

Accelerating change through connection.

Huw Griffiths



SEFYDLIAD
CALON Y DDRAIG
DRAGON'S HEART
INSTITUTE





Who we are

We are a network of leaders
spearheading innovation, sustainability
and health equality across public services
in Wales and beyond.



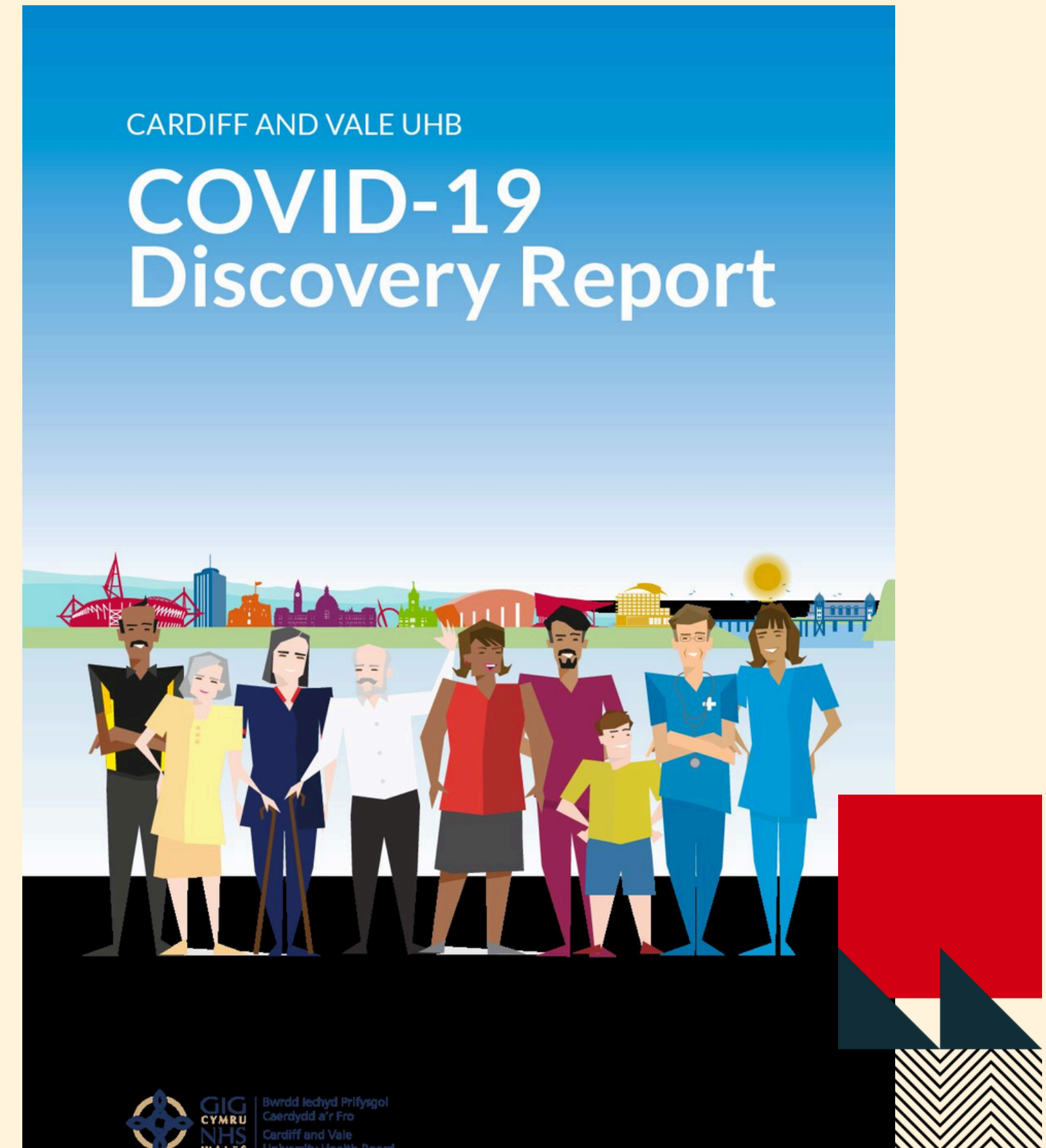
Our story

The Dragon's Heart Institute was created in the wake of the COVID to capture, keep and share what we learnt during our response to the pandemic.



Lessons from the pandemic

- Isolated leaders
- **Unexpected leaders**
- Burnout and fragility in teams
- **Brilliant ideas stuck locally**
- Speed of change when barriers are lifted
- Importance of networks and peer support
- Urgent need to spread what works
- **Connection, relationships and belonging is paramount**



DHI

Why we do what we do

Global health is facing a crisis, with declining life expectancy, increasing health inequalities, and significant threats from climate change.

No single organisation can address these challenges alone, but all too often we expect our leaders to do so by themselves, leading to no spread of innovation, isolation and burnout.

There is a historical lack of collaboration, sharing, and learning, highlighting the need for improved communication and intention in tackling these issues together.



