

Prime Minister

2.

Mr Edwards proposes a separate consultation paper on NHS in Wales. See in particular proposal for a new quango at "x" on leaf.



Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-233 6106 (Llinell Union)

WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
01-233 6106 (Direct Line)

Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

From The Secretary of State for Wales

MAP 4/1/81

mb
4 July 1980

Dear Mr. Jenkin,

TPM

Thank you for the copy of your letter of 1 July to Willie Whitelaw setting out your proposals for action in England. I have of course been kept closely in touch with the development of your thinking and there is nothing in your proposals which I would want to take issue on.

You and colleagues will however want to be aware of the rather different prospects in Wales. We had a substantial volume of comment following the issue of "Patients First" (including an undertow of criticism that we had not published a separate paper) and I feel I must reply to it at some length. It did not provide a sufficient basis of support for my proposals to retain the existing 8 health authorities in Wales to enable me to confirm them finally at this stage, indeed there was considerable pressure, most notably from my own constituency and Dyfed at large, for new smaller authorities based on districts as in England. But evident in this was a good deal of misunderstanding about the different realities in Wales and I remain far from convinced that it would be beneficial to incur the trauma of breaking up the existing authorities here or to incur the considerable extra administrative cost which it would undoubtedly mean here. There has also been considerable pressure for changes at the all-Wales level, based on criticism of the way the Welsh Office carries out the strategic "regional" role and on the lack of opportunity for public debate which follows from the absence of an RHA here.

What I have in mind therefore is a document - which I hope would issue at about the same time as your own - which would announce certain decisions in keeping with what you propose for England - notably on Community Health Councils and Family Practitioner Committees - and for the rest would explain the reasoning behind my original proposals in much greater detail and confirm them provisionally while offering further consultations before they are finalised. As part of this I am laying great stress on the importance of delegation of responsibility.

/within

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
Department of Health & Social Security
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant & Castle
LONDON SE1 6BY



within authorities to local level - what you call "units" and I am calling "divisions" - and am calling on authorities to consult locally straight away on the pattern of "divisions" which they would propose to introduce. I hope this will help to produce a more favourable response to my proposals this time.

At the all-Wales level I shall obviously be rejecting firmly any idea of a fully-fledged RHA in Wales but I have to acknowledge force in the criticism, particularly about the absence of machinery in Wales for the discussion of health service policies and priorities for the country as a whole - except of course in Parliament itself. I would like to go some way to meet this criticism, and I am also anxious to encourage the health service in Wales to accept responsibility for running certain all-Wales activities themselves without the intervention of the Welsh Office. What I have in mind is that management support functions which need co-ordination should be carried out by a joint committee of the 9 main Authorities supported by a small staff unit and that strategic planning matters should be discussed in public by an advisory council which would essentially bring together the Authority chairmen and representatives of the main professions. To be effective its numbers would have to be tightly controlled, particularly so that chairmen could ensure realism in the advice. I am reluctant to suggest a new Quango of this kind but it seems to me the least objectionable way of getting out of our difficulties.

I propose to offer consultation on these ideas too. The period of consultation will end by December at the latest and I shall aim at final decisions early in the new year to match the completion of your own regional reviews.

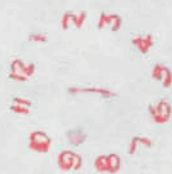
I do not think there is anything in this which, allowing for our different circumstances, makes for embarrassment. I should perhaps mention LA membership of authorities. Since I am not proposing that AHAs in Wales be broken down into smaller, more local authorities, it follows that I do not have your case for reducing LA representation and I am not suggesting it. One other point. I am following up the idea - which I owe to you - that CHC members might have a role to play at 'unit' or 'divisional' level.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and other recipients of your own. I would be grateful for any comments as quickly as possible. The consultation document is being finalised and will be circulated in draft to interested Departments in the next few days.

Yours sincerely,
P. J. Morgan

Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence

- 4 JUL 1980





Nat Health

Civil Service Department
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
01-273 4400

From the Private Secretary

18 July 1980

John Craig Esq
Private Secretary to the Secretary of State
for Wales
Gwydyr House
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2ER

Dear John,

THE NHS IN WALES

1. We have seen a copy of your Secretary of State's letter of 4 July to Patrick Jenkin setting out his proposals for the NHS in Wales.
2. This Department's main comment is about the proposal for a new advisory body - the Welsh Health Council - to act as a forum for public discussion of strategic planning matters. We share your Secretary of State's reluctance to see yet another "quango" created, particularly since this one could well turn out to be a lobby for increased expenditure and criticism of the Government. On the other hand, we recognise that the Health Council would be greatly preferable to the creation of a full blown Regional Health Authority and if it is judged that the pressure for one can be headed off only by the creation of an advisory body, we should of course be happy to abide by that assessment. But if the arguments are more evenly poised, it might be desirable not to commit ourselves to the creation of the Health Council at this stage.
3. A second point concerns presentation. As noted in your Secretary of State's letter there was a good deal of misunderstanding about the proposals for Wales in "Patients First". Part of this may have arisen because the authorities comparable to the district authorities proposed for England are called area authorities in Wales. There might be a risk of causing further misunderstanding if what is described in England as a "unit" is called a "division" in Wales. Although we have no particular preference between the two terms, it seems desirable to use the same word in both countries.
4. I am copying this to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, members of Cabinet including the Minister of Transport and to David Wright in Sir Robert Armstrong's Office.

*Yours sincerely,
Ji Buckley.*

J BUCKLEY



21 JUL 1980