

24 November 2019

Dear *Dai*,

Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Bill

I write following the publication of the reports from the Assembly's Health Social Care & Sport, Finance and Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committees on the above Bill.

The Board and CHCs would like to thank you for continuing to support the need for an independent and genuinely stronger people's voice body for health and social care in Wales. We also recognise that much of the evidence that was provided by CHC representatives and other organisations has been consistent and considered and reflected in the Bill and the recommendations included in the document.

As indicated in the evidence provided CHCs have welcomed the broad aims for the new body set out by the Welsh Government in the Bill. We think that the Bill's contents go some way to reflect what people tell us is important to them.

We were pleased to see, for example, that the proposals intend that the new body will:

- engage directly with people in different ways

- reflect the views and represent the interests of people in health and social care by making representations to health and care bodies (including on service changes)
- provide support to people under 18 who want to make a complaint about the NHS
- be a stand-alone, independent body outside the NHS that can employ its own staff and recruit its own volunteer members.

However, CHCs continues to believe that the proposals for setting up a new people's voice must be made stronger in some key areas so that the new body is equipped with the right tools to do the job across Wales. Some of these suggestions are included in the scrutiny committee recommendations.

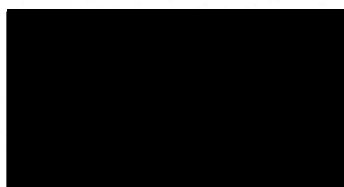
We therefore believe that the proposals should be amended so that the following key principles, governing the design and operation of the new citizen voice body, are enshrined in law:

- The citizen voice body must be able to engage directly with service users whilst they are accessing care through a right of access to health and care settings
- People should be able to clearly see how their views and experiences have informed and influenced the decisions made by health and care bodies.
- Health and care bodies should have a duty to help and assist a citizen voice body meet its aims and deliver its functions.
- The citizen voice body needs a local, regional and national focus, supported by a strong framework of volunteer membership.

- The Citizen Voice Body may make representations to Welsh Ministers.
- A citizen voice body needs all the tools and resources to do the job.

Thank you once again for your support and we trust that the Bill will now continue through to the second stage of the process.

Yours sincerely



Chief Officer
Board of Community Health Councils in Wales