**Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016**

**What’s it all about?**

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 provides a revised, streamlined framework for the regulation and inspection of social care services in Wales. It embeds the aims of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act is being introduced to improve the **quality of care and support** in Wales.
It will do this by strengthening protection, increasing accountability and giving a stronger voice to people who use care and support services.

**Who will it affect?**

Local authorities, care providers, managers, staff and people who use the following **regulated services**: care homes, secure accommodation, residential family centres, adoption and fostering, adult placements, advocacy, and domiciliary support.

**What’s going to be different?**

The Act marks a shift away from a system of regulation focused on compliance with minimum standards towards a system and culture which takes greater account of the impact that care and support services have on people’s lives and **well-being**.

The Act introduces **Social Care Wales**, a regulatory body and an **agent for change** at the heart of the sector. It will be formed from the Care Council for Wales and the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA). This national body will be given wider responsibilities for improving the quality of social care services.

**Social Care Wales**

The Act recognises the broad nature of the sector workforce. All care and support staff – such as adult care home and domiciliary care workers – **must** be on the Social Care Wales workforce register as well as the current groups of registered staff: social workers, social work students, managers and residential childcare workers.

**Workforce regulation**

Social Care Wales will also regulate **care and support worker training** to ensure that the whole sector workforce reaches an approved standard.

Service registration by CSSIW will move **from an establishment-based model to a service provider one**. Each service provider needs to make a single registration to cover all its services, building
in flexibility for providers to register services and expand or vary operations through a less burdensome process. It also allows CSSIW to press for improvement across one care setting, or across a provider’s entire range of services.

**Service regulation**

Each service provider will be required to designate an owner, partner or board member as a ‘**responsible individual**’ as part of their registration, ensuring a clear chain of accountability and communication from the boardroom to front line practice.

Service providers will be more accountable for their own standards and continuously improving quality. Providers will prepare **annual returns** outlining their performance, which will be publicly available. Inspections of providers will focus on **outcomes**, including an assessment of how well services are meeting the **well-being outcomes** of the people who use them. CSSIW will have strengthened powers to take action if there are poor quality services. These changes will create greater transparency, increasing understanding of where and how services are working, and make it easier for citizens to make well-informed choices about their care and support.

CSSIW inspections of local authority social services functions will focus on **outcomes**, including an assessment of how well services are meeting the **well-being outcomes** of the people who use them. There will be a standard approach to the **annual reports** of Directors of Social Services, which will make it easier for people to make comparisons across local authorities.

**Local authority social services**

To spot problems earlier, local authorities will publish **market stability reports**, taking account of the local population assessment. These will feed into a national market stability report, which will help the regulator to have better **market oversight** of important providers. This consolidates valuable work already done by many on market position statements (MPS) and will help everyone in the sector to be able to respond to market changes.

**Market stability**

**When will it happen?**

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| **April 2017**Workforce regulations come into forceSocial Care Wales created | **April 2018**Workforce register opens to domiciliary care workers | **April 2018 – April 2019**Providers register services under new Act in a phased re-registration process | **April 2019**New system of service regulation and inspection fully operational  | **April 2020**Workforce register opens for adult care home workers |

There will be no impact on service registration until April 2018, with a phased
re-registration process and full implementation by April 2019. Current regulations
and National Minimum Standards remain in force until then. CSSIW are testing a
new local authority inspection framework, aligned with the well-being outcomes of
the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, during 2016-17. Lessons learned from this testing will inform the development of the new requirements of
local authority inspection that come into force in April 2018.

The detailed requirements for all the changes will be set out in regulations developed by Welsh Government and consulted upon in two phases during June-September 2016 and spring to summer 2017.