



# The Voice of NHS Leadership in Wales

Annual Review 2020/21

THE WELSH NHS CONFEDERATION  
CONFFEDERASIWN GIG CYMRU



## Who are we?

The Welsh NHS Confederation is the only national membership body representing all the organisations making up the NHS in Wales: the seven Local Health Boards, three NHS Trusts and Health Education and Improvement Wales. From April 1st 2021, this includes Digital Health and Care Wales. We are part of the NHS Confederation and host NHS Wales Employers.

## What do we do?

Our mission is to be the authentic voice of the NHS leadership in Wales. We aim to support our Members in improving the health of the population and the planning and delivery of high-quality health care. We support our Members by acting as a driving force for positive change through strong representation, facilitating system leadership and our proactive policy, influencing, communications and engagement work.

## How do we do it?

### Our work includes:

- Building relationships and working in partnership with other organisations
- Engaging with Ministers, Members of the Senedd, key stakeholders and Government officials
- Responding to consultations, inquiries and reviews and giving evidence at or supporting Members to attend Senedd Committees
- Helping people understand the challenges facing the NHS in Wales and the need for change
- Sharing good practice from across Wales and the rest of the world
- Building relationships with media and communications teams across the NHS in Wales
- Organising and hosting events and meetings to bring key NHS Wales employees and wider stakeholders together
- Representing our Members at conferences, external events and key meetings
- Producing and publishing briefings and reports to help inform and shape debate
- Providing a co-ordinated, proactive voice for the NHS in Wales as the UK left the EU
- Working with colleagues in the wider NHS Confederation to share learning, good practice and policy thinking
- Hosting NHS Wales Employers, who support the strategic agenda of the NHS in Wales from an NHS employers' perspective.

@welshconfed

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# Foreword

The Welsh NHS Confederation is proud to be the membership body for all the organisations that make up the NHS in Wales, who have collectively risen to the many challenges of delivering a health service under extreme pressure.

Since early 2020, we have all been affected by the most difficult health crisis in living memory. The NHS in Wales, along with its partners, has responded with speed, determination and resilience to protect and care for those in need during this global pandemic. It has been an extraordinary time in which it has never been more important for our health and care services to support the people of Wales. In the face of COVID-19, the staff across the whole NHS service have worked, and continue to work, relentlessly to provide quality care in a wide range of settings. We thank them all.

By supporting and representing our Members directly and in the promotion of their successes and changes in the way care is delivered, we have also played our own part in contributing to the overall pandemic response.

On behalf of our Members, we have been providing representation to the Welsh Government and Members of the Senedd, as well as putting forward the key priorities ahead of the Senedd election. We have worked to influence political party manifestos to shape policies that will enable our Members to develop services fit for the future.

We have been flexible in providing direct support to NHS Executive Director Peer Groups, including working seven days a week and often after normal working hours.

With a plethora of new information being released constantly, we provided a daily

'all in one' update and analysis to Members on COVID-19 political and operational developments. In our regular press releases, statements and interviews, we presented our Members' perspective on the many aspects of the health response, whilst always being conscious to acknowledge the hard working NHS and care staff.

Partnership working and collaboration are a necessity in rising to the challenges facing us, and our Policy Forum has contributed to informing our policy position on key priorities, acting as a key source of intelligence. We have also promoted and encouraged health and wellbeing for all, through our partnership with the arts.

We too needed to change the way we supported Members and quickly established new ways of working, with Members not experiencing any changes to the delivery of our services. The Welsh NHS Confederation has been agile and has enhanced particular areas of its work to ensure we could support and represent our Members throughout this turbulent time.

This Annual Review outlines the work we have done to allow our Members to focus on the response to the pandemic and demonstrates the commitment to the values and priorities of our organisation.

We will continue to represent and support our Members and facilitate system change in the year ahead, as we hope for a better and brighter 2021/22.

**Darren Hughes**

Director  
The Welsh NHS Confederation

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# A Year in the Welsh NHS Confederation

## April 2020 - March 2021

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### Supporting Our Members

**Members...** asked us to assist and support their preparations for submitting oral and written evidence to Senedd Committees on key policy areas.

**We...** supported over 60 NHS Wales representatives to provide oral evidence to Committee inquiries, including the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee inquiry into COVID-19, the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on the voluntary sector and the Finance Committee inquiry into the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2021-22.

