



“ A
HEALTHY
NATION ”

**WELSH CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO FOR HEALTH
ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2016**



**Ceidwadwyr
Cymreig**

**Welsh
Conservatives**

The state of the NHS in Wales proves Labour are not up to the job. Welsh Conservatives are the only Party to have opposed Labour's health cuts, and the only Party to publish a dedicated health manifesto outlining the real change Wales needs, to secure a healthier nation.

Darren Millar

FOREWORD

People across Wales have told us time and time again that our health services are their number one priority.

Our NHS impacts upon each and every one of us and our loved ones, and touches us at every stage of our lives.

Yet health services here in Wales - despite the dedicated efforts of hardworking frontline staff - are not always reaching their full potential under Labour.

Targets are routinely missed, cancer patients are being denied life-saving drugs and funding is not always spent effectively.

Labour, supported by Plaid Cymru and the Lib Dems, have starved the health budget of one billion pounds in recent years, making Wales the only UK nation to see health spending decline since 2010.

Put simply, the state of the NHS in Wales shows that Labour are not up to the job and that the time has come to secure real change.

This document sets out more details of our plans to transform the Welsh NHS and secure the real change our health service needs.

Underpinning those plans is a clear commitment to protect the health budget, guaranteeing more investment each and every year, including in primary care and mental health services.

It includes a dedicated £100million Cancer Patients' Fund, as part of a war on Wales' four biggest killers, boosting access to treatments and improving patient experiences and outcomes.

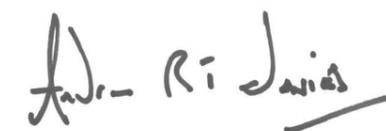
And we will offer security and dignity for those who require social care, by protecting £100,000 of capital assets and introducing a weekly cap on costs for people entering residential and nursing care.

This manifesto sets out a vision for a Welsh NHS which is better resourced, more accountable to those it serves, and delivers better outcomes for patients.

It is a plan to secure real change, supporting staff and enabling them to deliver world-class services we can all be proud of. We commend it to you.



Darren Millar,
Welsh Conservative Health Spokesman



Andrew RT Davies,
Leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the
National Assembly

Welsh Conservatives want a more accountable NHS which is better resourced and delivers high quality, safe and sustainable services as close to home as possible.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Increase health spending and improve efficiency

- Increase NHS expenditure in real terms, each and every year of the next Assembly term.
- Ring fence spending for mental health services.
- Increase investment in primary care.
- Tackle waste and inefficiency with a Wales-wide NHS Efficiency Task Force.
- Establish a £100 million Health Transformation Fund to support the modernisation of the Welsh NHS and make it fit for the 21st Century.

Increase patient choice

Establish a Patients' Choice Charter to provide:

- The right to choose a GP.
- The right to choose which hospital you are referred to for appointments and to access treatments.
- The right to choose to transfer your care if you've been waiting too long for treatment.

Improve accountability in the NHS

Make the Welsh NHS more accountable to those it serves by:

- Scrapping the system which allows Ministers to appoint health board members.
- Establishing directly elected Health Commissioners for each health board.

- Providing powers for Health Commissioners to set budgets, publish priorities, and hire and fire health board Chief Executives.
- Requiring Health Commissioners and Chief Executives to appear at least twice a year before local council committees and annually before the National Assembly committee responsible for the Welsh NHS.

Promote patient responsibility

- Introduce a charge for prescriptions for those who can afford it, subject to exemptions.
- Print the costs of prescriptions on NHS dispensed medicines.
- Provide patients with information on typical costs associated with the episodes of care they receive.
- Pilot the introduction of a charge for those who miss hospital appointments without good reason.
- Introduce tougher penalties for those who smoke in hospital grounds or abuse NHS staff.
- Encourage the use of minor injuries and ailments services as an alternative to GPs and emergency departments.
- Improve CCTV in emergency departments and on the ambulance fleet.

Promote Health Board responsibility

- Require health boards to consider provision in areas beyond their own boundaries when planning services, including across the English border.

- Overcome barriers between health, social care and other public services by creating a duty on health boards to plan services in partnership with local authorities.
- Publish public engagement and consultation standards for the Welsh NHS.
- Limit payoffs to senior NHS managers.

Promote Welsh Government responsibility

- No reorganisation of the health service during the Assembly term.
- Establish an independent NHS Performance Unit with responsibility for setting sensible targets which command widespread support from patients and clinicians.
- Ensure that all new commitments are fully funded.
- Undertake health impact assessments on all Assembly legislation.
- Legislate to provide health boards with the same financial flexibilities afforded to local authorities.
- Publish an annual NHS workforce plan.

