

**Wales Policy and Public Affairs, Welsh Board report– December 24**  
**Calum Higgins CSP Public Affairs and Policy Manager for Wales**

**1. Senedd Cymru and Welsh Government**



**a. UK Political outlook for Wales**

The UK Government budget was in early November, with a focus on raising taxes to pay for an increase in funding for the NHS in England and “balancing the books”. The increase of NHS funding in England means an increase in funding for Wales through the Barnett formula, amounting to £1.7billion. Plaid Cymru have criticised the lack of HS2 funding for Wales, which they say could be worth an additional £4billion, a figure disputed by the Welsh Government. Expect the next 18 months to follow this political pattern where Plaid Cymru criticise Welsh Labour for UK Labour not achieving things for Wales.

**b. The Welsh Government and Senedd**

Welsh Government agreement between Plaid Cymru and Labour ended under Vaughan Gething’s tenure. Currently Welsh Labour are 1 vote short of a majority, which means they need a member of the opposition to abstain for a budget to be passed in November. This is likely to be the single Liberal Democrat, who has an interest in children’s rights. The Conservatives have challenged the Welsh Government to “spend every penny” of the additional £1.7billion on the NHS in Wales. There are tensions between the First Minister and Health Board leaders, from her comments as Health Minister to her focus on waiting lists, in response to her approach to tackling waiting times the NHS confederation has responded:

Responding to the comments made by the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, on [Politics Wales](#), director of the Welsh NHS Confederation Darren Hughes said:

*“The First Minister knows all too well from her time as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care that the NHS is treating more people than ever before and that there are a range of factors impacting on the rate of elective recovery. Waiting lists cannot and must not be considered in a silo but as part of the whole health and care system, across primary care, community care, mental health services and social care.”*

*“The ability to discharge medically fit patients from hospital remains a huge challenge for all health boards due to the immense pressures in social care, despite best efforts in joint working with local authority partners. In some hospitals 20% of beds are unavailable as patients wait to leave hospital. This is like trying to run the NHS with one hand tied behind your back – we’re doing all we can to work with local authority leaders and care providers but the First Minister must be open about the scale of the challenge and what’s needed to put it right.”*

### **c. Cabinet Secretary for Health**

#### **Meeting**

We have begun lobbying the new Cabinet Secretary Jeremy Miles MS, we have written to him asking for a meeting with the CSP and suggested a service visit to learn about rehab. We have had a positive response but no date yet.

#### **The Senedd debated a petition on “Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales”.**

In the Senedd the Cabinet Secretary responded to the call for more funding for GPs, he said that the Welsh Government had invested £5m in **Allied Health Professionals**. He noted that the Welsh Government continue to invest in multi-disciplinary team so patients can access a wider group of primary care health professionals including Practice Nurses, **Physiotherapists** and pharmacists.

#### **NHS Confederation Wales Conference**

The Cabinet Secretary attended the NHS Wales Confederation Conference in November. This is a conference for Health Board leaders, which has often been the platform for the Minister to make public remarks to the health boards which get picked up by the press. Last year Eluned Morgan was publicly critical about the overspends and lack of consistency between health boards. This did not go down too well with Chief Executives and Chairs of the HBs.

This year Jeremy Miles took a more conciliatory tone, but still a challenging one. He spoke to health board leaders about the need for consistency and that the NHS Executive’s role was still not clear enough in his mind. He said he will make the NHS Exec role “crystal clear”, and provide clarity around national directs v local flexibility. He said he expects “once for wales” implementation on successful services, and will not hesitate to use his ministerial powers to make things happen if they do not.

Controversially, he said he will publish performance data in a comparison table to show which health boards are performing best.

#### **Response to NHS Accountability Review**

On a similar theme to the above point, the former Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, set up a Ministerial Advisory Group to reflect on the current governance structures in NHS Wales.

Led by Ann Lloyd, chair of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Earlier this year, the group [provided advice and recommendations](#) about actions needed to strengthen accountabilities. The report makes recommendations that will shape the NHS executive and Welsh NHS governance going forward:

- Governance is a means to an end, not the end in itself. We need an ambitious vision and strategy for Wales underpinned by a clear set of priorities.
- There is an urgent need to simplify the delivery landscape and the associated arrangements for governance.
- There should be much greater transparency about what Health Boards are held to account to deliver. These accountabilities should be drawn from the strategy and agreed annually.
- The culture in NHS Wales is characterised by regulation, judgement and intervention related to failure. We should promote a culture that is based on support, earlier intervention, and improvement.
- The Cabinet Secretary (and the public) should be able to hold Boards and Trusts to account in annual public accountability meetings. The agenda for these meetings should be informed by the agreed priorities referred to above.
- Leadership and People Development needs to be a core investment in the creation of a high performing NHS Wales.
- Patient and public participation in co-production of NHS services will lead to improved outcomes.

In total there are 30 sub recommendations in the report -Pages 18-25, which detail changes the group believe should be made. In response, The new Cabinet Secretary has said:

*“The Welsh Government’s focus over the coming 18 months is improving NHS performance and supporting the ongoing recovery from the pandemic. Concerted work to reduce the longest waits, supported by new funding is ongoing and I have recently appointed a new Ministerial Advisory Group on NHS Performance and Productivity, which will provide advice to me early next year.*

*I want to be clear that we will prioritise those recommendations which help the NHS continue in its performance journey, improve timely access to treatment and improve patient care.*

*The group’s report and recommendations were sent to NHS organisations and those bodies mentioned in the report, for their views and comments on the observations and recommendations made. We have now received a number of responses, which will inform how we implement the recommendations.”*

#### **d. Lobbying**

##### **Senedd Primary Care Event**

Hywel Dda FCP Shannon Robins attended a Primary Care private evidence session run by the Senedd Health Committee. The invitation came via the BMA who wanted to hear from a wider group of professionals.

