



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities

A summary

Improving social services in Wales from 2008 - 2018



Improving social services in Wales - the vision

The Welsh Assembly Government's vision for the next ten years is to ensure that we modernise social services in order to provide more accessible, personalised care for people. We want to ensure that people are supported earlier and helped to retain their independence for longer.

For further copies of this summary or the full strategy document of Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities, please contact:

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Who provides social services?

Social care services in Wales currently support over 50,000 people. They account for £1.1 billion in public spending and employ more than 70,000 people. The services are delivered by around 1,800 public sector, private and voluntary organisations located throughout the country.

Local authorities plan and purchase most social services. They link at a local level with many other services, such as housing, education, youth services, economic and community regeneration. They also partner the National Health Service, working together at a local level to strengthen community services and support the people served by them.

The Welsh Assembly Government assists by making policies, setting standards, regulating and inspecting services, providing funding and by guiding local authorities on their social services functions.



What social services do

Social services and social care can help people of all ages. They:

- **Promote** people's social inclusion and independence;
- **Support** people at times of distress, vulnerability or illness;
- **Protect** people from harm, abuse and neglect;
- **Take action** against those who cause harm and help people to recognise and cope with their own vulnerability.

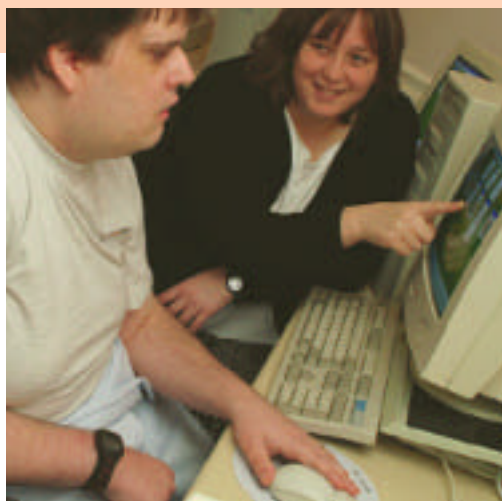
Working with others, social services have key roles at three levels:

- **Influencing** - informing national, regional and local policy and planning in order to support people's security and independence;
- **Developing** - community support and services which enable people to achieve their potential and achieve as much independence as they can;
- **Enabling** - assisting individuals and families to obtain the help they need, when they need it and in the appropriate form.

Provide specialist services which focus on the needs of individuals and their families...

Enabling children, young people, adults and older people to achieve their potential for wellbeing...

- Family breakdown...
- Mental health issues...
- Substance misuse...
- Anti-social and offending behaviour...
- Disability...
- Frailty....
- Poverty





Progress

In recent years much progress has been made by changing the way in which services are provided. Many groups of service users are now able to access a wider range of community based services near where they live. There is better working across health and social care and a more diverse range of services available.

Standards have been driven up through:

- The Care Council for Wales, which ensures higher standards of conduct, practice and training across the social care workforce;
- The Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW), which inspects and reviews the range of social services provided by 22 local authorities; and
- The Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW), which is responsible for raising the quality of services through regulation and national minimum standards within more than 6,000 care settings.

There is also an accessible and effective system of complaint and redress should things go wrong.

Footnote:

From April 2007, SSIW and CSIW will be integrated and known as the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW).

Why social services need to change

Annual reports from both the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW) and the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW) emphasise that there is much good practice and high levels of staff commitment across Wales, but they also identify areas which need strengthening or modernising. It is clear that not all social services are currently of the standard they should be. They need to improve and do so at a faster pace.

In addition, the Assembly Government has produced a number of key strategy documents which focus in detail on the health and social care needs of specific groups of people.

They include:

- **Rights to Action** and the **National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services**
- **Strategy for Older People in Wales** and the **National Service Framework for Older People**
- **Learning Disability Strategy**
- **Raising the Standard** (adults with mental health problems)
- **Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales**

There are a number of significant challenges ahead, both now and in the future. These relate to greater public expectations; increasing demand and pressure on services; capacity of the workforce; sustainability; consistency and quality.

If present trends continue, by 2016 we expect to see:

- Less need for universal services for children but more demand for specialist services;
- Increased demand for services and support for people with high care needs over longer periods of time;
- An increase in people aged 50-60 who provide informal care, but partly offset by more women in the workplace and by people choosing to work more years;
- An increase in lone living, particularly for older men;
- High demand for services from those of 85 or over.

Alongside these challenges, there are also important opportunities which will help drive change and improvement:

- Local government now has a central role and is in a stronger position to lead change;
- Better informed service users, carers and their families will take a more active role in managing their own situations;
- Collaboration between local authorities and partner organisations will help to deliver reform and improve integrated local services;
- Support systems and models of care will be more targeted, helping people to stay in their own homes longer;
- A stronger emphasis on earlier involvement and re-enablement will help social services to become a champion of people's independence.



The ten year strategy

By 2018, we want social services to demonstrate year on year improvement. They must focus on the needs of users and be provided by an adequately sized, skilled and valued workforce which provides the right service at the right time. They must reflect culture and diversity. They must also make a full contribution to the Assembly Government's wider policy objectives.

This is a major programme of change, which will contribute to a better Wales and to improving the lives of the people who live here. It will ensure that services are:

- Strong, accessible and accountable;
- Focused on citizen, family and community needs;
- Focused on social inclusion and the rights of individuals;
- Concerned with good outcomes;
- Delivered in a joined up, flexible and efficient way to consistently high standards and in partnership with service users.

