CYNGHRAIR NIWROLEGOL CYMRU | WALES NEUROLOGICAL ALLIANCE

Senedd Election Manifesto 2026

We call on the next Welsh Government to:

1. Develop a **neurology workforce strategy** to increase specialist staff both now and in the future.
2. Develop an **implementation plan** for the Quality Statement for Neurological Conditions.
3. **Increase the budget** for delivery of support for people with neurological conditions.
4. Establish a national system for the collection, collation, and publication of **outcome data** for all neurological conditions.
5. Ensure **social care engagement** in the integrated delivery of the Quality Statement for Neurological Conditions.
6. Address **shortages in Key Allied Health professionals**, including psychotherapists, neuropsychologists, occupational therapists and neuro-pharmacists for people living with neurological conditions in all local health boards.

Background

In Wales, around 100,000 people live with a neurological condition[1].

Such conditions range from extremely rare to more prevalent conditions, including dementia, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis (MS), myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), epilepsy, spina bifida, hydrocephalus, dystonia, and motor neurone disease.

Neurological conditions are both complex and variable. Even within a single condition, both disease progression and support needs following diagnosis can be very different.

The correct support enables people living with neurological conditions to be diagnosed in a timely manner and to live independently for as long as possible, which is important for their health, wellbeing, and dignity.

Service Provision

Despite the clear need for multi-disciplinary care close to home, support and services remain unequal across Wales.

NHS Performance and Improvement research shows Wales needs 8 more neurologists to meet the Association of British Neurologists (ABN) recommendation of 1 per 65,000 of the population, yet almost half of the current neurologists in South Wales are due to retire in the next 10 years.

There is just 1 specialist neurology nurse per 58,976 of the population, mainly in epilepsy, MS, and Parkinson's care. The neurology workforce is significantly lagging behind need, and without immediate intervention, will worsen with attrition.

The Wales-wide My Neuro Survey underlines this. It found that 44% of adults do not feel supported by the health system, and over one third say the services provided do not meet their needs [2].

In 2022, the Welsh Government published the Quality Statement for Neurological Conditions [3]. The Quality Statement was developed in the wake of the Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan (NCDP) and aims to ensure people of all ages living with or affected by a neurological condition have timely and equitable access to high-quality services.

However, progress against this has stalled. Indeed, over a third of people say their healthcare has not improved over the last 12 months [4].

Importantly, not all neurological conditions are provided for within neurology services. For example, Parkinson's frequently falls under the care of older people.

This disjointed working risks inequity in provision across neurological conditions, and prevents joined-up working in terms of workforce planning and allocation of resources.

"A major health service resource challenge results in a lack of accessible services and contact points. Poor communication between the hospital's neurological department and GPs to the extent that GPs were unaware of my condition until I informed them myself – indeed, my condition didn't even appear on my GP profile until 6 months after my diagnosis, and only because I personally had to report it. My confidence in the health service is so low that I am now taking steps to invest in private healthcare through my business for myself and my staff"

Person living with a neurological condition responding to My Neuro Survey in Wales.

We urgently need an implementation plan for the Quality Statement for Neurological Conditions and an accompanying neurology workforce strategy to ensure that people can access timely and equitable diagnosis and support.

Psychological Support

Access to psychological support is crucial for people living with neurological conditions to manage their mental health and wellbeing, and is not routinely accessible across Wales.

Over 80% of people with a neurological condition in Wales reported that it impacts their mood and mental health, with almost a third of people having no one to talk to about their mental health[5].

We urge the next Welsh Government to ensure statutory provision for psychological support after a neurological diagnosis in all local health boards.

Social Care

While some people living with neurological conditions can live independently for many years, many have complex social care needs that can progress rapidly. Currently, the adult social care system is too slow, too inflexible, and too disjointed, meaning people with neurological conditions face an inequality in access to social care alongside long waits and care packages that do not fully meet their needs.

Unmet social care needs leave people facing unnecessary hospital admissions and premature physical and psychological deterioration. This also increases strain and burnout on the 310,000 unpaid carers in Wales [6].

While we are mindful of the strain on health and social care services, and the progress made against the delivery of a National Care Service [7]. We urge all parties to continue this work with haste, and to ensure that social care engagement in the delivery of the Quality Statement for Neurological Conditions.

"The governments need to STOP the scrounger narrative and work with us in a co-production way to make sure their support serves our needs and empowers us instead of dehumanising us. They need to pour more resources into the NHS and support services, tackle poverty and other wider determinants in order to stop more people becoming sick/more sick. They also need to ensure all employers are clued up on social model of disability, and that all reasonable adjustments are met so as those of us well enough can stay in work. In Wales they need to change the healthcare system so as we can be referred out of area and ensure funding follows the patient."

Person living with ME responding to My Neuro Survey in Wales

About the Wales Neurological Alliance

The Wales Neurological Alliance (WNA) is a focused and purposeful forum of not-for-profit organisations and groups representing many thousands of people affected by neurological conditions in Wales.

We aim to improve services for people living with and affected by neurological conditions through:

- Engaging and working in partnership with people affected by neurological conditions.
- Raising awareness of neurological conditions and their impact on individuals and communities.
- Informing and influencing policymakers about the needs of people living with neurological conditions.
- Supporting and promoting appropriate research.

References

Wales Neurological Alliance – A powerful Welsh voice to express the shared interests of people affected by neurological conditions

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