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**Date: 1st November 2016**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Bryn Compost Liaison Group** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Monday, 7th November, 2016** at **2.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burns'.

**Chris Burns**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	
2 Declarations of Interest.	

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To receive and note the following minutes: -

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 3 Bryn Compost Liaison Group held on 21st June 2016. | 1 - 4 |
|--|-------|

A greener place Man gwyrddach



- 4 Matters arising.
- 5 Membership Update (verbal update).
- 6 Updates from Natural Resources Wales (dataset attached). 5 - 6
- 7 Updates from Public Health Wales (attached). 7 - 12

**Circulation:**

Councillors: A. Angel, D. Bolter, H.W. David, W. David, N. George (Chair), G. J. Hughes, M.P. James, S. Morgan and J.A. Pritchard

Residents: Mr J. Cuthbert, Mrs G. Davies, Mrs A. Gray, Mr W. Griffiths, Mr G. Mahony, Mr T. Matthews, Mr G. Reynolds, Mr J. Szura and Mrs C. Woods

Gelliargwellt Farm: Mr A. Price

Public Health Wales: Mr H. Brunt, Mrs M. Bowley, Ms T. Deacon and Dr G. Richardson

Natural Resources Wales: Mr J. Goldsworthy and Mr A. Ward

And Appropriate Officers



## **BRYN COMPOST LIAISON GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
ON TUESDAY, 21ST JUNE 2016 AT 2.00 P.M.**

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PRESENT:

Councillor N. George - Chair

Councillor:

W. David

Together with:

Residents: Mrs G. Davies, Mr J. Szura

Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm (Bryn Compost): Ms J. Morgan, Mr R. Thomas

Natural Resources Wales: Mr R. Hughes, Mr A. Ward

Public Health Wales: Mrs T. Deacon

Environmental Health: Miss C. Edwards, Mr G. Mumford

Officers: R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Angel, H.W. David and J.A. Pritchard, local resident representatives Mrs A. Gray, Mr G. Mahony, Mr G. Reynolds and Mrs C. Woods, Public Health Wales representative Mrs M. Bowley, and Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm representatives Mr P. Colley and Mr A. Price.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

### **3. MINUTES – 2ND FEBRUARY 2016**

The minutes of the Bryn Compost Liaison Group meeting held on 2nd February 2016 were received and noted.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING

Reference was made to the previous meeting of the Group in February 2016, where clarification was sought on the timeframe between Natural Resources Wales (NRW) reporting instances of farming odours to Environmental Health, and follow-up action by Environmental Health Officers. Ceri Edwards (Environmental Health Manager) provided an update on this matter.

It was confirmed that from 1st January 2016 to date, 4 complaints had been referred to Environmental Health from NRW in respect of odours arising from slurry spreading activities at Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm. Environmental Health investigated each complaint but took no action against the farm on these occasions. In response to a Member's query, Miss Edwards confirmed that some complaints were reported to Environmental Health on the same day that they were received by NRW, and some were reported the following day.

A Member asked whether any of these complaints related to the stirring of the slurry pit and Miss Edwards confirmed that the odours were attributed predominately to slurry spreading activities. Members were asked to note that NRW have visited the site on a number of occasions this year but that slurry spreading activities by the farm and any subsequent odour complaints have been infrequent.

A Member referred to the farm's previous method of breaking the slurry pit crust prior to it being stirred, which had caused the release of odour-creating sulphide gases, and to which a local resident had attributed as being the cause of his nasal complaint. The Member also sought clarification on the extent of the odours attributed to the breaking of the slurry pit crust, which had been described by NRW as being "offensive and strong".

Miss Edwards reiterated that this was an historic issue in that the farm has now introduced a new slurry handling system, where the liquid and dry components are separated which has eliminated the odour complaints previously associated with the stirring process. The Group were also given assurances that both NRW and Environment Health proactively respond in a timely manner to all odour complaints received via official channels.

Reference was made to the previous meeting of the Group, where discussion took place with Public Health Wales as to whether there had been an increase in ill-health within the local area as a result of odours from the Bryn Compost site. Tracey Deacon (Public Health Wales) provided an update on this matter.

