

Delivering the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act:

A national statement of joint working towards commencement on 6 April 2016

The 2011 Welsh Government White Paper *Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action* set out a new transformational vision for the sector grounded in offering the best possible outcomes for those who need care and support; ensuring that people have a stronger voice and real control over the services they receive; and delivering consistent, high-quality social services, which are sustainable for the future.

Much of this programme for change is encapsulated within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Act received Royal Assent in May 2014 and will take effect from 6 April 2016. It creates a new legislative framework, bringing together and modernising the law for social services in Wales.

The Act is built upon four principal and interlinking themes:

- People – putting an individual and their needs at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and greater control over, reaching the personal outcomes that help them achieve well-being;
- Well-being – supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of this support;
- Earlier intervention – promoting the use of preventative approaches within the community to address people's needs before they become critical;
- Collaboration – stronger partnership working across all organisations better support people in achieving positive outcomes.

Making the aspirations of the Act a reality for the people of Wales cannot be done by any one organisation alone. The cultural and practice shifts it aims to invoke require strong and consistent leadership from across the public and third sectors.

National Partners

The national organisations working together towards commencement of the Act, and their broad responsibilities, are:

Welsh Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru and The Welsh NHS Confederation

To provide the necessary leadership and project management capacity – at national level – in supporting the six regional implementation projects to implement the Act, consistently and effectively across Wales.

To date this has involved working with the Welsh Government, Care Council for Wales, third sector and other partners to:

- analyse, refresh and deliver each of the regional implementation plans;
- highlight areas of national priority and work with the Welsh Government to ensure leads are identified to drive and successfully deliver on these priorities;
- develop new services to support implementation of the Act (e.g. DEWIS, an online citizens' portal providing wellbeing information) and the development of advice and guidance in supporting consistency of approach (e.g. a toolkit and datasets to help inform the creation of Population Assessment Reports);
- identify, capture and facilitate the sharing of best practice – via a variety of communications means – across the health, social care, third and private sectors.

In addition ADSS Cymru, the Welsh NHS Confederation, Care Forum Wales, Community Housing Cymru, the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action and the WLGA have taken on responsibility to directly assist local authorities and Health Boards prepare for implementation of the Act. They have signed a collaborative agreement solidifying their commitment to helping services across Wales achieve the changes required for its successful implementation.

Care Council for Wales

To develop and implement a national learning plan that equips the social care and wider workforce with the knowledge, skills and understanding to deliver the Act.

Working with a broad range of partners via a Stakeholder Advisory Group, to date this has involved developing and promoting a range of awareness-raising materials, including an e-learning module, for delivery by organisations and regional teams. An audit of existing learning materials has commenced and a co-production grant scheme launched to enable the development of new materials in key areas: Carers, Deaf-blind people, Advocacy and User led Co-operatives.

Core learning materials have also been commissioned (from the Institute of Public Care) for those whose roles are most affected by the Act. These will be available by January 2016 with 'Train the Trainer' events to be held across the regions. A critical part of the work is drawing together a 'Virtual Team' – with membership from each of the six regional implementation teams – to support the delivery and commissioning of training.

Learning materials for those providing social care and support e.g., in the social care, housing or voluntary sectors, will be available from October 2015. Work is also taking place with the Social Services Improvement Agency to develop and deliver a learning programme for leaders and managers commencing in Autumn 2015 – to support them in their leadership and delivery roles.

All commissioned learning materials are bi-lingual and address the Active Offer (of services in Welsh) and the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care. An independent evaluation and training needs analysis are helping to inform an evidence base for planning the next steps.

To support all of this work the Care Council has developed, and maintains, a web-based 'one stop shop' for the Act – the CCW Information and Learning Hub –where all the latest information, training and communications resources are available: <http://www.ccwales.org.uk/getting-in-on-the-act-hub/>

Welsh Government

To develop and set the new legislative framework for the delivery of care and support in Wales.

The core components are set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and supplemented by a suite of subordinate legislation. The Welsh Government is exercising regulation-making powers under the Act in two tranches, with the first introduced into the National Assembly for Wales in summer 2015, and the second to be laid in November 2015.

In addition the Welsh Ministers are exercising further powers under the Act to issue codes of practice and statutory guidance. The codes, to be laid in November 2015, relate to the discharge of social services functions by local authorities, and are intended to support them in the exercise of those functions. The statutory guidance serves a similar function for the wider range of partners involved in delivering the duties around safeguarding and collaboration.

In redesigning the legal framework governing social care in Wales, the Welsh Government has led detailed work – through technical and advisory groups – on the practical operation of these legislative proposals.

To provide strategic direction and leadership support to all national partners, and regional teams, in preparing to implement the Act.

The Welsh Government funds the capacity necessary to drive this transformation, most directly through the regional implementation projects, via the Delivering Transformation Grant (set at £3m for 2015/16). Subject to budgetary decisions this is expected to continue through to April 2017, to support the embedding process.

The Welsh Government will lead a national public awareness-raising campaign commencing in January 2016. Communications resources, customisable by each region, will be made available to key stakeholders for use in communicating the changes brought about by the Act to their client groups.

The Future

The attached diagram provides a forward look, capturing headline activities to be undertaken and key milestones to be reached by each of the national partners in preparing for the Act coming into force on 6 April 2016. Beyond this a post-implementation plan will be developed for joint working through to April 2017, building upon these strong foundations towards improved service design and better outcomes for people in need of care and support, or carers in need of support, in Wales.

