



Welsh NHS Confederation  
Confederasiwn GIG Cymru

# The voice of NHS leadership in Wales

IMPACT REPORT 2021/22



# Foreword

Since early 2020, the whole world has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Under extreme pressure, the NHS and its partners have responded with speed, determination and resilience to protect and care for those in need.

It has been an extraordinary and unrelenting time for everyone, but none more so than for the people in the health and care system. The NHS has done everything in its power to manage the extraordinary demand. It has strived to address the impacts of the pandemic as well as address the ever-growing waiting lists for diagnostics and treatment, while delivering a record-breaking vaccination programme and running services under strict infection prevention and control measures.

We have continued to play our own part by representing, connecting and supporting NHS leaders in Wales at every opportunity. For instance, we provided unwavering direct support to NHS executive director peer groups, represented our members before and after the 2021 Senedd election and successfully brought leaders together at our Wellbeing for Wales lecture series, our first virtual conference.

This year has been a good example of the circle of influence which forms a core part of our work. This involves managing the NHS Leadership National Programme through which we facilitate strategic conversations between leaders. We then use this information to support our media and policy work and to guide stakeholder engagement, influencing the narrative to ensure our members' views are represented.

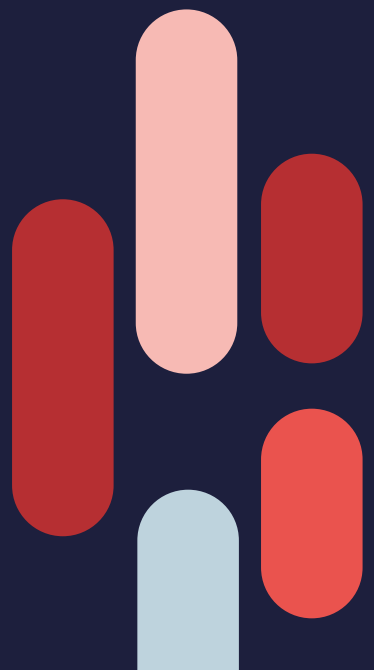
A pivotal area for the Welsh NHS Confederation has been the growth of our Health and Wellbeing Alliance - increasing partnership working with other key organisations from across the health and care system. We have worked to raise awareness of the challenges and demands on the system through our unified calls and policy positions.

As a small team, I'm incredibly proud of all we've achieved and hope this report gives a flavour of the work we do to support NHS leaders in Wales and, most importantly, its impact.

We will continue to represent, connect and support NHS leaders in Wales in the year ahead as they manage the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, system recovery, challenges in social care and the effects of the cost of living crisis.



