



# Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities

November 2006



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## Social Services Commitments

- 1. To have a collective responsibility for the reputation and performance of all social services departments in Wales.**
- 2. To use its collective resource of skills and knowledge to support those councils who are considered in most need to raise their performance.**
- 3. To ensure that services are individual focused and that the needs of individuals and families are at the heart of the planning, prioritisation and delivery of services.**
- 4. To collaborate with each other to ensure that resources are used effectively and that commissioning processes support value for money, responsiveness and quality.**
- 5. To build on local partnership arrangements to deliver high quality care in an integrated manner appropriate to the service being delivered.**
- 6. To work towards a system of standardised employment practice, opportunities and conditions of service that do not favour or hinder individual councils but promote benefit for all councils and employees.**
- 7. To secure adequate resources, capacity, skills and information and knowledge to provide high quality care that reflects best practice and the needs of local populations.**
- 8. To enhance existing specialist support available to promote and co-ordinate a programme of improvement and organisational development and research.**
- 9. To work constructively with external regulators and inspectors to promote best practice and attain high standards of service**

Leaders in social care



- 1. Ysgwyddo cyfrifoldeb ar y cyd am enw da a chyflawniad pob un o adrannau gwasanaethau cymdeithasol Cymru.**
- 2. Defnyddio medrau a gwybodaeth ar y cyd i helpu'r cynghorau mae angen cymorth arnyn nhw er mwyn gwella'u cyflawniad.**
- 3. Gofalu bod gwasanaethau'n canolbwyntio ar yr unigolyn a bod anghenion unigolion a theuluoedd wrth wraidd gwaith cynllunio, blaenoriaethau a threfniadau cynnal y gwasanaethau hynny.**
- 4. Gweithio ar y cyd i ofalu bod adnoddau'n cael eu defnyddio yn effeithiol a bod prosesau comisiynu yn hwyluso gwerth am arian, agwedd ymatebol ac ansawdd.**
- 5. Datblygu trefniadau'r partneriaethau lleol i roi gofal o'r radd flaenaf mewn modd cyfun sy'n briodol i'r gwasanaeth dan sylw.**
- 6. Anelu at sefydlu trefn safonol ar gyfer arferion cyflogi, amodau gwaith a chyfleoedd fel na fydd unrhyw gyngor yn cael ei ffafrio na'i rwystro a bydd modd hyrwyddo manteision i'r cynghorau a'r gweithwyr i gyd.**
- 7. Cael adnoddau, galluedd, medrau, gwybodaeth ac arbenigedd digonol er mwyn rhoi gofal o'r radd flaenaf sy'n adlewyrchu'r arferion gorau ac anghenion pobl leol.**
- 8. Ychwanegu at y cymorth arbenigol cyfredol er mwyn hyrwyddo a chydlynu rhaglen i ddibenion gwella, datblygu sefydliadau a chynnal ymchwil.**
- 9. Cydweithio'n adeiladol â'r cyrff rheoleiddio ac arolygu allanol i hyrwyddo'r arferion gorau a chyrraedd safonau uchel.**

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) welcomes the production of a draft ten year strategy for social services in Wales and the inclusive approach adopted to produce it through strong partnership working with the WLGA. The opportunity for a wide and inclusive consultation period is appreciated and reflects the uniqueness of the relationship between central and local government in Wales.
2. Our response takes into account the emerging themes identified from two well attended listening events held by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) and from separate submissions from SOLACE, the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ASEW) and the Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales (ADSS Cymru).
3. Initial messages were reported to the Minister for Health and Social Services at a recent meeting with the cabinet leads of the twenty two councils in Wales and the WLGA. This response builds upon those high level messages shared with the Welsh Assembly Government.
4. It is entirely appropriate for WAG to reflect upon the assumptions used to develop a ten year strategy and to examine these assumptions in the broader context of the direction of travel for public sector services in Wales. The Foreword raises some key questions about the foundations upon which the Assembly and its partners seek to move forward.
5. Local government has not sufficiently exploited or properly communicated the value of social services' fundamental role within local government to support social cohesion and vibrant communities. There is now a renewed political leadership and commitment with councils by elected members working closely with officers and professional groups to build upon its core community leadership role. In this way we can maximise the impact of galvanising the myriad of functions that lie within local government's statutory responsibilities. Within this context it is right and necessary for social services to remain within councils as a core function. The role and function of social services within councils has evolved significantly since local government reform and it is unhelpful and incorrect to continue to think of social services still existing as traditional and 'isolated departments' within councils. The substantial role and contribution by elected members on Local Health Boards cannot be over estimated or the benefits that have emerged from building statutory partnerships with health and community partners.