Mrs Deacon explained that in line with a previous report presented to the Group, she had examined instances of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and depression within the local area. Preliminary indications are that any increased prevalence across these illnesses are generally in line with national trends, and **Mrs Deacon confirmed that she would circulate the latest data to the Group once it becomes available.**

A Member requested an update on the Composting Best Practice Document referred to at a number of previous meetings. It was explained that NRW are continuing to liaise with DEFRA (the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) as to a possible release date for the document. It was noted that the local Assembly Member is also actively seeking the completion of this document.

Reference was made to the movement of compost product from the in-vessel composting system (IVC) directly to windrows located within the quarry at Bryn Compost. This change of practice had been discussed at the Liaison Group meetings in September 2015 and February 2016. Members of the Group had stated at these meetings that they had been unaware of this change, and at the last meeting in February 2016, they sought further information from NRW regarding the implementation date for this new process.

Adam Ward from NRW provided an update on this matter. He confirmed that the new

practice had been introduced approximately 2 years ago (Summer 2014) which had coincided with a significant reduction in odour complaints. He also explained that the quarry location allows for more effective cooling of the compost product and that NRW are satisfied that the quarry infrastructure meets all regulatory requirements.

Members expressed dissatisfaction that they had been unaware of this new practice and queried whether planning permission should have been sought prior to its implementation.

Miss Edwards provided further clarification on this revised process. She reminded Members that NRW are responsible for the regulation of composting matters and explained that compost product has always been taken to the quarry at some point. Originally the final maturation stage of the composting process took place within windrows placed on a concrete pad adjacent to the IVC pad (which had led to many of the historical odour complaints). The fully matured compost product was then taken to the quarry for stockpiling.

It had been determined that once compost leaves the IVC building it would be better to move the windrows directly to a concrete pad in the quarry for the final maturation stage to take place. It was reiterated to Members that this process has been subject to trial and error over the years in light of a number of recommendations and opinions.

A Member queried whether planning permission was needed for the windrows to be relocated to the quarry. NRW Officers explained that windrows (which are also used to hold the final composted product) have always been located in the quarry.

A local resident Member disputed the timeline of events with regard to compost being moved to the quarry, stating that he had viewed an online satellite image of the site and had observed mounds of compost product located around the site. NRW Officers explained that such images are not necessarily up to date and should not be used as an evidential measure.

## **5. UPDATES FROM NATURAL RESOURCES WALES**

The Group were referred to the overview of odour complaint data for Bryn Compost between 1st March 2016 and 31st May 2016, which illustrated the number of odour complaint calls received each month by NRW and the number of instances where composting odours were substantiated. In total, Natural Resources Wales received 49 complaints during this period. 23 of these complaints were attended but no compost only events were confirmed. However, 8 of these complaints were attributed to a mixture of farm and compost odours, which were attributed to slurry spreading activities. The figure is almost half of the total volume of complaints that NRW received in the 5 months prior, and is a very similar figure to the same period last year.

The overview of data also highlighted the significant findings during this period. There was a small spike in complaints between 5th-6th January 2016, where the operator cleaned out cattle sheds and moved fully matured compost to the "common" ready for spreading. NRW responded to these complaints and substantiated odours from the cattle shed on the initial inspection but no composting odours. During the second response, the stockpiles of compost on the "common" were inspected but no odours were detectable when in close proximity.

There was a significant spike in complaints on 21st March 2016, where NRW received 8 complaints in one day. NRW found that these complaints were linked to land spreading activities that commenced that day. Complaints in April and May 2016 remained relatively low, although NRW determined small spikes in complaints on 13th April 2016 and 3rd May 2016, which coincided with the cleaning out of cattle sheds.

Discussion of the dataset ensued and a Member queried whether any slurry spreading activities were currently taking place. Jennifer Morgan of Bryn Compost outlined the preparatory process relating to slurry spreading, explaining that the slurry was currently being discharged from the slurry pit lagoon into the anaerobic digester plant (AD). An assessment was currently being carried out to determine how much slurry content remained in the lagoon. It was anticipated that the spreading of the resulting digestate substance would commence in mid-July 2016.