**Darren Hughes**  
**Director**  
**Welsh NHS Confederation**



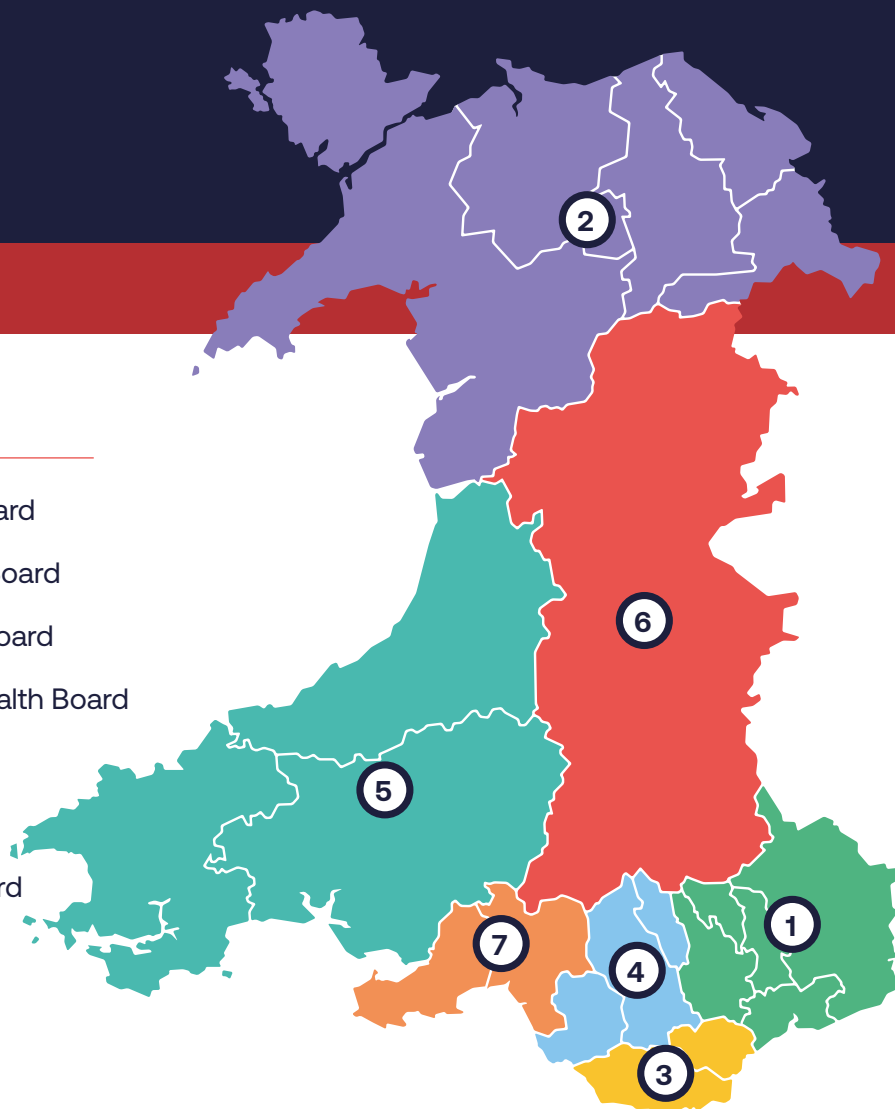
# Who we are

The Welsh NHS Confederation is the national membership body representing the leaders of the organisations making up the NHS in Wales: the seven local health boards, three NHS trusts and two special health authorities. We are part of the NHS Confederation and host NHS Wales Employers.

## Our members

### Local health boards

- 1 Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- 2 Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- 3 Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- 4 Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- 5 Hywel Dda University Health Board
- 6 Powys Teaching Health Board
- 7 Swansea Bay University Health Board



### NHS trusts

- + Public Health Wales NHS Trust
- + Velindre University NHS Trust
- + Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

### Special health authorities

- + Digital Health and Care Wales
- + Health Education and Improvement Wales

# What we do

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, events and engagement work.



## Represent

We represent organisations and sectors to ensure local organisations and systems work in the best interests of service users, citizens and staff.



## Connect

We connect the whole healthcare system to boost system working and develop solutions to shared challenges.



## Support

We support leaders to develop and hone their leadership skills, equipping leaders with tools, ideas and insights and connecting them with a community of leaders.

# How we do it

We work with our members to be a driving force for positive change through...

Promoting partnership working

Building productive relationships

Effectual political engagement

Influencing media narrative

Communicating complex issues

Managing the NHS Leadership National Programme

Organising events and meetings

Representing member views

Sharing good practice

Connecting health and care leaders

Informing and shaping debate

Providing insight and analysis

Promoting thought leadership

Supporting executive directors

Making calls to government

Producing informative briefings

Responding to consultations, inquiries and reviews

Providing a voice at a UK level

# 2021/22 at a glance

## Represent



Published **70+** press releases and comment pieces and **30+** radio and TV interviews, resulting in **160+** mentions in the media, representing the voice of leaders across the system



Responded to **13** Senedd Committee inquiries and Welsh Government consultations, giving evidence based on member insight



Published **20** briefings and reports, showcasing good practice and innovation across the NHS in Wales and calling for changes our members want to see, resulting in **50+** mentions in the Senedd

## Connect



Hosted **11** thought leadership online events, attracting **1,200+** attendees from across the health and care sector and beyond



**500+** people attended our virtual Wellbeing for Wales Lecture Series, sharing knowledge, promoting thought leadership and encouraging innovative thinking



