



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Measuring the Mountain

Response to phase one recommendations

February 2020

Measuring the Mountain response to recommendations

Background

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ('the Act') came into force on 6 April 2016 and aims to transform the way that social care is delivered across Wales by improving the well-being outcomes of people who need care and support and carers who need support.

As part of the development of the evaluation of the Act, stakeholders were keen to ensure that the views of citizens were embedded in the development of the evaluation as well as the evaluation itself. In order to support this approach and actively seek the views of citizens, in December 2017, the previous Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies, agreed to fund the Measuring the Mountain project.

The first phase of the Measuring the Mountain project commenced in January 2018 and was run in two phases:

- 1) A citizen-led research project using SenseMaker technology which collected and evaluated citizens' 'stories' which were gathered from across the whole of Wales. The focus of this research looked at 'what matters' to citizens in relation to social care. (Phase 1 January – June 2018).
- 2) A Citizen Voice Panel which used Citizens' Jury methodology, which was informed by the SenseMaker research. It aimed to capture deep insight and reflection into one specific theme through deliberative inquiry and discussion. (Phase 2 July – December 2018).

A range of detailed recommendations from both the Citizens' Jury and from Sensemaker were developed and Measuring the Mountain formally presented these recommendations to the Welsh Government in April 2019.

Welsh Government has welcomed the work undertaken by the Measuring the Mountain team and agreed to provide a formal response to the recommendations following the first year of the project. The response, as detailed in this document, sets out how Welsh Government will work with the social care sector to implement these recommendations.

Measuring the Mountain's phase 1 recommendations can be found in their report – 'Measuring the Mountain: What Really Matters in Social Care to Individuals in Wales – Final Report'¹

Methodologies

Measuring the Mountain has developed its recommendations by using two complementary and innovative research methodologies. Both methodologies have

¹ Measuring the Mountain: What really matters in Social Care to Individuals in Wales.
<http://www.mtm.wales/ckfinder/userfiles/files/MtM%20Final%20Report%20March%2019%202019.pdf>

been designed to engage directly with individuals; to gather and synthesise a wide range of views; and to be able to explore specific issues in depth.

The methodologies chosen are Sensemaker for gathering detailed stories from individuals and a Citizens' Jury to explore the more complex and in depth issues and enable members of the public to become directly involved in policy evaluation.

This is a complex project, and Welsh Government is content with the strength and validity of the methodologies chosen as these approaches will ensure that the project is able to present an overall picture of people's experiences of care and support under the 2014 Act.

Welsh Government's formal response

Welsh Government's formal response is presented in two sections which each address a different part of the Measuring the Mountain report. Section 1 responds to the recommendations from the Citizens' Jury (set out on pages 65 – 69 of the report) and Section 2 responds to the overall, final recommendations of the Measuring the Mountain Report which are a combination of the findings from the Citizens' Jury and the stories gathered through Sensemaker (set out on pages 80 – 81 of the report).

Section 1

This section sets out Welsh Government's formal response to the fifteen recommendations that were made by the Citizens' Jury as part of the Measuring the Mountain Project. The Citizens' Jury was held in September 2018 and sought evidence from a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Social Care Wales, practitioners, people in need of care and support and carers in need of support. All evidence was considered carefully by the Jury using recognised Citizens' Jury methodologies, and the following fifteen recommendations were made. The recommendations have been made under the following headings:

- People
- Partnership and Integration
- Prevention
- Scrutiny and Review

People

Recommendation 1 –

Each person approaching the social care system and related sectors, whether child, adult or carer, should receive the support of an independent, well-trained and knowledgeable key worker who will advocate and stand alongside them as they get involved.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted in part

Response

Welsh Government accepts this recommendation in part. Welsh Government recognises the importance of advocacy and individuals having voice and control within their care and support, but it would not be sustainable to provide all children, adults or carers who are engaged with social services with an independent key worker.

One of the key principles of the 2014 Act is voice and control. The intention is to put the adult, child or carer at the centre of their care and support with the main driving force being to improve the well-being of the person receiving support, recognising that the individual is the best person to make judgements about their own well-being. The 2014 Act also sets out the importance of co-production, with emphasis being placed on the need to ensure that people and carers are partners in all decision making processes that impact on their care and support or support. As well as having voice and control in their care and support, Welsh Government also recognises the importance of advocacy for individuals. The approach we have taken and consulted widely upon through the development and implementation of the 2014 Act is to embed advocacy within the legislation with a dedicated Code of Practice on advocacy issued under Part 10. This approach is further supplemented by highlighting the importance of advocacy in all relevant codes of practice issued under the 2014 Act.

Advocacy can take many forms, for example, informal advocacy often provided by family or friends through to independent professional advocates, each has its own benefits with the common aim of supporting individuals to have their voices heard, clarifying options and express their views, wishes and feelings.

Social care and other professionals play a key role in acting as an advocate on behalf of individuals as part of the exercise of their daily professional roles. However, there will be occasions where a conflict of interest may arise in relation to the decision being made. Professionals will need to be alert to situations where they believe that the objectivity or independence of the decision making process is, or could be seen to be undermined. In such circumstances, the roles of other forms of advocacy must be considered as outlined in the Part 10 Code of Practice.

Welsh Government does recognise however that more can be done to support those who need care and support and carers who need support, particularly surrounding advocacy and there are a number of work streams aiming to support the improvement of advocacy and advocacy services in Wales.