The same Member queried whether there would be an odour arising from the resulting digestate. Ms Morgan explained that samples were being carried out on the digestate, and confirmed that although there would not be as much odour as that generated from the raw slurry, there would be an odour of some description.

Mr Ward added that NRW are also involved in the monitoring of this AD process and confirmed that the monthly update reports that are circulated to local residents would continue. A Member commented on the usefulness of the reports and also remarked on a substantial improvement in odour complaints compared to the previous year. He expressed a wish to reach a position where there are no complaints at all and hoped the situation would continue to improve. Mr Ward explained that as the Bryn Compost facility continues to refine and improve its composting methods, it is expected that odour complaints will continue to decrease.

A local resident Member queried whether the spreading of fully matured compost in January 2016 took place on a public common. Mr Ward confirmed that this common is part of Gelliargwellt Uchaf Farm. This Member stated that she was very impressed by the Bryn Compost site visit that had been arranged for the Liaison Group (which took place in May 2016) and that she had noticed a marked improvement across the site. The Chair expressed his thanks to Bryn Compost staff for arranging the visit.

In closing, it was suggested that the frequency of future meetings be reduced to 6-month intervals. Following discussion on this matter, Members of the Group indicated that a period of 5 months would be acceptable to them, and it was agreed that arrangements be made to schedule the next meeting for October/November 2016.

The meeting closed at 2.44 p.m.



# Bryn Compost Liaison Group

## Liaison Group Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### Introduction

In total, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) received 138 complaints from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The majority of these complaints, 108 in total, were received from 26<sup>th</sup> August onwards with a total of 78 complaints received in September alone.

A total of 45 of these complaints were attended by NRW Officers. 15 of the complaints were attributed to compost odours, 19 were attributed to farming odours and the source of odour could not be identified for 11 of the complaints.

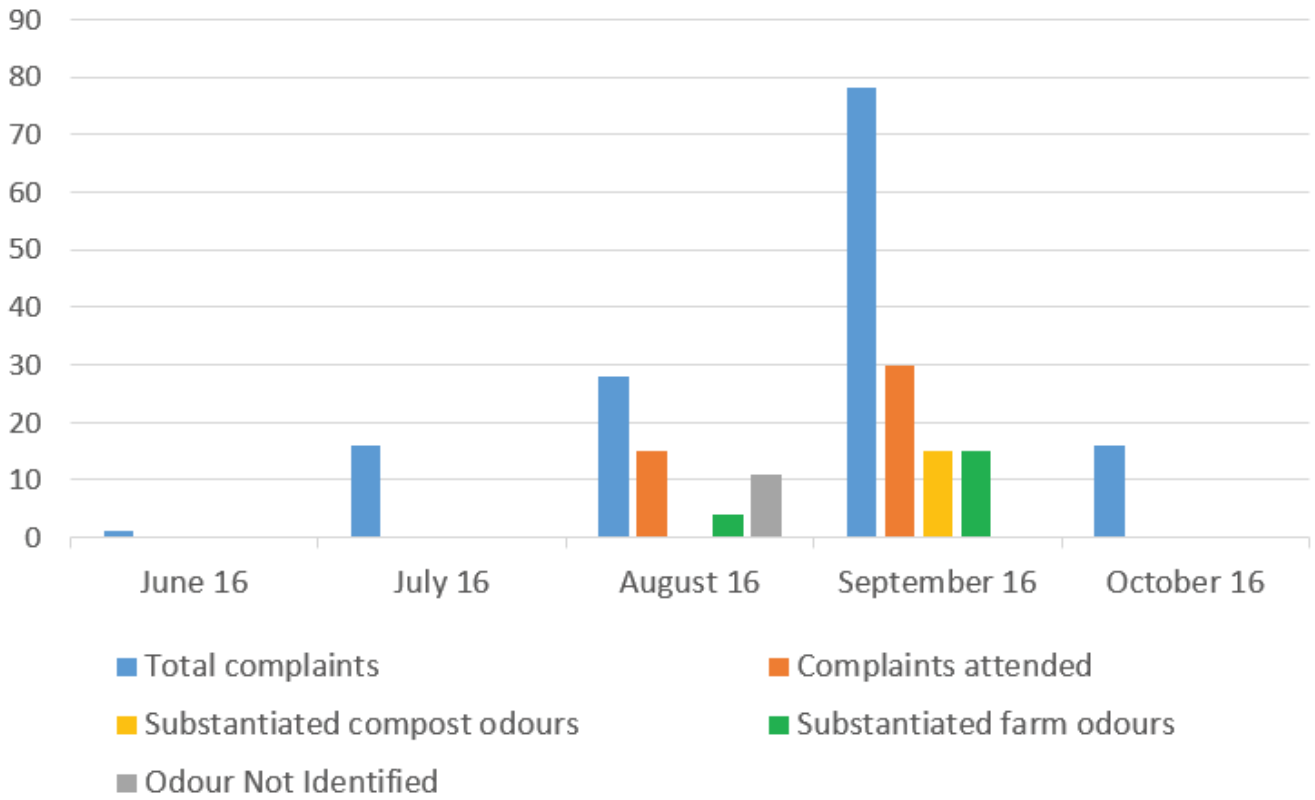
While NRW expected to see an increase in complaints during a period of increased landspreading in the August and September, the figures are very disappointing as the waste operation has been continuing to move in the right direction by improving infrastructure and management procedures. Routine inspections and audits by NRW have not uncovered any major change or worsening of odours caused by the waste operation.

