



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

Welsh Annual Conference 2009 - Thinking forward, thinking different

November 12-13th, Cardiff City Hall

Delegates from across the health and social care community gathered at Cardiff City Hall in November for our annual conference, *Thinking Forward, Thinking Different*. A wide range of inspiring and knowledgeable speakers gave their perspective on what the NHS and its partners need to do to meet the challenges ahead of us. Packed full of sources of inspiration and thought-provoking ideas, this was one of our most well-received conferences to date. This special edition of Bulletin reports on some of the highlights.



Mike Ponton's Final Conference Address



Mike Ponton gives his thoughts on his last annual conference as Director of the Welsh NHS Confederation.

"The Welsh NHS Confederation Annual Conference 2009 coincided with a truly pivotal time for the NHS in Wales. More than ever before, we know that this is the time to think differently about the way we work. The theme of the conference,

Thinking Forward, Thinking Different, provided a platform to articulate the challenges that we face, and share the ideas and innovation that we need to overcome them.

Amongst delegates and speakers, there was a real sense that NHS and public service leaders are ready and willing to take a fresh, entrepreneurial approach in all that we do, and tackle the challenges we face with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.

Rhodri Morgan's warmly-received address – his final to us as First Minister – was as ever very supportive of the work of the NHS in Wales. Edwina Hart and Paul Williams gave very clear and comprehensive presentations on their expectations of the restructured NHS in meeting the challenges ahead.

There were some inspirational talks from many people with experience of leadership in difficult times. Greg Dyke took us on an entertaining journey through his time as Director General of the BBC, and his successful efforts to overcome



the “them and us” culture that pervades so many organisations.

Alison Ward, chief executive of Torfaen County Borough Council and Meryl Gravell, leader of Carmarthenshire County Council, gave compelling accounts of the ground-breaking initiatives underway in Carmarthenshire and Gwent to provide joined-up services where citizens are truly at the centre. Colonel Kevin Davies gave us a particularly moving account of the remarkable work carried out by the Welsh 203 Field Hospital.

Paul Williams aptly described this year’s event as a “working conference” as we focused on Dr Chris Jones’s primary and community services strategy, and the action required to drive it forward. After his enlightening presentation and some lively breakout sessions, there is no doubt that Wales has an

“compelling accounts of ground-breaking initiatives”



opportunity to become a world-leading example of a truly balanced health service. With the structure of the new NHS Wales in place, the right conditions are there.

One over-riding and powerful message to emanate from nearly every session was our real and immediate need to achieve genuine collaborative partnerships with each other, and with our many partners outside the NHS.

It has always been one of the many strengths of our conference that the opportunities to network are countless, and it is the strength of these relationships within and outside of the NHS that are so crucial to our collective success. It was particularly pleasing to note a strong presence from the voluntary sector and local government, with whom our links are so essential to our ability to deliver together citizen-centred services.

In my last conference as Director of the Welsh NHS Confederation, it was certainly one of the most inspiring and thought-provoking I have enjoyed. It has been a pleasure to be involved in so many, and every year, there is always plenty to provide encouragement, motivation and food for thought. For all who attended, I hope our conference stimulated debate and provided inspiration as we endeavour to make the most of the opportunities in front of us. These are indeed exciting times!”

Mike Ponton
Director

**Conference round-up...conference round-up...
conference round up....**

Paul Williams - We must get better at sharing best practice

The work really starts from here on in, said Paul Williams, as he outlined the steps ahead for NHS Wales. There are significant obstacles in our way, funding only one of them, but there are key challenges that we simply must meet – sustaining Access 2009 targets, shifting the balance of care and ensuring mental health gets equal attention, are amongst the most important aims.

On finance, Mr Williams said that there is a need to “pick up the intensity” to reach both patient care and financial targets. Finance is the province of the whole executive team, but we can only achieve success with real clinical engagement.

Above all, we need to take a “Team Wales” approach and unite in a common purpose. Quoting the example of the Ticket Home scheme, pioneered by a Ward Manager at Llandough Hospital, Mr Williams said we need to be better at sharing best practice across Wales.

