised on various policies & procedures, including a new maternity policy; revised contracts of employment and arranged a new lease as they were evicted from their previous premises.

When all this has settled down, they will then need to revisit sources of potential funding again - coming full circle!



Apart from supporting groups to search for funding, we run a variety of grant schemes in collaboration with partners, including Local Authorities and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB).

The Health & Well-Being Small Grant Scheme in Caerphilly has been running as a partnership between us, ABUHB and Caerphilly County Borough Council for a

a number of years and distributes £25,000 a year in small grants to support the development of health and well-being projects that meet the local priorities in the Caerphilly Well-being Plan.

8 Organisations were funded in 2019-2020

Encompassing some really different & fresh ideas to support well-being, particularly fitness and mental health, one of them was The Living Room - Bywyd Iach Bywyd Llawn (Healthy Life Full Life) Project. This is what they had to say:

The main focus of the initiative has been our Thursday 'Café Connect' sessions for Support Workers, but we have also been able to organise some extremely successful Volunteer training & social events. A particular highlight in this respect was a team-building day for Volunteers.

Our full Volunteer team enjoyed the hospitality of the excellent Caffi'r Ffynnon in Argoed. We had fun and learned a great deal about one another and how we operate in teams through our experience of the Blackwood Escape Rooms. We also completed training sessions on Listening & Hospitality Skills and on Social Prescribing and the Bywyd Iach Bywyd Llawn Project.

"We would like to express heartfelt thanks to GAVO for the Health & Well-being Small Grant we received... which enabled us to put in place activities which have contributed to positive mental health and

Well-being in our communities and which have helped our own Volunteer team, Healthcare Practitioners and Support Workers in our local area to feel valued & appreciated.

We would also like to extend our thanks to all the members of GAVO staff who have called in and encouraged us along the way!"



Don't forget we can assist you in project planning & your search for suitable funding opportunities!

At the end of 2019, we were invited to deliver a short, small grant scheme by the Regional Partnership Board for Gwent, in conjunction with TVA in Torfaen, using Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) money. This was a quick, three-month round that was sadly impacted by the start of the Coronavirus pandemic.

However, groups were invited to adapt their applications, which involved face-to-face and group activities; most were able to consider capital works and really innovative moves to online activities; home entertainment packs for disabled children and telephone support for carers

& people with mental health issues.

The grant scheme had £40,000 available per county and funded 23 projects to a total of £108,813.

One of the recipients was The Palmer Centre Community Hall, Chepstow; who we have worked with for many years, helping them with a number of funding bids to upgrade the Centre. The final part of the jigsaw was an ICF small grant to enable the Centre to upgrade the acoustics, signage and furniture in the main hall to make it more user-friendly for the Dementia Café participants.



The acoustic baffles absorb sound and prevent sound from rebounding from high ceilings; without these baffles, people with these conditions couldn't previously use the hall. The work was completed as we entered lockdown and they are looking forward to welcoming participants back when they can.

We were pleased to learn that we would be offered a further grant scheme for 2020-2021, which would be administered by our Health, Social Care & Well-being Team.

As a result of the development of solar farms and wind turbines, there are a number of Community Benefit Small Grant Schemes across Gwent. Whilst some are run by Local Authorities or Town & Community Councils, GAVO has been able to use its expertise in Third Sector funding, to secure a number of these schemes to benefit specific geographical communities.

They vary in size and scope, but enable us to focus the funding on grassroots groups. During 2019-2020, we managed schemes in Caerphilly for Mynydd Islwyn, Croespenmaen and Argoed-Crumlin directly; ran the Darren Valley Scheme for the Community Council for the second year and we also administered the Caerleon Sunshine Community Grant in Newport.



Our Community Links Co-ordinator has supported Community Centres to access funding opportunities, measure and identify participant impact, undertake further programmes of engagement and identify people prepared to become more involved in services, either as a Volunteer, a recipient or both.

Here are just some of the Project stats:

514 people stated they felt less isolated and more part of their community

22 people have been aided to prevent homelessness

205 parents supported to improve their ability to support their child's health & well-being

77 people engaged in Welsh language, heritage & culture training

80 adults newly engaged in volunteering, education and/or training in Community Centre events & activities

The Project achieved great results, which led to Welsh Government providing future funding (administered by BGCBC) and expansion of the role from five Community Centres, to cover all of them in the Blaenau Gwent region.

This meant we could continue to support and facilitate capacity building services & initiatives for further development of these Centres to better serve communities into the future.