Regardless, investigations in response to complaints in September did substantiate mild composting odours caused by the site on 2 occasions. The investigations have been dealt with using the formal regulation of the operation by scoring breaches against relevant permit conditions. As a result of these investigations and the overall increase in complaints, the operator has agreed to improve their internal investigation and reporting to NRW and the Local Authority. The operator will also be able to further improve the management of compost storage in the quarry as increased volumes of food waste are diverted to AD, thanks to a changes in collection and delivery by the Local Authority.

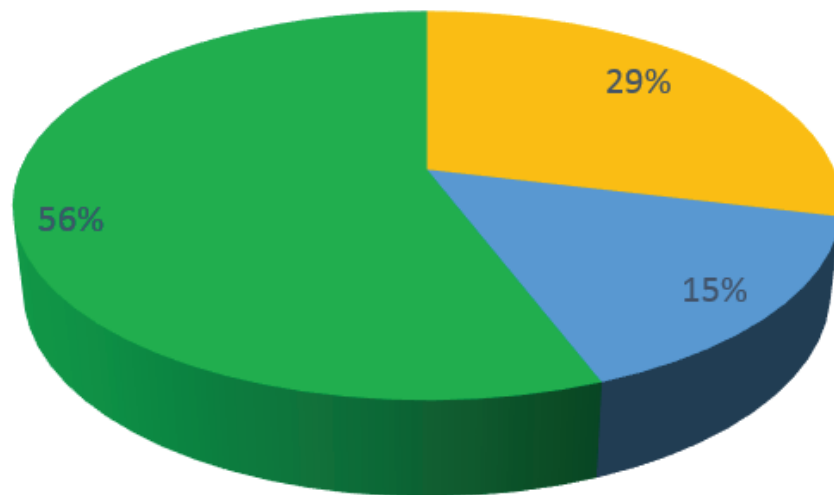
### Key Data

	Total complaints	Complaints attended	Complaints Not Attended	Substantiated compost odours	Substantiated farm odours	Odour Not Identified	Compost Odour Events
June 16	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
July 16	16	0	16	0	0	0	0
August 16	28	15	13	0	4	11	0
September 16	78	30	48	15	15	0	2
October 16	16	0	16	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>

### Bryn Compost Complaints - June to October 2016



### Substantiated Odours 2016



- Substantiated Compost Odours
- Substantiated Compost & Farm Odours
- Substantiated Farm Odour





## **Briefing Paper for Bryn Compost Liaison Group**

This briefing updates previous reports presented to the Liaison Group, compiled in response to residents' concerns expressed about the possible health effects of Bryn Compost.

