

Election 2007

A summary of the key health manifesto proposals



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Introduction

This document is a summarisation of the main pledges and promises made by each of the four main political parties in the health sections of their recently published manifestos.

These summaries are intended as a quick and easy reference document for members of the Welsh NHS Confederation.

Should you wish to read the full documents from which this information is taken they can be found on the internet at the following locations: -

Plaid Cymru: -

<http://www.plaidcymru.org/content.php?nID=402;IID=1>

Welsh Labour: -

<http://www.welshlabour.org.uk/>

Welsh Conservatives: -

<http://www.conservatives.com/tile.do?def=wales.index.page>

Welsh Liberal Democrats: -

http://www.welshlibdems.org.uk/e-election07_undecided.asp

Welsh Labour

The Labour pledges on health contained in their election manifesto include the following :-

- Invest £190m in health promotion and improvement over a third term.
- Extend the scope of the Health Inequalities Fund to help improve treatment for patients with complex and chronic health conditions, such as Parkinson's and heart disease.
- Cut deaths from cancer and strokes by 20 per cent by 2012
- Increase investment in the NHS smoking cessation service by 65%
- Improve the quality of food in schools, hospitals and other public organisations
- Expand the school nursing service to encompass the well being of young people both within and beyond school hours.
- Provide more treatment in the community and as close to home as possible.
- Provide extra resources to help practices to offer pre-booked appointments with a doctor of a patients' choice
- Reform the out-of-hours GP service to make it easier for patients to access.
- Work with GP practices and Local Health Boards to help them extend their surgery hours to evenings and the weekends
- Increase the number of salaried GPs, so that 10% of the whole GP population is employed on a salaried basis
- Greater role for local pharmacists, particularly in carrying out routine checks for conditions such as type-2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.
- Develop pharmacy-based NHS drop in centres to make health care more convenient for patients
- Increased investment in improving dentistry services to ensure that all people who want one can have access to an NHS dentist.
- By the end of 2009 no one will wait more than 26 weeks for the total patient journey from referral to treatment, including therapies and scans.
- Halve the time taken to carry out diagnostic tests by May '08.
- Reform the way NHS Trusts are managed so as to end the model of competition for patients and resources and improve Trust accountability to local communities.
- Commission an independent analysis of managerial capacity and administrative costs in the Welsh NHS.
- Invest over a billion pounds to modernise NHS buildings and infrastructure such as ICT, diagnostic imaging, for example MRI scanners, and treatment equipment.
- Provide free parking at NHS hospitals for patients requiring chemotherapy, radiotherapy and renal dialysis and ensure better access to season ticket arrangements for others with cheaper rates for regular visitors.
- End competitive tendering for hospital cleaning contracts to ensure that hospital cleaning staff are employed directly by the NHS and are managed directly by clinical staff on wards.
- Develop and implement a Cancer Plan for Wales, including a commitment to achieve and maintain short maximum waiting times for diagnosis and treatment.
- Ensure that the whole NHS estate is carbon neutral by 2012.

Plaid Cymru

The Plaid Cymru pledges on health contained in their election manifesto include the following :-

- A pledge to halt the hospital reconfiguration programme
- A provision of one school nurse for every secondary school and its associated primary schools.
- Encourage schools to get rid of junk food vending machines and set up a school based dental service to address the tooth decay crisis in Wales.
- Direct more resources towards Physical Education and end the sell-off of school-playing fields and playgrounds
- Provide significant investment in mental health services for children and young people
- Invest in a network of state-of-the-art primary care and walk-in treatment facilities in communities.
- Establish Wellbeing Centres across Wales.
- Each Wellbeing Centre will be staffed by a multidisciplinary salaried team, offering a range of services identified in an assessment of local needs
- Targeting chronic conditions through disease management and prevention will be central to the work of Wellbeing Centres.
- Place a new requirement on employers to provide occupational health schemes
- Ensure access to quality mental health services in communities across Wales.
- Call for all powers over mental health to be devolved to the Assembly through an Order in Council
- Create a system for no-fault pay-outs if patients receive substandard care
- Create a National Institute of Health Research in conjunction with the Welsh Medical Schools and other health research bodies
- Tackle delayed transfers of care by requiring Local Health Boards and Local Authorities to share their budgets in order to secure lower numbers of delayed transfers of care.
- Move towards the creation of a single seamless tier of joint health and care authority.
- Increase funding for palliative care in home and hospice settings
- Ensure that the carers voluntarily looking after our sick, disabled or older citizens are adequately supported
- Provide free care provision for older people and disabled people.
- To bring in this policy Plaid will demand the necessary powers to create a National Care Fund financed through a proportion of the revenue received as part of a proposed local income tax

Welsh Conservatives

The Conservative pledges on health contained in their election manifesto include the following :-

