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Member's Update Issue 20 25 Nov 2003

Bulletin is a regular update for members on the work being carried out by the Welsh NHS Confederation on their behalf. It complements *Interchange Alert*, published by our London office, which gives members an overview of the Confederation's work at UK-wide level. If you have any queries about either publication, please contact kevin.sullivan@welshconfed.org

Record audience for The Welsh Connection in Cardiff

Over 200 senior figures from all parts of the NHS in Wales and partner organisations gathered in Cardiff from 12-14 November to attend *The Welsh Connection 2003: connecting the jigsaw*, the Welsh Confederation's annual conference. Opening the event, chairman Lloyd FitzHugh explained that at a time when the NHS is dealing with an ever-increasing range of pressures and important new initiatives, it was essential to look at how the pieces all fitted together, a point reiterated by NHS Confederation chief executive Gill Morgan.

It was standing room only when keynote speaker Derek Wanless addressed the conference. Outlining his work for the Chancellor and the findings of the Welsh Assembly Review which he advised, he underlined the scale of the reform agenda, adding that it was essential to "keep the public on-side". He also had a clear message about the need for courage and leadership: "what's clearly required is bravery in political decision-making". These themes were also picked up in the lively panel discussion and question and answer session, which also provided some key messages from the service for Derek Wanless to take to the Health and Social Services Committee immediately afterwards.

The way in which success depends on leadership and vision was a theme picked up in different ways by former Olympic athlete Nigel Walker, and NHS Confederation Policy Director Nigel Edwards. And Michael West underlined how another key ingredient of success in delivering change was to motivate and empower staff by forging effective teams.

Friday's sessions brought a range of perspectives from outside Wales, with lessons from Chris Town

(England) and Brian Dornham (Northern Ireland) on how health and social care can fit together, and thoughts from Dr Scott Greer and Professor Brian Edwards on how health policy in Wales fitted into the larger jigsaw of the UK and the rest of Europe. Director Ann Lloyd set out the key challenges facing the service, and Jane Hutt closed the conference with a reminder of how it is essential to "bring communities with us" in implementing the major changes that lie ahead.

Director Richard Thomas said:

"We are extremely pleased that delegates judged the conference to be a big success. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our speakers, delegates, exhibitors and sponsors for helping us to make a success of this year's conference. We hope to see you at our other events and of course at The Welsh Connection 2004!"

Conference dinner

Around 200 also attended the conference dinner, including Jane Hutt and deputy health minister John Griffiths, Culture Minister Alun Pugh, NHS Wales Director Ann Lloyd, Derek Wanless, NHS Confederation chairman Peter Mount and chief executive Gill Morgan, and a host of other senior figures from the across the health field. It was also an opportunity to mark the retirement of Richard Thomas, director of the Welsh NHS Confederation, after 42 years' service to the NHS in Wales (and, as he told dinner guests, having witnessed over 30 service reorganisations). Richard was presented with a colour printer and webcam and expresses his sincere thanks to everyone for this gift. He said: "what I will miss most are my colleagues in all disciplines across the service".



Conference highlights on CD

Highlights from the conference sessions will shortly be available on CD. The cost will be £10 to members and £15 to non-members; details to follow soon. We will also be making the speakers' presentations available on our website www.nhsconfed.org/wales

Politicians, public figures and members gather for Chair's reception

Chairman Lloyd FitzHugh hosted a very successful chair's reception at the Cardiff Hilton the evening before the conference, in collaboration with BT. It provided an opportunity for the 100 or so guests from across the health field and other areas of public life to gather and mix informally. In her remarks, Jane Hutt praised the work of the Welsh NHS Confederation in staging the conference. BT Wales Director Ann Beynon described the importance of "connecting the jigsaw" to achieve success and underlined the key role of IT in helping to achieve the kinds of changes set out in Wanless.

Wanless – influencing on members' behalf

The Wanless Review has been the key focus for our influencing in the past few weeks. Based on our survey of members we produced a briefing underlining our support for the review recommendations and urging politicians to be "clear, co-ordinated and courageous" in their response. This briefing was distributed to AMs and MPs to coincide with relevant debates in the National Assembly and House of Commons. We secured press coverage on BBC Wales, and in the Health Service Journal. We have also met recently with BMA Welsh Secretary Richard Lewis and with Assembly Member Jonathan Morgan. We are scheduled to meet deputy health minister John Griffiths and other Assembly Members. These meetings allow us to highlight our key messages on Wanless and other issues, and are part of our effort to build a consensus for change. For copies of our briefing please contact kevin.sullivan@welshconfed.org (02920 504090)

"On Wanless, we urged politicians to be clear, co-ordinated and courageous in their response"

Review of the "Interface between Health and Social Care" – your views sought

The Health and Social Services Committee at the National Assembly is conducting a review on this issue and has invited the Welsh NHS Confederation to give written and oral evidence. If you have any comments to make to help inform our evidence please contact kevin.sullivan@welshconfed.org (02920 504090) by 5 December.

Working for NEDs and NOMs – update

Supporting non-executive directors and non-officer members is one of our most important areas of work at present. With this in mind, we held the first of a planned series of workshops aimed at NOMs and NEDs on 12 November. Around 40 people attended to hear independent expert David Mathew talk about "Making Boards Effective". If you are a NOM or a NED and would like to get involved in the Confederation's work in this area, please contact richard.thomas@welshconfed.org (02920 504090)

Informing Healthcare launch - 10 December

The Welsh Assembly Government strategy for information and IT, Informing Healthcare, is to be launched in Cardiff at the Hilton Hotel on 10 December. Invitations to this event have been sent out by Jane Hutt. We are organising this event in conjunction with the IHM and the Welsh Assembly Government.