These aims echo the principles set out in **Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries**, the Assembly Government's overall framework for public services in response to the Review of Local Service Delivery, chaired by Sir Jeremy Beecham, which reported in July 2006. Key reforms that will impact on services include the establishment of Local Service Boards, setting up Local Service Agreements with the Boards and improving the way in which public bodies engage with the people they serve.

Although **Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities** is addressed primarily to the local authorities which plan and commission social services in a range of partnerships, it requires active engagement from many more people. Service users, their carers and families, service providers and the workforce must be involved and listened to if these changes and improvements are to take place.



Achieving our vision - the key changes

To achieve our vision, a number of key changes will be needed in order to meet the challenges.

Assessment and care management

Better assessment and care management will lead to better solutions and outcomes. People will receive services which are proportionate to their needs, effective and provided at the time they need them. Local partners need to ensure that the appropriate professional help is sought.

Individuals to design their own support needs

Individuals must be given the opportunity and financial assistance to design their own support. Self care can enable people to maintain their independence and help them lead lives that are as fulfilling as possible. The Assembly Government will work with local authorities, the voluntary sector and service users to develop opportunities which encourage both self care and independence.

Safeguarding individuals at risk of abuse

People at risk of abuse must receive proper and proportionate protection. New laws set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act will improve future arrangements.

Recognising the contribution of carers

The Assembly Government's recently appointed 'Carers' Champion' will, in partnership with others, develop a refocused, modern carers' strategy, building upon its **Caring for Carers** report. Alongside this, strong local authority policies and structures will strengthen support for carers.

Accountability and leadership

Every local authority will be required to appoint a director of social services responsible for adults and children's services, together with a lead elected member for children and young people. This will ensure clear management and strong professional leadership within each authority. Local Service Boards and Local Service Agreements will play an important part in ensuring that social services develop and change over the next decade.

Real partnerships that deliver

The Assembly Government will support joint working at an organisational level to enable services to work together more effectively. Joined up planning, commissioning and delivery of services are essential. Our intention is to break down the barriers which can prevent statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations working together effectively. Service



users, their carers and families will be the ultimate beneficiaries as joined up thinking becomes standard practice.

Adult and children's services will work better together to tackle problems which may affect people's parenting capacity and to ensure well planned transitional arrangements from children's to adult services. Services for children who are 'looked after' and for 'care leavers' will support them to reach their full potential through better placements and co-ordinated support across local agencies.

Standards and performance

Across both adults' and children's services, the Assembly Government will be working with key organisations, such as the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), the voluntary sector and others to develop a core of universal standards for social services.

Where standards are deficient or failing to improve quickly enough, the Assembly Government will intervene.

Commissioning

Good commissioning by social services departments, driven by sound analysis of needs, will be a key driver in developing services of the future. It must exploit the opportunities for joining up with other organisations and services, involving genuine partnership with service users, private and voluntary providers and get the right balance between mainstream and specialist services. New commissioning guidance will be developed and its implementation supported.

Finance

Over the last five years, spending on social services in Wales has increased and significant extra money has already been allocated for 2008-09. A more stable financial planning environment will be achieved through three yearly local government funding settlements, enabling the Assembly Government to properly align the health and social care planning cycles.

The planned programme of change is not cost driven, but will ensure that resources already in place are used more efficiently and effectively. There will be less duplication of time and resources, as organisations work together and focus more proportionately on service user needs.

The financial implications for social care of demographic and other trends are complex. We will therefore take a fundamental review of the factors determining social services funding to examine the medium and long term implications for those who need social care.

Workforce

Services are only as good as the people who work in them. The Care Council will be invited to prepare a national action plan which addresses issues such as skills; training and development; recruitment; retention and the role of workforce regulation in improving protection and raising standards.

Information and technology

Working with partners, we will support and develop the use of information technology to improve information sharing between agencies and to modernise assessment and case management. We will seek to exploit the opportunities for technology and develop new care models to support people in their own homes.

Research, innovation and learning

We need to ensure that best practice is more readily shared and applied. Improvements must be achieved in the quality, dissemination and use of research data. A new Social Care Research Strategy will be developed in consultation with other key research organisations in Wales and the UK.

The wider policy agenda

As this strategy is rolled out over the next ten years, we will work with our partner organisations to ensure that the 1,800 organisations providing care in Wales are working towards a sustainable future. This will include efficient procurement, promoting bio-diversity, reducing waste, promoting the efficient use of energy, water and other natural resources, environmental management systems and alternatives to car travel.

Legislation

The Government of Wales Act 2006 provides us with new opportunities to change the current legal framework for social services and public services generally. In future, we will have new measure-making powers in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill. These powers will enable us to take forward the changes set out in this strategy and help us to provide first class social services.

Implementing change

The changes outlined in this summary will be managed under five related programmes comprising:

- Leadership and accountability
- Commissioning
- Performance management
- Partnerships
- The workforce

The implementation will be taken forward through a series of three yearly action plans which will commence in 2008. This ties in with the three year strategic framework approach being taken forward in the National Health Service, **Designed for Life**.

By 2018, the following should have been achieved:

- The vision for social services in Wales set out in **Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities**;
- Prevention and early intervention services will be an integral part of service provision;
- Social services will have an influential role in supporting partnerships which promote the health and wellbeing of all vulnerable individuals and their families within their own communities.

This major programme of change will take several years to complete. It demands the commitment of all those organisations and partners involved in providing social care services, including the Welsh Assembly Government, local government, the independent and voluntary sectors and the workforce. It will make Wales a better place to live in the future. We are aiming for excellence.