6. Strong, mature and outcome focused partnerships are key to delivering this strategy. Local Government is committed to the challenge and to take the real opportunities that now exist from the hard work and effort that has been given to partnership working at the local level and more recently to foster regional partnerships that respond to shared strategic issues.
7. A mixed economy of care is essential and highly desirable if councils and their partners are to adequately meet the demands of today and the future through sustainable approaches to commissioning and delivery of services. Over reliance on one model of provision inherently risky and cannot offer the degree of flexibility and responsiveness to local cultures and demographic changes that is needed.
8. The Foreword also raises significant issues regarding the shape and skills of today and the future workforce which will be vital to delivery the aims of this strategy. A sustainable and modern workforce is needed one that can respond to the aspirations set out by the First Minister to achieve a modern one public sector workforce for Wales capable of moving between organisational boundaries and harnessing creativity and innovation. We would suggest that this is a formidable agenda to achieve but vital and that more effort is needed to overcome some of the longstanding barriers that have prevented progress.
9. **Chapter 1: Vision and Principles**
10. *Do you agree with our vision for social services in Wales and should it be strengthened in any way?*
11. WLGA supports the sentiments expressed within the Vision statement but the vision statement itself is wordy and encompasses several complex messages that are not easily communicated. It describes process not outcomes. We would suggest a more succinct vision statement that is realistic and conveys to everyone a clear sense of what we are seeking to achieve and how things will be different. The three statements in 1.04 are better and a useful starting point.
12. The list of what it will mean for citizens is comprehensive and we support the principles and sentiments expressed. It could be strengthened by adding a further bullet point that people will be clear of what they will receive and what they will not receive. As it stands it implies a sense of universal entitlement. The WLGA believe it is vital that people fully understand what is available to them and what is not and that communities must participate in determining those priorities and pattern of services correspondingly put in place. Social services cannot

be universal services now or in the future. Within this context social services that offer direct care and support to individuals with assessed need must be explicitly targeted and outcome focused. However the role that social services as an **enabler** could play has **universal value to all** if we consider its contribution to deliver on the inequalities and regeneration agenda and it is within this context significant opportunities exist and local government's full potential will be unlocked.

13. **Chapter 2: The context, challenges and opportunities.**

14. *Have we identified all the key challenges and opportunities?*

15. The document clearly sets out a broad range of challenges within a changing context. However the lack of emphasis and weight of importance on some of the issues listed and their importance to deliver the changes envisaged needs further elaboration.

16. Understanding the full implications of demographic change and its impact is crucial. The projected increases within age bands of an aging society cannot be underestimated and the significant impact this will have on providing sustainable patterns of services. Of particular concern is the projected increase in demand for support to older people with dementia, the prevalence across all age groups of mental health problems and the survival and growth to adulthood of many more people with severe disabilities as a result of improved neonatal and medical care.

Over the next 20 years the overall population is projected to grow only slowly by just 3 per cent (less than 100,000 people), but the number of people of current retirement ages in Wales will increase by 11 per cent to 650,000. The number of very old people (85+) in Wales is projected to increase by over a third to 82,000.<sup>1</sup>

Also in regards to cost implications on a UK basis two scenarios presented by a King's Fund report were:

Under scenario 1, total costs are projected at £10.1 billion in 2002, rising by 139 per cent between 2002 and 2026 to £24.0 billion. This is an increase from 1.1 per cent to 1.5 per cent of GDP. Scenario 1's total costs are the actual expenditures on social care for older people by Social Services and by individuals (but, for comparison with the other scenarios, removes the modest NHS funding of long-term care).

Under scenario 2, total costs would have been £12.2 billion in 2002 had this scenario been in place, and costs are estimated to rise by 142 per

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<sup>1</sup> "The Strategy for Older People in Wales"

cent between 2002 and 2026 to £29.5 billion, an increase from 1.3 per cent to 2.0 per cent of GDP.<sup>2</sup>

We feel this chapter does not adequately reflect the service pressures.

