

The 2016 Challenge: A vision for NHS Wales

The Welsh NHS Confederation briefing for the
National Assembly for Wales Election 2016



Introduction

The Welsh NHS Confederation is a membership body representing all the organisations making up the NHS in Wales: seven Local Health Boards and three NHS Trusts. Our briefing sets out the key challenges facing the health and social care system in Wales, a vision for the future for the NHS in Wales and a call to action for political parties, the electorate and our partners.

The NHS is there to improve our health and well-being, treat us when we are ill, support us in reducing our risk of disease and to help us live as many years of our lives in as good health as possible. However, if the sustainability of the NHS is to be secured and it is to continue to deliver high quality care, it cannot do things in the same way.

Since its creation almost 70 years ago, society has changed dramatically. We're now living longer, which is partly down to the success of the NHS and is something to celebrate. However, an ageing population also brings about a series of fresh challenges for the health and social care sector and, as with all other UK health systems, the NHS in Wales faces these challenges as it works against a backdrop of increasing demand and in a period of austerity.

Despite this, much NHS care is rated highly by patients. In the National Survey for Wales 2015,¹ 91% were satisfied with GP care, while 96% of hospital patients said they were treated with dignity and respect.

In a survey² conducted by the Welsh NHS Confederation for this briefing, our members identified the recruitment and retention of the workforce, finances, lack of integration, an ageing population and reducing unhealthy behaviours as the top challenges facing NHS Wales.

There is much to consider for those in the next Government about how these issues are addressed and tough decisions will need to be made. We would like to see all political parties commit to publishing a **10 year vision for the health service in Wales in their manifestos.**

During this time, it is also important to recognise that improving the health and well-being of the population and reducing demand on the health service are not the responsibilities of one organisation. If the NHS is going to rise to the challenges ahead, it is vital that partnership working is developed to create the right conditions for people to have healthier lifestyles and build a service that is not only fit for the future, but leads the way in delivering the best quality care and treatment.

There is also a need for an open and honest conversation with the public about what the NHS can provide in the future. While the NHS is free at the point of contact, it is not free of obligation, and the public will need to be supported in taking more responsibility for their own health. The NHS belongs to all of us and, as individuals, we should do what we can to ensure it is sustainable, both now and in the future. At the same time, the NHS should do more to involve the public, patients, staff and partner services in explaining and working through the tough choices that need to be made.

There is a real opportunity for the NHS in Wales to further develop citizen-centred services that place an increased focus on outcomes and the individual needs of patients, who can be empowered to take more of an active role in their health and well-being.

This briefing, which outlines five broad themes, is based on the views of our members and is designed to provide an overview of what the current issues are and what those in the service suggest needs to be done to address them.

The NHS will no doubt be a central topic in the 2016 National Assembly Election and it is important to have a constructive debate around the solutions required to meet the challenges. However, we would also highlight that our members (44%) said the political nature of the health service could be a barrier for the NHS to make the changes that are necessary. Political parties and Assembly candidates must play a leadership role in ensuring the debate around the NHS focuses on patient outcomes, patient experiences and maintaining sustainable services.

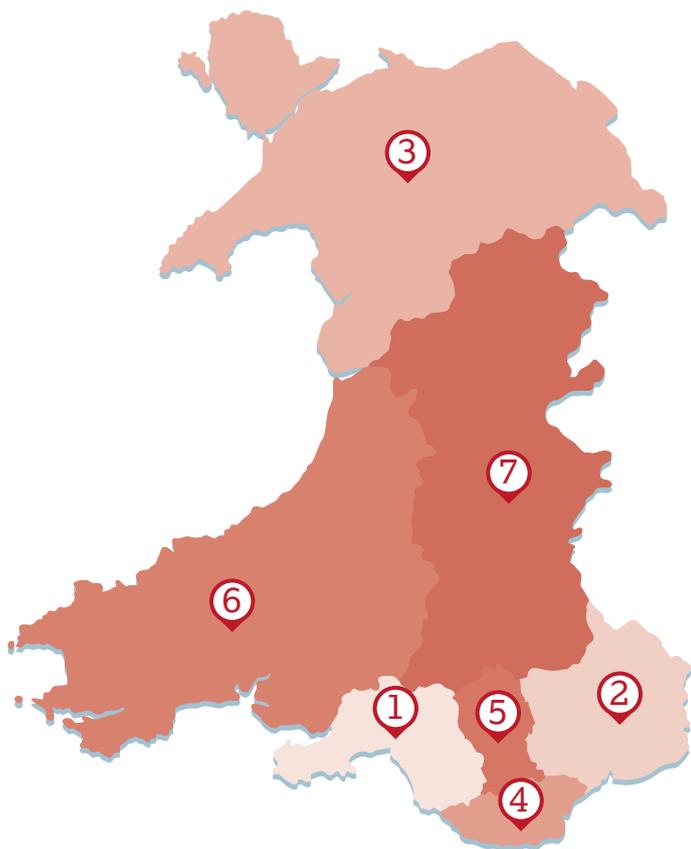
Moving ahead, the Welsh NHS Confederation wants to emphasise that we are part of a **national** health service that strives to provide the best for every patient. All UK health systems continue to face challenges, and bold action and significant changes to the way we do things are required if we are to step up and meet them.