Legislative Changes

Welsh Government are making legislative changes in order to take account of the National Approach to Advocacy and make legislation clearer for those working in the sector. A Technical Group made up of Members with a range of perspectives and expertise from organisations representing children and adult services, have been working with Welsh Government officials in updating the Part 10 Code of Practice on Advocacy under the 2014 Act, to take account of the National Approach to Advocacy for Children. This work also included refining the definition of an Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) and taking account of the standards for regulated advocacy services under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (the 2016 Act).

In April 2019, Welsh Government also published statutory guidance relating to regulated advocacy services in Wales. Prior to the 2016 Act advocacy services were unregulated. The regulations came into force in April 2019 and currently apply to advocacy services arranged by local authorities under their duty to assist children, looked after children and care leavers with particular needs in making representation about their needs for care and support.

Welsh Government propose that the 2016 Act framework be extended to providers of advocacy for adults and those children who would not fall within the scope of s178 of the 2014 Act at the point in the future when there is distinct evidence of the impact the Act will impose on providers. In the intervening period there will be a clear expectation that providers are working toward the future regulated advocacy for adults.

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy (NASA)

Wales also has the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy (NASA) which is a standardised approach to statutory advocacy services being delivered by the six Regional Social Services Collaboratives.

The NASA sets out shared national expectations on access and availability of (independent professional) advocacy. Underpinned by the National Standards and Outcomes Framework, common components of a service specification and reporting template, the NASA reinforces and secures a consistent offer and experience for children and practitioners. The NASA further evidences and informs future delivery and improvement through quantitative and qualitative reporting at local, regional and national levels.

An active offer of advocacy forms part of the NASA. *“Children and young people are entitled to an active offer of advocacy from a statutory Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) when they become looked after or become subject of*

child protection enquiries leading to an Initial Child Protection Conference". (National Standards and Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People in Wales). Welsh Government August 2019

Golden Thread Advocacy Project (GTAP)

The Welsh Government is funding the Golden Thread Advocacy Project (GTAP), which commenced in March 2016 through the Third Sector Sustainable Social Services Grant Programme. The project is in its final year, and has worked across Wales as a resource for commissioners and providers of independent professional advocacy for adults, building an understanding of current advocacy commissioning and provision in Wales; to co-produce a vision of what advocacy provision should look like to comply with the new statutory framework; and to provide support to commissioners and providers to achieve that vision by sharing good practice and building capacity.

The project builds on the principles laid out in the 2014 Act, Part 10 Code of Practice on Advocacy. The project also raises awareness of advocacy amongst those people eligible for care and support. In addition the project supports commissioners and providers in the delivery of independent professional advocacy in line with the 2014 Act. The project aims to ensure that where applicable, individuals are able to access appropriate independent professional advocacy support and to develop a better awareness of the role of advocacy.

GTAP has produced a Framework, which is titled 'Framework for Commissioning independent professional advocacy for Adults under the 2014 Act and an associated Toolkit. It is intended to support local authorities and their partners in delivering the requirements of the 2014 Act, and sets out the essential components of commissioning Independent Professional Advocacy for adults (what to do); and is accompanied by a toolkit which supports local authorities to use the Framework (how to do it).

The Framework has been formally launched and is available on the Age Cymru website.

People

Recommendation 2 –

Care and support plans need to respect an individual's desired outcomes, and be more holistic, so that services fit the person and not the other way round.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation and agrees that all care and support plans must respect individuals' desired outcomes.

The 2014 Act places clear duties on those exercising functions under the Act to begin with the assumption that the adult is best placed to judge their own well-being. This is continually reinforced through the definition of well-being and the national well-being outcome statements for example, “I get the right care and support, as early as possible” and “I do the things that matter to me”.

Care and support plans evolve from effective assessments about what matters to the person and the outcomes they want to achieve. This is a model of assessment and care planning that requires the assessment process to start with the person themselves and understand their strengths and capabilities and what matters to them and how their family, friends and local community play a part in their life to help them reach their personal outcomes.

The Part 4 Code of Practice is clear that care and support plans must promote well-being. Care and support must build on the person’s strengths and abilities and enable them to maintain an appropriate level of autonomy with the appropriate level of care and support consistent with their well-being. This includes their right to receive a direct payment to meet their eligible needs so that they can decide how, when and by whom their needs are met.

Supporting effective leadership and practice, consistent with the principles the Welsh Government has established through the 2014 Act, is a continuing priority for Social Care Wales particularly enabling successful and informative conversations about what matters to people.

People

Recommendation 3 –

Greater consideration must be given to carers so they are recognised, supported and valued, as the vital assets they are.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

The Welsh Government values the enormous contribution made by carers to the social care sector in Wales and fully accepts this recommendation.

Welsh Government has prioritised actions to improve to the lives of carers, most significantly through the introduction in the 2014 Act which sets out that a carer has the same right to be assessed for care and support needs as the people they care for, and to have their eligible needs met. To help with this objective, Welsh Government launched a publicity and awareness campaign in autumn 2019, to help individuals of all ages, understand their rights as a carer.

