

Bay Watch

12 May 2008



About Bay Watch

Bay Watch is a weekly political briefing for Welsh NHS Confederation members that is focused on health issues and policies being discussed and debated in the National Assembly for Wales.

If you have any queries about this publication, please contact jonathan.davies@welshconfed.org

Last week at the Assembly

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

999 co-responders

The Health Minister said she would look into concerns raised by **Kirsty Williams (Liberal Democrats, Brecon and Radnorshire)** that the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust was limiting the number of calls that co-responders can respond to.

Priorities for the NHS in Wales

Mrs Hart named her main priorities as the reconfiguration of services, improving access and the patient experience and supporting social care. AMs also discussed childhood vaccination programmes, asthma treatment and school nurses.

Older people

Deputy Minister, Gwenda Thomas, reported that the government is making progress on their “groundbreaking strategy” for older people. She also reiterated the government’s commitment to initiatives that encourage older people to exercise.

Well person clinics

The Health Minister said that well person clinics are commissioned locally by LHBs to meet the needs

of their population. In response to concerns raised about problems accessing GP services in Gwent, Mrs Hart said that “*the vast majority of GP practices fulfil their obligations wonderfully*” but that there was a minority that would have to be “*dealt with*”.

Support for hospices

Edwina Hart reported that she had been in contact with the chair of the Wales Palliative Care Planning Group, and that she was keen to find the right balance between providing funding from LHBs and maintaining the independence of hospices.

Night-time ambulances in Neath Port Talbot

The Health Minister said that the “*current level of performance in Neath Port Talbot is unsatisfactory and I have asked for action to address this.*” She added that concerns about waiting times in rural areas had been expressed to Stuart Fletcher, who is undertaking a review into the service.

Cross border services

Mrs Hart explained that there is a national agreement between WAG and the Department of Health that English Trusts and LHBs agree costs locally. She explained that the government is not aware of any refusals by English Trusts to treat Welsh patients.

Chronic conditions

Mrs Hart said that an extra £15m has been committed to drive service improvements. Questioned about plans for a renal dialysis unit in Withybush, the Health Minister said that *"it is a question now of agreeing a timescale"*.

Restructuring of LHBs

The Minister said that it would be inappropriate to answer until the consultation period has ended.

Read the transcript of Health Minister's questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=84320&ds=5/2008#a1>

Written answers to questions not reached in plenary are also available online. The issues covered are: improving working conditions for NHS staff, preventing strokes, reducing infections, cardiac rehabilitation, hospital hygiene.

Read the answers here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=84171&ds=5/2008>

Questions to the First Minister

The First Minister issued a written answer to a question on pay for NHS staff. He explained that the Minister for Health and Social Services has accepted the recommendations of the NHS pay review bodies for 2008-09, together with a three-year pay package negotiated with Unison and the Royal College of Nursing.

Read the transcript of First Minister's Questions here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=84024&ds=5/2008#rhif1>

Lymphoedema debate

Janice Gregory (Labour, Ogmore) highlighted the "great variety of provision" in services for lymphoedema patients across Wales and called for an all-Wales strategy to tackle the problem. The Health Minister acknowledged that the *"availability of lymphoedema services remains patchy"* and said that a task and finish group is being set up to ensure that patients receive *"equitable and prompt access."*

Read the transcript of the debate here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=84320&ds=5/2008#a7>

NHS Redress Measure

The NHS Redress Measure has become the first piece of primary legislation made by the National Assembly. AMs voted against proposed amendments to the measure and it will now be passed to Parliament for scrutiny.

More information on the measure can be found here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-nhsr-home.htm>

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

The transcript is now available from the session in which the Director of the Board of Community Health Councils, Carol Layman-Jones gave evidence to the committee for its inquiry into proposals to change the structure of the NHS:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=83915&ds=5/2008#rhif3>

The committee is also continuing its inquiry into presumed consent for organ donation. Read the transcript of evidence given by the National Secular Society and the British Humanist Association here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=83915&ds=5/2008#rhif5>

Next week at the Assembly

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government committee

The committee has decided to hold an inquiry into Local Service Boards. Read the scoping paper here, written by the Members' Research Service to provide background information.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=84269&ds=5/2008>

In Wednesday's meeting, the Committee will hear evidence from the UK Transplant Coordinators' Association and Kidney Wales Foundation as part of their inquiry into presumed consent for organ donation.

See the agenda here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home/bus-committees-third-hwlg-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=84176&ds=5/2008>

Mental Health Services LCO Committee

This week, the Committee will hear evidence from Gofal Cymru, RCN Wales and the Law Society.

See the agenda here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-legislation-lco-2008-8/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas-4.htm?act=dis&id=83912&ds=5/2008>

Questions to the First Minister

The Minister will be asked to comment on support given to junior doctors by WAG, the recruitment process for NHS staff and the state of public services.

Read the list of questions in full here:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=83296&ds=5/2008>

Substance Misuse Debate

In Tuesday's plenary session, AMs will discuss the government's 10 year Substance Misuse Strategy. The government will call upon the Assembly to support the strategy, entitled "*Working Together to Reduce Harm*".

Read the strategy here:
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/consultation/workingtogether/?lang=en>

Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

The Minister will be asked questions on the following topics:

- Ensuring value for money in delivering public services
- Improving public sector procurement
- Rate of improvement for public services in the past 5 years
- Update on Making the Connections

Read the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=83448&ds=5/2008>

Autism Debate

In a Plenary Debate on Wednesday, the Welsh Conservatives will call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to undertake further work to tackle the difficulties that adults with autism face.

See more details in Wednesday's agenda:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=84127&ds=5/2008>

THE **WELSH NHS CONFEDERATION**
CONFFEDERASIWN GIG CYMRU



Unit 3
Waterton Park
Bridgend
CF31 3PH

Tel 0845 33 00 499
E-mail info@welshconfed.org

About the Welsh NHS Confederation

The Welsh NHS Confederation represents the organisations making up the NHS in Wales: trusts and local health boards. We act as an independent voice in the drive for better health and better healthcare through our policy and influencing work, and by supporting members with events, information and training. To find out more about us go to -

www.welshconfed.org