NHS Wales – an overview

NHS Wales delivers services through seven Health Boards and three NHS Trusts.

Health Boards

The seven Local Health Boards in Wales (below) are responsible for planning and securing the delivery of primary, community and secondary care services alongside specialist services for their areas. These services include dental, optical, pharmacy and mental health services.



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

There are three NHS Trusts in Wales with an all-Wales focus.

- **Public Health Wales NHS Trust** provides professional, independent public health advice and services to protect and improve the health and well-being of the population of Wales.
- **Velindre NHS Trust** provides a range of specialist services at local, regional and all-Wales levels, including the Welsh Blood Service and Velindre Cancer Centre.
- **Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust** provides pre-hospital emergency care and treatment throughout Wales. In April 2007, NHS Direct Wales, a telephone service which provides 24-hour health advice and information, became part of the Trust.

Each day in NHS Wales:³

- **8,500** people have an outpatient appointment.
- **1,200** emergency 999 calls are responded to.
- **2,400** people are discharged from hospital.
- **50,000** people see a GP.
- **800** calls are made to NHS Direct.
- **600** people receive treatment in minor injury units.
- **800** people are transported to hospital by ambulance.
- **10,000** x-rays are carried out.
- **1,500** operations performed.
- **2,100** people receive treatment in A&E.
- **9,700** people occupy NHS bed.
- **50,000** people visit a community pharmacy.

The 2016 Challenge



Our commitment and call to action

We are calling for a positive, shared vision for the future. This vision should encapsulate the needs, assets and wishes of the people using the health and care system, and the values of the people working in it. If we are to be successful in delivering this vision, everyone should play a part.

Our Commitment as Health and Social Care leaders is to:

- Put compassion and care at the forefront of all we do;
- Work continuously to make further improvements in the quality and safety of care;
- Ensure that every member of staff feels valued and involved;
- Play our part in reducing health inequalities and improving health;
- Provide honest and open leadership – focusing on the evidence of what works;
- Engage continuously with the public, explaining clearly why changes are happening and encouraging their involvement in decision-making;
- Build a collaborative approach with partners focusing on outcomes for citizens.

All Political Parties' National Assembly Election manifestos should:

- Commit to publishing a **10 year vision** for the future of the health service in Wales;
- Commit to the transformational change required within the health service by putting in place a **transition fund** to enable investment in service change. This will facilitate the shifting of services closer to people's homes and into their communities, with care provided in hospitals only when it is absolutely necessary to do so;
- Provide and support the implementation of a **long-term vision for the health and social care workforce**, acknowledging that the workforce should change to deliver integrated, personalised care closer to home;
- Have a long-term commitment to **provide sufficient resources to the NHS in Wales**, including confirming what proportion of the Budget will be allocated to the health and social services department in the next Assembly;
- Support the **overhaul of NHS performance targets**, focusing more on outcomes rather than processes;
- Commit to **driving forward effective integration** through a joint outcomes framework, with indicators that align across health and social care. This should include a commitment to coterminosity between health board and local government boundaries;
- Commit to **improving public health** through further development and implementation of policies that will create the right conditions to support people to make healthier lifestyle choices; and
- Implement a **'health in all policies'** approach, with public bodies being required to conduct health impact assessments on future policies.