To support the delivery of these enhanced rights for carers and to ensure that they are accessed by and make a difference for carers, including young carers, we recognised that some additional development work was needed. Working in co-production with carers organisations and stakeholders, we announced in

November 2017, three national priorities for carers. These are Supporting life alongside caring; Identifying and recognising carers; and Providing information, advice and assistance.

We intend to strengthen the national co-ordination of support for carers by building on the three priorities announced two years ago. On 21 November 2019 – Carers' Rights Day - we announced our plans to develop a new national carers' action plan, in 2020. This plan will be drawn up on the basis of co-production with carers themselves, carers' organisations and all the main relevant public services through the Ministerial Advisory Group for carers' issues. The national plan will operate across Government, looking at all relevant areas of policy.

In 2018 the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) for Carers was established, with the group providing a national forum to steer the delivery of improvements for carers and provide a cross-sector response to the challenges carers face. The establishment of this group supports the 2014 Act's key principle for supporting an integrated approach, with membership including the key statutory authorities (regional partnership board, local authority and local health board representation) alongside third sector representatives, the Older People's, Children's and Future Generations Commissioners and others.

The National Assembly for Wales' Health, Social Care and Sport Committee published its report and recommendations arising from its inquiry into the impact of the 2014 Act on carers. Welsh Government will discuss the content of the report with the Ministerial Advisory Group members and will provide a formal response in January 2020. The inquiry report will form part of the range of information and evidence that we will be considering, to inform development of the new strategic action plan.

We have also been working on development of a new Engagement and Accountability Group, to commence work in 2020, and to sit alongside the Ministerial Advisory Group for Carers. This new group is intended to facilitate wider representation from the third sector and individual carers, including young carers.

Whilst all carers are entitled to access support from mainstream funded health and social care services, targeted funding was agreed in order to help delivery against the 3 national priorities and to support carers. From 2017-18 all local authorities were given an allocation from £3m of funds, for the provision of additional or new forms of respite care. This recurring support is now provided via the local government Revenue Support Grant.

In both 2018-19 and 2019-20, £1m funding has been allocated by Welsh Government, across local health boards to support the carers 3 national priorities, including by improving support for carers in GP surgeries, and better engagement of carers, at the point of hospital discharge of the individual they care for.

For 2019-20 we strengthened the guidance for the Integrated Care Fund, with an additional £30m to address integrated working, with £15m of the funding to be used to develop preventative services for adults in need of care; and support for carers. This increased investment is intended to bolster progress in delivering the priorities and to improve both direct and indirect support for carers – for example

opportunities for new forms of short breaks or respite; and promoting carers' well-being.

Funding totalling over £1.7m has been awarded from our current Third Sector Sustainable Social Services grant scheme, to Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales, for a wide range of activity, including to raise awareness and understanding amongst carers of their rights and how to access different forms of support. A new three year social services grant scheme will also operate from 2020-21.

We have also provided in 2018-19 and in 2019-20, specific funding for small scale direct carers projects e.g. £45,000 for the Carers Wales Employers for Carers Hub; £10,000 to the All Wales Forum to improve awareness of carers rights; and £14,000 to Children in Wales for ongoing support to the Young Carers Network. We have also agreed funding to Carers Wales to provide an online learning resource which carers can choose to access, and use to accredit their skills for young carers up to the age of 18, we are working with Carers Trust Wales and local authorities to develop a new model for a national young carers ID card, which when rolled out, will help young carers access the right information, advice and assistance from education, health and social care professionals. Additional funding is also going to support development of resources and materials to inform and education GPs, pharmacists, teachers and others about the issues that face young carers, and how they can improve their ability to help identify young carers and sign post them to support or to access a carers' needs assessment.

The Welsh Government is keen to ensure that the range of data in relation to social care in Wales provides a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the experiences of carers which can then be considered at a national level. This will assist in informing policy and guide improvement. With this in mind the Welsh Government is leading on developmental work around our new Performance and Improvement Framework which will be launched in April 2020. It is the intention that more will be done to collect accurate and relevant data around carers including young carers.

People

Recommendation 4 –

The transition between children's and adult services must be made less disruptive and should better prioritise the young person.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation and has already gone some way in addressing this.

Firstly, consolidating the legislation for children and adults into a single coherent framework has enabled a common approach to the assessment of people's needs for care and support. The Part 3 Codes of Practice on Assessing Needs specifically identifies that transition from child to adult constitutes a significant change in circumstances and therefore creates a right to a re-assessment of the person's needs for care and support. That re-assessment must re-establish whether and to what extent the provision of care and support can contribute to the achievement of the person's newly identified outcomes or otherwise meet identified needs.

For children accommodated by a local authority, our legislation and policy is clear that the priority when decisions are being made about the support provided for young people when they are transitioning to independent living should always be on improving the well-being outcomes for the young person concerned.

Part 6 of the Code of Practice to the 2014 Act sets out that all young people leaving care should be provided with the support they need to make a successful transition to adulthood and move towards more independent living.

To successfully achieve this the Part 6 Code outlines that preparation for leaving care should be integral to the support and planning process throughout the time the young person is in care.

The Pathway Plan which all care leavers have is based on their Part 6 care and support plan. The Pathway Plan also sets out the actions that **must** be taken by the local authority, the young person, their parents and carers, and each of the agencies involved with the young person, so that the young person is provided with the services they need to enable them to achieve their aspirations and make a successful transition to adulthood.

