

Health and Social Care Committee Newsletter

Spring 2024



This newsletter provides an update on the work of the Health and Social Care Committee this term, as well as details of future work and how to get involved.

The Committee is keen that as many people as possible engage with our work. If you would like to get in touch, or provide feedback on this newsletter, please contact Seneddhealth@senedd.wales.

Supporting people with chronic conditions

This term, we have been hearing oral evidence from key stakeholders to inform phase 2 of the inquiry. We also held a stakeholder event at the end of February and have published a [note](#) of that meeting.

After the Easter recess, we will be holding our final evidence sessions before turning our attention to drafting the report.

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

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

Having completed our evidence-gathering before the Christmas break, we have now agreed and published our report, which makes a number of recommendations to the Minister for Health and Social Services. We expect to receive the Minister's response within 6 weeks and will review it before deciding on any next steps.

You can follow our work on the [inquiry webpage](#).

The Prevention of ill health – Obesity

We have agreed to begin working on a new inquiry, looking at the prevention of ill health specifically relating to obesity.

Obesity is recognised as one of the most significant public health challenges, both in the UK and internationally. Prevalence is rising in Wales (as elsewhere), with much higher levels of obesity in the most disadvantaged communities. Obesity is a key risk factor for a wide range of chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease (including stroke), and some cancers. It also impacts people's wellbeing, quality of life, and ability to work.

Our work will consider the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's strategy, regulations, and associated actions to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales.

We have launched an [open call](#) for written evidence; the deadline for responses is 7 June 2024. Full details about the inquiry, including the terms of reference and how to respond to the consultation, are available on our [webpage](#).

Gynaecological cancers

Since our last newsletter, we have received a response to our [report](#).

We will be debating our report and the Minister's [response](#) in plenary on 15 May 2024 and, in preparation for that, we have invited stakeholders to share their views with us on the Minister's response.

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25

On [17 January](#), we held an evidence session with the Minister for Health and Social Services, the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, and the Deputy Minister for Social Services to discuss the Welsh Government's draft budget 2024-25. You can [watch](#) the session on Senedd.tv.

Following that session, we published our [report](#) on the draft budget, which contained a number of recommendations to the Ministers, and we have now had their [response](#).

On 07 March, the Senedd [debated](#) the Welsh Government's final budget for 2024-25.

Pre-appointment hearings

On 24 January, the Committee held a pre-appointment hearing with the Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (UHB). On 30 January, the Minister for Health and Social Services confirmed the appointment of Dyfed Edwards to the post.

On [25 April](#), the Committee held pre-appointment hearings with the Welsh Government's preferred candidates for the Chairs of Swansea Bay UHB and Hywel Dda UHB. The appointments of Jan Williams and Neil Wooding (respectively) were subsequently confirmed. The Committee wishes each candidate well in their new role.

Reports of all pre and post-appointment hearings can be found on the [Committee's webpage](#).

Area of Research Interest: innovation for improvement in healthcare

We have recently published an [Area of Research Interest \(ARI\)](#) on innovation for improvement in healthcare.

We are interested in learning how the NHS could harness the power of emerging technologies to improve patient diagnosis, treatment and care, and we would like to hear from researchers working to develop new therapeutic approaches and the use of new technologies that could help to drive innovation in healthcare Wales.

Full details of the ARI, including how to register your expertise and research insights in this area, are available on our [website](#).

Forward work programme

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](#).