

UNISON Cymru/Wales response to Welsh Government consultation on draft guidance to replace the Service Development and Commissioning Directive for Non-Chronic Malignant Pain 2008

1. UNISON Cymru/Wales represents over 35,000 members of staff across all sectors of health and notes the proposals of Welsh Government regarding the new draft guidance to the Service Development and Commissioning Directive for Non-Chronic Malignant Pain 2008.

2. UNISON Cymru/Wales recognises these proposals put the patient at the centre of care planning, which is essential. UNISON Cymru/Wales believes that these proposals will work well for patients, as long as they are implemented correctly at board level.

3. Our health and care services are the bedrock of our communities, helping the sick, weak and vulnerable and providing care and support whenever it is needed as well as being the focus of most Welsh Government expenditure and policy.

4. UNISON Cymru/Wales opposes privatisation, marketisation and fragmentation of our health and care services in any form and we welcome the Welsh Government's commitment in Wales in health. We are concerned about the creeping privatisation in the care sector in Wales. The use of zero hour contracts; casualisation of the workforce and challenges are local government funding impact on the provision of a holistic health and care service.

5. Given the outcome of the Royal Commission earlier this year and the move to the integration of Health and Social Care, we need to work together, through the Workforce Partnership Council and our negotiating bodies to ensure the best possible support for people working within the public sector in Wales.

6. UNISON Cymru/Wales believes patients and their needs should be at the heart of all decision making. To support this, UNISON Cymru/Wales recommends that Welsh Government should enforce an Ethical Care Charter across the NHS and care sectors.
7. UNISON's Ethical Care Charter places the needs of care users, dignity of patients and investment in the care workforce above profit-making considerations. This wouldn't short-change clients and would allow for the recruitment and retention of a more stable workforce through good working conditions, sustainable pay and high training levels.
8. UNISON Cymru/Wales strongly supports the integration of Health and Social Care. Previously, allowing the private sector a greater role in social care has not increased the quality and choice for all patients. Instead, it has created an unregulated sector where there is little incentive for employers to invest in training.
9. UNISON Cymru/Wales believes the integration of Health and Social Care would benefit everyone, including our members. UNISON Cymru/Wales, as the largest Trade Union in Wales (and the UK) expects to be fully involved in discussions concerning the future of the care sector. Already we are seeing an increase in the two-tier workforce where staff from Health and Local Government are paid different rates of pay for doing the same job and are on different Terms and Conditions. Raising the generally inferior social care employment conditions should be a priority.
10. Care workers, including those whose work is informal, must be provided with professional support. Additionally, UNISON Cymru/Wales seeks formal registration of all care workers paid for by the Welsh Government. Whilst there is currently a phased roll out of registration, this is proving confusing to employees as well as to the public.
11. UNISON Cymru/Wales believes that a better patient experience can be created by allowing patient information to be shared between health boards as people would not be forced to

undergo repeat tests with different health boards. This would have the added bonus of saving time and money as well as moving us towards a 'One Public Service' as Rhodri Morgan championed when First Minister.

12. Q1. Services need to be more consistent across Wales. Living with persistent pain is debilitating and having to travel long distances can be impossible. We need to bring the service closer to the patients home to ensure all our citizens have access to this support. Added to that, and in support of the integration of Health and Social Care, the provision of 'One Stop shops' where services are all on the one site/complex will assist. This means Health services such as persistent pain 'clinics' as well as accessing social services care. Patients have complex lives, and in particular, where they have been forced out of employment by illness, we need to treat them with dignity and respect. Travelling long distances when you have to change a colostomy bag (for instance) is undignified at best and a barrier to accessing a service.

13. Solutions to living with persistent pain are not going to have a 'one size fits all' remedy – we need to look at the examples of best practice and seek to deliver a holistic service as close as possible to the patients home, whilst ensuring all our professionals have the same terms and conditions of employment (levelled up) and appropriate career progression. For example, Occupational Therapy can be provided by Local Government or Health, yet in Local Government there is not the same care progression that there is in Health. This not only impacts on the professional person, but limits the potential of the service to the country – good career progression, as there is in Health, helps focus activity on best practice. We should provide all our professionals with the best possible environment to develop and progress.

14. Q5. Advice provision needs to be multi faceted. People access information from different perspectives throughout their lives which can change as their medical condition changes. All formats – electronic; posters etc. it would be useful also to have a Wales-wide leaflet

explaining how persistent pain affects people and what we in Wales are doing about it. Many patients are unaware of 'pain clinics', especially as the provision is not consistent across Wales.

15. Q6-8. As well as self-management techniques we need to provide easy, affordable (preferably free) access to leisure centres and swimming pools. Also, promotion of the clubs and societies that foster friendship are important – loneliness as your world becomes smaller makes it more likely that pain becomes the only point of reference, thereby exacerbating the negative impacts on lives.

16. Treatments other than medication too should be more accessible (which means free or subsidised, if there is to be equality of access). The cost of living with pain can be very high as services may need to come to you (for the relevant fee).