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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 Welsh Annual Conference 2008 – Book Now

We are taking bookings for our annual conference, *The NHS at 60: Looking Back to the Future*, which takes place in Cardiff City Hall on 6-7th November.

In the year of the 60th anniversary of the NHS, this year's conference is an opportunity to reflect on the journey thus far but more importantly, debate our vision for the future. With a restructuring of the NHS on the horizon, discussions this year will centre on how to manage large-scale change while keeping our focus on delivering world-class services for a 21st Century population.

Speakers already confirmed include:

- **Rhodri Morgan**, First Minister
- **Roger Lewis**, Chief Executive, Welsh Rugby Union
- **Nigel Edwards**, Policy Director, NHS Confederation
- **Baroness Rennie Fritchie**, management consultant
- **Huw Irranca-Davies MP**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales
- **Ann Lloyd**, Head of Department, Health and Social Services
- **Professor Laurie Taylor**, social psychologist, writer and broadcaster
- **Steve Thomas**, Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association

The conference is open to all. To download a brochure and booking form, please see our website at

<http://www.welshconfed.org/WelshAnnualConference2008.htm>
e-mail: - info@welshconfed.org

Welsh NHS Employers Unit Update

The post of Director for the newly formed Welsh NHS Employers Unit is being advertised through NHS Jobs during September. This is an exciting opportunity for someone with the ambition and experience to set up and develop the Welsh Health Employers Unit. The role of the Unit is to support, advise and represent NHS Employers in: the negotiation of terms and conditions of service; the work of the Welsh Partnership Forum; and the development of Welsh NHS human resource policy and strategy. In the meantime, Mike Ponton will be acting as the Unit's Director for which the list of work is steadily growing. Clearly the NHS reform agenda will be driving much of the work programme, together with a range of issues such as weekly to monthly pay, national contracts and issues emanating from the recent staff survey.

Anyone interested in the post of Director can get an information pack, or book a call with Mike Ponton by contacting Tegan Williams at the Confederation's office in Bridgend.

Press work

The Confederation responded to comments made over the summer by Welsh Conservatives' health spokesperson, Jonathan Morgan, on the "*creeping culture of bureaucracy in the NHS*".

We strongly rebutted the claims and established the facts about NHS management figures, pointing out that the majority of alleged "*pen-pushers*" are vital support staff who are critical to the smooth running of the NHS such as medical secretaries, maintenance staff, cleaners, caterers and porters.

We added that NHS managers had consistently achieved significant efficiency savings and are constantly making improvements to patient services.



Read the story from the Western Mail here:

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health-news/2008/08/09/health-workers-anger-at-pen-pusher-culture-claim-91466-21501226/>

Response to mental health consultation

We have submitted our response to the Minister's consultation on the future of mental health services in Wales. In it, we stated our belief that mental health services should be integrated with the new seven organisations being discussed as part of the wider restructuring of NHS Wales. We expressed concern that a single all-inclusive organisation would stand the risk of becoming isolated and stigmatised.

We summarised our view in our regular Western Mail column where we widened the debate about mental health to describe the overarching aims that should form the basis of all mental health policy.

Read our column from the Western Mail here:

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health-news/2008/09/08/the-professionals-mental-health-mustn-t-be-cinderella-service-91466-21698143/>

Public Service Ombudsman Seminars

At our recent meeting, the Public Service Ombudsman, Peter Tyndall, expressed a keen interest in developing closer working relationships with the NHS.

The Ombudsman's office has arranged a series of seminars for Chairs and Chief Executives of NHS bodies, to be held in three locations across Wales. The focus of the seminars will be the lessons that can be learnt from complaints received by the Ombudsman, and how these provide a real opportunity to improve patient care.

The Confederation is very supportive of the seminars and the opportunity they provide for closer co-operation and learning.

Seminar details

2 October, 11 am, The Imperial Hotel, Llandudno
8 October, 11 am, Glen-yr-Afon House Hotel, Usk
15 October, 11 am, The Cawdor Hotel, Llandeilo

For more information on the seminars, please contact:

christine.watkins@ombudsman-wales.org.uk or call 01656 641150.

Encouraging community engagement

The Confederation has joined the advisory panel of Participation Cymru, a WCVA-supported project that provides training and policy direction in community engagement. Getting involved with Participation Cymru gives us the opportunity to feed in views and challenges from the NHS, and learn from the experiences of other public and voluntary sector organisations.

Participation Cymru runs a training programme on a variety of engagement techniques, for more information, please see their website at www.participationcymru.org.uk

Building links with the HSJ

We have met with Dave West, a new reporter for the Health Service Journal, who will lead the journal's coverage on health stories from Wales. The HSJ is looking to boost its coverage of events in Wales and this is the first time that we have had a named contact to deal with Wales-specific issues. It is a very positive step and we will be looking to develop this contact to help boost the profile of NHS Wales in this important publication.

New Fax Number

Please note that we now have a new fax number:

0870 487 7377

Please remove any alternative fax number you have for us from your records

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