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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

Welsh Annual Conference 2009

Following the success of our 2008 Annual Exhibition and Conference, preparations are already underway for the 2009 event, which will take place at Cardiff City Hall, November 12-13th. Our conference is the biggest event in the Welsh health calendar, and every year, over 300 delegates, ranging from senior NHS managers, government officials, politicians and representatives from commercial organisations, come together to network and to hear from leading figures in the health and business communities.

We have already secured several top line speakers that include: -

Scott Greer - Professor Political Science, University of Michigan

Irwin Turbitt - Warwick University Governance Unit

Julian Le Grand - Professor of social policy at the LSE

Lt. Col. Kevin Davies

If you are interested in promotional or sponsorship opportunities for this year's event, contact sandra.cummings@welshconfed.org

Paying for Care group

Jonathan Davies, Policy & Public Affairs Manager has been sitting on the Advisory Group for the Paying for Care in Wales consultation, launched by the Deputy Minister for Social Services last year. The consultation aims to find out how we can create a fairer and more sustainable system for paying for care in the future, as the social care system prepares for major challenges in the next 10-15 years. One of the main tasks for the Advisory Group is to make recommendations about what policy proposals the Welsh Assembly Government's Green Paper on paying for care should contain.

For more information on the consultation, please see the website at www.payingforcareinwales.net. If you have any views you would like the Confederation to feed into the discussions, please contact jonathan.davies@welshconfed.org

Welsh NHS Employers' Unit

Kate Watkins has begun her role as Director of the Welsh NHS Employers' Unit, and is already leading a busy and growing agenda. Updates on the unit's work will now be communicated via their website: www.welshemployers.org and through a regular newsletter, *The Link*, which will be distributed via e-mail.

Delivering the new NHS for Wales

The Confederation's response to the Welsh Assembly Government consultation, Delivering the new NHS for Wales, is available to download from our website. In a plenary statement shortly after the close of the consultation, comments made by the Minister for Health and Social Services reflected many of the views put forward by the Confederation, including the need for further clarity on the relationship between the professional forum and statutory machinery of the new LHBs, and on the roles and responsibilities of the Community Health Councils and stakeholder reference group, which could potentially overlap and lead to duplication of effort.

Copies of our consultation response can be downloaded from our website at: www.welshconfed.org

CHCs and Public Health

We are continuing to work on responses to the current consultation on the future of Community Health Councils and the unification of public health services in Wales. Initial comments have been sent to members by e-mail; any responses should be sent to Mike Ponton by no later than 10th April.



Patient voice in the new NHS

One of the key objectives of the restructuring of the Welsh NHS is to strengthen the patient's voice in the planning and delivery of services. Welsh NHS Confederation Director, Mike Ponton, gave a presentation on this subject at an event organised by the Bevan Foundation, Positif Politics and the Pollen Shop, which looked at the implications of the NHS reorganisation on how the patient voice is heard.

We have followed up this seminar with Consumer Focus Wales, with a view to carrying out further work to help try and ensure that NHS services in the new world are citizen-centred.

Cross-border healthcare

The European and External Affairs Committee has begun an inquiry into the EU Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. In order to assess the potential implications of the directive for NHS Wales, the committee invited Mike Ponton, Director of the Welsh NHS Confederation, to give evidence. Amongst the issues discussed were the administrative burden associated with the flow of patients, how payment systems could be administered, and the need to ensure patients have access to correct and comprehensive information.

You can read the full transcript of the session here:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-eur-home/bus-committees-third-eur-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=119916&ds=3/2009#3>

Written evidence submitted by the Confederation is available to download from our website at:

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

A way forward for dementia services

In February 2009, the Department of Health published a National Dementia Strategy for England. With the Welsh Assembly Government developing its own policy work on dementia services, we produced a concise summary of the English proposals, which our members may find useful ahead of a similar strategy being published here in Wales.

The summary is available to download from our website at: www.welshconfed.org

Press work

In our most recent Western Mail column, we discussed the daily dilemmas facing NHS managers when it comes to managing the maintenance issues presented by an ageing estate of over 300 hospitals, health centres and other NHS properties. We raised the difficult issue of what to do when old buildings have become unfit-for-purpose and how we shift our focus away from bricks and mortar, to take a closer look at providing more care in the community.

Read our column in full here:

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health-news/2009/03/02/time-to-look-again-at-nhs-building-maintenance-costs-91466-23039781/>

We also gave comments to the press highlighting the rise in the number of frontline workers in the NHS in recent years, and the difficulties faced by Trusts in implementing the European Working Time Directive.

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