Additional funding has been provided by Welsh Government to support children's transition into adulthood. Funding streams have been provided to Local Authorities, as part of our Improving Outcomes for Children work programme, to help them support their care leavers.

St David's Day Fund - £1m

The £1m St David's Day Fund supports young people who are or have been in local authority care aged 16-25 to access opportunities that lead them towards independent and successful lives.

Personal Advisers - £1m

Local Authorities received additional funding to extend personal adviser support for care leavers aged 21-25. Personal adviser support and advice is essential in helping care leavers to successfully transition from care to independent living and adulthood.

Traineeships and Work Placements - £625k

We have provided funding to local authorities to expand on or enhance their traineeships and work placements specifically to young care leavers aged between

16 and 18 years. This is important as we know that care leavers are more likely to end up as not in education, employment or training.

Recommendation 5 and 8–

People

5. Individuals and service providers should work collaboratively as equal partners, promoting good decision-making and minimising the need to challenge decisions.

Partnerships and Integration

8. Co-production needs to be defined and embedded as a practice which is understood and utilised by all who are involved in the creation, delivery and evaluation of social care services.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Both of these recommendations are fully accepted by Welsh Government. They have been grouped together for this report as they cover similar areas around collaboration and co-production.

The 2014 Act requires a culture change from the way in which services have been traditionally provided, to an approach based on partnerships, and an equal relationship between practitioners and people who need care and support and carers who need support.

Voice and control is a key principle of the 2014 Act and sets out a link to co-production, requiring people to be partners in all decision making that relates to their care and support. This approach is based on strengths and understanding people's own contribution to their well-being.

Within the 2014 Act are duties, specified social services functions, processes and powers which encourage people to have stronger voice and control over their lives.

Co-production runs throughout the 2014 Act. All partners involved in the development and delivery of social care services are expected to co-produce services to bring about the changes envisaged in the 2014 Act.

At an organisational level, Welsh Government is already seeing some good examples of co-production through the Regional Partnership Boards (RPB's) delivery of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF). RPBs set up as a result of the 2014 Act, are established on the health board footprint to drive the integration of health and social care. The role of RPBs is to focus on the strategic delivery of care

services and to drive the integration of health and social care and to ensure collaborative working.

In addition to this, RPBs promote and develop alternative delivery models, including co-operatives to bring about the shift envisaged in the 2014 Act and to make social services sustainable. Service users and carers are key partners in the work for the RPBs and we expect RPBs to proactively engage with people and support them to inform the shape of services in the region. It is important that citizen engagement occurs at a range of different levels and not just around the RPB table with a few 'expert citizens.'

Finally, in relation to the development of the social care workforce, in order to ensure that practitioners were aware of what they needed to be doing, in terms of individuals receiving care and support and being treated as equal partners, the Care Council (now Social Care Wales) was selected to deliver a national resources and learning programme to practitioners to support the implementation of the 2014 Act.

Recommendation 6 and 10 –

Partnership and Integration

6. Greater consistency is needed in strategic and operational delivery of social care across Wales with better facilitation of partnerships and collaboration.

10. Processes and tools need to be developed and utilised effectively to embed good partnership and collaborative working.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Both of these recommendations are fully accepted by Welsh Government. They have been grouped together for this report as they cover similar areas around effective partnerships and collaboration.

The Welsh Government is committed to working collaboratively and in partnership with the social care sector across Wales. The foundations for this are set out in our long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales' and also within the 2014 Act.

For example, Regional Partnership Board's (RPBs), provided for by the 2014 Act, are established on the health board footprint to drive the integration of health and social care. The role of RPBs is to focus on the strategic delivery of care services and to drive the integration of health and social care.

They are required to assess the care and support needs of their population and to produce an area plan, setting out how they will respond to those needs. RPBs produced the first population assessments in 2017 and area plans in 2018. The membership of RPBs includes representatives across health boards, local authorities, third sector, care providers, citizens and carers. Following the amendment to the partnership regulations adding housing and education representatives to the board will further strengthen partnership working in Wales.

We realise that more can be done to improve the role of RPBs in Wales. To support this we are now in the process of reviewing the guidance under Part 9 of the 2014 Act to provide further clarity and support to RPBs. Although we are not adding a requirement for regional commissioning strategies in the regulations, we will still encourage and support regions to develop these to promote regional and integrated working. We will strengthen this in the Part 9 Guidance.

We are also working with a wide range of stakeholders, including RPBs, Health Inspectorate Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales to develop and trial an RPB self-assessment tool that will help RPBs assess their progress to date and identify areas for further development.

The Welsh Government also continues to engage with RPBs, including in relation to providing partners with the confidence to pool funds and jointly commission services.

Pooled funds are a key driver of strengthened integrated and collaborative arrangements, specifically in relation to supporting the joint commissioning of services. Welsh Government commissioned the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru to develop a practical toolkit to support implementation of pooled funds. The toolkit was developed with the engagement of relevant partners via an expert advisory panel.

An independent review of pooled funds is currently underway. The review, undertaken by KPMG, will test the scope and effectiveness of pooled fund arrangements to help inform next steps, which will include considering where else pooled funds might be beneficial and how we can support this development.

