

Welsh Lib Dems call for hospital chaplains to be paid by charitable trust

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At their conference in Brecon on 13th October, Welsh Liberal Democrat delegates voted in favour of a motion calling for an end to public funding of the hospital chaplaincy service.

The motion, which was tabled by members of the Lib Dem Humanist & Secularist group, called for hospital chaplaincies to instead be funded through a charitable trust, with the £1.3million saved each year instead diverted to front-line health services. It was pointed out that the Welsh Air Ambulance service already relies on substantial charitable trust funding, and that such an arrangement for chaplaincies would allow the NHS to focus its limited resources on proven clinical interventions rather than on religious provision.

The debate was largely good-natured, measured and reasoned, with good points made on all sides. Encouragingly, at least one Lib Dem Assembly Member voted in favour of the proposal, suggesting a degree of support for secular views within the Senedd. Whilst the Welsh Labour Government has made it clear that it is not considering reforming the existing arrangements, the mathematics of the Siambr (Welsh Assembly) mean that Labour require opposition support to push through any measures. The charitable chaplaincy campaign can therefore now focus on calling for Welsh Lib Dem AMs to put forward the policy agreed by their members as part of any future negotiations over healthcare reform.

Anyone wanting to find out more about the Lib Dem Humanist & Secularist group can do so [online](#).

Campaigner Alan Rogers said: "The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign operates in Wales since the Assembly Government of Wales is responsible for the NHS in Wales. The campaign is an informal network of supporters."

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