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**Members...** asked us to enhance our Programme infrastructure for NHS Executive Director Peer Groups in response to COVID-19.

**We...** provided secretariat and administrative support to 10 Executive Director Peer Groups in the development and delivery of their response to the pandemic. We covered more than 170 individual and cross-Group meetings, delivering a flexible and agile service to ensure Peer Groups received as much support as required to enable meetings and the delivery of agreed actions.

**Members...** asked us to support the work of the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Chief Executives Leadership Group meetings.

**We...** provided ongoing corporate and executive support to over 100 Chairs, Vice Chairs and Chief Executives Leadership Group meetings, including agenda development, minute taking, coordination and follow up of actions, preparation of papers and managing attendance of invitees.

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**Members...** asked us to engage with and influence EU Exit forums in Wales and the UK and keep them up to date on the latest developments for health and social care.

**We...** provided secretariat support for two Welsh Government health and social care groups and are members of the UK-wide Cavendish Coalition, the Brexit Health Alliance and the Home Office National Advisory Group. We issued nearly 20 editions of our Brexit at a Glance newsletter and updated our FAQs over 10 times to reflect the changing landscape.

**Members...** requested regular COVID-19 updates, including analysis of key developments across Wales, the UK and internationally.

**We...** have ensured Members are aware of developments through our weekly newsletter, BayWatch, providing a forward look at the areas being discussed in the Senedd, we developed over 40 COVID-19 Member briefings and published six briefings showcasing partnership working across Wales to support the response to COVID-19.

**Members...** asked us to deliver events to engage proactively with key stakeholders and to build and maintain relationships across the system.

**We...** hosted webinars for our Members with the Children's Commissioner, the Older People's Commissioner and the Welsh Government on the introduction of the Socio-Economic Duty, sparking ongoing conversation and facilitating connections between NHS leaders and external stakeholders. We have significantly enhanced our relationships with key stakeholders throughout the pandemic, building strong foundations for the future.



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# Representing Our Members

**Members...** wanted us to develop system-wide responses to Senedd Committees and Welsh Government consultations while continuing to build and maintain positive relationships with Members of the Senedd and Senedd staff.

**We...** we provided the views of our Members through developing written responses to 14 Senedd inquiries and Welsh Government consultations and have been mentioned over 30 times in the Senedd. We have enhanced our relationship with Members of the Senedd through attending virtual events and Cross-Party Groups.

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**Members...** asked us to highlight the key issues for the NHS as the UK left the EU by producing briefings and providing evidence to the Senedd.

**We...** have published six briefings and commissioned and published research analysing the impacts of the proposed new immigration rules on the Welsh NHS and social care workforce. We provided written evidence to the Senedd External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee and the Welsh Affairs Committee inquiries on Welsh NHS preparation for the UK leaving the EU.

**Members...** asked us to increase our representational voice to become the “go to” organisation for the media and increase our engagement through a wider range of media channels.

**We...** regularly issued proactive and reactive statements and gave media interviews on behalf of our Members. We published over 100 press releases and media statements, featured over 350 times across press and broadcast media, and provided over 40 radio and TV interviews. We developed over 20 vlogs and 10 blogs to generate content-rich social media posts. We increased our Twitter following by 1,000 new followers and our LinkedIn following by almost 150%.

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**Members...** wanted us to drive forward health care system improvement and to identify obstacles and potential solutions in response to COVID-19.

**We...** published over 30 briefings showcasing good practice and innovation across the NHS in Wales, including how the NHS was delivering the vaccination programme, how industry supported the NHS to improve outcomes throughout the COVID-19 response and how digital developments are transforming NHS Wales services.

