

Priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Share your views

The **Health and Social Care Committee** has been set up by the Senedd to look at policy and legislation, and to hold the Welsh Government to account on specific issues. This includes the physical, mental and public health and well-being of the people of Wales, including the social care system.

During autumn 2021, the Committee will be considering its strategic approach and forward work programme. To make sure that we can take account of what you think the most important issues are, we would like you to share your views on:

1. The initial priorities for the Sixth Senedd identified by the Committee (see below).
2. What other key priorities the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to: health services, social care and carers, and COVID recovery.

How to share your views

To share your views, please complete this form and send it **by 16.00 on Friday 17 September** to SeneddHealth@senedd.wales, or by post to Health and Social Care Committee, Welsh Parliament, Cardiff, CF99 1SN.

You can find more information about how to share your views at the end of this document, including guidance on providing written evidence, information about the Senedd's two official languages, and details about how we will use the information you provide.



About you

This section of the form asks you some questions about yourself and the capacity in which you are responding to this consultation. This will help us to process and use your information in line with our [privacy policy](#).

Your details	
1. Name:	Alyson Thomas
2. Email address:	Alyson.thomas2@wales.nhs.uk
3. Would you like to be added to the Health and Social Care Committee's contacts list in order to receive updates about our work?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>You can unsubscribe at any time by emailing SeneddHealth@senedd.wales.</i>	
4. Please tell us in what capacity you are responding to this consultation.	
I am an individual responding in a personal capacity	
I am an individual responding in a professional capacity (please tell us what your job title is)	
I am responding on behalf of an organisation (please tell us which organisation and what your job title is)	Chief Executive, Board of Community Health Councils in Wales, responding on behalf of the 7 Community Health Councils in Wales
If you are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate. They can do this by sending us an email to SeneddHealth@senedd.wales .	
5. Are you under 13 years old?	
I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.	
We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.	
I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.	
I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 1: Initial priorities identified by the Committee

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.

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

You can comment on as many or few of the issues as you want.

In your answers, you might want to think about:

- What impact or outcomes could be achieved through any work by the Committee?
- How the Committee might address the issue?
- When any Committee work should take place?
- Whether there are any specific groups, communities or stakeholders that the Committee should involve or hear from in any work?

Over the past year, the 7 Community Health Councils have heard from people and communities in all parts of Wales about their views and experiences of NHS services throughout these most challenging times.

Thinking about what we have heard, CHCs agree that the following areas should be priorities for work during the Sixth Senedd:

- **Access to mental health services**

Throughout the pandemic, we've heard from people about their worries that the NHS is not equipped to respond to a need to provide more support early enough for people – and particularly children and young people - who may need help to improve their mental health and well-being for the first time.

We've also heard concerns that people living with severe and enduring mental health conditions have found it more difficult to access the care and support they need - in the way they need it.

In many parts of Wales, mental health services were struggling to meet people's needs before the pandemic. This has been compounded during the pandemic.

Over the past 18 months, some CHCs have published reports of people's experiences of mental health services during the pandemic. These can be found at the following links:

[Mental Health Services - North Wales Community Health Council \(nhs.wales\)](https://hywelddachc.nhs.wales/files/reports/every-mind-matters-report/)

<https://hywelddachc.nhs.wales/files/reports/every-mind-matters-report/>

Public health and prevention

We've heard how important it is that people feel supported to stay safe and healthy. This includes having access to clear advice, practical support and information that is easy to access and understand.

Access to services for long term chronic conditions, including musculoskeletal conditions

Throughout the pandemic we've heard from lots of people living with long term health conditions about the impact of the pandemic on their condition, and on their overall well-being.

Many people have shared their fears, and in many cases experience of worsening health, and the impact of living in pain while waiting for treatment.

Our national report 'Feeling Forgotten' covers some of what we've heard, and one CHC has published a report on the experiences of people living in pain waiting for orthopaedic surgery. These can be found at the following links:

<https://boardchc.nhs.wales/files/what-weve-heard-from-you/feeling-forgotten-waiting-for-care-and-treatment-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

The health and social care workforce, including organisational culture and staff wellbeing

CHCs have heard and seen for themselves throughout the pandemic about its impact on the health and social care workforce, and in turn what this means for people's experience of NHS care.

People most often judge their NHS experience on how well they feel looked after and cared for and about by the staff involved in their care and treatment. We have heard about the impact of tired, exhausted and stressed staff on behaviours across all parts of the NHS.

