

# Deep End Cymru

## Annual Report 2025–2026

Royal College of General Practitioners Wales

### About Deep End Cymru

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Deep End Cymru supports GPs and primary care teams working in the most deprived communities in Wales. We work to reduce health inequalities — the unfair differences in people's health that are caused by poverty and disadvantage. This report covers our work from April 2025 to March 2026, funded by Welsh Government.

### Year at a Glance

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We began the year with 89 of the original 100 GP Practices that were invited to join in 2022. All practices had an least 35% of their patients living in the most deprived LSOAs. Eleven have disappeared: some of these we know are practice mergers that may be good for patients and practice sustainability, with all the surgery sites remaining open ( at least seven are in this category). However, several have closed altogether with dispersal of patients to already overloaded local practices and increased distance for patients to travel (at least two)

Group	Practices in Jan 2022	Disappeared by Apr 2025	Disappearance rate
Deep End	100	11	11.0%
Non-Deep-End (remaining 290)	290	9	3.1%
<b>All practices</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

We are an informal voluntary network, and our top priority remains engagement with practices at the grassroots, for mutual solidarity and sharing. We reimburse the time of staff from Deep End practices, although our events are open to anyone who has an interest in deprivation medicine. We welcome GP practices who serve disadvantaged communities, even when they do not reach our criteria for a Deep End practice.

Engagement continues to be above initial expectations, based on the experience of other Deep End projects across the UK. Of the 89 practices, 24 sent at least one person to one of our two Round Tables (27%). 15 people attended our monthly steering group meetings, most of them more than once. The core group (three GPs, one Practice Manager, one Public Health doctor and the project coordinator) met every 2-3 weeks.

Across the year, we ran two well-attended round tables, hosted a major Health Equity Study Day with over 90 participants, gave evidence to the Senedd, launched our Manifesto, and built new partnerships with researchers, NHS bodies, and community organisations. Here is a summary of what we achieved under each of our four main areas of work:

### Workforce

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#### Community Health Workers

One of our biggest ambitions is to bring Community Health Workers into Deep End practices. We spent the year building the case for this, consulting with community organisations, practice managers, and NHS leaders. By early 2026, the proposal had been formally backed by the Blaenau Gwent/Torfaen Integrated Services Partnership Board. The local cluster team is now applying to the National Lottery Community Fund for £500,000 over three years to make it happen.

## Safe Surgeries and Inclusion Health

We worked with Public Health Wales on the Teg I Bawb (Fair for All) framework, which helps practices become more welcoming to patients who are often excluded from healthcare — including people experiencing homelessness, those with no recourse to public funds, and refugees. Our Deputy Chair led the training, which by March 2026 had reached 44 practices across Wales through individual sessions and Protected Learning Time events. She also shared the work at an international conference in London.

## Childhood Vaccination

We connected Bellevue Surgery in Newport — a practice serving a deprived, multi-ethnic population — with the Public Health Wales vaccination team. Together they ran a research project to understand why vaccination targets were being missed, combining interviews with families and staff with analysis of practice data. This was the first time Public Health Wales had worked with a GP practice in this way. The final report will be published shortly with findings from the project.

## Continuity of Care

We were invited to join the NHS GMS Quality Improvement Continuity of Care group. Our Deputy Chair — the only practice manager on the group — brought the perspective of practices in deprived areas, where continuity of care is particularly valued by patients but harder to achieve.

## Education

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### Health Equity Study Day

In March 2026 we partnered with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to run a full-day event focused on health and equity. The event was fully booked, with more than 90 attendees from a wide range of professional backgrounds, including many GP trainees and early-career GPs. Highlights included a live keynote from Professor Sir Michael Marmot, and a powerful session from Made by Mortals, a creative arts organisation that brought the lived experience of people often left out of healthcare. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

### Round Tables

We ran half day Round Tables, each bringing together GP practices, managers, and other stakeholders to share learning and tackle shared challenges. Topics included practice sustainability and staff wellbeing (July 2025), and digital technology and its impact on Deep End patients and practices (December 2025). The December event — run with DHCW colleagues — generated a set of recommendations for Welsh Government on digital inclusion and primary care investment.

### Clinical Lead for Health Inequalities

We are proud that our Education and Training Lead, Dr Rebecca Jenkinson, was appointed by HEIW as Clinical Lead for Health Inequalities. In this role she is helping to shape the Strategic Workforce Plan for Primary Care. Deep End Cymru is also a standing member of a new project to develop induction training on health equity for all clinical staff in primary care, and a project to develop Mentorship for newly qualified GPs focussed on deprived areas.