National Assembly Candidates should:

- Recognise that change in the way we organise care is necessary, and **play a leadership role** in ensuring debates about change focus constructively on people's outcomes, experiences and well-being;
- **Be candid with the public** about the need to change the way we deliver care if we are to sustain an effective system that delivers positive outcomes for patients.

The need challenge

Meeting the rising demand for care, particularly from people with complex needs or long-term conditions, is a major challenge. Redesigning the healthcare system to reflect the needs of people now – and so that it remains sustainable in the future. This includes shifting more care closer to people's homes, while maintaining hospital care.

An ageing population, combined with more people having increasingly complex needs, means that demand for health and social care services is predicted to grow rapidly in coming years.

The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 50% by 2037.⁴ While the fact that more of us are living longer is a success story and should be celebrated, this trend brings about fresh challenges for the NHS and how it manages the level of need.

In our survey, members stated that the rising number of people living with chronic conditions was one of the top five significant challenges facing NHS Wales in the coming years, while 30% listed an ageing population as a top three challenge facing NHS Wales. A number of respondents highlighted older people as the one key area that the next Government should focus on.

While people are living in good health for longer, this health gain is not distributed equally. Wales currently has the highest rates of long-term limiting illness in the UK, which is the most expensive aspect of NHS care. Between 2001/02 and 2010/11 the number of people with a chronic or long-term condition in Wales increased from 105,000 to 142,000.⁵ This figure is expected to rise for a number of conditions, including cancer, dementia and diabetes.

According to Cancer Research UK,⁶ one in two people born after 1960 will be diagnosed with some form of cancer during their lifetime, while Diabetes UK Cymru suggests that the numbers of people in Wales with diabetes will increase from 173,000 to 288,000 by 2025, with 350,000 at risk of developing the disease.⁷ In a recent joint report with Marie Curie, the Alzheimer's Society in Wales estimates that, by 2021, the number of people with dementia across Wales will increase by 31%, with this figure increasing to as much as 44% in some rural areas.⁸ Alongside this, people's health and well-being needs are becoming more complex, with many people having multiple long-term conditions that require different levels of intervention.

Policy makers and the health service also face a significant number of public health challenges, including high levels of obesity, smoking rates and poor levels of physical activity. Many of these are linked with deprivation. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation,⁹ 690,000 people (23% of the population) and a third of children are currently living in poverty, which can have a profound impact on people's physical and mental health.

The number of people waiting for treatment is a reflection of this rising demand. Waiting times are a key priority for those in the NHS and there is much work going on to address this. While targets have a role to play, policy makers must look at the bigger picture, which is about instigating a whole system change in the way treatment is delivered to patients and providing the best service we can within the resources that we have.

To address these rising levels of need, the delivery of services will have to be redesigned. Patient-centred care, which is measured in outcomes, should be driven further through the provision of more services in communities and closer to people's homes. Treatment should be provided in hospitals only when it is absolutely necessary to do so.

In order to meet the needs of the population political parties should work with and support the NHS to:

- Ensure person-centred care is provided. This will require further delivery of care in the community, avoiding hospital admission and supporting people to manage their health and well-being and to live independently for as long as possible;
- Remodel the relationship between the patient and the service, with patients taking more responsibility for their own health; playing a greater role in managing their conditions, living healthier lifestyles and using the NHS responsibly;
- Have an open and honest conversation about the public's role and what the NHS can do for them within the resources available;
- End the stigma around mental health and put it on an equal footing with physical health;
- Take into account the impact that decisions in other policy areas could have on people's future health.

The workforce challenge

Planning for a sustainable and resilient workforce to better match changing demand. Developing staff roles and skills to provide complex, multi-disciplinary, co-ordinated care, in partnership with individuals, other sectors and communities.

Currently, around 129,000¹⁰ people are employed in the health sector in Wales – the equivalent of 8% of the country's employment – while NHS Wales itself employs around 85,000 staff.¹¹ This makes the health service Wales' biggest employer, with the NHS pay bill standing at around £3 billion (more than 50% of NHS spend).¹² These figures demonstrate the economic significance of NHS Wales to the overall economic health of Wales.