Reached **5,400+** Twitter followers to share key messages and information



Held **20+** Health and Wellbeing Alliance meetings, bringing together **70+** health and care organisations to facilitate joint working and collaboration

## Support



Provided corporate and executive support to **70+** chairs, vice chairs and chief executives group meetings



Provided programme management and administrative support to **120+** executive director peer group meetings, coordinated **200+** guest presenters and monitored the delivery of **1,300+** peer group actions



Supported **15** NHS representatives to provide oral evidence to Senedd Committee inquiries to ensure NHS leaders' views were heard



Produced **140+** member briefings and updates, distilling latest news, views and developments to keep leaders up to date on key issues

# Welsh NHS Confederation: Delivering for NHS leaders

## Representing NHS leaders' views to the media

We built on our reputation as the go-to voice of NHS leaders, enhancing our relationships with the Welsh and UK media.

We consistently influence the national narrative, raise awareness and improve understanding of the challenges facing the health and care system in Wales.

We have provided a coordinated, proactive and reactive voice for the NHS in Wales to the media, the public, politicians and wider stakeholders by issuing over 50 press statements and responses and giving 30 radio and TV interviews. Alongside this, we published 11 blogs and comment pieces and were mentioned over 160 times in the media, significantly raising the profile of key issues affecting the NHS in Wales.

We continue to represent NHS leaders' perspectives on a range of different areas, including NHS performance, the Covid response, system pressures, cross-sector working and NHS recovery. Every month we explain the challenges behind the NHS activity and performance statistics, highlighting areas of improvement and articulating the current challenges. We helped shape this media narrative through our statements and TV and radio interviews, including on BBC Wales, ITV Wales, Global Radio, WalesOnline and BBC Two's Newsnight.

50

press statements  
issued

160+

media mentions

“The Welsh NHS Confederation is committed to communicating with partners and members to positively impact the delivery of A Healthier Wales. Throughout the pandemic they have established the first-class reputation for being a go-to organisation to understand the NHS in Wales.”

**NHS Chair**

## Political influencing and providing member insight

Ahead of the 2021 Senedd election, we raised awareness of the key priorities for NHS leaders both in the media and with politicians, developing a briefing, comment pieces and vlogs to outline our calls.

We organised a Health & Care Hustings in partnership with the British Medical Association Cymru Wales and the Royal College of Nursing Wales, where 200 colleagues from the health and care system were able to directly engage with candidates.

Following extensive engagement with NHS leaders, we responded to 13 Senedd Committee inquiries and Welsh Government consultations and supported 15 NHS representatives to provide oral evidence to Senedd Committees to ensure the views of NHS leaders were heard and better understood.

This financial year we have been mentioned over 50 times in the Senedd. Following our response to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2022-23, we received 25 mentions during the scrutiny process and our calls relating to a multi-year settlement, social care, capital, workforce, prevention and health inequalities were all included in committee reports.

We kept NHS leaders informed of policy and political developments by sharing over 140 member briefings to enable leaders to make decisions based on the most up to date information. We provided updates and distilled the latest news through our weekly newsletters, BayWatch and Weekly Report, as well as our monthly member briefings and 'At a glance' newsletter.

# 140

member briefings produced

# 50+

mentions in the Senedd

"These briefings are really valuable resources - rich in content and provide some excellent insight into NHS organisations' activities across Wales. They are very useful in preparing plenary contributions and social media content for Senedd Members."

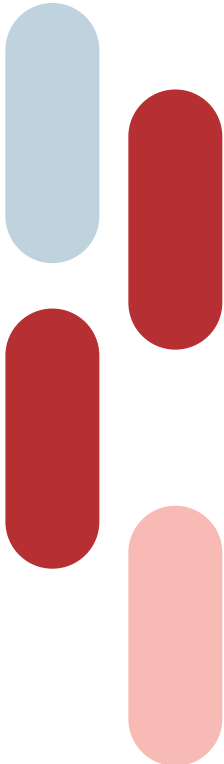
Senior adviser for Member of the Senedd

## Showcasing good practice across the NHS in Wales

We published 20 briefings and reports showcasing good practice and innovation across the NHS in Wales to help improve services and outcomes for patients.