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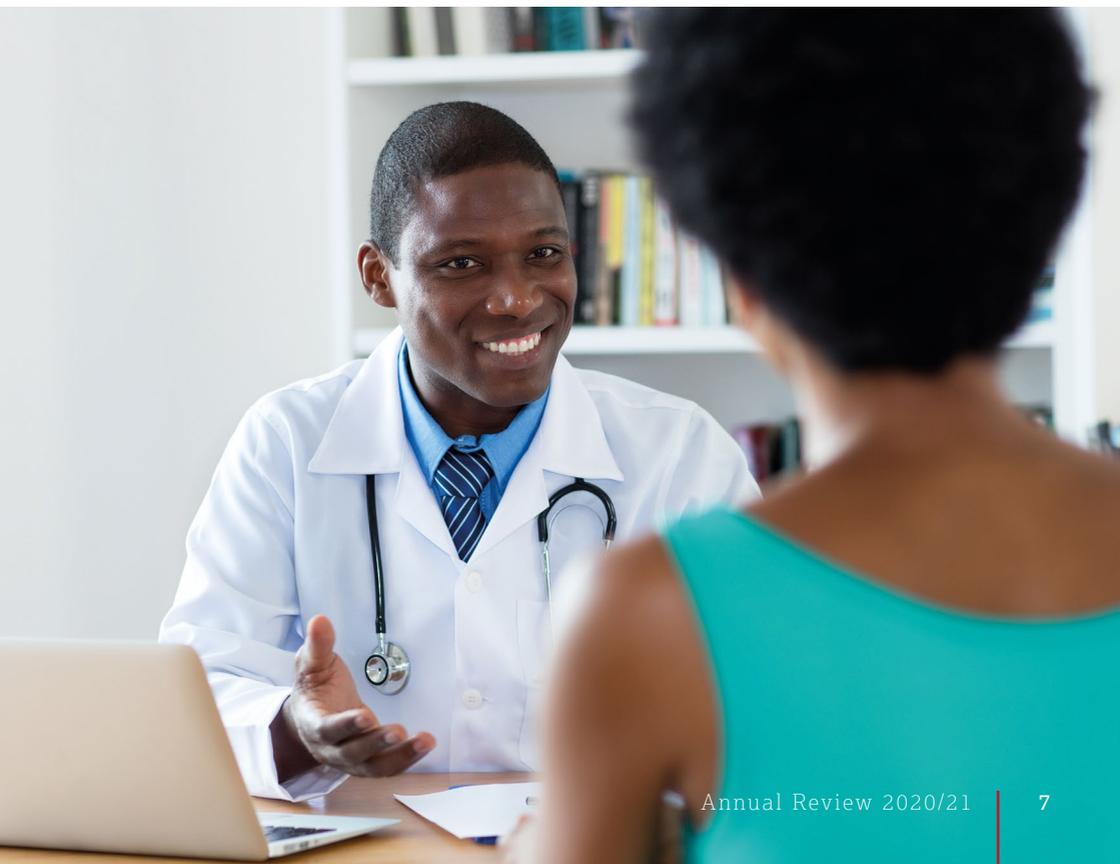
**Members...** asked us to coordinate and voice their views on the future for social care.

**We...** worked with our Member Leadership Groups to develop a response to the Rebalancing Care and Support White Paper and were an active member of the Welsh Government Reference Group, resulting in positive engagement with the social care sector.

**Members...** wanted us to represent their positions on various issues with key stakeholders.

**We...** regularly met with stakeholders, including the Welsh Local Government Association, ADSS Cymru, Community Housing Cymru, Social Care Wales and Commissioners, to share our Members' priorities and enhance partnership working.

*We covered more than 170 individual and cross-Group meetings... to ensure Peer Groups received as much support as required.*



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# Facilitating System Leadership

**Members...** asked us to develop and organise events and webinars which grow knowledge and encourage innovative thinking.

**We...** hosted “external” thought leadership webinars for our Members and wider stakeholders. Topics included the role of health and care in social and economic recovery, the impact of the new immigration system on the Welsh health and care workforce and the journey towards delivering the Well-being of Future Generations Act with the Future Generations Commissioner. We attracted over 400 attendees across eight online events with over 300 retrospective views on YouTube.

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**Members...** asked us to develop a briefing for the Senedd election to highlight the big issues facing health and social care in the next five years.

**We...** engaged with our Members and published a briefing for the Senedd election, “*Valuing, Engaging and Delivering: A health and care system for future generations*”, and an animation to support our calls. We continue to influence the political parties’ manifestos through highlighting our Members’ priorities in meetings and roundtable events.

**Members...** asked us to develop policy groups with a variety of health and social care organisations, in order to develop shared policy positions.