17. Pressure on service is described but the full impact of meeting continuing raised expectations for improved quality and consistency also needs further emphasis.
18. The challenge of sustaining effective outcome based partnerships is under estimated. These will be key to the delivery of the strategy. Partnership working is difficult and needs to move to another level of sophistication with full advantage being taken from the Children Act 2004 and the coterminous, community focused arrangements with Local Health Boards.
19. A further challenge is the limitations of existing accountability and governance arrangements to promote sufficient resources moving within and across organisational boundaries. At the heart of future arrangements must be local flexibility and freedoms to respond innovatively to the challenges it is facing.
20. The references to workforce should be stronger to fully represent the significant pressure on the existing workforce, its fragility and the need for sustained support across all its dimensions. The document does not sufficiently acknowledge the collective pressure currently evident in the system and the overwhelming demand being placed not only on local government but its partners such as the NHS. These pressures must be seriously acknowledged along with their growing interdependency within a tightening public sector funding regime.
21. Opportunities exist in many ways and the chapter usefully sets out some of these. The list could be strengthened and the final document will undoubtedly contain further detail on the opportunities arising from the potential of Local Strategic Partnerships Boards and the evolving, but very promising regional collaborative that now exist across councils. The Report by Sir Jeremy Beecham - Beyond Boundaries and the WAG response to this report offer significant opportunities which can be elaborated upon. The promising but yet unrealised potential from joint commissioning and a small set of jointly agreed outcome targets for agencies are examples that can be given further emphasis within the document. The WLGA welcomes further discussion on these positive opportunities and how local government can play its full part in future developments.

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<sup>2</sup> "Securing Good Care for Older People"

22. This chapter is incomplete without reference to the resources available both human and financial. Whilst we understand that is impossible to deal with this in detail due to the timing of its development and ahead of the results of the next comprehensive spending review, nevertheless any final document must set out clearly what mechanisms and actions will take place to secure an adequate funding base to deliver the vision, Without this its credibility is seriously undermined. We would urge the Welsh Assembly Government in these discussions to consider the provision of 'transitional funding' to support the safe and effective move from one model of care to another to be achieved and to recognise the pressure on finances not just within local government but also on its partners. Lessons from successful major change programmes all highlight the importance of the availability of transitional funds whilst re-engineering of services were achieved and resources unlocked for alternative purposes. We are encouraged to note that WAG is linked to the working group that is considering in England funding models for future patterns of service and how difficult choices will need to be made in order to meet the financial consequences of future services.
23. The establishment of the Social Services Improvement Agency and the Children Commissioning Support Resource are additional positive examples of the partnership working between central and local government which will help promote collaborative working and the adoption of good, streamlined practices.
24. **Chapter three: Social Services in 2016- Change and Development**
25. *Do you agree with our description of where we want to be in 2016? Is there an alternative set of questions you would like to propose?*
26. We support in general the list set out in the table as a useful set of markers for progress although we reject that social services is at the margins of local government.
27. We support the emphasis on leadership which needs to be strong both at central and local government to achieve change. The commitment of WAG to support local government to make the changes will be critical and local governments efforts will be undermined without strong partnerships and agreement on shared outcomes.
28. We welcome the references to a new more transparent and outwardly engaging scrutiny and reporting mechanisms. In the future and as a direct response to the Beecham report - Beyond Boundaries, local government wants to move to more inclusive and integrated forms of scrutiny and reporting on performance building on more self assessment and less numbers of performance targets.

29. The shaping of services through increased engagement of service users is paramount and could feature more prominently than it does in the current list.
30. Through these arrangements there would be an expectation that in return there is greater awareness of the contribution of social services and that their profile is raised so that the public value their contribution and understand what they do.
31. We would expect to see new ways of working between social services, education and local NHS services that are significantly more integrated than exist at the moment and the limited reference in 3.14 of the document so that we exploit the opportunities possible from the expansion of jointly managed or single managed services on behalf of a range of providers and integrated one stop provision and multi functional facilities in the community.
32. **Chapter 4: The Drivers for Change**
33. *Have we identified all the key drivers to help us achieve our vision? Will the actions proposed be sufficient? Which drivers should receive more attention?*
34. We agree with the list of major drivers for change however it is not possible to tackle all of them to the same degree nor will this be necessary in a blanket one size fits all approach. We have particular comments on the following:
35. We agree strong leadership is vital. Champions will be needed for this challenging change programme at all levels including the Welsh Assembly Government. The WLGA continues to press for an increase in strategic capacity at central government to champion the difficult policy issues that will arise and to ensure that there is a strong voice for social services and local government within the Health and Social Care department. Over recent years this senior capacity has diminished and will need significant bolstering. There's has been an imbalance between capacity available to develop and oversee the parallel changes within the NHS through the Welsh Assembly Documents Design for Life and Designed to Deliver and this needs to be urgently rectified if the two modernisation programmes are to be harmonised.
36. Partnerships are also key and it would be helpful in the final strategy if there was more explicit commitment given to reducing the barriers that exist which hamper partnerships realising their full

potential whilst acknowledging the significant progress and opportunities through the Children Act 2004 for partnership working.