- Replace the existing 22 Local Health Boards with an all-Wales commissioning body, which would develop secondary and tertiary health services.
- GP practices to play a direct role in the commissioning of secondary services
- Encourage NHS Trusts to seek Foundation Hospital status and allow a measure of financial autonomy to such Trusts
- Unified Care Agencies offer the best way forward based on local authority areas to provide primary and community health care and adult social care;
- These agencies would be funded by a ring-fenced grant from local authorities and accountable to the local authority, but at arms-length in operational matters.
- Ensure that patients are treated promptly and safely throughout Wales
- Improve access to modern medicines by investing an additional £20 million each year in the drugs budget financed by our investment fund
- Use finances from our investment fund to improve cancer services, especially through access to modern drugs
- Work with hospitals to improve nutrition and provide appetising food and clean wards
- Promote independent living at home by reducing inappropriate admissions to hospital
- Expand the direct payments scheme which allows people to control their own care budgets
- Publish a strategy to reduce the level of obesity in Wales and tackle diet-related ill health
- Modernise the ambulance service (including support for the air ambulance)
- Invest an additional £10 million each year from our investment fund to produce a comprehensive palliative care strategy which would provide up to 50% of core funding for hospices and expand the role of GPs and specialist nurses in palliative care at home
- Review the dental contract to ensure better access to an NHS dentist; we would invest finance from our investment fund in orthodontic services to guarantee NHS treatment for children
- Pilot a nurse led walk-in centre in North Wales
- Utilise the skills of pharmacists, particularly in chronic disease management
- Review the provision of maternity services to further improve standards and build on the success of midwife led services.
- Establish a special commission to examine the structure of hospital services
- Use the capital budget to develop intermediate care through the network of community hospitals in Wales
- Fully fund the Children's Hospital for Wales, using money from our investment fund
- Review the delivery of health services in rural areas to ensure the highest level of access to modern services
- Encourage the provision of advanced and integrated clinics in each NHS Trust for the treatment of stroke and diabetes.
- Ensure that the contract for non-consultant grade hospital doctors reflects the true contribution of these valuable professionals

Welsh Liberal Democrats

The Lib Dem pledges on health contained in their election manifesto include the following :-

- Bring healthcare and well-being services together through Health Hubs.
- Remain committed to a network of District General Hospitals providing A&E and Maternity Services as close as possible to the patient's home.
- Develop the role of community hospitals in providing diagnostic, recuperative and rehabilitation care.
- Re-organise hospital services, by first setting out in detail the alternative primary and community provision to replace them
- Rules out another expensive and unsettling NHS re-organisation.
- Requires Local Health Boards (LHBs) to work together on secondary commissioning and will encourage the merging of LHBs.
- Regional commissioning for secondary care before 2009.
- Provide financial incentives for organisations to work more closely together.
- Introduce a shared budget between NHS and Social Services to deal with delayed transfers of care.
- Develop the use of new-technology, such as access to telemedicine, SMS and e-mail notifications and on-line information services, in the NHS.
- Support elective surgery schedules that run on a 24-hour cycle, where staffing levels and capacity allows.
- Expand the range of treatments and services available in the community.
- Encourage more GPs to become specialist GPs equipped to diagnose and treat more patients
- Increase the use of extended prescribing so that appropriately trained nurses and pharmacists are able to prescribe a wide range of drugs.
- Introduce a single waiting list to encompass the time between GP referral and treatment.
- Introduce nurse-led walk-in centres, working alongside larger A&E Departments and GP out-of-hours services
- Review hospital charges for services such as parking, telephone and television
- Develop thoracic teams serving communities across Wales
- Develop a single team approach to district nursing, ensuring that district nurses employed by Trusts work much more closely with GP practices.
- Provide investment over the next decade to resource a fit-for-purpose ambulance service
- Give paramedics the power to triage patients
- Focus on increasing the use of mobile dentists to serve the most rural areas
- Fund more salaried dentists to serve areas of particular shortage
- Provide bursaries to newly qualified health professionals to work in areas where there is a shortage
- Employ more physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech & language therapists
- Introduce a guaranteed standard of service that would include what can be expected at hospital
- Develop targeted health MOTs with appropriate screening tests based on age, family and other risk factors.
- Work with health professionals and patient groups to adopt a Health Improvement Plan
- Extend the use of nurses and pharmacists in testing, screening and monitoring for a range of chronic conditions

Welsh Liberal Democrats

- Work towards developing more mutual arrangements, improving community engagement in NHS management
- Review all health targets, with the intention of reducing the number
- Introduce a “self-referral” pilot scheme for patients wishing to see a physiotherapist
- Produce a holistic Cancer Plan for Wales
- Support, in principle, the abolition of charging for non-residential services
- Seek the powers to legislate on mental health
- Prioritise increasing the capacity of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Introduce new regulations on nutritional standards for school meals and ensuring stricter control on the marketing of food and drinks in schools
- Raise the nutritional standards for hospital food

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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