Following extensive engagement with our Policy Sub-Group, we published Health, wealth and wellbeing: The NHS' role in economic and social recovery. The briefing and its recommendations have influenced national and local discussions around the foundational economy, including the recently launched Welsh Government Foundational Economy in Health and Social Services 2021-22 programme. We also wrote for the Institute of Welsh Affairs, Wales' leading independent think tank, reaching a wider audience of policy makers and thought leaders.

In line with the priorities of our Policy Sub-Group, we published Reshaping the relationship between the public and the NHS, calling on the Welsh Government to introduce a Deal for Health and Wellbeing. In response to COP26, we published a briefing showcasing case studies from NHS organisations across Wales, detailing how they are responding to the climate emergency.



“ The work of the Policy Sub-Group provides a unique opportunity for senior NHS leaders to... consider the wider strategic policy priorities for NHS Wales and the key messages we wish to communicate as a service to Welsh Government and politicians more widely.”

**NHS Chair**



## Influencing and information sharing across the NHS Confederation

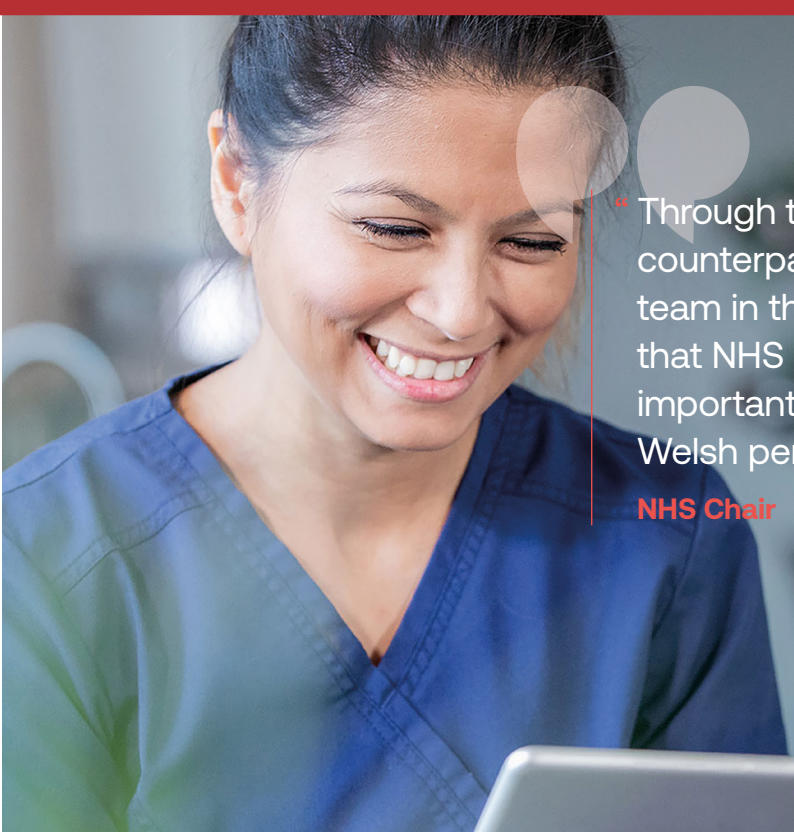
We continue to proactively engage with the NHS Confederation to ensure the voice of NHS leaders in Wales is represented at a UK level.

Following engagement with NHS leaders in Wales, we provided input to the NHS Confederation's response to the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and supported Welsh representatives to be involved in NHS Confederation events, including the Confed21 Conference and NHS Reset events. This has enabled two-way information sharing with other jurisdictions across the UK.

As part of the NHS Confederation's #NotTooMuchToMask campaign, we brought together 28 leading Welsh health and care organisations to endorse the campaign. Through the partnerships we have developed in Wales, a number of organisations have written blogs for NHS Voices, including a piece from Community Leisure UK, highlighting how their members support the NHS in Wales, and Wales Council for Voluntary Action on the value of volunteering throughout the pandemic.

