



bulletin

Conference special

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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 sian.owen@welshconfed.org

The NHS at 60: Looking back to the future

60 years on, rapidly advancing technology and a changing world have transformed the NHS beyond the imagination of anyone in post-war Britain. But yet its core values remain the same; universal, high quality care, publicly funded and free at the point of use.

The question we debated during the course of our annual conference in 2008 was how we take those values into the future and make sure the NHS continues to meet the needs of the 21st Century population it serves.



Over 300 delegates gathered to hear from a wide range of inspiring and knowledgeable speakers giving their perspective on managing change and creating a shared vision for the future. Anchored by BBC Wales Chief Reporter, Penny Roberts, and held over two days, this was our most successful annual conference yet. This special edition of Bulletin reports on some of the highlights.

Laurie Taylor – root out cynicism for change to be a success

In a characteristically entertaining address, social psychologist Laurie Taylor talked about the “lurgy of cynicism” that accompanies the introduction of organisational change. People love cynicism, he said, and there is no way change will take root if one person continually undermines it. In his usual entertaining mix of comedy and incisive observations, Professor Taylor encouraged delegates to overcome the peculiarly British attitude that views the workplace as “a special opportunity to moan” and make it a place where people want to be.



To make changes work, you have to root out cynicism, be forthright, and ensure that everyone is included. Talk to people, get to know their names and communicate with each other, urged Professor Taylor. Ultimately, getting people out of their silos will have a huge impact on whether change will succeed.



Roger Lewis – take your people with you

In the first of many parallels drawn between Welsh rugby and the NHS, Roger Lewis said that leadership and change management are at the heart of his work as Chief Executive of the WRU – and in many cases, only a dagger's distance away. Leadership is a paradoxical mix of will and humility, he said, as we seek to lead people in an age of declining trust in authority. In terms familiar to NHS managers across Wales, Roger described the dual challenges faced by the WRU in satisfying the public's expectations and overcoming resistance to change. You have to create the conditions whereby change is seen as a constant, he argued, but you always need to have clear goals, articulate them and take your people with you.



Jeff Grout – make your employees feel included

Why do change initiatives fail? In a thought-provoking speech, business speaker and consultant Jeff Grout gave an illuminating insight into the reasons why people resist change and how to overcome it. The biggest inhibitor to change, he explained, will always be the fear of failure. The role of leadership is to provide direction and make sure everyone is pulling in the same direction. However, in many cases, he found that people often pull against each other. He used the example of the McLaren F1 team, who gather together all 260 of their staff after every victory to show how each and every one of them contributed to the win, despite the fact that only 15 staff travel to each Grand Prix. In most organisations, it is only the board members who are the insiders and we need to make sure we open up the decision-making process so that employees feel included and motivated.

David Murray – making services better

In today's managerialist culture, said David Murray, director of Age Concern Gwent, everything has to be measured. He warned that in a target driven culture, it is easy to take our eye off the ball, and lose our focus on what we're really in this business for – making people feel better. David presented the entrepreneurial side of health service management – he argued that this doesn't mean taking unnecessary risks, it's all about using current structures to be innovative. We need to understand the needs of the individuals we serve and introduce new ideas to make our services better. The well-being of the individual must always be the driver for change.

The Government perspective

First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, paid tribute to the work of the NHS over the last 60 years and expressed his admiration for all the health service had done for him personally. The role of management and leadership would become even more important during structural change, he said, warning that structures must not divert attention away from the patient. One of the biggest challenges we face for the future is tackling the problem of obesity and maintaining the health of the nation, rather than treating ill health.



Neonatal care, palliative care, stroke services and presumed consent for organ donation: these are the four key priorities as spelled out by Health Minister, Edwina Hart, in her address to conference. She added that she was very "appreciative" of the way the Welsh NHS had been prepared to adapt to the new structures, and reiterated her commitment to ensuring that there would be no privatisation of the health service in Wales.



Steve Thomas – build on excellent joint working already in place

Health and local government – intrinsically linked or pulling in different directions? Steve Thomas, Chief Executive of the WLGA, gave his insight into NHS restructuring from a local government perspective, arguing the case for closer joint working in the future. The NHS and local government must share a joint aim to provide high quality, citizen-focused health and social care services through strong partnership working. Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater, he warned – build on some of the excellent joint working already in place with LHBs and LSBs.

Conference round-up

The role of the board is to know when to fly at 30,000 feet, when to fly at 10,000, and when to get out and walk around, said Baroness Rennie Fritchie as she gave her insight into the role of governance in the new NHS structures. Boards must be strategic but must also know when they need to be closer to the action. Speaking from his own personal experience as a non-executive director of Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust, Philip Champness, explained how relationships and conversations are key.

The role of the Audit Office is to sit alongside organisations to be helpful, but not so close as to be part of the decision-making process, said Auditor General, Jeremy Colman, in an overview of an auditor's role in NHS restructuring. Dr Alan Wilson, co-director of the 1000 Lives Campaign, thanked organisations for the commitment and enthusiasm they have shown towards the campaign and showed how executive commitment is making a huge difference to patient safety.

Diverging health policies in the four nations of the UK provide an opportunity to learn from each other, said the Chair of the UK NHS Confederation, Bryan Stoten. He highlighted comparisons between each country and argued the case for more joint analysis. Nigel Edwards, policy director of the NHS Confederation, outlined some of the pressures and opportunities for NHS Wales as we head into the future. We must get better at technology, he argued, and move the emphasis of the health service away from a system designed for single episodes of acute care.

In her last conference address in her current role, Ann Lloyd thanked managers for their achievements during her eight years as Chief Executive of NHS Wales. She highlighted the much improved working partnerships with local authorities and GPs as one of the many successes, but also outlined some of the challenges that remain in the "new world", including the need to be better at sharing best practice across Wales.



Welcoming our new Chair

The conference also marked the end of Simon Jones' term as Chair. We are very grateful for Simon's contribution to the work of the Confederation in the past two years and the significant role he has played in raising our profile and influence in NHS Wales. We warmly welcome Dr Lyndon Miles, Chair of Gwynedd Local Health Board, as our new Chair and look forward to the knowledge and expertise he will bring to the role.

New publications

Annual Review: Working for members 2007/08

This snapshot of the past year gives an overview of all our activities on behalf of members during 2007/08.

Hospital at Home – what community services mean for you

We explain how just how much patient care can be delivered out of hospital and how it means a better service for patients.

Briefings

A new series of Briefings outlines the key challenges for NHS management during restructuring and beyond:

Primary care: At the heart of a strong NHS

Investment in Information Technology – an investment in patient care

NHS Management: part of the solution, not part of the problem

Review



Review is a new series providing an overview of key texts from leading thinkers in the world of health and change management.

Leading change: Why transformational efforts fail by John P Kotter

Managing Transitions by William Bridges

Viewpoints 3.0

Media comments and observations from the Confederation on everything from MRSA to managing change.

Download all our new publications from:

<http://www.welshconfed.org/PublicationsforConference.htm>

Thank you

The Confederation would like to thank all the delegates, speakers, sponsors and exhibitors who helped make this year's conference such a success. In particular we would like to thank:

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