



bulletin

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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

Evidence given to committee on health/social care interface

The Welsh NHS Confederation was invited to give evidence to the Health and Social Services Committee which is conducting a review of the interface between health and social care in Wales. Following the submission of a short paper based on views gathered from trust and LHB members across Wales, incoming director Mike Ponton and management committee members Judith Paget from Caerphilly LHB and Andy Williams from Powys LHB attended the Health and Social Services Committee meeting on 4 February to give oral evidence. The key points they made were:

- Members are committed to partnership working between health and social care
- There are many good examples provided by trusts and LHBs of work across the health/social care interface
- LHBs and trusts need stability, headroom and freedom to develop links with social care alongside all the other issues on their agenda
- Strategic direction, co-ordination and clear priorities from the Assembly are crucial
- Joint performance management systems and common information systems across health and social care are essential

Committee members asked a wide range of questions covering all of these points, and the chair, David Melding, has asked the Confederation to provide further information on several areas, including the examples cited by members of successful partnership working. Director Mike Ponton said: "We were very pleased to have this opportunity to highlight publicly the importance of the partnership agenda, the very real challenges faced by trusts and LHBs, and the ways in which they are already working successfully to develop better links with social care. The extra input we have been asked to provide will give us a further opportunity to take forward members' views on this issue. We are very grateful to members who sent us their comments or who met with us to give their input, and we will keep all members informed of progress in our work in this vital area."

Influencing the political agenda

In the past week Lloyd FitzHugh, Chair of the Welsh NHS Confederation, accompanied by Richard Thomas and Mike Ponton, met with many of the members of the Health and Social Services Committee from across all four political parties. The main purpose of the meetings was to raise members' views on key issues. These included Wanless implementation, the need for political support for change, and the importance of connecting all the other pieces of the jigsaw, such as new contracts, Agenda for Change, and the working time directive. Director Richard Thomas said: "In all meetings the discussion proved to be very useful and informative. It was agreed by all those involved that regular meetings of this kind were mutually beneficial and would provide a valuable opportunity for an exchange of views and information on topical health and wellbeing issues. Importantly, it will also enable the Confederation to inform and influence the political agenda on behalf of its members".



'There has never been a more challenging time for health organisations, and they increasingly need and expect the Confederation to provide strong support and effective representation.'

Mike Ponton, Director, Welsh NHS Confederation

Restructuring of Assembly Health and Social Care department

The Confederation has responded to the recent consultation on the new structure for the integrated health and social care department. The key points of our response were:

- There is a need to integrate offices of chief medical officer and chief nursing officer to help ensure that public health, health promotion and professional issues are truly consolidated in policy making and strategic planning at national level, to match what is required at local level
- The new directorates will need to work very closely together, and the new arrangements must support this
- The new management unit should play a key role in underpinning the leadership role of the new department, but more details about its operation and its links to the NHS are necessary
- Further clarification is needed on the role of the regional offices
- An evaluation and review of the new arrangements should be built in from the outset

Welcome to new director Mike Ponton

Mike took up his post on 2 February. He succeeds Richard Thomas, who will remain in post for a handover period until 31 March. Mike said: "I am really pleased to be joining the Welsh NHS Confederation at this very important stage in the evolution of the NHS in Wales. There has never been a more challenging time for health organisations, and they increasingly need and expect the Confederation to provide strong support and effective representation. Richard Thomas has been very successful in strengthening and developing the Confederation's contribution and influence in health policy, organisation and management. I look forward to follow on from Richard and to build on his success in working with, supporting and representing members in their quest to provide the highest standards of management and health care in the increasingly demanding environment in which we now live and work".

Richard Thomas said: "I am extremely pleased that Mike Ponton has been appointed as my successor. His wide experience in senior and top management posts in both provider and commissioning functions across the NHS in Wales and his senior civil service appointments in both the Welsh Office and the Welsh Assembly Government will be of enormous benefit to him in his role and to the membership in Wales. I'm pleased to be able to hand over the reins with the Welsh NHS Confederation in a strong and healthy position, which will enable Mike to take it to new heights as a major player and influencing body on behalf of NHS trusts and LHBs in Wales. I wish him every success and happiness".

Diary date

UK Confederation conference, 23 to 25 June, Birmingham

Real leadership: tough choices, difficult decisions, International Convention Centre and National Indoor Arena, Birmingham.

For information and to book go to:

http://www.nhsconfed.org/annualconference/real_leadership.asp

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NHS Confederation Publication Sales and Enquiries
DS1 NE, 1 Enterprise Place, Rolling Mill Road
Jarrow, South Tyneside NE32 3DP

Tel 0870 444 5841 Fax 0870 444 5842
E-mail publications@nhsconfed.org

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THE WELSH NHS CONFEDERATION
CONFFEDERASIWN GIG CYMRU 

The Welsh NHS Confederation
Regus House, Falcon Drive
Cardiff Bay CF10 4RU

Tel 029 2050 4090 Fax 029 2050 4190
E-mail info@welshconfed.org

www.nhsconfed.org/wales