As this report covers the period of 2019-2020, we cannot avoid looking at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Sector, and reflect on the number of people we have sadly lost to the virus.

As we were coming to the end of this reporting period, we were heading into nationwide lockdown with the inevitable impact on people and communities.

The consequences for Third Sector groups & organisations has been wide and varied, but we have seen amazing response from some who were able to change direction and meet the challenge of providing community support and becoming hubs for essential services such as food banks.

However, we also had to consider that many organisations had to shut down overnight. Community Centres, unless providing essential services, closed; groups and organised social activities were suspended. Many of the people running these are older, encompassed by the 'vulnerable' category or shielding.

Our Community Development Team roles changed dramatically, as groups looked for support to survive and funding to pay the bills, whilst revenue had ceased. Welsh Government and Funders established a number of funding streams, in response to the crisis, to provide a lifeline to the Sector.

We promoted these widely, as well as a

number of localised schemes we administered to target those groups most in need.

One example of an organisation that was able to rapidly transform their services is Cymru Creations and the establishment of the Tredegar Community Task Force. In their words:

"As a film & media company, the usual business model of different departments fulfilling different tasks, was implemented to great effect. A food distribution network, medical deliveries and personal shopping service for those in self-isolation were quickly initiated. Weeks ahead of many official organisations & governing bodies, Cymru Creations became the go-to place for all types of support in Blaenau Gwent.

As word spread during the first week, it was clear that many other people in the community also needed vital support; and the task force would be needed on a much bigger scale than we originally anticipated.

Soon the team were delivering: all the free school meals for Tredegar Comprehensive; medicines & prescriptions for two local dispensing chemists; personal shopping for self-isolating families; educational supplies and providing families, with financial difficulties, with free food parcels.



Deliveries numbered up to 750 per week, with some staff refusing to leave until the jobs were complete, working up to 15 hours a day".

Our Blaenau Gwent TSD Manager provided guidance and assistance; signposting the organisation to funding sources, enabling them to extend its services and widen its reach.

Creation Cymru's amazing journey is actually being made into a documentary film that is anticipated to be showcased later in 2021. We look forward to seeing it!

At the end of the reporting period, we were responding to the groundswell of community action. We had to support many unconstituted groups through a very quick "governance" process to ensure they functioned properly; whilst our Community Development Team has a remit to work with groups, many individuals contacted GAVO in the early stages of lockdown, desperate to find out who could help them with emergency support, when access to statutory services appeared to shutdown over-night.

Our Officers answering these enquiries were able to signpost them to other Third Sector organisations and groups that were able to quickly respond to the needs of the community's most vulnerable, proving our local knowledge & understanding of the Sector is invaluable.

If you need our assistance with setting up a new group; reviewing your governance; finding funding; or networking with others in the Third Sector etc. send us an email or give us a call. **Also did you know we have lots of useful Information Sheets for groups on our website?**

Engagement & Influencing

What we do: We ensure the voice of the Third Sector is heard at local, regional and national levels and make sure organisations and groups are consulted, involved and valued.



The TSSW Engagement & influencing pillar of activity, has become a significant workstream of GAVO, with the organisation being a key member of partnerships such as Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW), Public Services Boards (PSBs), Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the infrastructures that support the strategies that evolve from these at a regional and national basis.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 legislation, which required each PSB across Wales to produce a Well-being Plan, has been entrenched in our work and continues to have positive impacts across our patch.

Blaenau Gwent

We have continued our support to the partnership, representing across each of the action areas - which ultimately focus on effective delivery of the Well-being Plan in Blaenau Gwent "The Blaenau Gwent We Want". GAVO is Vice Chair of the Strategic

Support Group.



We have played an active role in many of the initiatives benefiting the people of Blaenau Gwent, ranging from recruiting volunteers to support 'Blaenau Gwent On the Move'; being involved in the work around 'Age Friendly Communities' and have been a voice of strategic support of the Climate Change Initiative, to name a few.

Caerphilly

We continue to lead on the 'Volunteering Action Area', which is a priority under the Well-being Plan objective of 'Positive People'. We are also part of the Leads Group on a number of the other Action Areas and Enablers, including Apprenticeships, which links with the volunteering theme well by offering volunteering as a step to training & employment.

GAVO continues to support the collaborative structure in Caerphilly, which has existed for a number of years. Through the Third Sector Forum, to an elected Voluntary Sector Representatives Sub Committee, and the Third Sector element of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Sub Committee, which includes elected members from Local Authority & representatives from the PSB.