### **Public Health Effects**

A briefing was produced for a meeting of Bryn Compost Liaison Group chaired by Mr Jeff Cuthbert in July 2009. This summarised a literature review conducted on the health effects of in-vessel composting by Mr Huw Brunt, Consultant in Environmental Health Protection, Public Health Wales. Records of bioaerosol monitoring at Bryn Composting were also examined and levels found to be below that which would affect the physical health of residents. Recommendations for future monitoring were made.

In July 2010, Dr Gill Richardson and Mr Huw Brunt made a presentation to the Liaison Group. This summarised the available evidence and concluded that any risk to the physical health of the public was very low.

There have been requests by residents in the past for health surveys to be conducted. However, the advice from the UK Expert Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution states that 'single site studies of the effects of air pollutants on health are unlikely to have sufficient statistical power to confirm or refute assertions of effects and there is significant risk that the results of such investigations will be impossible to interpret'. In addition, other limitations include the fact that it would not be possible to attribute small area study findings to a specific potential point source. It would be difficult to separate out the other causes of ill health, including socio-economic influences such as lifestyle behaviours, deprivation, education and employment.

An examination had been conducted, however, of 'Quality and Outcomes Framework' data, which GPs collect routinely as part of their contract. These data have been presented previously in 2011 and 2013 to the Liaison Group, which indicated no significant effect on the health of the public. Updated data are presented below.

## **Quality and Outcomes Framework**

GP practices can voluntarily participate in the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QoF). This allows them to be rewarded, through financial incentives, for good practice (and its associated workload).

Prevalence for specific diseases can be recorded as part of QoF process. It must be noted that prevalence data is only for conditions have been **diagnosed** and then captured by GP information systems. Also, as the QoF data is primarily used to monitor GP practice performance against their contract, secondary uses of the data need to be interpreted with caution.

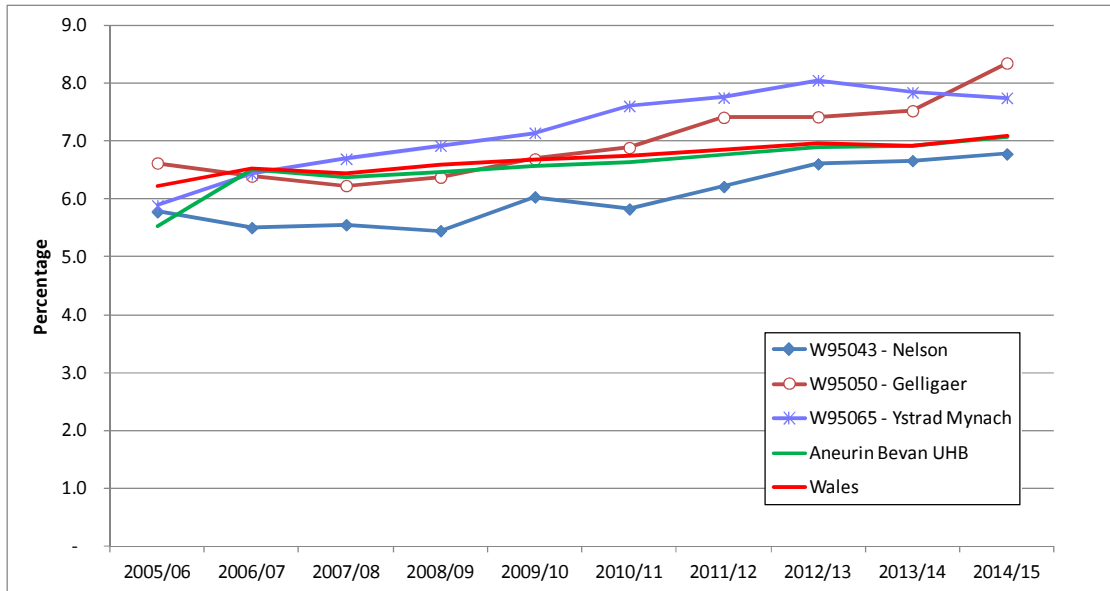
Practices do vary in the prevalence rates recorded. The least variability is found for conditions with an onset that is easily recognised by both the patient and clinician (for example, a stroke), and the greatest variability for conditions where identification is more dependent on individual and clinician practice (for example depression).