The National Commissioning Board (NCB) has also been active in developing resources to support more effective commissioning, strategic planning and market development across health and social care in the last three years. It was agreed that there are a series of national priorities and service and market challenges which will require a different approach from the NCB including: expectations set out in A Healthier Wales in relation to RPBs and the NCB to '*Support RPBs to develop areas plans setting out new models of seamless care, pooled funds and joint commissioning arrangements*' and the expectations of much greater locality and primary care hub-based services.

In addition to the RPBs, the Welsh Government has also established the National Social Care Partnership Board (NSCPB). The NSCPB is constituted of representatives from all RPBs, third-sector organisations, NHS Wales, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Association of Directors of Social

Services (ADSS) Cymru and includes citizen representation. The NSCPB takes an active role in discussions of emerging policy as well as providing direct feedback on policy development and the implementation of policy. The operational arrangements of the NSCPB have been, and will continue to be, subject to a continual review process to help ensure that engagement happens in a timely and constructive manner with a wide range of representative stakeholders.

Partnership and Integration

Recommendation 7 –

Regional Partnership Boards need to be made more transparent and accountable, and need to be more open to the public.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

This recommendation is fully accepted by Welsh Government.

Co-production and citizen voice are at the heart of the 2014 Act and they are the key principles informing the work of the RPBs and all of their partners.

We are aware that service user and carer representatives on regional boards have described some of their challenges in meaningfully engaging with the regional partnership board meetings and agendas. Citizen and carer representatives should be supported to engage with the complex reports and materials that flow through the RPBs and if necessary help them to ensure they have their voices heard within what can be an intimidating environment for an individual member of the public.

To address some of these issues in 2019-20 the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) increased from £59million to £89 million and we have also provided RPBs with some additional flexibility in using the ICF for regional infrastructure support which could include supporting third sector, citizen and carer engagement or supporting local programme management and evaluation. Some RPBs have made good use of the ICF to provide additional capacity to support carer, service user and third sector members to engage effectively.

Ministers often re-affirm their expectations in relation to the RPBs' role in proactively supporting engagement with carers, services users and the third sector. Engagement is specifically addressed in regular meetings between the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Care and RPB chairs.

We have also commissioned Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) to support and co-ordinate third sector representatives and assist them in fulfilling their roles as RPB members.

The All Wales Forum for Parents and Carers has been funded £17k in 2019-20, to carry out a national project to deliver collaborative regional carer focused

workshops in each RPB area, bringing together carers, their RPB carer representatives, and key colleagues attached to the RPB who lead on carer strategies. The aim of the workshops is to generate regional engagement groups of carers for the RPB carer representatives to feed back to, and draw comment from. These groups will help to ensure a stronger voice for carers in the regional and local planning processes, as well as offering opportunities for deputy representatives to be found. This work is in support of the strategic activity of the Carers Ministerial Advisory Group, whose members are working with us on development of the new national plan for carers.

Partnership and Integration

Recommendation 9 –

Tendering and commissioning processes need to ensure they focus on delivering high quality services that provide exactly what is needed for people in the short, mid and long term.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation.

It is essential that we continue to improve the way that tendering and commissioning is done in Wales to ensure that high quality services are delivered to those who need them. We have gone some way in addressing this. For example, the NCB has been very active in developing resources to support more effective commissioning, strategic planning and market development across health and social care in the last three years.

The new work plan for the NCB contains the following priority areas for action:-

- Supporting the development of regional commissioning practice
- Supporting market development and cross sector balance
- Developing new domiciliary care commissioning and delivery models
- Measuring the costs and outcomes of care
- Improving and integrating arrangements for commissioning complex care

The final two priority areas will be worked through with a wide range of stakeholders, including both commissioners and providers, to explore how we can more consistently measure the cost and quality of care and understand the outcomes service users experience from the services they access. Findings from this will be used to drive improvement and improve quality of services in Wales.

A key priority for the NCB is to develop commissioning practice across Wales and establish commissioning as a recognised profession. A planning and

commissioning diploma is currently under development to help build capacity and skill across both health and social care.

Prevention

Recommendation 11 and 12 –

Statutory bodies should provide clear information about their services and about the Act, ensuring it is easy to access and understand no matter what someone's circumstances, background or needs.

Improvements should be made to the overall system so that people's experiences are not complicated, and getting the right support is easy.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

The Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation.

This recommendation reiterates the key principles of the 2014 Act and the statutory Code of Practice (Part 2 - General Functions). Local authorities' information, advice and guidance (IAA) services must publicise information about how the care and support system operates in the local authority area; the types of care and support available; how to access the care and support that is available; and how to raise concerns about the well-being of a person who appears to have needs for care and support. Our expectation is clear that IAA will be easy to use, welcoming and informative to create a service which reaches people and offers early intervention and prevention and a response that is informative, knowledgeable and re-assuring.

IAA approaches vary across local authorities and have recently been subject of scrutiny by the Welsh Audit Office (WAO). The WAO identified examples of effective IAA and also identified opportunities for improvement;

<https://www.audit.wales/publication/front-door-adult-social-care>

It is imperative that local authorities understand the impact of their IAA services and are able to understand the quality of individuals' experiences of their services as part of their responsibilities for continuous improvement. In order to support this, Welsh Government has commissioned through the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) a research project which will explore in depth:

- 1) The IAA models that currently exist within local authorities
- 2) What elements of IAA are working successfully
- 3) How to monitor the activity and impact of IAA on a local, regional and national basis

Findings from the first phase of this project are due to be published in Summer 2020, which will then be used to guide and support improvement within IAA services and aligned to the requirements of the 2014 Act and the associated Codes of Practice.