The remit to promote the Third Sector

activity in the borough to members and bring general issues of concern to the table, has largely been local authority & health focused. Unfortunately, as the 2019-2020 year came to an end, this activity (as with many others) was already being impacted by the pandemic lockdown.

Monmouthshire

We lead the 'Active Citizenship' priority, which is a key objective of the Monmouthshire Well-being Plan, to respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.

GAVO has been engaged in many different opportunities to support the Plan, including providing training for Youth Volunteers through the Be. Community Leadership Programme and we have been instrumental in acquiring Rural Development Funding for new initiatives and Projects.



Both of our lead roles in these areas have a strong focus on community benefit; building supportive communities and volunteering for employment & well-being - and illustrating the value of Volunteers to partners and communities alike.

We co-hosted 'The Power of Community' event with Mon CC, which created an opportunity for people and organisations interested in community action to come together, share experiences, exchange ideas and shape the future of the county.



Over 130 people attended and there was a great atmosphere, full of enthusiasm to do things in a more collaborative & structured way, to move things forward.

We were due to hold a series of these events and follow-up meetings but they had to be put on-hold because of lockdown, however, a number of conversations continued online via the 'Our Monmouthshire' platform.

If you are interested in active citizenship and would like to get involved, visit:
<https://ourmonmouthshire.org/>
to find out more!

Newport

In partnership with Coleg Gwent, we joint lead the 'Right Skills' step of the Newport Well-being Plan, which is focused on ensuring people have the right skills and opportunities for economic & sustainable growth - which will aid communities' well-being through learning. We strongly support ways to encourage volunteering as a pathway into employment and continue to work with organisations and businesses across different Sectors to create these opportunities; not just in Newport but across Gwent.

For the first time in over 15 years, the Third Sector in Newport, now has a recognised role in contributing to the strategic direction of service planning and delivery.

In April 2019, the One Newport PSB adopted the Terms of Reference for the Third Sector Partnership (TSP), now a formal sub-committee of the PSB. In October 2019, the TSP met for the first time, with representatives of the Sector - five of the representatives provide links to the Intervention Boards that underpin the work of Newport's Well-being Plan.

The main purpose of the TSP is to meet prior to the PSB, to discuss the PSB's agenda and highlight observations from the Third Sector and any other issues facing the Sector, that need to be brought to the attention of key strategic partners - our Chair and CEO then make sure these are raised at the relevant PSB.

If you have suggestions of ways we can improve & evolve our engagement with the Third Sector; or you have any issues that you would like us to take to the PSBs, get in touch:

info@gavo.org.uk

Be Proud of Your Community, Gwent Awards

We retired our long-running 'Gwent Best Kept Village Awards' in 2019, and launched our 'Be Proud of Your Community - Gwent Awards' (with our PA to the GAVO CEO & Chair continuing as Secretariat) - with a new direction and set of criteria that better acknowledged active citizenship and projects that tackled issues such as climate change & conservation of biodiversity, as well as those that promoted community spirit and local heritage.

We wanted to engage with as many



grassroots groups and individuals across communities in Gwent as possible, so we had a variety of categories. Our categories included Saving the Planet; Remembering Them; Taking Care of Your Community and Go Wildlife, the latter of which we were pleased to work with RSPB.

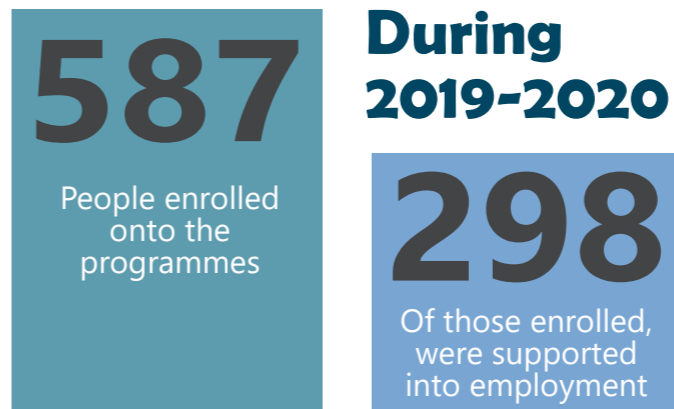
We also encouraged Primary Schools to enter in their own category, as schools play a very important part in our communities - the judges were very impressed with how schools were looking at alternative ways of taking care of the environment by encouraging recycling, up-cycling, creating bug hotels, growing vegetables and more.

