

Bay Watch

3rd March 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

Restructuring scrutiny session

The Health, Wellbeing and Local Government committee has published the transcript of its scrutiny session with the Minister for Health and Social Services, over her plans for NHS restructuring. The following issues were amongst those discussed:

Local government representation

The role of local government representation on the new NHS boards will be to contribute to the strategic development of health and social care in the area, and not to look at the particular views or “pet subjects” of individual local authorities.

Appointing Chairs

The Minister acknowledged “examples of excellent leadership in Wales”, stating that “the quality is definitely there” when it comes to leadership in the Welsh NHS.

Localism

Statutory duties for partnership working will ensure accountability at local level. The roles of the chair and vice-chair, with responsibility for primary and community mental health, will also “be good for communities”.

Cost savings

Until the design of all the structures is completed, there will not be specific figures about what savings may be achieved by reorganisation. The Minister said: “It would be foolish of me to say that I am going to save loads of money, because whatever money I have within that system will just go to another part of the system.”

HR issues

The Minister acknowledged the stress involved for many staff going through reorganisation. She said she was aware of the problem and received regular reports on it in meetings with the trade unions.

Read the full transcript 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=117036&ds=2/2009#crffu>

Audit committee

The transcript is now available from the Audit Committee’s session with Paul Williams, Chief Executive of NHS Wales, and Sheelagh Lloyd-Jones, Director of HR for NHS Wales, on the subject of staff sickness rates. Committee members discussed the feasibility of the 4.2% target, and how good progress would be sustained throughout

reorganisation.

Paul Williams acknowledged the risks posed by reorganisation in terms of staff morale and said: "Some of the anxiety will simply be about the unknown, and we need good communication on what the reorganisation means."

Read full transcript 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=116160&ds=2/2009#2>

Questions to the First Minister

Health services in Welsh prisons

The First Minister acknowledged the need to resolve the continuing deficit in child and adolescent mental health services in the young offender institution attached to HMP Parc.

Respite care for the elderly mentally infirm

Mental health carers grants are available for respite care for carers of people with a mental health problem. The detailed provision of services is a matter for local agencies, on the basis of assessed need.

Read the transcript in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=118136&ds=2/2009#1>

Welsh language debate

The Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas, made a statement on the work of the task group on the Welsh language in health and social services. She gave assurances that Welsh-language services will not be adversely affected by the NHS reconfiguration. The Minister for Health has informed the chief executive of the NHS in Wales that the current capacity of Welsh language

officers in the NHS in Wales must be safeguarded.

Jonathan Morgan argued for the need to allow key workers, such as GP practice nurses, the time to pursue Welsh-language courses, while Peter Black, Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, said that the Welsh language in healthcare agenda seems to have lost its way in recent years, and urged the Deputy Minister to look at the issue of education and training for people already in post.

Read the session in full here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=118136&ds=2/2009#3>

This Week at the Assembly

First Minister's Questions

The First Minister will be asked to comment on stroke services in Wales.

Read the full list of questions here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-oral.htm?act=dis&id=117137&ds=3/2009>

Personal data

Liberal Democrat health spokesperson, Peter Black, has proposed a debate in Wednesday's plenary session on safeguarding personal data. The Conservatives will raise the issue of medical records and the distress to patients caused by incidents of data loss.

See more details in Wednesday's agenda:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=118338&ds=3/2009>

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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