



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

Meeting Jane Hutt and John Griffiths

In the past fortnight we have had our regular meetings with both the minister and deputy minister. We were pleased that both meetings were extremely productive and useful. We highlighted some of our current work, including our efforts to generate consensus across key health organisations, and our media work to highlight key issues and examples of good practice from members. Chairman Lloyd FitzHugh and Director Mike Ponton also underlined to Jane Hutt members' concerns over the recent Wanless allocations and the Townsend formula, and she has suggested that the Confederation should meet Professor Townsend and senior Health and Social Care Department officials to discuss this further. With John Griffiths we also discussed service redesign and cross border issues, and we were pleased to receive a very constructive letter from him in which he said how useful he found the discussion and how keen he was to work closely with us. These were part of what is now a comprehensive schedule of meetings with key decision-makers, which will help ensure members' views are represented at the highest level. As well as the minister and deputy minister, we are also meeting monthly with the special advisor for health and health and social care department officials, and have regular contacts with opposition health spokespersons and backbench AMs. For details of our work at Westminster see below.

Audit Commission report – influencing and responding

A major focus for us over the last month was the Audit Commission report "Transforming Healthcare in Wales". We were invited to comment on a draft of this report before publication. We expressed strong concerns about the wisdom of publishing what we saw as unbalanced arguments and criticism set out in the case for change chapter. We were, however, pleased with the report's emphasis on the need for urgent service redesign, its affirmation that it is essential to align the levers of change and the recognition that the NHS alone cannot resolve all the service problems we are now facing. We were glad to see that these points were reflected to some degree in the final version. In our response to the report on publication we said that it provided further evidence of the need for a radical rethink of the way services are provided, and used media interest in the story as an opportunity to gain coverage on BBC Wales Today for innovative work in Powys tackling delayed transfers of care.

July meeting with Welsh MPs

As reported in our last Bulletin, strengthening our links with Welsh MPs is a priority area for us at present. We have now confirmed a meeting with all Welsh Labour Party MPs on 13 July in Westminster. Although health is a devolved area, MPs from all parties take a keen interest in the issues. This meeting will therefore be a very important opportunity to brief Labour MPs further and to make them aware of the scale of the challenge facing members. We will also be planning similar discussions with Welsh MPs from other parties.



Working Time Directive – raising the issue in Wales and Westminster

With the directive in force from 1 August, we are redoubling our efforts to ensure that decision-makers are aware of the major impact that it will have on services. The UK Confederation recently gave evidence on the issue to the House of Lords, and a recent briefing on the subject is at:

www.nhsconfed.org/docs/briefing101.pdf. In Wales we are underlining that the directive is another driver for the radical rethink of services that is urgently needed. We recently wrote to the Western Mail in support of the BMA on this issue. We also briefed MPs in advance of a debate on the directive in Wales which took place at Westminster on 25 May. The Hansard report of this debate is at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/cm040525/halltext/40525h05.htm

We are hoping to generate some media coverage on the directive and the wider change agenda in the next few weeks and we are therefore looking for examples of innovative ways of working developed in response to the imminent implementation of the directive. Please contact us if you have such an example which you would be willing to highlight in the media (kevin.sullivan@welshconfed.org)

In bed with an elephant – Wales, England and the rest of Europe

Our seminar with Professor Brian Edwards looking at devolution and divergence took place in Llandrindod Wells on 25 May. Thirty delegates from all parts of Wales and all parts of the NHS took part in the discussions, based around Brian's thought-provoking comments about recent developments in England and elsewhere in Europe. We will be producing a report on the seminar and will circulate it to all members.

UK Confed annual conference 23-25 June, Birmingham

Almost 2000 places are already sold, and the event is now close to capacity. Welsh members are strongly encouraged to book their places as soon as possible. For information and booking details go to www.nhsconfed.org/annualconference

Free member event: Implementing Wanless: the challenges ahead, 14 July Millennium Stadium, Cardiff.

This free one-day event (10.30-3.30) is aimed at board members and will feature a workshop session run by Pat Oakley on what boards need to do to deliver change. The programme will also include an update on the implementation programme for Wanless and an opportunity for members to feed in their comments. If you have not received details and a booking form contact us on **02920 504090** (info@welshconfed.org)

Welsh Connection 2004 - First Minister and Health Minister confirmed

We are pleased to announce that both Rhodri Morgan and Jane Hutt will be addressing our conference. They will join BBC broadcaster John Humphrys, and WRU chief executive David Moffett, in what will be a top-quality programme, with sessions on topical health issues. The conference takes place in Llandudno on 25-26 November. Booking forms will be sent out in the next few weeks, but to register your interest now contact us on info@welshconfed.org

Celtic dinner 23 June – Book pronto for Vino, Tapas and Salsa dancers!

The Celtic dinner this year has a Spanish flavour! So why not come and spend midsummer's evening Spanish style, with wine, tasty tapas, and salsa dancers to entertain you. The dinner is at La Tasca Tapas restaurant in the centre of Birmingham. Over 100 places are already sold so we advise members to book as soon as possible sandra.cummings@welshconfed.org (02920 504090)

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