



# Health and Social Care Committee update

December 2023

 Senedd Cymru  
Welsh Parliament

## Dear colleague

Please see below an update on the work of the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee.

## Supporting people with chronic conditions

Thank you to everyone who responded to Phase 1 of our [inquiry](#) into the level and quality of support for people living with chronic conditions.

The clear message from the responses was the need to improve person-centred, holistic care, and stop focusing on individual cases in isolation.

Based on this, we have agreed terms of reference for Phase 2, and will begin taking further evidence in the new year, including:

- engaging with people with chronic conditions directly,
- stakeholder focus groups with organisations representing a range of chronic conditions, and
- some formal oral evidence sessions. All

the details are on our [website](#).

## Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016: post-legislative scrutiny

Over the last term, we have been looking at the impact and effectiveness of the [Nurse Staffing Levels \(Wales\) Act 2016](#), which requires health boards to calculate and maintain appropriate nurse staffing levels in adult acute medical and surgical hospital wards and paediatric ward.

As part of this, we have been hearing oral evidence from a range of stakeholders, as well as the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chief Nursing Officer.

We will prepare our draft report over the recess and consider it in the new year. You can follow our work on the [inquiry webpage](#).

## The Health Service Procurement (Wales) Bill

Stage 3 proceedings on the [Health Service Procurement \(Wales\) Bill](#) took place in plenary on 10 October 2023, and the Bill was passed by the Senedd on 14 November.

The Bill is waiting for Royal Assent, which is scheduled for the new year.

You can find more information about the Bill and the [legislative process](#) on the Senedd's website.

## Gynaecological cancers

On 6 December 2023, we published our [report](#); 'Unheard: Women's journey through gynaecological cancer' and a [summary](#) document.

It makes 26 recommendations to the Minister for Health and Social Services for improvements in the services available to women.

During this inquiry, we worked with Tenovus Cancer Care to ensure women's voices were at the heart of our work. Our Citizen Engagement Team recorded a series of video interviews giving women the chance to tell their stories. You can read more about their stories and watch the videos on the [Senedd blog](#).

We would like to re-iterate our thanks to all those who took part in our inquiry and shared their stories with us.

We expect a response from the Minister in early February.

## Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

As part of our ongoing watching brief of the special measures intervention, we held an evidence session with the interim Chair and Chief Executive of the Health Board on 23 November 2023.

If you missed it, you can [watch](#) the session again.

You can keep up with our work on this issue on our [website](#).

## European models of health and social care

We held a one-off evidence session on 21 September with experts in this field. We had a wide-ranging discussion which touched on:

- the key differences and similarities between models of health and social care in Wales, the UK and across Europe
- approaches to long-term care, including integration of health and social care, and
- the sustainability of the health and social care workforce in other European countries.

You can [watch](#) the session again on our website.

## General scrutiny with the Ministers with responsibility for health and social care

On 8 November, we held a general scrutiny session with the Minister for Health and Social Services, the deputy Minister for Social Services and the deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

We covered a range of areas including:

- the financial pressures facing health boards in Wales,
- challenges for the health and social care workforce,
- provision of mental health services, and
- waiting times in the NHS.

You can [watch](#) the session back, or read our follow-up [letter](#) to the Minister.

## Health Literacy

Last year, we published an Area of Research Interest (ARI) on health literacy.

Health literacy is about an individual's ability to find, understand, and act on health information, to know which health services to use, when to use them, and to be active partners in their care. It's also how relevant organisations meet those needs, enabling individuals to access, understand and use health information and services.

We have now considered a report produced for us by Dr Emily Marchant and Professor Tom Crick from Swansea University. The report will feed into our discussions on our forward work programme.

You can read the [report](#), and a [research article](#) that accompanies it, produced by the Senedd's Research Service, on our website.

## Other Committee activity

Our work during the spring term is expected to include:

- Evidence session with the Ministers with responsibility for health and social care to scrutinise the Welsh Government's draft budget 2024-25
- Pre-appointment hearings with the successful candidates for Chair of various health boards
- Evidence gathering as part of our inquiry into chronic conditions

You can find details of our [work to date](#), and our [upcoming work programme](#) on our website.

You can also keep up with the Committee's work by following us on Twitter at [@seneddhealth](#)

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