

Annual Review

Working for members 2008-09

Director's introduction



Mike Ponton, Director

The past twelve months have been one of the most challenging and exciting times I have experienced in my time at the Welsh NHS Confederation, and indeed, that NHS Wales has ever seen.

In a demanding environment, with the financial challenge intensifying and demand growing, we have worked even harder to deliver our aims of supporting our members, influencing health policy, informing the public debate and connecting health leaders through networking and information sharing.

Throughout this time of change, the Welsh NHS Confederation has been at the forefront of the reorganisation process, collating the views of our members and maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders to shape the final proposals.

At the same time, the Confederation has itself experienced significant change, as we adapt the way we work to fit the changing landscape and ensure we continue to anticipate and meet the needs of our members.

We have expanded our range of skills and expertise through the establishment of the Welsh NHS Employers' Unit, which already has already created a strong presence within the health and social care community in Wales. Work is continuing on the development of new services for members, including more comprehensive corporate support and media work.

This latest Annual Review comes at the end of my time at the Welsh NHS Confederation, and it has been a tremendous privilege to hold the position of Director and lead the team to all that we have achieved during the past twelve months and beyond. Our strength has always been our unique ability to provide an objective and collaborative all-Wales voice for NHS management. We aim to be an organisation that members are proud to be part of, and work in a way that enhances public confidence in the NHS in Wales and its management.

I hope this review gives you a useful overview of our work and achievements throughout the past year. Thank you for all your continued support.

What we do

Connecting

We bring people together from all parts of the NHS and from the wider health community, helping to strengthen the relationships which are so crucial in improving health and delivering healthcare.

In our policy and influencing work we look for ideas and information outside the usual sources, connecting people with the latest thinking and the lessons that can be learned, for example, from other countries.

Influencing

Influencing is at the heart of our work. On key issues affecting our members, we ensure that decision-makers and opinion-formers are made fully aware of the facts, and of our members' views.

We also work to influence the overall direction of the health debate in Wales, for instance by reinforcing the message that the NHS must transform its services to keep pace with a fast-changing world.

We meet regularly with senior politicians in Wales and Westminster, including: the First Minister, Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh MPs and Assembly Members. We also work with the media, providing comment and background briefing on major health stories, and highlighting examples of good work by our members.

Supporting

Providing practical support to our members is an integral part of our work. One way in which we do this is to organise events on important issues that affect them – for example, our learning event on health reforms in New Zealand.

The briefings we produce on topical issues, such as a literature review of texts on managing change, help support members' work at local level.

Our corporate support services also provide a great deal of practical support to our members, bringing them together for all-Wales meetings, which help to share information and create consensus.

Informing

Our work informs different people in different ways. Our regular bulletin, Bay Watch, keeps members informed of latest developments in health from the National Assembly, while Reportage gives a quarterly update of health-related news from Europe. Weekly press summaries help keep members informed of the latest health stories hitting the press in Wales and the rest of the UK.

We help inform the general health debate through major pieces of work such as Hospital at Home, which showed how much healthcare can be delivered outside of hospital.

Our briefings also help inform decision-makers and opinion-formers on some of the key issues of the day. Our regular Bulletin keeps members informed of our work on their behalf.

Our website www.welshconfed.org contains all our publications as well as other key health documents and links to a wide range of health sites.

Working for Members 2008/09 - Highlights

Employers' Unit

The new Welsh NHS Employers' Unit, led by Director Kate Watkins, has significantly extended our role in NHS Wales, and has allowed us to offer expertise in the specific areas of HR and workforce development.

The Unit co-ordinates and represents the interests of NHS organisations as employers, acting as their voice in discussions and negotiations both inside Wales and on the UK stage.

The Unit undertakes research and comments on workforce issues that are on the horizon, concentrating on the essential changes needed to the current workforce to meet the challenges of the new strategic direction for the NHS in Wales.

Reorganisation

We have been at the forefront of the restructuring process from its very beginning over a year ago. We played a significant role in helping to shape the final proposals, collating views from our members and maintaining a programme of contact with senior assembly personnel throughout the process.

Briefings with AMs, targeted and timely to match the current issues, ensured that key decision-makers took into account the views of our members. Many of the outcomes of the reorganisation directly reflect comments fed into the process by the Welsh NHS Confederation.

Board development

Now that the new structures are in place, we are working with our partners to support and develop the new leaders for NHS Wales through our board development sessions. The sessions are designed to appraise chairs, chief executives and non-officer members of the key issues impacting on their work – including governance, the legal framework and the relationship between the new LHBs and government. These sessions are the start of a continuous process that will see us take a central role in the development of both current and future leaders of NHS Wales.

Governance guide

With brand new, integrated NHS organisations with large budgets, huge workforces, and far-reaching remits, the principles of good governance are more important than ever before. We have brought together a wide selection of advice, practical help and guidance into a new governance website to help members get to the grips with what is governance, and how to do it well. The website is supported by a smaller pocket book, both of which are packed with references to detailed studies and sources of further information. Headings such as Improving Board Effectiveness and Understanding the Dual Role of Executive Directors, aim to provide practical support in an easily digestible format.