This includes reception/first point of contact staff whose interaction with patients and families are so important in accessing the right care in the right way at the right time.

CHCs have also heard and seen the impact on patients when staff in different parts of the health and social care system are not clear about a patient's whole care pathway, or if capacity challenges in one part of the system leads to difficulties in accessing care in another.

Support and services for unpaid carers

CHCs continually hear from people about the vital care and support they receive from family members and loved ones.

We hear frequently about the impact of caring responsibilities on the lives of those family members and loved ones during the pandemic, when people's need for care and support were greater.

Our national reports cover some of what we've heard in these areas. These can be found at the following link:

[What we've heard from you - Board of Community Health Councils in Wales \(nhs.wales\)](#)

Access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services

The suspension and reduction in access to key rehabilitation services during the pandemic has had a profound and often heart breaking impact on some people we've heard from.

We know that many people in Wales felt that the community pathways approach to supporting people with long COVID hasn't been as good as the long COVID clinic approach in England, and wanted Wales to continue to learn and develop services to better meet their needs.

For others recovering from surgery and other treatments, shortages in areas like physiotherapy has been worrying for many people.

Our national report 'Feeling Forgotten' covers some of what we've heard. This can be found at the following link:

<https://boardchc.nhs.wales/files/what-weve-heard-from-you/feeling-forgotten-waiting-for-care-and-treatment-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Question 2: Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd

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?**

You can comment on as many or few of the issues as you want.

In your answers, you might want to think about:

- What impact or outcomes could be achieved through any work by the Committee?
- How the Committee might address the issue?
- When any Committee work should take place?
- Whether there are any specific groups, communities or stakeholders that the Committee should involve or hear from in any work?

Access to General Practitioners (GPs) and dentists, and the development of primary care services

Over the past 6 months, CHCs have heard most of all about the challenges people are facing – in all parts of Wales – in getting access to see a GP for both routine and urgent care.

These difficulties are resulting in increased anxiety and frustration for many people. For others, we have heard that the difficulties have had a profound effect on their diagnosis (both in terms of late and missed diagnoses).

We've also heard about some of the developments introduced to help people access GP services in different ways. For many people these developments have made a positive difference in the way they can access their GP. For others, their introduction has created more problems, if they are used as the only option.

Even when positive developments have been introduced, they are not always available or used consistently, and this has also caused difficulties for many people.

Some CHCs have published reports on what they have heard in their local areas – the issues raised in these reports are consistent

with what we are hearing across Wales. The reports can be found at the following links:

<https://aneurinbevanchc.nhs.wales/what-we-have-to-say/report-library/reports/chc-survey-gp-access-report-may-2021/>

<https://powyschc.nhs.wales/files/report-library/report-of-gp-access-survey-november-2020/>

In response to what CHCs were hearing in their local communities, some have explored the issue of routine dental access for patients. A consistent theme is the absence of NHS dental capacity for routine care.

Whilst in general, urgent or emergency care is available, the long term oral health of the nation is at risk with related risks to physical health because preventative care is not easily available for significant numbers of the population.

CHCs are particularly concerned that this is resulting in a two tier system, where those who can afford to pay for private care can access a dentist routinely, whilst those who cannot continue to be disadvantaged.

COVID recovery planning – involving people and communities in the redesign of NHS services

People want to clearly see how NHS services will recover – and over what time period. We know that previous ways of tackling waiting lists will not work this time around, and that creativity and innovation is key to tackling backlogs.

When doing this, people want to see the things that have worked well for them during the pandemic continue into the future. This includes things like digital healthcare, health and care partners (including the 3rd sector) working effectively together within local communities, etc.

People don't want a 'one size fits all' approach – health and care services must be delivered flexibly, in a way that meets peoples' individual needs.

Recovery plans that involve redesigning services need to tackle – the health inequalities that have been so devastatingly demonstrated throughout the pandemic, so that wherever you live and whatever your background and characteristics, people in Wales can be confident of support to stay healthy and well, to get the care and treatment they need when they need it in the way they need it.

NHS recovery plans cannot be developed in isolation – health and care planners must work together. They must avoid any postcode lottery for health and care services, and focus on delivering equitably for people living in all parts of Wales in a way that places equal value on physical and mental health services, and health and social care provision.