Our 2020 competition was unable to go ahead because of COVID-19 but we are looking forward to running it again and getting more people involved - and giving projects a platform to showcase their work and recognise their achievements; many of which have a wider-reaching positive impact than they may realise.

2019 results can be found on our blog www.gavo.org.uk/news

Employability (Blaenau Gwent)

What we do: Our Communities for Work (CfW) and Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) Teams aim to tackle poverty and social exclusion, through sustainable employment.



In June 2019, we celebrated 'National Employability Day' in style, with a cinema screening of our showcase film to mark a significant milestone of our Teams supporting 1,042 participants since the start of the Programmes.



Over 150 people attended the event held at the wonderful Market Hall Cinema; prior to the screening, guests were able to mingle with staff on the Market Square in glorious sunshine, to find out more about the Programmes and their outcomes.

Films shown on the big screen depicted the journeys of participants enrolled on our Employability Programmes, who have been supported into employment by our dedicated staff working across Blaenau Gwent.



The keynote speech was delivered by Jo-Anne Daniels, Director for Communities & Tackling Poverty at Welsh Government, who praised the Teams for their achievements in supporting people into employment and stressed the importance of employment as a route out of poverty.

Following the event, Ms Daniels wrote to the Team, thanking everyone for their hard work & dedication, saying it was great to hear about the positive impact the programmes were having in Blaenau Gwent and truly inspiring to hear the stories of the participants themselves - congratulations & thank you to all those involved.

We would like to share two (anonymised) Good News stories about individuals that our dedicated staff have supported to turn their lives around.

Case Study - Ivor

"Ivor had been claiming benefits for around six months but had previously earned a good living from working in lone-worker security and before that, long-distance driving, both of which involved working away from home for long periods of time.

In our first meeting, Ivor disclosed that he had some mental health issues and was on medication to help control his condition. He isn't good in situations with lots of people around or that require good social skills - hence his chosen fields of work when he was employed, were primarily lone working roles.

Ivor had previously had his SIA licence suspended but said his suspension was now at an end and he could apply to get his licence back. Ivor also had an up-to-date HGV2 licence, CPC Card and Tachograph Driver Card.

One of the key factors in Ivor's determination to return to work, was to improve the family's stressful circumstances - they were really suffering financially and his partner's 5 years old grandson, who they are guardians of, was currently undergoing medical assessments as health workers suspect he has Autism.

At one meeting, Ivor was visibly upset that they had been unable to afford to take their grandson to his swimming lesson (which is one of the few things the little boy really loves).

As a Mentor, I found this particular meeting to be a difficult one. It was very

emotionally draining to have a big strong man, who is also a really nice guy and whose partner and grandson you have met, breakdown in tears in front of you.

Although my role is primarily to help a participant find employment, I wanted to see if I could support Ivor further. I sourced information on the Local Authority's Disabled Swimming Club and got agreement that Ivor's grandson could go along (even though he hadn't yet received a diagnosis), with no cost for the child and a subsidised cost for the adult.

I also sent the family information on the Welsh Government's education grant, for them to check eligibility for school uniform for their grandson, before school started in September.



I heard from a family member, who had been offered a driving job with a fairly local haulage company but had decided not to accept it as it required being away from home 3 or 4 nights a week, which wasn't ideal with a young family.

The role sounded ideal for Ivor, so I tracked down the Company and spoke to the owner, who suggested I forwarded his CV across. I let Ivor know he may be contacted and within a day, he was invited to an interview.

Ivor was successful and started working for

the haulage company a few days later. When I messaged him to say "well done", he responded:

"No, well done you. All your efforts and support on my behalf was much appreciated. Thank you!"

Case Study - Sarah

"Sarah had been claiming benefits for five years, she has two children, of which her youngest has ongoing health issues which restricts her from standing or walking for a long time.

This lady has never felt confident enough to submit any job applications before - she didn't have a CV and interviews were a scary prospect.

Dealing with Anxiety, Depression and low self-esteem, had affected her ability to socialise with others and on our first meeting, Sarah really struggled to maintain any eye contact with me. She hoped that doing something positive for herself would improve her outlook on life and may be alleviate some of her symptoms.

Sarah was extremely passionate about caring for others and nursing was of great interest but was unsure she would be able to pursue this until her children were older.

We discussed gaining some caring experience on a voluntary basis and looked at the possibility of a befriending placement at Cwrt Mytton Residential Care Home.