Welsh Annual Conference

The feedback from our conference last year was the most positive yet, after a packed programme ensured high attendance throughout. Our conference is our flagship event, and brings together over 300 delegates representing senior NHS management, local government, third sector and commercial partners. A wide range of inspiring and knowledgeable speakers gave their perspective on managing change and creating a shared vision for the future. Entertaining and thought-provoking speeches from social psychologist, Laurie Taylor and Chief Executive of the WRU, Roger Lewis, were amongst the highlights.

Other Highlights

During the year, we also:

- Extended our corporate support services, allowing us to give even more practical help to our members, strengthen relationships between organisations and share best practice.
- Continued to receive positive feedback for our regular services – our political round-up from the National Assembly, Bay Watch, our weekly press summaries, and Reportage, a quarterly update from Europe.
- Issued publications focusing on the topical issue of managing change – literature reviews of work from world-renowned writers such as John Kotter and William Bridges, giving bite-size overviews of expert wisdom from around the world.
- Collated the views of members and formed a collaborative response to all the main consultations of the year, including the future of Community Health Councils, a unified public health organisation, rural health and the community nursing strategy for Wales.
- Gave oral and written evidence to the Assembly's European and External Affairs Committee as part of its inquiry into patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. We also co-ordinated several committee evidence sessions for inquiries carried out by the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government committee. We regularly meet with committee clerks to discuss the arrangements for committee evidence sessions, and this growing agenda will form an important part of our work programme in the next year.
- Kept members informed of policy developments outside of Wales – we wrote summaries of the dementia strategy for England and the NHS Constitution to inform members of the potential impacts on Wales.
- Issued a briefing on the importance of management to all AMs and elected representatives in Wales, which highlighted the value and necessity of good management in the NHS, and gave key facts emphasising how low management costs are in Wales.
- Met with Welsh MPs in Westminster, including the Secretary of State, to brief them on developments in Wales, as they continue to have a very important role, even though health is a devolved

issue.

- Were quoted on several occasions by AMs in Assembly debates, for example, our view that restructuring should ultimately lead to even closer integration of health and social care.
- Acted as the first point of contact for journalists seeking an authoritative view from NHS management in Wales. We brief key contacts regularly to ensure that coverage is balanced, informed and leads to improved public confidence in NHS management.
- Gave public comments in the press and media on topics that cover the whole spectrum of NHS issues, including patient safety, the rebalancing of hospital care, top-up fees and the European Working Time Directive. In an in-depth interview with HSJ, we described the effects of devolution on healthcare delivery in Wales.
- Continued to provoke debate among the health and social care community with our regular Western Mail column. This year, we covered topics as diverse as mental health reform, the NHS estate, US healthcare reform, patient safety and digital health records.
- Facilitated filming and interview opportunities to showcase good work by our member organisations, such as a health and social care centre in Monmouth, and a home-treatment initiative in Carmarthen.
- Updated our website more frequently than ever before. All of our publications, details of events, press comments and columns, are available to download. A comprehensive links section connects you to sources of further information and health policy developments across Wales and beyond.
- Hosted a free event to hear lessons from health reform in New Zealand. Chris Clarke, lead CEO of New Zealand's primary healthcare reforms, spoke about some of the challenges that he believes lie ahead for NHS Wales.
- Co-ordinated and developed all Wales workforce policies on areas such as employee relations, disciplinary, grievance and sickness and absence matters.
- Represented Wales at the UK NHS Staff Council ensuring Welsh interests are voiced and listened to in the development of UK wide NHS terms and conditions.
- Joined the One Wales Occupational Health Task & Finish Group to represent the views of NHS employers in Wales.
- Supported medical workforce development through

membership of the All Wales Junior Doctor review group, and the co-ordination of views from Wales on the proposed UK wide review of the Junior Doctors' contract.

- Participated in the development of the work programme as a member of the Wales GMC Revalidation Delivery Board and are now co-ordinating workstreams on appraisal and remediation.
- Represented members on the following groups throughout the year:
 1. Health Sustainable Development Group
 2. Joint Working Grant Reference Group
 3. Local Authority and NHS Communication Officers Network
 4. Local Service Board Stakeholder Group
 5. Making the Connections Delivery Board
 6. Participation Cymru Advisory Board
 7. Paying for Care Advisory Group
 8. Staff Survey Communications Focus Group
 9. WAG Migrant Workers Reference Group
 10. WAG Overseas Development Network
 11. Wales Concordat Reference Group
 12. Wales for Africa Health Links Group
 13. WaMH in PC Core Group
 14. Welsh Partnership Forum & Business Committee
 15. WORD Advisory Board
 16. Occupational Health Task and Finish Group
 17. One Wales Organisational and Leadership Development Steering Group
 18. UK NHS Staff Council
 19. Policy Development Sub Groups
 20. NHS 4 Nations Pay Leads Meeting
 21. Joint Wales Consultant Contract Committee
 22. Wales Revalidation Delivery Board
 23. All Wales Junior Doctor Review Group
 24. UK KSF Project Reference Group