

# Bay Watch

2 February 2009



## 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.

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## Last Week at the Assembly

### Debate on a cancer tsar for Wales

Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, pointed to the success of Professor Mike Richards' appointment as England's cancer tsar and called for a similar role to be created in Wales. He said the appointment of a cancer tsar would inform the debate in Wales, independently of Government but working with the Minister for Health and Social Services.

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, raised concerns about handing over the decision making, particularly on the use of resources, to clinicians. He said the role of a cancer tsar "would effectively fudge...accountability and transparency". A better approach, he said, would be to put the responsibility on the Minister for health as it currently stands.

Health Minister Edwina Hart highlighted the differences between Wales and England, arguing that England needed to take a co-ordinated approach to oversee the 30 cancer networks, and numerous professional organisations and royal colleges. She said that Wales already has close collaboration and strong clinical involvement in the three regional cancer networks. She added: "It is quite clear that we have a focus of working together to get improvement in services."

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114619&ds=1/2009#6>

### Ambulance cover in Powys

Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Kirsty Williams, raised concerns about response times, and Powys ambulances being used to support services in Gwent and Swansea. She noted the need to end the "blame game", but said that the Health Minister seems sometimes to be "asking the trust to do the job with one hand tied behind its back". She concluded: "There is a distinct need for more investment in the ambulance service across the board. We therefore need to examine whether our ambulance trust is being properly funded to deliver the service required of it."

The Health Minister responded by highlighting the considerable surge in demand over the winter period, and outlined plans to introduce a paramedic role to provide more care at home and avoid hospital admissions. She responded: "You might think that there is a blame culture, but, at the end of the day, somebody has to manage the service, and they must do that within the confines of the budget and make some difficult decisions."

Read the debate in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114619&ds=1/2009#9>

## Social services debate

In a debate on the annual report from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas, noted improvements and increasing confidence within social services, but highlighted “*unacceptable variations in performance*”.

Conservative health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, raised the large variation in the number of days between an initial inquiry and the completion of a care plan. The best-performing authority took 13 days; the worst-performing authority took 71 days.

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, raised concerns about how effectively social care is being delivered in conjunction with health trusts and local health boards. He said: “*We do not always see the working together that is necessary to deliver the best possible service for clients.*”

Read the debate in full here:

[http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114402&ds=1/2009#Adroddiad\\_Blynnyddol\\_Arolygiaeth\\_Gofal\\_a\\_Gwasanaethau\\_Cymdeithasol\\_Cymru\\_2007-08The\\_Care\\_and\\_Social\\_Services\\_Inspectorate\\_Wales\\_2007-08\\_Annual\\_Report](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114402&ds=1/2009#Adroddiad_Blynnyddol_Arolygiaeth_Gofal_a_Gwasanaethau_Cymdeithasol_Cymru_2007-08The_Care_and_Social_Services_Inspectorate_Wales_2007-08_Annual_Report)

## First Minister’s Questions

First Minister Rhodri Morgan rejected suggestions by Conservative leader, Nick Bourne, that middle class people should pay a contribution towards their prescription costs. The First Minister said the free prescriptions policy mainly benefitted those who were just above benefit levels.

Read the full transcript of First Minister’s Questions here:

[http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114402&ds=1/2009#Cwestiynau\\_ir\\_Prif\\_WeinidogQuestions\\_to\\_the\\_First\\_Minister](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114402&ds=1/2009#Cwestiynau_ir_Prif_WeinidogQuestions_to_the_First_Minister)

Use the link below for written answers to questions on services for AIDS patients and winter pressures:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=114338&ds=1/2009>

## This Week at the Assembly

### Questions to the Health Minister

The Health Minister will be asked to comment on:

- her achievements in the Ogmore constituency
- proposals to improve services in South Wales Central
- progress of NHS restructuring
- promoting good health among children and young people
- dental services
- priorities for expenditure for the next two years
- mental health treatment
- ambulance response times in South Wales East
- out-of-hours provision for emergency mental health cases
- improving stroke services
- initiatives to improve the health of the people in Flintshire
- health screening
- Deep Brain Stimulation
- services for EMI patients in Llandudno.

Read the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=113422&ds=2/2009>

## CAFCASS inquiry

In Thursday's meeting, the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government committee will continue its inquiry into the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS), hearing evidence from:

- Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services
- Marc Phillips, National Head for BBC Children in Need
- Roger Bishop from Tros Gynnal

See more information in Thursday's agenda:

<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=114160&ds=2/2009>

Written evidence from BBC Children in Need and Tros Gynnal is available here:

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

## European and External Affairs Committee

As part of its inquiry into patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, the committee will hear evidence from Bernard Merkel, Head of Health Strategy and the Health Systems Unit at the European Commission.

See Tuesday's full agenda here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-eur-home/bus-committees-third-eur-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=111106&ds=2/2009>

## Questions to the First Minister

The First Minister will be asked to comment on:

- the NHS in South Wales Central
- sexual assault referral clinics in North Wales
- the cost of implementing the new regional health boards
- ambulance services in Islwyn.

Read the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=113248&ds=2/2009>

## Audit Committee

The committee will discuss the recent Wales Audit Office report on NHS sickness absence, hearing from Paul Williams, Head of the Department of Health and Social Services, and Sheelagh Lloyd-Jones, Director of Human Resources for NHS Wales.

Read the report here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ac-home/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=114582&ds=2/2009>

The committee will also discuss its draft report on home oxygen therapy services.

See Wednesday's agenda in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-ac-home/bus-committees-third-ac-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=114175&ds=2/2009>

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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](http://www.welshconfed.org)