# 28

leading Welsh health and care organisations endorsed the campaign



“Through their consistent engagement with their counterparts in England and Northern Ireland, the team in the Welsh NHS Confederation ensures that NHS leaders in Wales are kept informed about important UK-level developments, and that the Welsh perspective is shared across borders.”

**NHS Chair**

## Supporting NHS leaders through our NHS Leadership National Programme

Our support for 10 director peer groups over the past year has been unwavering.

Through our NHS Leadership National Programme, we provided programme management and administrative support to over 120 director peer group meetings, coordinated over 200 guest presenters and monitored the delivery of over 1,300 peer group actions.

Throughout the year we have provided enhanced secretarial and policy development support to over 70 chair, vice chair and chief executive group meetings. We enabled cross-organisational discussions by developing agendas and work plans, arranging strategic briefings and presentations on priority topics, taking minutes and implementing actions.

We have been flexible and agile, enabling delivery of the broad range of services required for peer groups to function well, deliberate issues and initiatives, build collaboration and demonstrate collective leadership. We linked peer group work on areas including pandemic service recovery, vaccinations, planned and emergency care, primary and community care, quality and safety and workforce issues.

We facilitated collaboration between peer group chairs as well as with the chair of the Chief Executive Management Team. We connected peer groups, for example through a workshop on tackling system pressures with the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, All Wales Medical Directors, Executive Directors of Nursing and Improvement Cymru, leading to practical delivery at the front line. Sharing knowledge and expertise across peer groups has increased understanding of whole system priorities and the development of collective initiatives.




200

guest presenters  
coordinated at  
120 director peer  
group meetings

1,300

peer group  
actions monitored



“ The support I receive as peer group chair is critical to the success of my role and to the effective functioning of the group... I am hugely grateful for the work that they do. They are our silent champions!”

**Chair of executive peer group**

## Building strong partnerships through our Health and Wellbeing Alliance

We continue to chair meetings and work with stakeholders through our Health and Wellbeing Alliance, which comprises over 70 health and care organisations.

The Alliance met over 20 times throughout the year, enabling stakeholders to hear from a range of speakers on key issues, develop shared policy positions and respond to Senedd Committee inquiries. These shared policy positions and joint responses result in a bigger collective impact in the Senedd.

The Alliance developed the Making the difference: tackling health inequalities in Wales paper, endorsed by 36 organisations, calling for health inequalities to be a cross-governmental priority. The paper gained coverage in the media, received support from opposition parties and led to a debate in the Senedd. In addition, it led to meetings with the Minister for Health and Social Services, with the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing and influenced the Health and Social Care Committee forward work programme and Sixth Senedd Strategy.

# 36

organisations called for health inequalities to be a cross-governmental priority

“ Being part of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance has shown how co-production can make a profound difference to the delivery of health and care. Everyone involved in the Alliance is grateful for the leadership of the Welsh NHS Confederation and the opportunities provided by being part of this innovative forum.”

**Welsh NHS Confederation Health and Wellbeing Alliance member**



## Raising awareness of system pressures and supporting integration between health and social care

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a key area of focus has been to engage with social care partners and to put forward consistent messages to politicians, the media and stakeholders around the challenges facing social care and the impact on the NHS.

We have represented NHS leaders in Ministerial Care Action Committee meetings and regularly engage with a range of stakeholders on issues concerning the interface between health and care. This includes monthly meetings, events and conferences with local authority leaders, lead civil servants, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru.

A crucial area of focus in our communications has been the impact of the challenges facing the social care sector on the NHS - helping the media, politicians and the public understand the complex factors playing into system pressures. We wrote an article focusing on this topic for the Western Mail, which was cited as evidence in a report by the Royal College of Physicians, calling for investment in 'hospital at home' services.