It has become increasingly clear that a transformation in service design and the way treatment is delivered is required. A key aspect to driving this forward and making it a success is the workforce.

The retention of the current workforce and recruitment of new staff have posed significant problems for the NHS in Wales for some time. In our survey of members, recruitment and retention of the workforce was listed as the top challenge facing NHS Wales in the next five years, with nearly 42% of respondents identifying it as an issue. Meanwhile, 41% said staff shortages or the availability of a skilled NHS workforce were the main barriers preventing their organisation from tackling the challenges facing the health service.

With an ageing population also comes an ageing workforce. Currently, more than 45% of workers within the NHS in Wales are aged 45 or over,¹³ which brings its own challenges. This is coupled with the fact that the present workforce is designed to deliver services within historic models and patterns of care.

While change will take time, the Welsh NHS Confederation believes it is vital that the workforce develops new ways of working to address the expected shortfall and also be aligned with the overall direction for the delivery of health services. In the future, healthcare must be built around individuals and both the system and workforce must help with this.

In order to achieve a workforce for the future political parties should support the NHS to:

- Give greater priority to developing the skills and competencies of the current workforce to better meet the needs of patients now and in the future;
- Re-design services to secure their future, particularly where resources are spread too thinly across too many sites. Workforce skills must be developed to support the move of more care into the community and make the most of technology;
- Develop a more flexible workforce in terms of skills and competencies to allow care to be delivered in a variety of settings;
- Plan in detail to maintain the health and well-being of older staff. Employers will need to understand the implications of working longer and what support employees need;
- Give greater focus on recruitment and retention of the current workforce in order to reduce bank, agency and locum use and making Wales an attractive place to live and work for new recruits.

The financial challenge

Recognising the financial pressures on all parts of the system and getting value from every penny of public money spent on healthcare. Being open and honest in the debate on the future levels and sources of funding for healthcare.

The rise in demand, coupled with constrained financial resources, has made delivering healthcare in the current model increasingly difficult.

In a period of austerity, our members have worked incredibly hard to achieve significant savings. In fact, organisations have reduced costs by nearly £1bn from 2010/11 - 2013/14 (an average efficiency saving of 4.5% per year)¹⁴ against a backdrop of rising demand of people requiring treatment.

While recent increases in funding have been welcomed, finances remain extremely tight and will continue to be so as the NHS is asked to do more and the costs of providing care increases. We would ask political parties to have a long-term commitment to providing sufficient resources to the NHS in Wales, including stating how much of the budget will be allocated to the health and social services department.

The NHS in Wales is committed to working more efficiently and prioritising spending in order to rise to the challenges that it faces. However, it has become increasingly clear that traditional methods of savings are unlikely to deliver what is needed in the future.

Our members are working hard to drive down costs. However, difficult decisions will still need to be taken. In our survey, 37% of respondents listed finance as the second main challenge facing the health service, while 49% said it was the main barrier preventing their organisation from tackling the issues they face. But more than half (56%) said that an increase in funding would not solve the challenges that NHS Wales faces.

This demonstrates that, while finances are extremely important, putting in more money is not a single solution to the challenges that face the health service. Radical change is what is needed if the NHS is to meet the level of demand being placed upon it while living within its means. If the NHS continues to do the same things in the same way, it will fail. Sustainable plans will have to be developed to enable the NHS to deliver financially as well as provide high quality care to patients. This is a significant and complex challenge which will require the support of the Government and the broader political community, as well as the people of Wales.

In order to place itself on a sustainable financial footing in the future political parties need to work with and support the NHS to:

- Have a longer term approach to funding arrangements and performance management systems focusing on outcomes;
- Find more efficient ways of working, making the best use of resources, the workforce and technology. This won't be easy and it will take time to see the benefits;
- Be honest with the public about what the NHS can (and cannot) provide - work alongside the public to help them understand their role in supporting the health service and reduce demand and over-reliance;
- Consolidate resources and increase efficiency - there will need to be an investment in buildings, equipment and information and communication technology in both secondary and primary care.

Support to achieve all of the above will be required from politicians, staff, patients and the public in order to create an environment where change is possible.

The integration challenge

Focusing on partnership and collaborative working across all public bodies so care revolves around the needs and capacities of individuals, families and communities.

