

BEVAN COMMISSION MANIFESTO

HEALTH MATTERS: CREATING SUSTAINABLE HEALTH AND CARE IN WALES

January 2026

BEVAN COMMISSION MANIFESTO CALLS FOR 2026

Health Matters: Creating Sustainable Health and Care in Wales

Wales is at a defining moment. The pressures facing our health and care system are growing, inequalities are deepening, and the needs of future generations demand bold, long-term solutions. The choices made in the coming years will shape not only the future of the NHS and social care, but the health and wellbeing of people, and communities.

The Bevan Commission sets out this manifesto to provide a clear, independent vision to achieve sustainable, equitable health and care that is fit for the future. Grounded in evidence, underpinned by the principles of prudent health care and innovation, this manifesto outlines the actions we believe must be taken to build a healthier, fairer, and more resilient future for people and for Wales itself.

We believe that **health matters** — to individuals, to communities, and to the nation. By focusing on prevention, using our resources wisely and transforming and innovating services to meet needs, Wales can lead the way in creating a sustainable system that truly delivers for people and with people.

This is our call for ambition, for courage, and for collective responsibility. The future of health and care in Wales depends on the decisions we make today.

OUR FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Our manifesto calls are grounded in our work and thinking to date, wider international evidence and extensive engagement with people and professionals. They include:

Foundations for the Future

- Resilient and Resourceful People and Communities
- Prudent, Integrated & Equally Well Care
- Sustainable Workforce, Services and Systems
- Dynamic, Innovative and Transformative Culture

Turning Point: Uniting for the Future of Health and Care in Wales

Our recent Summit brought together key leaders from across Wales identifying themes and actions calling for prevention, collaboration, innovation, and long term sustainability.

These have all helped to inform the **three central commitments** of this manifesto:

COMMITMENT 1

HEALTH MATTERS: KEEP PEOPLE WELL, ENGAGED AND ACTIVE AT ALL STAGES OF LIFE

A thriving Wales depends on supporting people to stay active and well throughout their lives, from early childhood to older age. Wales must create environments, services, and communities that empower people to live healthy, connected, and fulfilling lives.

We believe Wales should:

- Give every child the best start in life through strong early years support, knowledge and health skills for families to prevent ill health.
- Promote wellbeing in working life, engaging employer support and empowering people to make changes, balancing health with their everyday responsibilities.
- Support independence in later life, ensuring older people can live healthily and well at home and within their local communities.
- Adopt a whole society approach: Good health depends on housing, education, work, environment, and community — not just hospitals and healthcare settings.

Why this matters:

- Builds resilient people and thriving communities.
- Reduces pressure on hospitals and social care.
- Strengthens economic and social sustainability.
- Tackles inequality across Wales.

Action: What Wales should do:

- Prioritise prevention and early intervention, creating supportive environments and incentives for change.
- Embed health in all policies: Ensure housing, transport, education, and employment strategies consider their impact on health outcomes.
- Work in partnership with people and organisations to tackle root causes, harnessing the skills and resources across society, including volunteers.
- Use digital tools to help people manage their own health and wellbeing.
- Give every child an equitable start in life by making healthy early years a national priority.

Our message: Keeping people well at every stage of life is the cornerstone of a sustainable health and care system and thriving communities.

COMMITMENT 2

HEALTH MATTERS: BE PRUDENT AND MAKE THE BEST USE OF ALL SKILLS AND RESOURCES - STOP DOING THINGS THAT ADD LITTLE VALUE.

A sustainable health and care system requires everyone working together, making the best use all the skills and resources available to us. We must engage wider community support and stop practices that waste resources, duplicate effort, or fail to improve outcomes. We should redirect energy to what truly matters to people.

We believe Wales should:

- End wasteful or low value practices e.g., in medicines, treatments, and services.
- Eliminate duplication by breaking down silos, integrating services and sharing proven models across Wales.
- Shift from overmedicalisation to social prescribing, self management, and other innovative ways of managing health conditions.
- Focus on outcomes rather than just the activity.
- Review and revise skills, roles and responsibilities to meet future needs.

Why this matters:

- Builds a leaner, more resilient, high quality and efficient system.
- More effective, rebalancing and releasing resources to better meet people's needs.
- Demonstrates prudent leadership and value-based decision making.
- Engages wider skills, support and resources outside of the health and care system.

Action: What Wales should do:

- Use evidence and data to inform service and identify low value practices.
- Involve staff, people, and communities in decisions and service design.
- Strengthen cross sector collaboration and collective learning and working.
- Fully utilise the potential of data, technology and AI in health and care.

Our message: Wales must ask the tough question: What can we stop doing or do differently? Only then can we build a prudent, sustainable system that delivers high quality care and value for people.

COMMITMENT 3

HEALTH MATTERS: TRANSFORM AND INNOVATE TO CREATE A DYNAMIC HEALTH AND CARE SYSTEM FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Wales needs a dynamic health and care system that can adapt to future needs. Achieving this demands bold leadership, meaningful transformation, and faster adoption of innovation. It also relies on a workforce equipped with the appropriate skills, confidence and support to work differently. Digital, data and technology must act as core enablers to improve access, productivity and better outcomes. Transformation must be purposeful, people centred and grounded in long term sustainability.

We believe Wales should:

- Move from small change to whole-system transformation, redesigning services with people and around their needs.
- Invest in and support a skilled, flexible and empowered workforce, with new roles, career pathways and ways of working.
- Accelerate digital transformation, making digital and data-enabled care the default where appropriate.
- Adopt, spread and scale innovation rapidly, reducing variation and ending reliance on outdated models.
- Create a culture that encourages shared learning, and creates joint solutions.

Why this matters:

- Builds a resilient, adaptable system capable of meeting future demand.
- Improves staff experience, retention and productivity.
- Enables more personalised, accessible and timely care.
- Makes better use of skills and resources through smarter, digitally enabled services.
- Supports long-term sustainability and improved outcomes.

Action: What Wales should do:

- Invest in embedding digital skills, transformational leadership and change capability across the workforce.
- Utilise data to co-design new models of care with staff, people and communities.
- Establish a national, accountable framework to quickly adopt and spread innovation across Wales, embedding successful approaches systematically.
- Measure what matters most, ensuring data and performance measures support health outcomes.

Our message: We must move away from just doing the same and expecting different results. This requires creating a supportive environment where we work together to manage risk, seize opportunities, and drive systemic change.

THE FUTURE STARTS NOW

Wales has the opportunity to shape a future where health and wellbeing are not just protected but revitalised for generations to come. The challenges facing our health and care system are significant, but they are not insurmountable. By focusing on what truly matters — keeping people well, using our resources wisely, and transforming health and care around the needs of people, Wales can build a system that is fairer, sustainable and more resilient.

We believe that by working together, across communities, sectors, and government, Wales can lead the way once more, just as it did when Aneurin Bevan laid the foundations of the NHS. By drawing upon that same spirit of ambition, vision and collective purpose, we can create a sustainable health and care system that is truly fit for the future.

The Bevan Commission stands ready to support this national endeavour with independent insight, bold ideas, translating thinking into practice and a steadfast commitment to prudent and equitable care.

Health Matters. The future matters. Now is the moment to act.