Also to note is the fact that the data shown below have not been age standardised. Age standardisation allows comparison of rates across different populations while taking account of the different age structures of those populations. Differences in prevalence may be due to different population structures in practices.

The following charts show QoF data on disease prevalence for Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Depression for Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as a whole, and for practices in Gelligaer, Nelson and Ystrad Mynach.

### ***Asthma***

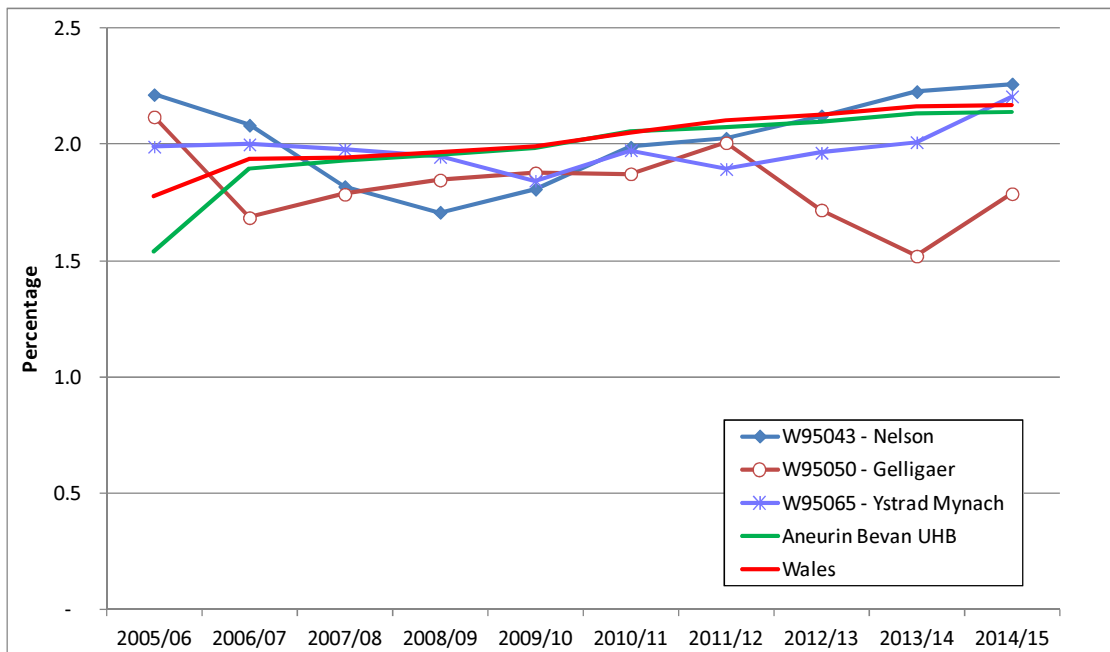
Asthma prevalence has been increasing for some time; this is a national trend. Trend data show that prevalence has tended to be highest overall over the period of monitoring in Ystrad Mynach, the practice furthest away from the area of interest. Although the percentage was slightly higher in Gelligaer for 2014/15, the difference between Gelligaer and Ystrad Mynach was not statistically significant.



### **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**

Prevalence for COPD is low, around 2% of the population. Small numbers means that year to year fluctuations are likely and small numbers influence percentage prevalence unduly.

Prevalence in Nelson and Ystrad Mynach practices are similar to the Aneurin Bevan and Wales rates. Whilst rates in Gelligaer have been lower in recent years.