We supported NHS representatives to provide evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into hospital discharge and its impact on patient flow through hospitals. Ahead of the inquiry, we gathered intelligence from NHS leaders to develop a briefing for MSs, Actions taken to mitigate pressures in the health and social care system, which received a number of mentions during Senedd debates.

“ The briefings raise awareness of the positive and innovative work being undertaken across the service, together with the recommendations to inform and influence government policy and legislation on key priority areas, are vital contributions made by the Welsh NHS Confederation.”

**NHS Chair**

## Sharing knowledge and encouraging innovative thinking through events


Throughout the year we hosted 11 online thought leadership events for our members and wider stakeholders, some of which were in partnership with other organisations, attracting over 1,200 attendees in total.

Topics included clinical trials and the development of new therapies and vaccines, Covid innovation and transformation, long Covid and the support available in Wales, partnership working between the police and the NHS, healthy working relationships in the NHS and governing in a crisis - embedding learning and new ways of working.

We developed and launched the Wellbeing for Wales brand for our lecture series, which we will continue as an overarching theme for future events. Our inaugural lecture series attracted over 500 attendees across eight sessions that took place over four days. The lecture series was supported by the Arts Council of Wales, Novartis and ABPI Cymru Wales and had contributions from the First Minister, Sir Michael Marmot, the Minister for Health and Social Services and a number of leaders from across the UK. By delivering high quality events, we ensure the Welsh NHS Confederation remains at the heart of health and care thought leadership.

# 500

delegates  
attended our  
Wellbeing for  
Wales Lecture  
Series



“ The Welsh NHS Confederation provides one of the most useful gathering points to share thinking, question experts and every once in a while, row against the tide..It is an important cog in Welsh health innovation.”


**Welsh NHS Confederation Health and Wellbeing Alliance member**

## Sharing NHS leaders' priorities and enhancing partnership working

We have worked with a range of organisations including the WLGA, ADSS Cymru, Community Housing Cymru, Community Leisure UK, WCVA, Social Care Wales, Arts Council of Wales, ABPI Cymru Wales and Welsh Commissioners, to share NHS leaders' priorities and enhance partnership working.

Working with a range of partners, including Welsh Government, Swansea University and Healthcare Science Cymru, we contributed to and led on communication and engagement for the [NHS Wales COVID-19 Innovation and Transformation Study Report](#) and launch event. The report showcased innovative practice that emerged across the NHS as a result of the pandemic and was mentioned by the First Minister and the leader of Plaid Cymru during Senedd debates, as well as inspiring the BBC's article ['Covid innovations will reshape future NHS in Wales'](#).

As part of our [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the Arts Council of Wales, we continued to raise awareness of the benefits the arts can bring to health and wellbeing. We did this by presenting at events and conferences, being an active member of the Senedd Cross-Party Group on Arts and the Health and the [HARP](#) (Health, Arts, Research, People) Steering Group. We have commissioned an evaluation into arts and health, which will be published in the summer of 2022.



“Regular engagement with the Welsh NHS Confederation provides important opportunities for open and honest dialogue...their extensive knowledge and understanding of the action being delivered by health boards, and the different pressures facing health services in Wales, provides me with invaluable insights and intelligence to support my work.”

**Commissioner**

# Stay connected

There are a number of ways to keep up to date with the Welsh NHS Confederation:



We produce weekly and monthly email newsletters. To subscribe or find out more, visit [www.nhsconfed.org/membership/email-newsletters](http://www.nhsconfed.org/membership/email-newsletters)



NHS leaders are also able to subscribe to the NHS Confederation's bulletins including daily member briefings, a weekly member bulletin and a range of special interest bulletins across key topics. Find out more here: [www.nhsconfed.org/membership/email-newsletters](http://www.nhsconfed.org/membership/email-newsletters)



We organise events, webinars and an annual conference. For more information about our events programme, email [info@welshnhsconfed.org](mailto:info@welshnhsconfed.org)



We develop a range of good practice briefings, raising awareness of initiatives and innovative practice from across the NHS in Wales. To showcase your work please email [info@welshnhsconfed.org](mailto:info@welshnhsconfed.org)

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