This role interested her immensely, so we arranged a visit to the Home, so Sarah could get a 'feel for it' and meet some of the residents. Following the visit, she started a voluntary placement for 2 hours

per week, assisting residents with activities including bingo and singing.

After two months of volunteering, Sarah's self-confidence rocketed, and she now felt ready and excited to start looking for full time employment within the Care Sector.

Sarah completed various training tailored towards this goal, including Dementia Awareness, Manual Handling and Food Hygiene.

I supported her to submit an application for a Care Assistant role at a local Care Home and a week later my participant was invited to an interview.

Naturally this caused her some anxiety, but we did some prep and performed a mock interview, which helped Sarah feel more at ease. She did well at the interview and was offered the position and started full time employment.



Sarah had blossomed from someone who could barely hold a conversation to a confident young lady with ambitions in front of her. She told me that Christmas was the best Christmas she and her children has ever had."

"I am so happy, I could not have done it without you. My children and I can't thank you enough!"

Visit www.gavo.org.uk/cfw to find out more about our CfW & CfW+ Teams

Health, Social Care & Well-being

What we do: We support partnership working between the Third Sector and other providers of health, social care and well-being services. We also develop and co-ordinate a fantastic range of free, Volunteer-led health and well-being courses.

Health, Social Care & Well-being (HSCWB) Partnership Officers

Our HSCWB Partnership Officers contributed to workshops and funding panels, such as those for the Integrated Care Fund and the Transformation Fund; and promoted engagement sessions with local & regional partners in relation to a range of HSCWB strategies including the ABUHB Cancer Strategy; Building a Healthier Gwent and Bone Health & Falls.

Responses were also prepared for Welsh Government consultations, such as 'Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales', by facilitating engagement with the Third Sector via our networks.

Following our Caerphilly Health & Social Care Alliance event, which was attended by a representative of the Court of Protection (CoP), they were keen to work with us and the Third Sector around their Awareness Campaign. So a partnership initiative was developed and planning is ongoing with an official CoP Solicitor, to arrange a Gwent-wide event to promote the work of the CoP to vulnerable people, including information to support unpaid carers. Unfortunately the event was due to take place in April 2020, but is currently on-hold.

Primary Care 'Neighbourhood Care Networks' (NCNs)

We supported a number of initiatives through engagement with the NCNs, for example, we worked with the Blaenau Gwent West NCN GP Cluster to identify

support available throughout the borough for people living with Fibromyalgia. Following consultations (via face-to-face events & online survey), a report was produced, detailing peer support groups, financial support and online resources. The BG HSCWB Partnership Officer is now working with Third Sector partners to develop sustainable projects, to build on the success of current pilot projects.

Our Caerphilly HSCWB Partnership Officer secured funding for Caerphilly Mind to deliver Mental Health training to NCN staff, to raise awareness & improve practice.

Education Programmes for Patients (EPP)

Our EPP Project goes from strength to strength, throughout all five boroughs of Gwent; our Co-ordinators have continued to build effective relationships with Primary Care & Mental Health professionals, GP practices and the NCNs.

650+

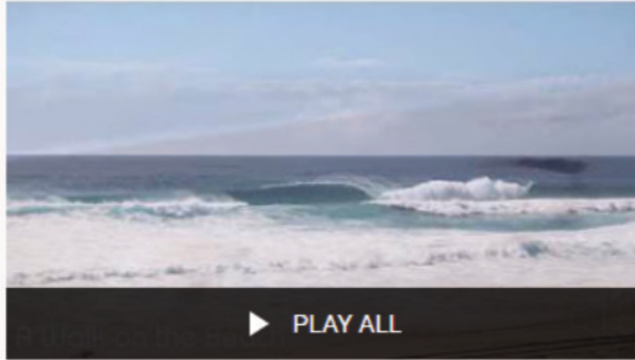
Participants completed EPP Courses

Due to the success of the new 'Living with Chronic Pain' courses and the support they give to people struggling with Fibromyalgia and Arthritic Conditions the numbers have dramatically increased, as well as the interactions we are receiving from Primary Health Services, resulting in

higher referral rate, more participants completing six-week courses and the number of courses being delivered across Gwent.

There has been a **20% increase in Volunteer Tutors** joining the Project throughout Gwent. In addition, four staff from the Gwent Integrated Autism Service have come on-board; this will ensure future capacity to run EPP Self-Management courses for children and adults living with Autism.