To provide patient-centred care, collaborative working is vital. Integration needs to happen, both within and outside the health service. The NHS will not be able to rise to the challenges it faces without the help of our colleagues in other sectors, including housing, education and, in particular, those in social services.

The health and well-being of the population is not the sole responsibility of the NHS - everyone must come together to play their part. At the same time, the NHS must build on its ability to work with others in order to provide services which are not only person-centred but also help to reduce health inequalities and improve patient outcomes.

In our survey, respondents highlighted improved integration as the main area for the next Government to focus on, while 26% said the integration of health and social care was the top challenge for the health service in the next five years. Meanwhile, 24% said that the lack of joint working and integration of services was the main barrier preventing their organisation from tackling the challenges they face.

The Welsh NHS Confederation believes that Wales, given its size, structure and close links, has a golden opportunity to achieve so much when it comes to integration. The Welsh NHS Confederation is working with ADSS Cymru on a project called Delivering Transformation to assist transformational change across social services and health. This includes a Memorandum of Understanding with Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Care Forum Wales, Welsh Local Government Association and Community Housing Cymru to support the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

As we move ahead, the NHS must strengthen the links that are already there and build new relationships if it is to move from an 'ill health' service to one that promotes healthy lives. A significant opportunity to do this comes from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The forthcoming Public Service Boards, introduced as part of the Act, will enable public services to commission and plan collaboratively, ensuring that services are integrated and that care and support provided improves health and well-being outcomes for the local population.

Alongside this, there is a need for honest conversations with the public about how greater integration will impact on local services. An increasing proportion of resources will go to community-based interventions, prevention, social support and primary care. Services will need to be transferred out of hospital, but in a way that does not compromise access to services or outcomes.

In order to drive forward integration political parties and those involved in health and care should work with and support the NHS to:

- Ensure effective shared leadership at all levels and develop a clear shared set of priorities to improve health and social care outcomes;
- Develop a collaborative culture that emphasises team working and the delivery of highly co-ordinated and person-centred care, supported by joined-up information systems;
- Develop a joined-up workforce, capable of working with individuals, their carers and families in multi-disciplinary settings, with joint appointments where necessary;
- Ensure that the right resources are in the right place, at the right time, with joint responsibility for delivering high-quality, joined-up care;
- Have governance structures to provide timely and appropriate access to information for health and social care professionals.

The public health challenge

Investing in prevention and early intervention to support and maintain people's well-being and prevent ill health for as long as possible. Empowering and informing people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being.

Wales faces a significant number of public health challenges, including high levels of obesity, smoking and poor levels of physical activity.

The latest Welsh Health Survey results¹⁵ show that 20% of adults still smoke, 40% report drinking above the guidelines on at least one day in the past week, 34% say they have not been physically active in the last five days and 58% are overweight or obese.

The impact of such behaviours on our health is resulting in significant demand being placed on the health service and, with the consequences of poor lifestyle decisions taking time to manifest, this will only increase demands in the future. Bold decisions are now required to make industrial scale change in our services and shift the funding to support people to make better lifestyle choices.

Public accountability is vital and we, as individuals, need to recognise the role we have to play in our own health. If patients understand the impact their behaviours are having on their health, it will benefit not just themselves, but all those who will rely on the NHS in the future. Patients need to become partners in managing and improving their health, rather than passive recipients of healthcare. The NHS should also manage expectations and help patients understand exactly which services the NHS can provide.

In our survey to members, 28% of respondents said one of the main challenges facing NHS Wales is reducing unhealthy behaviours, while prevention and public health came second behind integration when asked what key area the next Government should focus on.

This is why the Welsh NHS Confederation has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sport Wales. Through this partnership we hope to encourage people of all ages to enjoy more active and healthier lives and take more personal responsibility for their health which will, in turn, help to secure the future of the health service.

Wales has led the way in many public health policies and legislation, such as the ban on smoking in public places, and we would urge political parties to keep up this momentum. While legislation and policy-making are only two of many strands in addressing Wales' public health challenges, they can play a vital role in changing behaviour. The development and implementation of policies that help to create the right conditions that will support people to make healthier lifestyle choices are key to securing both the health of our nation and the NHS.