Alongside this we will continue to support improvements in practice through Social Care Wales and raising people's awareness about their rights and entitlements under the 2014 Act. We have commissioned Social Care Wales to develop a skills based resource training pack for managers and practitioners to enable better conversations with people as they connect with their local authority (<https://socialcare.wales/resources/skills-based-resource-pack-better-conversations-in-information-advice-and-assistance-services>).

Between 2016-17 and 2019-20 we have also provided significant funding to our Third Sector partners to provide information, advice and assistance to people about their rights and entitlements under the 2014 Act.

Prevention

Recommendation 13 –

Frontline workers need to be recognised as critical assets within the social care sector and their status professional development and pay should be enhanced to reflect this.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

The Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of frontline workers who are paramount to the successful delivery of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. In order to support the sector we are committed to raising the profile and status of the social care workforce in Wales.

Welsh Government has legislated to improve the terms and conditions of the workforce by reducing the use of zero hour contracts and by requiring the clear delineation of care and travel time. In addition to this, we have also begun to proportionately extend the workforce register to other aspects of the social care workforce; starting with the voluntary registration of domiciliary care workers, who have been able to register with Social Care Wales from 2018, ahead of their mandatory registration from 2020. This will be extended to adult residential care workers from 2020 ahead of their mandatory registration in 2022. The aim of this is that it will provide continued development of the workforce and also provides public reassurance that social care workers are appropriately qualified to deliver quality care to the vulnerable in our society. We also believe that this will help to

raise the profile of the social care sector as a whole and showcase that its workforce are well trained and highly skilled individuals. This will in turn bring recognition for the valued contribution that the social care workforce provide in supporting the healthcare sector and change public perception that they are simply poorly educated and low paid.

The WeCare.Wales Campaign

The Welsh Government has charged the workforce regulator, Social Care Wales, with developing, alongside key stakeholders from within the social care sector, an attraction, recruitment and retention campaign that will help showcase the rewarding opportunities that social care, early years and childcare can offer in supporting people to live full and active lives. Through a series of case studies, it is seeking to highlight the breadth of career opportunities in care, from childminders and nursery practitioners to home care co-ordinators and care home managers with the overall aim to meet the growing needs of the sector and help create a sustainable future workforce for Wales.

Prevention

Recommendation 14 –

All those who are involved in social care should be encouraged to embrace new technology.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

The Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation.

Welsh Government recognises that digital technology is a key enabler of transformational change, which the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales recognised as an important priority. It provides a shared platform for safe and effective joint working between different organisations, and with citizens directly.

Welsh Government is working towards making better use of digital, data, and communication technologies to help us to raise the quality and value of health and social care services, so that they are cost-effective and sustainable and also bring our offer in line with increasing expectations of technology in people's day-to-day lives.

We already have excellent examples of digital systems sharing information across and between primary care, secondary care and social care in Wales. The Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) is a national programme enabling the safe sharing of information between health and social care. We have made a commitment in *A Healthier Wales* to accelerate the national rollout of WCCIS, as well as other national mandated systems. By providing a single electronic patient record will enable health and social care to undertake joint decision making and

provide joined-up care, benefiting everyone who receives health services, care and support. At the same time we will also ensure delivery at pace locally, across organisations and nationally.

In *A Healthier Wales*, we have also made a commitment to investing in the future skills we need within both the health and social care workforce to accelerate digital change.

We have recently announced that there will be a Chief Digital Officer for Health and Care, and one of their tasks will be to encourage the informed use of digital, data and technology in health and social care professions.

The digital inclusion programme seeks to ensure that those who are most at risk of being excluded from digital services are able to reach care and care professionals across Wales.

Scrutiny and Review

Recommendation 15 –

Citizens should be formally involved in greater and deeper scrutiny of the Act to build confidence in the sector and ensure the proper delivery of the Act.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

The Welsh Government fully accepts this recommendation.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of citizen engagement. There are mechanisms in place to secure citizen engagement in the planning, delivery and reflection on implementation of the 2014 Act include citizen representatives on the strategic NSCPB; maturing RPBs, with their service user, carer and third sector representatives; and citizens panels and existing local fora which give collective voice to people's experiences of services.

Noting that RPBs have duties placed on them to engage with the public in the discharge of their functions and have a range of systems and opportunities in place for effective engagement, officials will be considering over the next year how citizen engagement is working in practice, across the regions

Section 2

This section sets out Welsh Government's formal response to the final seventeen recommendations from the Measuring the Mountain project which combines together the findings from Sensemaker story gathering process and the fifteen recommendations from the Citizens' Jury.

Welsh Government has brigaded the comments together under common headings rather than responding to each recommendation separately.