### GP Training and Nursing

We presented at the Training Programme Directors meeting to promote health inequality training in the GP curriculum and to advocate for a dedicated training scheme focused on deprivation. We also continued to work with HEIW Practice Nurse Facilitators to support student nurse placements in Deep End practices — the majority of placements are now in Deep End practices. We were disappointed to hear that HEIW has withdrawn funding for the three regional posts supporting this work from April 2026, and we will continue to advocate for their reinstatement.

## RCGP Annual Conference

We hosted a fringe event at the RCGP Annual Conference, which took place in Newport this year. Two Deep End GPs gave moving talks about their experience of working in deprived communities. We ran this session alongside the RCGP Health Inequalities Special Interest Group.

## Advocacy

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### Senedd Inquiry into the Future of General Practice

This was a significant year for our advocacy work. We submitted written evidence to the Senedd Health and Social Care Committee Inquiry into the Future of General Practice, and Deep End Cymru members were interviewed by the Committee. In October 2025 we gave in-person evidence, supported by Professor Adrian Edwards, who presented data on the Inverse Care Law in Wales — the well-established finding that the communities with the greatest need receive the least resource. The Inquiry report was published in March 2026, and our Chair, Dr Neil James, was interviewed about it by BBC Radio Wales and on BBC television news.

### Our Manifesto

We launched the Deep End Cymru Manifesto — a set of practical, grassroots recommendations for addressing health inequalities in primary care. The Manifesto was developed through events, surveys, and conversations with practices. Several steering group members undertook media training and visited the ITV Wales studios. As a result, a journalist is producing an in-depth programme on Deep End practices in North Wales, due to air before the Senedd election.

### Meetings with Decision-Makers

Over the year we met a wide range of people in senior positions, including the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Directors of Public Health, NHS Chief Executives, the Chair of the Strategic Programme Board for Primary Care, Specialist Advisors to the Cabinet Secretary, and representatives of all political parties. We were also invited to join the Reference Group for the *Community by Design* programme, and continue to advocate for equity to be central to that programme's design.

### Media and Communications

We send a regular newsletter to all Deep End practices and stakeholders (published roughly every two to three months). Our website is continuously updated. We launched a LinkedIn page, which grew to 117 followers by March 2026 without any paid promotion. We received coverage in the Nation, South Wales Argus, and BBC Radio Wales.

### Deep End Clusters

We mapped the clusters with the highest proportion of patients in the most deprived areas of Wales and invited all Cluster Leads to join our steering group. We have also invited them to an online meeting to share experience and ideas. The steering group now meets quarterly in the evenings to allow more members to attend.

## Research

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Research is central to making a compelling case for change. Over the year we:

- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with PRIME (the Primary and Emergency Care Research Centre at Cardiff University) and began planning a joint research associate post.
- Successfully applied to the Data Quality Service group to explore GP activity — appointments and contacts — in relation to deprivation.
- Worked with Public Health Wales Health Intelligence to add a Deep End category to the Primary Care Clusters Dashboard from April 2026, and agreed for them to analyse PaRIS data in relation to deprivation.

- Met with the PHW analyst group working on health equity, who have agreed to take forward work on the Inverse Care Law.
- Supported Professor Martin Kitchener of Cardiff Business School in developing a qualitative paper on what Deep End practices do differently, due for publication shortly.
- Engaged with the Wales Centre for Public Policy and the HDRC in RCT to explore further collaboration.
- Met with research-active GP practices in Wales and planned an online workshop to support more Deep End practices in becoming research-active.

## Grant Expenditure Summary

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The following amounts were claimed from Welsh Government during the financial year 2025–2026:

- April – June 2025: £18,529.75
- July – September 2025: £29,275.95
- October – December 2025: £29,134.18
- January – March 2026: £32,125.67

### **Total claimed for the year: £109,065.55**

Expenditure covered staff costs, management, chair and clinical lead sessions, round table events, venue hire, translation, website, and education activities.

## Looking Ahead

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As we move into 2026–2027, we remain focused on making the case for fairer resources for the communities that need them most. We will continue to build our evidence base, grow our network, and work with Welsh Government, HEIW, NHS Wales, and community partners to put the principles of the Inverse Care Law into practice — ensuring that the most deprived communities in Wales receive the support they deserve.

The Deep End Cymru Core group  
Dr Neil James (Chair)  
Joanna Watts-Jane (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Rebecca Jenkinson (Education Lead)  
Dr Jonny Currie (Policy Lead)  
Dr Kathrin Thomas (Public Health Lead)  
Bernard Carter (Project Coordinator from Sept 2025)  
Nicola Edmunds (RCGP Cymru Head)  
Amy Clark (RCGP Cymru Executive Assistant)