

Cafodd yr ymateb hwn ei gyflwyno i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

HSC PSS 22

Ymateb gan: | Response from: [Confensiwn Pensiynwyr Cenedlaethol Cymru](#) | [National Pensioners Convention Wales](#)

Blaenoriaethau cychwynnol a nodwyd gan y Pwyllgor Initial priorities identified by the Committee

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi nodi nifer o flaenoriaethau posibl ar gyfer ei waith yn ystod y Chweched Senedd, gan gynnwys: iechyd y cyhoedd a gwaith ataliol; y gweithlu iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys diwylliant sefydliadol a lles staff; mynediad at wasanaethau iechyd meddwl; arloesi ar sail tystiolaeth ym maes iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol; cymorth a gwasanaethau i ofalwyr di-dâl; mynediad at wasanaethau adsefydlu i'r rhai sydd wedi cael COVID ac i eraill; a mynediad at wasanaethau ar gyfer cyflyrau cronig tymor hir, gan gynnwys cyflyrau cyhyrsgerbydol.

The Committee has identified several potential priorities for work during the Sixth Senedd, including: public health and prevention; the health and social care workforce, including organisational culture and staff wellbeing; access to mental health services; evidence-based innovation in health and social care; support and services for unpaid carers; access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services; and access to services for long-term chronic conditions, including musculoskeletal conditions.

C1. Pa rai o'r materion uchod ydych chi'n credu y dylai'r Pwyllgor roi blaenoriaeth iddynt, a pham?

Q1. Which of the issues listed above do you think should be a priority, and why?

NPC Wales believes that improvements should be made to the health and social care structure for the benefit of service users and the workforce. Better integration of services and professionalisation of the care sector should be prioritised, improving wellbeing and career opportunities for workers and improved quality of care for service users. For too long, social care has been the poor relation of the NHS and this must change.

Older unpaid carers often find it difficult to access support as information and advice services continue to move online. Information regarding services and support should be made widely available and accessible in all formats. Improved integration of health and care services would improve the accessibility of information, but further work needs to be done to support unpaid carers and to ensure their physical and mental wellbeing.



NPC Wales has concerns that COVID has encouraged a faster move to remote or online consultations with health workers, leaving many older people unable to access essential services, such as GP appointments. The main concern is that this move to digital access will continue post-COVID, leaving those who are digitally excluded at greater risk. Moving forward, a blended approach that is person-centred and offers appropriate access needs to be adopted.

We welcome “evidence-based innovation in health and social care” being included in the Senedd’s priority list. We would like to see the success of new technologies in improving people’s lives and helping improve delivery of health and social services given greater acknowledgement and the public made more aware of the benefits.

Blaenoriaethau allweddol ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd

Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd

C2. Yn eich barn chi, pa flaenoriaethau allweddol eraill y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd mewn perthynas â:

- a) gwasanaethau iechyd;**
- b) gofal cymdeithasol a gofalwyr;**
- c) adfer yn dilyn COVID?**

Q2. In your view, what other key priorities should the Committee consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to:

- a) health services;**
 - b) social care and carers;**
 - c) COVID recovery?**
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Gwasanaethau iechyd

Health services

Improved access to preventative services, including social prescribing. Improved access to primary health care, especially GP appointments.

NPC Wales calls on the Welsh Government to start the process to enable the development of an integrated National Health and Care Service in Wales.

NPC Wales notes that Welsh Government has stated:

The Welsh Government will help those who are least able to pay for the care they need.

Continue to cap non-residential care fees and maintain the £50,000 capital limit, helping people hold onto more of their savings before paying for care than any other UK nation.

Continue to cap the costs of non-residential social care at the current £100 maximum per week.

Pursue a sustainable UK solution so that care is free for all at the point of need.

And significantly: If the Conservative UK Government breaks its promise again and fails to bring forward a fully funded scheme within the current UK parliament, we will consult on a potential Wales-only solution to meet our long-term care needs.

Gofal Cymdeithasol a gofalwyr

Social care and carers

The social care system in Wales will not improve without significant investment and integration with health services. The COVID pandemic has exposed the lack of resilience in the current social care system.

Professionalisation of the sector will protect the system for the future, offering care workers a clear career path and higher pay, ensuring higher quality provision for service users.

Wales NPC notes that Welsh Government has committed to ensure that care workers are paid the Real Living Wage during the next Senedd term.

Unpaid carers need easy to access information about their rights and the support and services available to them.

Adfer yn dilyn COVID COVID recovery

Ensure the retention of adequate general practice, hospital capacity beds, out-patient services and preventative services such as podiatry. Dealing with waiting lists and appointment backlogs should not relegate new referrals to second-class service – priority should be given to those in the most need.

Members of NPC Wales have experienced issues accessing GP services owing to the move to online and telephone consultations. In many cases, a face-to-face appointment was required to diagnose a new condition. Although NPC Wales acknowledges that online consultations can enable primary care services to deal with appointment backlogs, they should only be used when appropriate, not as the default – services should be person-centred.

Invisible illness: When others can't see your Pain.

This problem is going to increase as many people will be suffering the long-term effects of coronavirus (long COVID).

When someone who breaks their arm, throws out their back, or experiences another form of injury they may be in rough shape, but others can see their injury and understand their limitations.

But the millions of people who are living with Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and other forms of pain that are "Invisible Illnesses", explaining what's wrong in another side effect of their condition.

They have to put up with challenging, often painful, and sometimes debilitating conditions every day, but on top of that, may have to face scepticism from people – friends, family, and workmates, as well as strangers – who don't understand what's wrong.

The Sunflower lanyard is intended to be a subtle but visible sign enabling airport staff to recognise that the wearer (or someone with them) may require some extra help, time or assistance when moving through the airport.

The success of this simple but effective design and its positive response it has received, has now increased awareness of the challenges that some children and adults with hidden disabilities face.

Over one million lanyards have been provided both to businesses as well as directly to the general public. Although it has mostly been focused on the UK.

It would be good if Welsh Government could facilitate a scheme like the Sunflower lanyard so that people with hidden disabilities, including people with long Covid, could use it, if they wish, to flag up that they do require assistance.

Unrhyw faterion eraill

Any other issues

C3. A oes unrhyw faterion eraill yr hoffech dynnu sylw'r Pwyllgor atynt?

Q3. Are there any other issues you wish to draw to the Committee's attention?

Older people's confidence in engaging with the outside world has decreased. Many have worries about access to healthcare and other public services, shopping, cash, exercise, libraries, and entertainment.

NPC Wales launched a digital inclusion/exclusion campaign, *Connections for All*, on 1 February 2021, which supports the Older People's Commissioner's report, *No-one left behind*. In addition to our comments on digital exclusion in Q1, we would stress the need for health and social care services to signpost patients to the resources widely available to help them get online.