Shannon Robins, MSK First Contact Practitioner and CSP Steward said:

“It was a great opportunity to raise the benefit of FCPs in primary care directly with elected members of the Senedd. I took the opportunity to explain that FCP is invaluable in primary care to help deliver the Welsh Government’s ‘A Healthier Wales’ strategy, and used evidence back up how we’re benefiting GP caseload in primary care. As the CSP have raised previously, I also reiterated the importance of sustainable funding of services.

## **CSP joins Children’s Services and Equality letter- 22<sup>nd</sup> of October Press Release**

### *47 organisations demand Welsh government cabinet secretaries and ministers work to reduce the impact of poverty and inequalities*

Currently Wales has one of the [highest poverty rates among the four UK nations](#), with 29% of children and 21% of working aged people living in poverty and this is driving inequalities across Wales. A national cross-government delivery plan to tackle poverty and inequality is desperately needed.

A range of health and care organisations have written to all Welsh Government cabinet secretaries and ministers, requesting information on how they are working to reduce the impact of poverty and inequalities in each of their remits.

Previously, many of the same organisations wrote to the Welsh government in [April 2023](#), but since then little progress has been made. Families continuing to face inequalities and share the devastating impact poverty is having on their lives.

These organisations are once again calling for a joined-up delivery plan that sets out milestones, timelines and clear targets detailing what every Welsh government department is doing to tackle inequalities within their remit, and how cabinet secretaries and ministers are working together to reduce the impact of poverty and deprivation on the people of Wales.

## **Welsh Labour conference**

### *CSP makes case for rehab funding at Welsh Labour conference*

The CSP were at Welsh Labour conference, held in Llandudno on November 16-18, promoting investment in rehab and workforce to the new cabinet secretary for health and social care, and other key Labour figures.

Among the activities at the conference, the CSP held a joint ‘Right to Rehab’ briefing with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, attended by Ruth Jones MP, who is a former physiotherapist and the newly elected chair of the Welsh affairs select committee in the UK parliament.



Left to right: Cat Chin, Ruth Jones, Calum Higgins, Caroline Walters

Calum Higgins, the CSP's public affairs and policy manager for Wales, and Cat Chin, the CSP's professional adviser for Wales, also met Jeremy Miles MS, the new cabinet secretary for health and social care. They took the opportunity to raise the need for waiting times funding to include rehab provision. This followed the funding

announcement of the conference made by both the first minister and cabinet secretary.

On a successful conference attendance, Calum said:

*'This activity at Welsh Labour conference is vital in influencing the party in government in Wales, to make the case for more rehab and workforce funding. Together with our partners in the Right to Rehab campaign we spoke to a range of stakeholders and politicians to highlight the profession and rehab services. The next set of conferences are in the spring when we will attend all the party conference once again, at a time when they will be writing up manifestos for the 2026 elections.'*

In a statement to the conference, Jeremy Miles stated: 'On 24 October, I announced £28m to support health boards to reduce the longest

*waiting times, increase outpatient appointments and speed up diagnostic testing.*

*'I am today increasing that funding to £50m, which will be available immediately to health boards to increase capacity in the NHS in Wales and to commission activity from the private sector, where available. The focus will continue to be on reducing the longest waits for treatment, on cutting waiting times for diagnostic tests and increasing capacity in outpatient departments.'*

Calum and Cat will be writing to the cabinet secretary to raise the need for further investment in rehab services as part of the solution to waiting times issues, and to ensure it's planned for in any increase of post-surgery demand.



**e. Manifesto meetings**

The CSP has begun meeting manifesto teams in Wales to influence the political parties in the run up to the 2026 Senedd elections. We are arranging a second meeting with Plaid Cymru's manifesto team. Calum has arranged a workshop for CSP Welsh Board and will look to have key asks in place by the end of 2024.

## 2. Welsh Government Agencies (e.g HEIW)

### a. HEIW education training plan 25-26

The Education and Training Plan 2025-26 has been submitted to Welsh Government for approval. Our expectation is a standstill for Physiotherapy, while other professions are experiencing cuts. Other Professional bodies have expressed privately that the HEIW budget may be unrealistic and we expect pushback from the Welsh Government.



### b. HEIW Allied Health Professional Conference



CSP had a stall at the HEIW AHP conference in Sophia gardens, which was a great success, and it was fantastic to see so many CSP members leading sessions and attending the event. We gave out copies of the “Easing the Pain” report and caught up with members who were in attendance.

## 3. Consultations

### a. Consultation on agreeing the parameters of practice for the registered nursing associate role

During 2023, a national project was undertaken by Welsh Government to explore the options and opportunities for the future development of the band 4 nursing role across NHS Wales  
**30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 - 11 December 2024.**

## 4. Forward Work Programme – Winter 2024

The Government has returned to some normality in Wales in September, once the expected There are new members on the Senedd Health committee and new Cabinet Member for Health. We have a planned Rehab workforce event in Welsh Labour’s conference, and an event planned with the other Professional Bodies in the early new year. Lobbying activity will continue to ramp up into the pre election year for Wales in 2025.

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