Communication and Service Provision

- Listen to what people say, and believe them. Start conversations from the stand point of wanting to understand someone's circumstances and needs, not a stand point of wanting to challenge or disbelieve them.
- Discuss arrangements for meetings and appointments with the person being supported; recognise that they have commitments and often complex lives, and agree a mutually suitable time and location.
- Make sure that the reason for a meeting or appointment is clear to everyone involved and they agree it would be useful. This includes referrals to other services, and ensuring that those appointments are similarly purposeful.
- If meetings need to be rescheduled, or missed for some reason, let everyone who was attending know.
- Greet everyone at someone's house, and ask them how they are. Many social care workers visit homes to see an individual, greeting others who live there, especially if they are carers, will build rapport, and offer better opportunities for early interventions, should they be needed
- If a process will involve a number of individuals, for example, fitting a hoist in a home which may require multiple visits, seek to have as many of those visits at the same time as is appropriate. Combining visits, or meetings, minimises the time burden on the person being supported, and improves communication between the parties involved.
- Where someone requires a range of support that is inter-related, work with that person to identify ways this support could usefully be streamlined. For

example, if a child requires splints and special shoes, try to arrange for both of these to be measured for and delivered at the same time.

- Provide individuals with a named point of contact that they can reliably get in touch with. Explore options that would meet this need, for example, a two-tier system so that individuals know who they will speak to when they phone up each time, even if that person is not their named case-worker.
- Provide a range of ways that people can communicate with services; ensure that they are all free; and ensure that they all offer the same continuity of relationship that the two-tier phone system would.
- Work co-productively with people. Use the expertise of people accessing services to develop useful information, efficient routes through provision and to improve the delivery of preventative measures. Make use of the knowledge and experience of people accessing social care.
- Discuss personal connections and social lives with people and work with them to identify ways these could be maintained, strengthened or expanded. Recognise that people's needs in this area vary enormously and that options may take time to identify. In relation to carers seeking respite, respite is not respite unless that person is doing something they want to do, for a length of time and in a location which suits them.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Welsh Government recognises that the requirements that have been set out in the 2014 Act and in the supporting Codes of Practice aren't always reaching the people who need care and support and the carers who need support.

The principles of the 2014 Act are very clear and the ethos of the Act is focussed on the individual and on the support they need to achieve their well-being outcomes. This should be a clear common thread in all activity that is undertaken under the 2014 Act and should be evidence in the experiences of each individual who is receiving care and support.

These recommendations are highlighting that this is not always the case and that individual's experiences under the 2014 Act remain variable.

Following on from these recommendations, Welsh Government will work closely to local authorities to explore these recommendations in more depth and to explore how these can be addressed. There is clearly an issue with how the requirements and key principles of the 2014 Act are flowing through the system, and so further work in this area is clearly needed.

To support this, we have commissioned Social Care Wales to deliver continuous programme of training to practitioners about having effective conversations. We

will make these messages available to Social Care Wales so they can be used as part of that ongoing training. We will also explore how the recommendations could be embedded in other areas that Social Care Wales has responsibility for delivering.

Assessment and Care Plans

- Offer carers' assessments to carers. Do not wait for them to say they are struggling, or for them to indicate that they need something; being a carer is hard and offering assessments to them is an easy way to provide support.
- Consider if the work that is being undertaken truly brings benefit for the person being supported. If it does not, give thought to why that might be, and work with colleagues to identify the rationale for carrying out that work and whether it could be achieved more productively in another way.

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

The fundamental principles of the 2014 Act are voice and control, prevention and early intervention, well-being and co-production. The focus is on talking to individuals about what matters to them and the outcomes they want to achieve. That conversation begins with Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) and continues, where appropriate, and where the carer chooses, with an assessment of their care and support needs.

One key aspect of the 2014 Act is that a carer does not have to specifically request a carers needs assessment. If a need for such an assessment is identified, one should be offered to the carer who may not in fact have self-identified that they are a carer, or they should be signposted to the local authority. Welsh Government has not been prescriptive on the process to be undertaken by local authorities when assessing ('what matters conversation') an individual's need for care and support or the support to be provided to carers.

The Codes of Practice underpinning the SSWB Act for assessing the need (Part 3) and meeting the need (Part 4), for care and support, are clear on the requirements of local government. Within the Part 3 code of practice, local authorities must ensure their approach to assessment and eligibility is clearly communicated so that individuals understand how to access an assessment, and what is involved in the assessment process. This also includes confirming how it will be undertaken and who will be involved as part of the process.

The national eligibility criteria set out in the 2014 Act provides for a consistent approach to meeting the care and support needs of all individuals in Wales, including carers. Central to this approach is the spirit of co-production, working with the individual, carer and family to understand their needs, capacity and resources and the outcomes they wish or need to achieve. They can then identify how they can best be supported to achieve those outcomes, recognising their eligibility for that support. Needs can be met not only through the provision of

services, but also through active support and assistance to enable people to meet their own needs.

Concerns regarding carers assessments in particular were highlighted in Carers Wales' 'Track the Act 3' briefing, published in October 2018² and have been raised in other evidence since then, including submissions from organisations that gave evidence to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Inquiry. These highlighted a lack of consistency in the approach that local authorities take as to how and when carers are assessed, and highlighted some confusion amongst carers about when assessments take place, or what is being assessed as part of such an assessment.

To address the concerns raised within Measuring the Mountain and the Carers Wales Track the Act 3 report, Welsh Government commissioned Social Care Wales to develop practitioner guidance to support social care professionals who undertake carers' needs assessments.

