



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Minister praises health workers after 3-day visit to frontline staff in Wales

Health Minister Edwina Hart today (30 August) praised the commitment of nurses and other frontline NHS staff after meeting staff and patients' groups the length and breadth of Wales on a series of "unannounced" visits. She plans to make more informal visits in the future to listen to staff and public opinion and to see for herself what conditions are like in the NHS.

Mrs Hart said:

It was really useful to informally drop in at hospitals and for me to speak with and listen to the concerns of frontline staff and patients groups. This was a good chance to listen to people's concerns.

I met a lot of nurses and saw nurse-led facilities and it was a good opportunity to discuss the issues that are affecting the staff who are delivering healthcare in Wales.

Mrs Hart said the issues that were raised with her included:

- Agenda for Change
- Violence against NHS staff
- Delayed Transfers of Care
- Palliative Care
- Consultation over hospital reconfiguration

After listening to what staff and patients groups have told me, I will now take their views and concerns back with me to feed into future meetings with health officials at the Welsh Assembly Government.

Added Mrs Hart:

These are very real concerns for staff. Informally meeting people on the frontline is the best way of seeing the NHS as staff and patients see it – rather than on an official visit. I was able to speak directly to staff because that's important and very useful for me to get their views and take them into account.

She visited a range of hospitals from Morriston in Swansea to the smaller rural Newtown Hospital.

It was good to see how services were provided in a rural area like Powys and at larger hospitals in cities like Swansea, added Mrs Hart.

In addition to visiting hospitals in South, West, Mid and North Wales Mrs Hart also visited

Nightingale House Hospice and spoke with two North Wales Action Groups – campaigners concerned about the future plans for Prestatyn Community and Llandudno hospitals.

Mrs Hart said:

These are groups representing local communities in Prestatyn and Llandudno and it is important that I meet them to get their views.

At Prestatyn, in particular, they were concerned about the consultation. They told me that they wanted to see more openness in the way consultations were carried out in the future. I believe that the consultations over the future of hospitals needs to be transparent and fair.

I have to say that I have been really impressed by the commitment of the nurses and other frontline staff everywhere in Wales.

We talked about many issues, important issues to staff, important issues for me.

One of the main concerns is over aggression and violence against healthcare staff. What is happening to nurses and other health workers while they are providing a committed service is horrendous.

I have also been looking into the particular issue of cleanliness and infection control.

On the issue of Delayed Transfers of Care, Mrs Hart said the clear message from staff was

there is a need to get things right in the community and deal with the issue of what individual people want.

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