

Bay Watch

16 December 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

Recruitment of social workers

Deputy Minister for Social Services told plenary that vacancy rates in local authorities were declining and less reliance on agency social workers. She added that the Care Council for Wales were looking at an initiative to introduce the post of consultant social worker, similar to that of a medical consultant.

Occupational health

The Health Minister announced plans to consider the "most appropriate direction for Wales" in relation to the introduction of fit notes.

Career development

In response to concerns that newly qualified nurses are finding it increasingly difficult to find permanent employment, the Minister said she would monitor the implementation of 'Designed to Work' very closely, but added that "there is still a lot more work to be done in that area."

Agenda for Change

The Minister said that there has been "progress in the main", but that the ultimate goal of Agenda for Change has not yet been achieved.

Ambulance service in Powys

The Minister expressed concern at the performance

of the emergency ambulance response times in Powys, and announced that she would issue a statement on the issue in the future.

Rehabilitation services

AMs raised concerns about the number of patients who find their rehabilitation after illness hampered by respiratory conditions. The Minister said she had discussed rehabilitation with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, adding that "more staff in the rehabilitation field...could be usefully employed in the community."

Osteoporosis patients

The Minister said that the Department for Public Health and Health Professions would meet the Osteoporosis Society to discuss prevention methods and other issues, because "we must get to grips with some of the issues around osteoporosis."

Social services

The Deputy Minister for social services acknowledged the financial challenges faced by social services. She pointed to her consultation on how social care should be paid for in the future, which has already begun.

Read the full transcript of the session here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=109160&ds=12/2008#3>

Carers Legislative Competence Order (LCO)

The Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas delivered a statement on the proposed order to introduce new rights for carers in Wales. The LCO was passed by Assembly Members and has now been referred to Parliament for scrutiny. The proposed order, which would give the Assembly the power to make measures to support carers, includes a proposal to place a new duty on NHS organisations to develop carer information strategies.

Read the Minister's statement and the following questions in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=109033&ds=12/2008#rop20081209qv-part1-Anchor5>

Questions to the First Minister

Alcohol abuse in Wales

The First Minister said that the government's substance misuse strategy, 'Working Together to Reduce Harm' would help to tackle the different kinds of harm associated with alcohol misuse. The government are also working on a domestic abuse strategy to sit side by side with the alcohol strategy.

Staff safety in hospitals

Extending CCTV in hospitals and ambulances, and introducing a lone-worker alert system were two of the measures described by the First Minister to protect the safety of NHS staff. The First Minister also described the need for culture changes in the Crown Prosecution Service and among hospital staff to end the acceptance of violence.

Services for AIDS patients

The Assembly Government is developing a sexual health strategy that will be submitted to Edwina Hart for approval shortly. The strategy will include a specified quality requirement for HIV and AIDS services.

Read the full transcript of the session here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=109033&ds=12/2008>

Written questions

Click on the links below for answers to written questions on the following subjects:

Clinical governance at Abergele hospital

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=109076&ds=12/2008>

Home births, chronic pain management, uptake of recommendations from the Victoria Climbié inquiry

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=109057&ds=12/2008#4>

Assessment unit for the Elderly Mentally Infirm at Llandough Hospital

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=108916&ds=12/2008#2>

"Fit notes" for employees, competition between GP and community pharmacies for NHS prescriptions

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-written.htm?act=dis&id=109039&ds=12/2008#2>

Press Releases issued this week

Transitional Directors to NHS Wales appointed

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2791919/?lang=en>

Health Minister announces improvements to children's specialised services

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2792616/?lang=en>

Assembly Government to seek powers to provide more support for unpaid carers

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2793286/?lang=en>

Patients receiving diagnostic tests faster

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2797030/?lang=en>

New expert group to advise on health service reform

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2801223/?lang=en>

Plans to support children and young people get royal approval

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/health/2008/2801595/?lang=en>

The National Assembly for Wales is in recess from 15 December 2008 to 11 January 2009. The next edition of Bay Watch will be published on 12 January 2009.

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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