Social Care Wales worked in partnership with the Institute of Public Care (IPC) and a working group of key stakeholders, including national carers organisations and government, to develop a suite of bilingual tools to support good, lawful, outcomes-focused practice for social workers and other professionals assessing carers' support needs. The professional resources toolkit was launched in 2019 and was in addition to the Social Care Wales e-learning module about carers, aimed at members of the health and social care workforce³. These materials will support social care professionals to deliver carers needs assessments and care and support plans for carers, developed with the carer as an equal partner and with the goal of enabling carers to live the life they want to achieve.

Our new strategic carers action plan development process, which will involve consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, will be examining amongst other strategic issues, the role and impact of carers needs assessments as experienced by carers, in order to inform the content of the plan, its priorities and how action can be taken to improve the experiences of carers.

Information, Advice and Assistance

- Develop an approach of offering information, advice and support without people needing to ask. Although the Act seeks to provide individuals with voice and control, this should not be interpreted as individuals needing to understand everything that may be available to them, and also being comfortable asking for it. Offering appropriate services, even occasionally, will support an agenda of early intervention and prevention.
- People who are new to being a carer will be facing emotional and practical challenges they may struggle to navigate successfully. Offering them easy to understand support and guidance, using the expertise that working in the sector affords, will minimise these challenges and build an understanding

² <https://www.carersuk.org/files/section/5763/carers-wales-track-the-act-2018-final-081018.pdf>

³ <https://socialcare.wales/service-improvement/working-with-carers-1>

that the social care is there to help. Consider creating a small packet of information for people, or appointing someone to a role to provide support to and build links with carers.

- Anticipate people's needs and offer them information in alternative formats where that would be useful. Registers of people with impairments and disabilities (section 18 of the Act [1]) provide a starting point for identifying needs. If someone asks for documents or information in an alternative format, ensure that they only need to do this once

Welsh Government Response -

Accepted

Response

Our response to Recommendations 11 and 12 set out our expectations that local authority IAA services will be easy to use, welcoming and informative to create a service which reaches people and offers early intervention and prevention and a response that is informative, knowledgeable and re-assuring. Our response also identifies the activity we will lead and deliver.

The 2014 Act is still relatively new legislation. Welsh Government recognises that the introduction of IAA is a significant change for local authorities and that the approach is still embedding.

Independent research on IAA has been commissioned by Welsh Government to explore in depth the different approaches to IAA across Wales; to identify where the most effective practice is taking place; and to identify the types of quantitative and qualitative data that should be collected at a national level to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of IAA provision.

Findings from the project are due to be published in Summer 2020, which will then be used to guide and support improvement within IAA services to ensure that those who need information can access it easily and that it is clear to understand and in alternative formats as required by the Part 2 Code of Practice (General functions).

Developing Well-being

- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is about improving well-being outcomes for people who need care and support and carers who need support. These recommendations illustrate approaches which would support the social care sector in Wales can move closer to providing the best possible well-being outcomes for the people it supports.

Welsh Government Response -

Agreed

Response

Welsh Government recognises the importance of improving the well-being outcomes for people who need support and carers who need support and it is committed to monitoring national well-being outcomes of those individuals.

The development of the National Outcomes Framework was a requirement in Part 2 Section 8 of the Act to describe well-being for people who need care and support and carers who need support and provide a consistent approach to measuring well-being. The national outcome indicators evidence whether the national well-being outcomes are being achieved, and provide a measure of the well-being of people who need care and support and for carers who need support. Through our National Framework we:

- 1) Set the national direction to promote the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support in Wales
- 2) Provide greater transparency on whether services are improving well-being outcomes for people who need care and support and carers who need support in Wales using consistent and comparable indicators.
- 3) Describe the national well-being outcomes that people who need care and support and carers who need support should expect in order to live fulfilled lives.

As information is gathered through the national outcomes framework over the coming years this will start to establish the evidence base to identify the national priorities for improvement in Wales and will start to provide an understanding of the overall impact of care and support on people's lives.

In addition to this, at an individual level, local authorities exercising functions under the Act must ensure that they make a positive contribution to the well-being of people that they support.

The 2014 Act ensures people with care and support needs, or carers with support needs, will identify their personal outcomes and what matters to them. Individuals, their carers and families, as well as advocates where appropriate, will then work together with practitioners to find the best way for the individual to achieve those outcomes. This may include through a managed care and support plan, preventative services or the provision of information, advice and assistance.

An important step in the journey to put people at the center of their care and support is to empower them to be able to identify and measure the progress they are making to achieve their personal outcomes.

In conclusion

The Welsh Government welcomes the recommendations from phase one of the Measuring the Mountain project. It is clear that there is a range of different practice taking place which indicates that the implementation of the 2014 Act and of the supporting codes of practice remains inconsistent, and some people's experiences of care and support in Wales are being affected by this.

This report and the supporting recommendations help to identify where additional work is needed and how we can ensure that, at a national level, all people in need of

care and support and all carers who need support are able to improve their well-being outcomes.

The change in legislation is a significant shift and Welsh Government recognises that since the introduction of the 2014 Act in April 2016, we are still at an early stage of implementation. However, these recommendations indicate that we are not where we should be at this stage and that some additional work is needed to ensure that the requirements of the 2014 Act and practice on the ground are more aligned.

Welsh Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, Social Care Wales and third sector colleagues to explore these recommendations in more depth and to explore what further actions are needed.

In the meantime, Welsh Government is delighted that phase two of the Measuring the Mountain project is well underway and looks forward to the findings which are due in September 2020.