Our EPP Officers worked tirelessly to convert existing face-to-face courses to virtual courses that could be delivered as part of ABUHB's home-based support package for those who have existing health conditions that require ongoing management during the pandemic. They also created some wonderful relaxation videos that can be found on our YouTube channel.



EPP Relaxation Sessions
6 videos • 116 views • Last updated on 10 Sept 2020

Relaxation Sessions created by the EPP Team at GAVO

You can register for our EPP courses online www.gavo.org.uk/epp
'Like' our EPP Facebook page @EPPCymru to keep up-to-date with new course releases, tips for well-being and other helpful info.

Monmouthshire Carers Project

1,010 carers are registered with the Project and receive the Carers Newsletter (bi-annually), which provides them with up-to-date information, both at a local & national level, support and advice.

The fantastic work carried out by carers in Monmouthshire was recognised during Carers Week 2019 by enjoying a number of events organised by our Carers Co-ordinator. This included a coach trip to Hereford; afternoon tea at Monmouthshire Golf Club (golf was unfortunately rained-off!); an expert guided stroll around Caldicot Country Park and a nostalgic ride of an evening at The Savoy Theatre, listening to songs of Roy Orbison.



All Carers registered with the Project have been invited to send in examples of their memories during the lockdown, such as a poem, favourite lockdown recipe, photos, a personal story or a drawing. These memories will then become part of a book of carers stories to share with other carers in the future.

A number of carers have been able to apply for a small grant to help them with their caring role. This includes money towards the cost of household equipment; taking a break and learning new skills.

The Carers Project continue to work with Mon CC to provide unpaid carers with 25% discount at all Leisure Centres across Monmouthshire.

Children & Families

What we do: We support young children and families in Caerphilly, through fun-filled groups where they can explore, play, learn & love language. We also provide support to parents and carers in Newport, by getting their voices heard to ensure that decisions are made with parents and not for them.

Caerphilly Early Language Team

Over the past year, the need for the project and the number of referrals has grown exponentially; this has meant an increase in the number of children on the waiting list for a place with Little Voices.

We successfully applied for Families First underspend to provide an additional group from January 2020 to April 2020, to help meet some of the growing demand but it's been challenging for the Team who had to make the difficult choice of which referrals to prioritise due to lack of capacity.

370+

Families worked with this year

"A well set up group, the kids really enjoyed it. The two girls were so lovely and helpful, we've really been missing the [face-to-face] sessions"

We were grateful to also be able to recruit an Administrator from the underspend, which has been a huge asset for the Project; freeing-up time for the Early Language Officers to enhance elements of support and partnership working.

Although this post was to run until April 2020, we were been able to demonstrate

how crucial the Administrator was to the Project and have been allowed to keep the post for the final year - which was great news!

In March 2019, we revamped all of our resources including more detailed Welcome and Home Packs for families, with an engaging user-friendly design that helps stimulate the imagination - we've had lovely feedback from families, who look forward to receiving them each month.



With an Administrator now on-board we were able to dedicate some time to create and build a social media presence, via Facebook, to help communicate key speech & language messages and connect with families in a new way.

Fortunately, our page was setup about a month before the COVID-19 pandemic hit; it has been so invaluable; enabling us to continue supporting families during national lockdowns.

Our Project Staff adapted quickly to continue to meet the individual needs of families. They put a lot of effort and energy into creating videos and other content to bring key messages, songs, stories and sign come to life.



Don't forget to 'like' our Facebook page @GAVOEarlyLanguageTeam

It is regularly updated with tips, links and fun activities for supporting language development of children in the early years!

Keeping our knowledge up to date is important, the whole Team completed a multitude of training throughout the year including ELKLAN for 0-3s; Mental Health First Aid; Autism Awareness and Baby Talk Conference 2020. This training, alongside the varied experiences staff have been exposed to, has been instrumental in the development of practices and early language support we provide to families.

Relationships with Health Visitors and other key partners, including Supporting Family Change and More than Play, have been strengthened through regular

discussions, good practice and idea sharing.

These meetings have helped staff feel more confident signposting or referring families to partner services and enable us to support families more holistically.

"L has really come along since the group and is putting sentences together now"

Case Study

Child B, referred to the Project by the Health Visitor for speech delay, is very active and struggled to sit and concentrate for any activities such as 'circle time', which was very distressing for Mam. Mam explained how she was concerned about her child's overall development, not just her speech and was really struggling with her at home.

From observing over a few weeks, staff talked with Mam about contacting her Health Visitor for a possible referral to ISCAN, to gain additional support from other services. Mam was eager to accept any help possible.