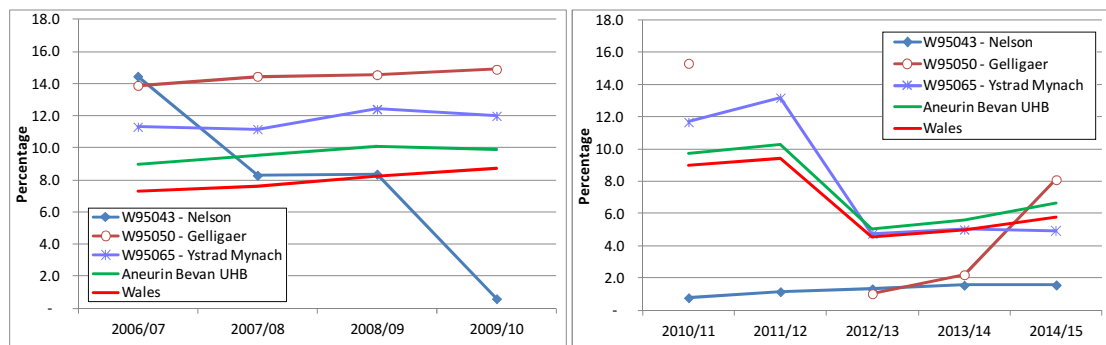
### **Depression**

Data on depression are only available from 2006/07, so a baseline for mental health before Bryn Composting was operational is not available. Over time there has been a change in the way the QoF data has been requested and reported, meaning that it is difficult to

make comparisons (see Appendix 1), so the trend data are separated into two charts below.

The improvement in depression levels in Nelson from 2007/8 may be an artefact of reporting, but it is known that the practice underwent a change in software in 2009/10 which affected their data collection process.

For the earlier years, prevalence is highest in the Gelligaer practice. Data are not shown for 2011/12 for Gelligaer as the practice changed its clinical data system which affected the quality of the coding for depression. The sharp increase in 2014/15 is possibly an artefact of reporting and due to delay getting accurate coding entered for depression cases in 2012/13 and 2013/14. It would have been unlikely for depression prevalence to have dropped suddenly from 14.5% in 2009/10 to 2% in 2012/13 and 2013/14. The level of 8.1% prevalence in 2014/15 is still lower than the 14.5% level reported in 2009/10. Future prevalence will be necessary before any indication of trend. The diagnosis of mild depression can be difficult and thresholds for diagnosis may vary between clinicians and practices.



**Tracey Deacon**  
**Principal Public Health Specialist**  
**September 2016**

## Appendix

### QoF Depression definitions

<b>2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09</b>	In those patients with a new diagnosis of depression, recorded between the preceding 1 April and 31st March, the percentage of patients who have had an assessment of severity <u>at the outset</u> of treatment.
<b>2009/10</b>	Patients diagnosed with depression between the preceding 1 April and 31 March.
<b>2010/11</b>	In those patients with a new diagnosis of depression, recorded between the preceding 1 April to 31 March, the percentage of patients who have had an assessment of severity <u>at the outset or have had a further assessment of severity 5-12 weeks (inclusive) after the initial recording.</u>
<b>2011/12</b>	In those patients with a new diagnosis of depression, recorded between the preceding 1 April to 31 March, the percentage of patients who have had an assessment of <u>severity at the time of diagnosis or who have had a further assessment of severity 4 - 12 weeks (inclusive) after the initial recording.</u>
<b>2012/13</b>	In those patients with a new diagnosis of depression, recorded between the preceding 1 April to 31 March, the percentage of patients who have had an assessment of <u>severity at the time of diagnosis or who have had a further assessment of severity 2-12 weeks (inclusive) after the initial recording.</u>
<b>2013/14</b>	Patients aged 18 or over with a new diagnosis of depression in the preceding 1 April to 31 March, who have had a <u>bio-psychosocial assessment by the point of diagnosis or who have been reviewed not earlier than 10 and not later than 35 days after the date of diagnosis.</u>
<b>2014/15</b>	Patients aged 18 or over with a new diagnosis of depression in the preceding 1 April to 31 March, who have been reviewed not earlier than 2 weeks after and not later than 8 weeks after the date of diagnosis.

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