**We...** continue to chair and work with stakeholders through our Policy Forum (which includes over 60 health and care organisations) to develop shared policy positions on key priorities, build strong working relationships and identify new ways of working. In preparation for the Senedd election, the Forum published a briefing, *Delivering a sustainable, seamless health and social care system: Our Priorities for the next Welsh Government*, which was endorsed by 35 organisations.

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**Members...** wanted us to demonstrate the breadth of health and care innovation and transformation over the past 12 months.

**We...** supported the development of the NHS Wales COVID-19 Innovation and Transformation Study. As a member of the Innovation Study Board, we contributed to the report which evidences the innovative practice that emerged in NHS Wales as a result of COVID-19, and led on the communication and engagement for the report launch.

*We published over 30 briefings showcasing good practice and innovation across the NHS in Wales.*

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**Members...** wanted us to work with the Arts Council of Wales to raise awareness of the benefits the arts can bring to health and wellbeing.

**We...** signed our second three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arts Council of Wales and published an animated video, press release and vlogs to highlight what had been achieved during the first MOU. We published two briefings looking at how the arts are supporting the NHS response to COVID-19 and are an active member of the Senedd Cross-Party Group on Arts and Health. We hosted a joint workshop at the National Social Care Digital Conference with the Arts Council of Wales and have presented at six arts and health conferences.

**Members...** wanted us to support the two-way sharing of information on the Welsh health and care system and the response to COVID-19 with other jurisdictions across the UK.

**We...** supported the NHS Confederation NHS Reset campaign by sharing good practice and supporting NHS representatives from Wales to speak at UK-wide webinars and meetings. We highlighted specific issues through established NHS Confederation structures and processes to feed information to the UK Government.



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# NHS Wales Employers

**Employers...** asked that we supported, developed and implemented All-Wales workforce policies, guidance and procedures.

**We...** continually updated a set of COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for both managers and staff, to guide organisations in their responses to the pandemic. We led on the review of the Secondment policy, Special Leave policy, Recruitment and Retention Payment Protocol and Procedure for Staff to Raise Concerns. We were commissioned by the Welsh Partnership Forum to develop the new Respect and Resolution policy as part of the wider work on Healthy Work and Workplaces. This work has emphasised the resolution of issues at the earliest opportunity and led to the establishment of an All-Wales Mediation Network.

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**Employers...** wanted us to support employee relations and partnership working at both an All-Wales and UK level.

**We...** took an active lead in representing NHS Wales at a national level, representing employers in weekly tripartite meetings with Trade Union and Welsh Government colleagues as well as the shadow Social Partnership council, the Workforce Partnership Council and the Welsh Partnership Forum. We continued to represent Welsh NHS organisations at a UK level through the NHS Staff Council and on the NHS Pension Scheme Advisory Board.

**Employers...** asked us to continue the valued support to the Workforce and Organisational Development Directors Peer Group and both Assistant Director groups.

**We...** provided increased support to Workforce and OD Director and Assistant Director Peer Groups, including supporting over 50 Peer Group meetings. We ensured that the Peer Groups worked effectively in their response to COVID-19 and delivered on their other priorities, progressing the broader workforce agenda during the pandemic response.

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**Employers...** asked us to project manage complex negotiations and consultations in partnership with key stakeholders.

**We...** participated in negotiations relating to a new Speciality and Associate Specialist doctors' contract on behalf of Wales, in conjunction with colleagues from England and Northern Ireland, which led to a successful endorsement of the new contract by doctors in Wales.

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# 2020/21 at a glance

Between April 2020 – March 2021

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## Events



Hosted **8** thought leadership webinars, attracting over **400** attendees from across the health and care sector and beyond

## Members Support



Provided programme and administrative support to over **170** Executive Director Peer Group meetings

Provided corporate and executive support to over **100** Chairs, Vice Chairs and Chief Executives Group meetings

NHS Wales Employers supported over **50** Workforce and Organisational Development meetings

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## Communications



Published over **100** press releases and media statements



Mentioned over **350** times in the media



Provided over **40** radio and TV interviews



Reached over **5,000** Twitter Followers

## External Affairs



Responded to **14** Senedd inquiries or Welsh Government consultations



Mentioned over **30** times in the Senedd



Supported over **60** NHS representatives to provide evidence to Senedd Committees



Published over **30** briefings

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