Over the weeks, Child B began to understand the routine of the sessions and started to join in with activities, finding particular enjoyment in the 'Tap Tap Box' and 'Stick Song' activities.

Mam was so pleased to see these small improvements in development. Mam explained how she felt listened to and valued for the first time, and that she wouldn't have got the help into other services without attending Little Voices.

This highlights not just the benefits of our Little Voices & Tiny Talkers sessions themselves, but also our staffs knowledge and strong links to other services.

Newport Parent Network

Our Parent Participation Officer (PPO) has helped develop various support groups during the year including: Newport Autism Group; Grandparents & Kinship Carers Support Group; The Meet/Parents for Change; Rewild Play and the more recently formed ADHD/Autism/Neurodiversity Family Support Group.

Through working with our PPO, these support groups become more sustainable, with a clearer sense of direction and focus - linking them to other relevant agencies and services; helping them to understand changes in legislation & regulations e.g. Special Guardianship Orders; improving their flyers and promoting them through the Newport Parent Network Facebook page and networks.

Our @NewportParentNetwork Facebook page is a fabulous resource for Parents and Carers in Newport.

Two new groups were started in the summer of 2019. Firstly, the Dinky Dragons ABUHB NICU Parent Support Group' and 'Dinky Dads' subgroup.

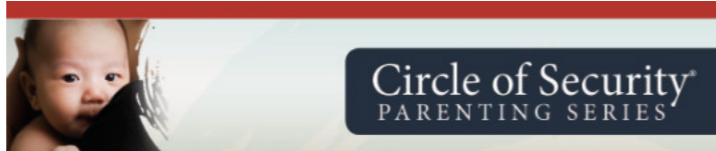
These were setup by two Neonatal Nurses from the Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Gwent. It provides ongoing support and reassurance to parents & babies that have left the unit and are now home.

We joined them at Cwmbrian Boating Lake



for their 'Sponsored Superhero Walk/Run' in the sunshine, to help raise awareness of the support group and funds.

Secondly, the PPO connected with 'Action on Postpartum Psychosis', a closed-group who had begun holding monthly meet-ups in a local café, in order to find out more so this info could be shared with Health Visitors and Flying Start staff etc. who may have mothers' that would benefit from this support group.



Our PPO undertook a 4-day training course in order to facilitate and deliver the innovative 'Circle of Security Parent Programme' which is based on the principles of attachment theory and was developed in the USA.

The programme is split over 8 sessions lasting 1.5 to 2 hours each. In partnership with Dr Jen Daffin from Gwent Community Psychology and partners from Newport's Flying Start Team, we delivered the first of these courses from September to December 2019 at the Forest Children's Centre (Duffryn). In January 2020, we began to deliver the second course at GAVO HQ but unfortunately this was cut short because of the lockdown - though we did manage to move the Parent Support Sessions online.



Four communities across the UK were chosen as pilots for Save the Children's new programme aimed at improving early learning outcomes for children growing up in poverty - Newport was one of them.

From the very start GAVO's PPO played a pivotal role on the Project Board, ensuring

that the initiative placed the community and parents at the centre of its planning and that there was a strong commitment from Third Sector organisations. From this work a local strategy emerged in late 2019.

As the 3 workstreams identified in the strategy developed, the PPO was able to tap into the work of other GAVO Officers to help with the mapping of services and provision, using their local knowledge & experience to the development of various interventions.

By early 2020, the work of our PPO was firmly interwoven into the delivery of many of the stated interventions including the rolling out of the ground-breaking Circle of Security training instigated by this Officer along with support from Newport City Council, which funds this vital post through its Families First Programme.

All this investment in partnership working came to fruition, when the world was hit by the Coronavirus pandemic. GAVO's TSD Manager & Line Manager for the post of PPO recently reflected:

"When the lockdown was imposed with very little warning, it threw the communities and especially the most vulnerable into a state of panic and confusion. Contact with many of the statutory organisations that people relied on seemed to disappear overnight.

In Bettws, the partnerships developed as part of the earlier mapping exercises came swiftly into their own.

Families at risk were immediately put at the centre of things &

various partners collaborated to ensure that emergency support was provided. In other areas of Newport that weren't lucky enough to have previously developed such networks, the sense of isolation was more keenly felt & it took several more days or even weeks before those in crisis were able to access essential support."