Improve safety and standards in the Welsh NHS

- Commission an independent inquiry into the NHS in Wales to identify poor standards and bring forward recommendations to address them.

- Establish a fully independent and better resourced healthcare inspectorate.
- Establish a "scores on the doors" hospital rating system.
- Provide every patient with a named and accountable consultant on discharge from hospital.
- Publish a comprehensive hospital infection reduction strategy with an emphasis on preventative measures that start in the patient's home.
- Develop the role of community health councils in supporting high standards of care in the NHS.
- Improve the NHS complaints process, so that complaints are resolved more quickly and NHS organisations learn from mistakes.
- Introduce a system of registration for health care support workers.
- Require NHS staff to blow the whistle when they see evidence of patient safety being compromised.
- Enhance protection for those who blow the whistle on patient safety.
- Review critical care capacity to meet patient demand.

Improve emergency services

- Ensure that ambulances respond to at least 75% of immediately life-threatening calls within 8 minutes.
- Invest an additional £10 million annually in the Welsh Ambulance Service.

- Support Wales Air Ambulance by providing up to £3 million in match funding each year.
- Recruit 100 additional staff for the Welsh Ambulance Service.
- End the emergency department bottleneck by improving access to hospital beds for patients who need to be admitted.
- Train a new generation of first responders by introducing first aid to the school curriculum.
- Work with the independent sector when planning for the nursing and care workforce needs of Wales.
- Increase the number of specialist nurses, nurse prescribers and nurse consultants in the Welsh NHS.
- Develop the use of therapist prescriber and consultant therapist roles.
- Develop a rural health clinical specialism.

Tackle challenges in the recruitment and retention of NHS staff

- End uncertainty over service configuration in Wales.
- Introduce training contracts which tie in newly trained doctors for a number of years, in return for training bursaries.
- Establish a pilot of financial incentives to attract doctors to work in specialties or geographical areas which have shortages.
- Establish a pilot of financial incentives to encourage doctors in shortage specialties or geographical areas to remain in the workforce.
- Work with the UK Government to establish a joint performers list for clinicians between England and Wales to remove barriers to recruitment between the nations.
- Change training rotations so that doctors can choose to do their training in North Wales and the North West of England.
- Increase the number of doctor and nurse training places.

WAGE WAR ON WALES' BIGGEST KILLERS

We will implement specialist plans to guarantee improved outcomes in the fight against Wales' four biggest killers - cancer, heart disease, dementia and stroke.

CANCER	HEART DISEASE	DEMENTIA	STROKE
1. Improve access to modern cancer drugs.	1. Make Wales a nation of First Responders.	1. Work with dementia charities and other stakeholders to produce a National Dementia Plan for Wales.	1. Establish a dedicated stroke unit in every district general hospital in Wales.
2. Establish a national Mobile Cancer Treatment Service to prevent unnecessary journeys for patients accessing clinics and chemotherapy treatment.	2. Introduce training in the delivery of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillators into secondary schools.	2. Make Wales the first dementia-friendly nation in the UK.	2. Require health boards to provide stroke patients with access to multidisciplinary clinical and therapist teams.
3. Improve access to modern radiotherapy treatments.	3. Improve rapid access to Automated External Defibrillators for those who suffer a heart attack by making them available in all major public buildings, schools and shopping centres.	3. Ensure that more people living with dementia receive a formal, early diagnosis.	3. Provide 24/7 access to clotbusting thrombolysis in all parts of Wales.
4. Establish an annual public education campaign to raise awareness of the causes and symptoms of cancer.	4. Establish an annual public education campaign, in partnership with the third sector, to raise awareness of heart disease and cardiac arrest.	4. Improve support for carers of people living with dementia by extending free bus travel to the principal carer.	4. Invest in early supported discharge services, to give stroke victims the best chance of recovery.
5. Reduce the referral to diagnosis target for patients to 28 days by 2020.	5. Reduce the referral to treatment target for cardiac patients to 18 weeks.	5. Establish an annual public education campaign, in partnership with the third sector, to raise awareness of dementia.	5. Improve access to home adaptations.
6. Provide a follow-up appointment guarantee so that all patients are seen within a maximum of six months after the conclusion of their initial cancer treatment episode.	6. Ensure consistent access to cardiac rehabilitation and specialist nurses across Wales.	6. Protect dementia training time for all health and care workers, and introduce dementia awareness training into the national curriculum.	6. Establish an annual public education campaign, in partnership with the third sector, to raise awareness of the causes and symptoms of stroke and transient ischemic attacks (TIA).
7. Appoint a Cancer Patients' Champion to hold the Welsh Government and health boards to account for the delivery of national and local Cancer Delivery Plans.	7. Increase funding for research into new treatments for heart disease patients.	7. Increase funding for research into new treatments and searching for a cure for dementia.	7. Increase funding for research into new treatments for stroke patients.