37. The support of WAG to enable authorities to come together and deliver services with the help of the SSIA is welcomed but could be much stronger in the document. Regional collaborative are a reality and will continue to mature and tackle major strategic problems that cannot be dealt with solely at the local level. However, the document could also highlight the need for councils and its local partners to come together and for regional working across local government and the other public sector bodies to be exploited in a much more systematic and streamlined way than at present. The community leadership role of local government is pivotal and needs to be explicit reference to the potential of regional partnerships.
38. The document does not refer to the potential that exists within the NHS regional offices to support partnership working. They are regionally based and could play a significant role in promoting partnership working across the NHS and local government. Opportunities to re design their existing role and remit are not highlighted and the WLGA would welcome discussions on how this could proceed in the context of the WLGA partnership forums and a new governance model for public sector agencies.
39. The section on standards and performance could be more innovative and bolder. The production of universal standards and performance are often confused as being two of the same issue. We would suggest that performance and accountability are described separately to any action on professional practice and the provision of a standardised service which we support in principle but must be approached with careful consideration.
40. We understand that at the time the document was produced only limited references could be made to how WAG would modernise its inspection and regulatory regimes to support the future vision for public services. However, we would urge WAG to respond innovatively and set out an immediate action plan to move swiftly to modernise all inspection and regulatory functions including those for education and health so that capacity within the system can be released to support improvement and change whilst allowing agencies to support the respective and vital contribution that external regulation and inspection provides for public assurance and facilitating innovation.
41. Developing a limited number of shared outcomes with integrated, proportionate to risk, methodologies for inspection and audit must be a key driver and a priority.

42. **Chapter 5: Implementation**

43. *Do you have any views on the implementation process outlined here?*

44. At the local level, councillors are embracing the challenges of this agenda and strengthening capacity in many ways. Local government accepts the need to be ambitious, challenging and committed to implementing the changes necessary. Across all councils, scrutiny and performance management arrangements are becoming stronger and partnership working is maturing across social services and education, supported by the Children Act legislation.

45. Social services are no longer 'at the margins of council activity' as the document describes.

46. Our biggest concern is that insufficient capacity exists both at central and local level to deliver on the strategy and the necessary time and skills that are needed to construct a coherent, robust implementation plan.

47. The WLGA and its partners have signalled our willingness to help overcome this problem and to make a difference now but there are serious blocks in the system which must be acknowledged before a realistic set of targets and time scales are produced. The balancing act of continuing to provide high quality complex services, invest in partnership working, win the hearts and minds of the general public and politicians, engage constructively in the totality of inspection and regulatory requirements whilst planning complex changes to current service provision and commissioning arrangements cannot be underestimated.

48. A realistic and pragmatic way forward is to concentrate on a small number of key actions that are successfully implemented within the next three years. This small prioritised list should be developed quickly through dialogue and consultation. Once agreed all performance targets set by WAG should be reviewed to assess whether they will complement and enhance their achievement or will run counter to what is intended. Absolute clarity on the difficult choices and the shared outcomes to be achieved is vital.

49. An inspection and regulatory regime that supports this would be considered a real asset.
50. The WLGA and the SSIA will work constructively with partners for example the Care Council and NLIAH to galvanise our collective forces to support the delivery of this small set of targets.
51. **Concluding comments**
52. The WLGA re affirms its support for improving and modernising social services, within the context of councils wide range of statutory functions, especially education and housing and regeneration. Local government accepts the challenges arising from this strategy and is prepared to play a full and active role in its delivery. To assist we consider the following are critical:
  53. A small number of agreed pivotal actions are needed that will unlock the potential that exists and make real demonstrable progress over the first half of the strategy's intended life cycle. Without this, credibility to achieve the change will be seriously undermined.
  54. Our strengths balanced with our serious capacity issues must be recognised. We urge the Welsh Assembly Government to recognise the capacity problems that exist within WAG as well as within local agencies, such as the NHS when formulating the priorities and actions arising from them.
  55. Move swiftly to a more integrated risk based approach to inspection and regulation that will clarify respective roles and demonstrate clearly how this specialist resource will help to deliver on the key priorities and assist overcome the real capacity issues that exist in the system.
  56. Commence dialogue on a small set of key priorities and the implementation process as soon as possible. These discussions should take into account the priorities for the NHS and current progress on implementing Design for Life, so that all parts of local government and the healthcare system are working in harmony and our collective resources are maximised
  57. Maintain commitment to re dress the balance of service provision to a more preventative and early intervention universal approach that is community based whilst investing to provide high quality targeted services for those who are vulnerable.

**For further information please contact:**

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