Our Programmes



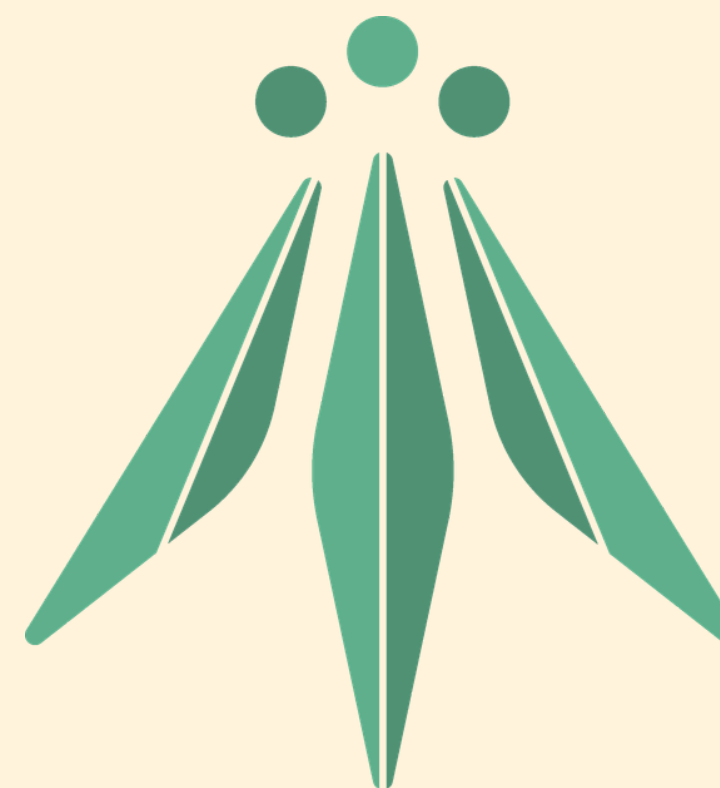
Academiau Dysgu
Dwys Cymru
Intensive Learning
Academies Wales



Spread & Scale

A comprehensive programme with an intensive three-day Academy at its core.

Designed to empower teams to rapidly expand the reach and impact of their proven innovations across their system.



Climb

A radical 10-month leadership journey.

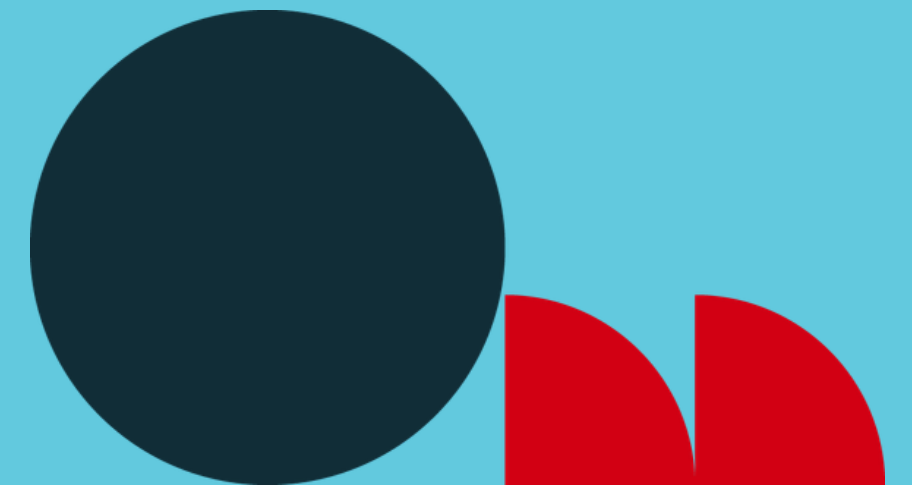
Designed to connect emerging and established leaders to develop the skills, mindset, and network needed to drive transformative change.

It takes 17 years on average for any given solution to spread to even half of the population that could benefit from it.

Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 2011

THE PROBLEM

Why is it so hard to achieve Spread and Scale?



A BAD QUESTION

"How can I get all these
people to do what I want
them to do?"

A BETTER QUESTION

"How can I help all these
people to do what they
want to do?"

THE NUMBER ONE MISTAKE

We try to spark motivation
with information

Why Connection?

Loneliness
Epidemic

Physiological
Impact (burnout)

Mental Health

Feeling like you belong (or not) also impacts:

Wellbeing

Productivity

Creativity

Engagement



Why does connection matter?

The number one factor in employee engagement is:

Do you have a friend
at work?

Why does connection matter?

The number one factor in employee engagement is:

Do you have a friend
at work?

#2: Do you have a
positive relationship
with your manager?

The number one factor in overall health, wellbeing and longevity is the quality of your relationships.

High quality relationships help us live longer, happier, healthier lives.

Sources: Harvard Study of Adult Development





Every change begins with **connection.**



Dr Natasha Zimmerman, PhD
**Belonging & Organisational
Psychology**



GIG CYMRU NHS WALES | Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

We need all ~~gloves hands~~ on deck.

Weekly glove use on Critical Care produces the same CO2 it takes to drive from Cardiff to Pakistan.

Let's reduce our glove use, only using them when necessary. When used inappropriately, gloves can be associated with poor hand hygiene and skin health, plastic waste, and cross-contamination.

Download the Gloves Safety Guide
Keep your colleagues, patients, family and friends safe.

GLOVES OFF

GLOVES OFF - REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE AND CARBON EMISSIONS

Between May 2025 and February 2026:

- 3.3 million fewer gloves ordered
- £103,520 cost avoidance
- Carbon savings equivalent to 12 return flights from London to Perth
- Winner of the NHS Wales Sustainability Award for Spread and Scale (2025)
- Shortlisted for the HEIW Improvement Prize (2026)
- Resources adopted nationally across Wales
- Highlighted by the Royal College of Nursing as a potential exemplar

BRIDGING CONTRACEPTION - IMPROVING ACCESS AND EQUITY

From a small pilot in Cardiff, immediate bridging contraception now available from all pharmacists in Wales, preventing gaps in access and reducing unwanted pregnancies.

Over 129,267 consultations delivered in community pharmacies.

Model is a key component of Wales's sexual health improvement strategy.



Leading with Authenticity in Social Care

Mel Jones



**Mel
Jones**

“Climb gave me exactly what I was looking for,” he said. “A fresh perspective on authentic leadership, strategic influence and resilience.”

Diolch!

Thank you!



**Join the next Spread
& Scale Academy**



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