“the work really starts from here on in ”

Don’t drop the ball - Rhodri Morgan

Devolution has brought power closer to the people, said outgoing First Minister Rhodri Morgan in his last address to conference, with the decentralising of power allowing greater directness of communication and feedback.



In future, care will not be measured by the number of inpatient beds, he said, instead the NHS will be measured by its interface with social care. We will have an NHS that does what it says on the tin – a service that promotes health, rather than treats illness.

Wales can have the best healthcare system in the world, the First Minister finished, and with a rugby related warning, added “it’s in your hands - don’t drop the ball.”

Greg Dyke - Get your staff on your side



A “them and us” culture is just one of the ways the NHS and the BBC share common problems, and it is only by building an inclusive culture that you will overcome it, said Greg Dyke in an entertaining account of his experiences as Director General of the BBC. Staff will perform better if they know that those above them value them. Expecting people

to deliver because you tell them to doesn’t work anymore, he said, you have to get staff on your side.

Above all, communication really matters. Never lapse into the language of management jargon, and always make your staff feel proud of what they have achieved.

Chris Jones and the future of primary and community services

We’ve got to use our wit and work in partnership, said Dr Chris Jones as he presented his work on a new vision for primary and community services in Wales. Breakout sessions then focused on a different strand of Dr Jones’s strategy, encompassing the themes of the hospital and community interface, health and social care working together, excellence in information communications and the generalist as the new specialist.



Partnership works - Meryl Gravell and Alison Ward

“Partnership works”, was the message delivered by two influential local authority figures, each showing a determination to work together with health to deliver better outcomes for citizens. If we don’t make it work, the future of our health and communities is very bleak, announced Cllr Gravell. We must stop the endless disputes about who pays for what and think about “Mrs Jones and Dai Bach”. Both speakers gave a seemingly endless list of ideas and initiatives that are working in their respective areas to bridge the gap between health and social services and provide a seamless service to users. The Carmarthenshire demonstrator project and the Gwent Frailty Programme show just what can be achieved with determined leadership and a focus on the citizen’s needs.

Edwina Hart - Mental Health must be a priority

Funding in the future will not be the same as the first ten years of devolution, warned the Health Minister;



ingenious thinking is required to make the money go further. With organisational barriers removed, the opportunity is now there to make the required fundamental shift to community based care. The Minister

concluded her address with a frank warning that mental health must be made a priority: "If you do not deliver", she said, "I will look again at the concept of one mental health trust for Wales."

Irwin Turbitt

It is well known that the process of change is difficult for staff, but distress can be productive, claimed Irwin Turbitt, Senior Fellow at Warwick University Governance Unit, and former Assistant Chief Constable of the Police Service for Northern Ireland. We often try to "technicalise" problems and find a process to deal with them. Sometimes the way we try to respond to problems can leave us feeling trapped by bureaucracy. Create a safe environment where public servants are part of the solution, he said, and help them to feel energised, excited and inspired.

"distress caused by change can be productive"

Ruth Marks

Ruth Marks described her role and responsibilities as the Older People's Commissioner and outlined her vision for older people's services and the Commission's role in helping to bring it about. There is a big gap between what should be happening and what is happening, she said, but the right support early on makes a big difference.

Scott Greer

Create a democracy, rely on consumer choice, let the professionals make the decisions, or give orders. These are four separate policy experiments that all the devolved nations have used at some point during devolution, said Scott Greer, Assistant Professor of Public Health at the University of Michigan, as he outlined the lessons that devolution has taught us about health policy. The aim for all is integrate hospital services with the community, and structurally, Wales is best placed to do it. The message ultimately for health leaders is "make decisions based on what you know about your local patch."

Colonel Kevin Davies

In a moving account, Colonel Kevin Davies described the work of volunteers at the Welsh 203 Field Hospital. Describing Camp Bastion as "the busiest trauma centre in the world", Colonel Davies outlined the benefits for NHS staff – and ultimately, NHS patients – who take on roles with the field hospital. "This is your hospital and your staff," concluded Colonel Davies, "and you should be proud of them."