8th annual Families Love Newport (FLN)

As well as the plethora of stands offering information & advice, there were plenty of activities for the youngsters to do. But as in years past, the stars of the show were Characters & Co. who posed for colourful photos and selfies - using our new fancy 'Selfie Frames' designed by GAVO's Marketing Officer. Social media was busy covering the event and there was even a photo competition with some brilliant prizes donated by local businesses.

It was a wonderful opportunity to let families know that there is lots of support out there & Newport really cares for families.

Corporate Services

What we do: We provide a range of crucial support to GAVO's operations and Projects, to enable a high quality delivery of services.

Training

We continued to deliver targeted interventions linked to our Core TSSW objectives such as Governance Support and Volunteer Management. We have sourced and provided training opportunities that aim to positively up-skill the Third Sector in-line with its needs.

Current professional qualifications & training opportunities, including those delivered by GAVO Members are listed on our website:
www.gavo.org.uk/training

Marketing & IT

The brand is fully embedded across GAVO and being used for all current documentation and marketing content (including our website & social media), ensuring we have a strong and consistent visual identity.

Our Marketing Officer continues to work proactively with each Team, to help improve their communications and engagement through promotional materials (both print & digital) - as GAVO's work is so diverse, so are our audiences. This means no two days are the same for our Marketing Officer; switching between creating cute Home Packs for our Early Language Team to producing effective strategic documents.

When holding events in partnership with Local Authorities and Public Services, such as 'Families Love Newport', support group sessions for 'New & Expectant Parents' and

'The Power of Community', we have regularly been entrusted to create the promotional materials for them and have received excellent feedback.



We continued to transition our core IT services in 2019, using Microsoft 365 as one of the primary applications, to reduce dependency on in-house hardware and offices and rely more on the Cloud. We also made significant investments into our IT equipment, allowing staff to work more agile than ever before.

As we began to utilise the Cloud more, we sought to ensure GAVO was 'cyber aware' by completing the Government-backed Cyber Essentials Certification. This sets out a number of guidelines to help protect GAVO from a wide range of common cyber-attacks.

Migrating to the Cloud was challenging at times, and some staff struggled initially with this big change to how we worked.

However, we were all very thankful to our IT Officer for the pivotal improvements to our IT infrastructure, that meant we were 'ahead of the game' when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Our staff were in a position to respond and adapt immediately with minimal disruption to service delivery - so we could continue making a positive impact in the communities, wherever we were working from.

Finance & Human Resources

GAVO's Finance Team covers all aspects of the finance function and ensures it is managed in-line with the required legislation. During the year the Team migrated to the newest Sage Cloud package, which has improved data safety and the efficient management of Purchase and Sales Ledgers.

This move to newer software has enabled the Team to continue processing payroll for GAVO's staff and Projects, as well as for external Third Sector organisations, whilst we have had to work from home.

Our Human Resources function plays an important role in the Corporate structure to ensure support is continually available to staff; providing advice and guidance and making sure the legislative context is acknowledged through our policies.

Facilities and Health & Safety

We reviewed our buildings across 2019-20 and are happy to now have an office in each of our regions across our Gwent footprint.

Information on locations of these offices and contact details can be found on our website under 'Contact Us'

Prior to the pandemic, our Conference Room in Newport was regularly booked throughout the year by a number of Third



Sector Partners such as Chwarae Teg, Private Sector companies and has been a central hub for GAVO staff meetings.

We hosted well attended events, such as the All Wales Forum for Parents and Carers "Your Rights, The Act and Direct Payments" sessions, as well as our Newport Children and Families Forum.

We were also able to free up another room for smaller meetings and training sessions such as the Circle of Security Parenting Programme sessions, which provided a more intimate space.

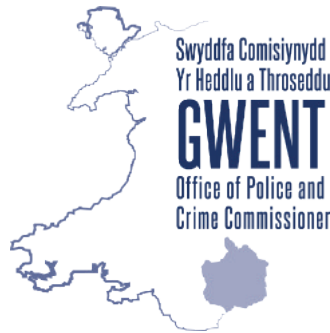


Our Front of House Co-ordinator, has been working hard on reviewing and improving our Health & Safety policies and Risk Assessments, to reflect the changes within GAVO including new offices and increased agile working, and to ensure that our system is effective in managing risk and protecting our workforce.

Responding to these changes, has allowed us to decide if existing arrangements need to be strengthened, simplified or improved to keep our staff and buildings safe.



Cefnogi Trydydd Sector **Cymru**
Third Sector Support **Wales**



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