Improve mental health and wellbeing

- Increase spending on mental health services in Wales with a better balance between services for children and adults.
- Establish a new 28 day target for access to talking therapies, for children and adults, by 2021.
- Ensure that crisis teams are available 24/7 at all major emergency departments.
- Increase the capacity of mental health services for children and young people.
- Improve access to mental health support for women before, during and after pregnancy.
- Promote mindfulness as a means of preventing poor mental health and supporting recovery.
- Take action to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination.

Prioritise public health

- Appoint a Deputy Minister for Public Health to focus on improving the health of the nation by co-ordinating cross-cutting portfolios.
- Require local authorities to appoint a Public Health Champion to support their efforts in promoting public health.
- Improve access to screening for cancer, diabetes and eye conditions.
- Work to secure a minimum alcohol price of 50p per unit.
- Embed public health into the school curriculum.

- Increase physical activity rates amongst children and young people.
- Scrap anti-vaping laws and pilot the use of e-cigarettes in NHS smoking cessation services.
- Appoint a dedicated nurse in every secondary school, further education college and university.
- Promote awareness and development of safe walking and cycling routes, and the benefits of active travel.
- Work with Welsh food and drink manufacturers to reduce the sugar and salt content of their products.

Improve end of life care

- Increase annual funding for Welsh hospices by £10 million.
- Support the development of hospice at home services.
- Enable more people to die in the place they choose.
- Maintain funding for hospital chaplaincy services to ensure that the spiritual needs of patients are met.
- Reduce the number of days people spend in hospital during their last year of life.
- Improve access to, and develop, palliative care services for those with degenerative conditions other than cancer.

End uncertainty over hospital services in Wales

- No hospital closures during the Assembly term.
- Maintain all existing emergency departments across Wales.
- Re-establish minor injuries units at Colwyn Bay and Tenby Hospitals, and in the Rhyl/Prestatyn area.
- Extend the operating hours of minor injuries services in Newtown.
- Maintain consultant-led maternity services at all three district general hospitals in North Wales.
- Re-establish full-time paediatric and special care baby services at Withybush Hospital.
- Establish a Community Hospital Development Fund to encourage the innovative use of community hospitals across Wales.

Improve access to primary care and GP services

- Invest in new primary care facilities.
- Increase spending on primary care in each and every year during the next Assembly term.
- Provide every patient with a named and accountable GP.
- Encourage GP practices to work together in providing access to appointments in their localities during the evenings and at weekends.
- Improve the skill-mix in the general practice workforce, to include wider use of specialist nurses, pharmacists, mental health professionals and therapists.

- Reduce referrals to secondary care by making greater use of diagnostic technology in general practice.
- Co-locate primary care services alongside emergency departments.
- Develop a new Out of Hours Primary Care Service to replace existing GP Out of Hours services across Wales.
- Review the need for a new contract for pharmacists, opticians and dentists, which includes their role in responding to unscheduled care and managing chronic conditions.

Boost funding for health research and technology

- Support innovation in healthcare by providing £50 million in match-funding for research into new treatments and cures.
- Create an annual prize fund to promote the development of health related mobile phone applications.
- Make greater use of telemedicine to reduce the need for long and inconvenient patient journeys.
- Establish a Best Practice in Healthcare Exchange to share learning in the NHS.

Remove barriers between Health and Social Care

- Establish a cross-party Commission on the long-term, sustainable provision of care.
- Legislate to require health and social care providers to work collaboratively, delivering a truly integrated health system for the first time.
- Subject joint-working between health and social care to inspection and require the inspectorate to publish indicators of performance.
- Establish a £10 million Care Innovation Fund to promote joint working between health boards and social services departments.
- Increase the number of step-down care beds in the community.
- Implement a £400 weekly cap on residential care costs, offering security to people entering such settings.
- Protect £100,000 of assets for those in residential care, providing dignity and ensuring people do not lose their life savings to care costs.

Promote independence and support carers

- Promote independent living and plan for future needs by offering voluntary Stay at Home assessments for those reaching pension age.
- Support and promote the use of personal budgets and direct payments in social care.
- Consult on the introduction of a right to respite for carers.
- Provide free bus passes to the principal carers of those with dementia.