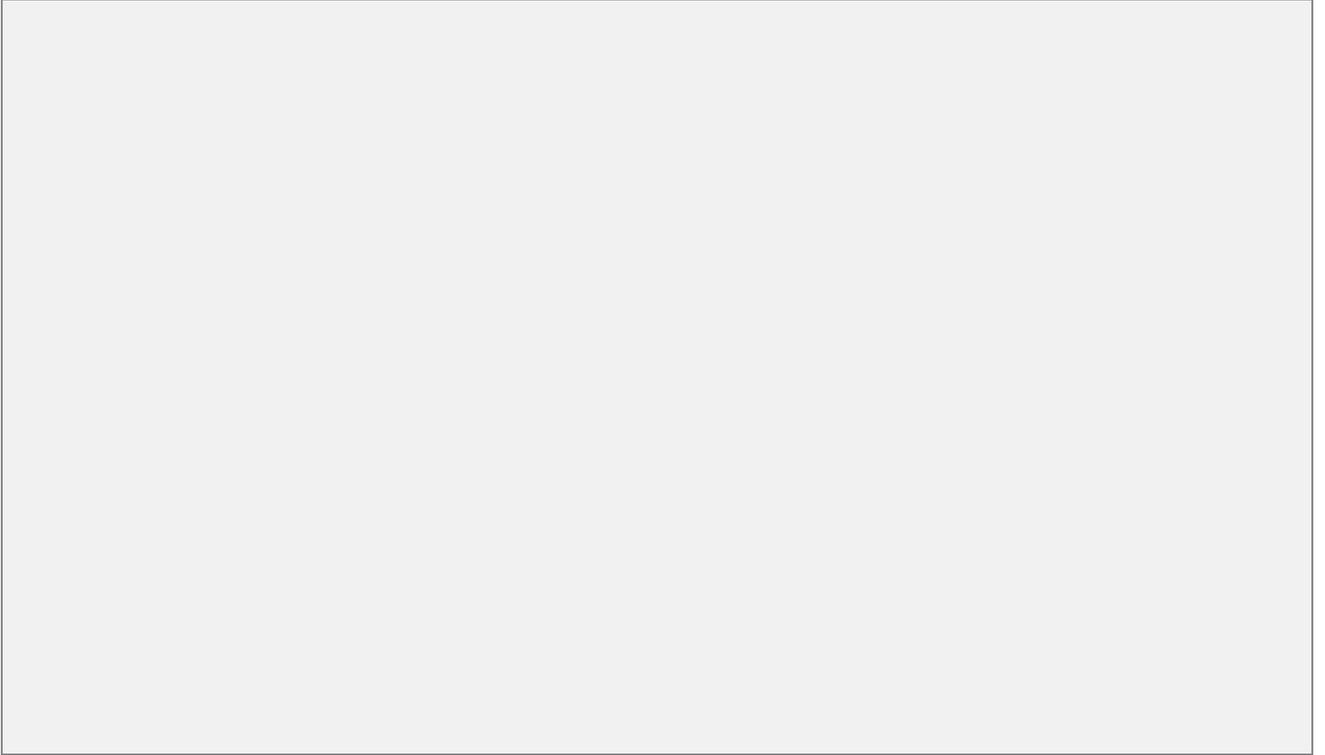
OUR health and care services for the future must be designed and developed WITH people – and not DONE TO them. People in Wales care so passionately about their health and care services and the people who deliver those services – they must have their SAY in their services for the future.

People understand that during the pandemic things needed to change quickly and this meant it was not possible to engage and consult people in the usual way.

But designing sustainable services for the future is different – this MUST be done together, through continuous engagement and public consultation whenever this is appropriate.

Question 3: Any other issues

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



Submitting evidence

Guidance on providing written evidence

If you have any questions about this consultation or providing written evidence, please contact us at SeneddHealth@senedd.wales or on 0300 200 6565. You may also wish to read the advice on "[Getting involved with committees](#)", which explains how to prepare and submit evidence to Senedd committees.

Official languages

The Senedd has two official languages, Welsh and English. In line with the [Senedd's Official Languages Scheme](#), we request that you submit your response in both languages if you are able to do so. If your response is not submitted bilingually, we will publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only. We expect other organisations to implement their own standards or schemes and to comply with their statutory obligation.

How we will use your information

General information regarding consultations, which you should consider carefully before submitting a response to the Committee, is available in our [privacy notice](#).

How to submit your response

We prefer to receive evidence digitally (for both practical and sustainability purposes). Please send an electronic copy of your form to SeneddHealth@senedd.wales.

If you cannot provide evidence digitally, you can send a copy to:

Health and Social Care Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Responses should be submitted no later than **16.00 on 17 September 2021**.