Alongside all of this, there needs to be a shift of resources from treatment to prevention. The challenge here is that there is limited flexibility to shift significant investment away from traditional treatment services when the current demands on the health service are so great. Therefore, this is an extremely difficult, yet vital, task and the health service will need support to do this.

In order to address these public health challenges, political parties and those involved in health and care should work with and support the NHS to:

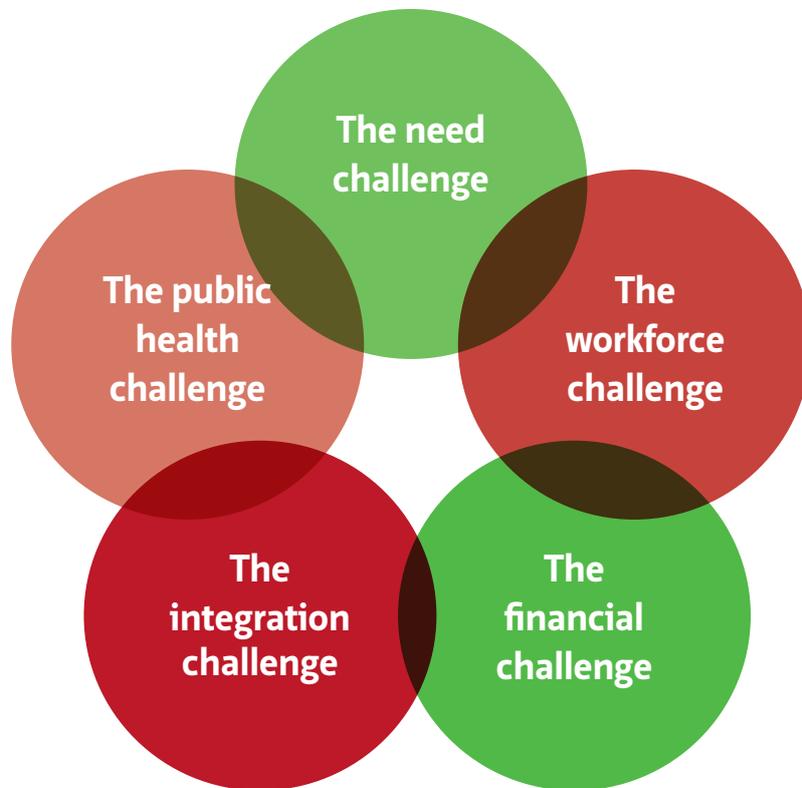
- Work collaboratively across sectors to help people make healthier choices in life and reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases, many of which are linked to lifestyle;
- Manage patient expectations about what the NHS can realistically provide and what their role is;
- Keep people healthier through a greater emphasis on primary and community care, a focus on prevention, supporting people to make healthier choices, better integration across all public bodies and education and co-production between the service and the public;
- Engage the entire public sector workforce in public health and prevention;
- Support a culture change among the public in terms of their making healthier choices and reducing reliance on NHS services.

Our vision for the future of the NHS in Wales

Our aim is for an NHS that meets the needs of the people it serves, and is ready to change to meet those needs in the future. **We hope all political parties' manifestos will aspire to meet this vision.**

We believe a health and care system fit for the future should:

- Invest in prevention and early intervention to support and maintain health, well-being and independence in communities;
- Provide person-centred care that is integrated, compassionate and joined-up across sectors;
- Empower and inform people to take responsibility for their health and shape their own care around their individual needs, ensuring they are involved in decision-making;
- Listen to and learn from the experiences of patients, their carers and staff and be accountable to the public;
- Continually improve quality and safety, engage and equip staff to work in new ways and embrace innovation and technology to achieve this;
- Reduce inequalities in outcomes, eliminate discrimination and value mental and physical health equally; and
- Use finite resources responsibly, efficiently and fairly, making tough choices which ensure sustainable services.



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The Welsh NHS Confederation

The Welsh NHS Confederation is a membership body representing all the organisations making up the NHS in Wales: seven Local Health Boards and three NHS Trusts.

We support our members to improve health and wellbeing by working with them to deliver high standards of care for patients and best value for taxpayers' money. We act as a driving force for positive change through strong representation and our policy, influencing and engagement work. To find out more about our work please contact info@welshconfed.org

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