

Health & Social Services Committee

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Date: Thursday 11 May 2006

Venue: Committee Room 2, Senedd, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Strategic Forward Work Programme - 2006 to 2007

Purpose

1. The Committee is invited to agree the strategic forward work programme for 2006 to 2007.

Committee Service

May 2006

Health And Social Services Committee

Forward Work Programme

Part 1 : Strategic Forward Work Programme

May 2006 to April 2007

Standing order 9.9 requires subject committees to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least 12 months. The Strategic Forward Work Programme sets out the Committee's priorities for the coming 18 months. It is complemented by detailed programmes covering around three months at a time.

The Committee's Portfolio

2. In accordance with s57(4) of the Government of Wales Act 1998, the Committee's portfolio follows that of the Assembly Minister:

- All aspects of the National Health Service in Wales, including general practice and primary care, other than (i) oversight of the medical professions; (ii) policy on surrogacy, xenotransplantation*, embryology and human genetics; and (iii) licensing of medicines. (These matters are not devolved to the National Assembly.)
- Charges for NHS services, including prescription, dental and ophthalmic and optical charges.
- The provision of services in Wales to the mentally ill.
- All aspects of public health in Wales, including food safety.
- The regulation of poisons.
- The activities of the Food Standards Agency in Wales.

- Genetically-modified food (but not the cultivation of genetically-modified crops - this is for the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside).
- Oversight of the Audit Commission's activities so far as relating to the National Health Service in Wales.
- Policy on care in the community.
- Policy on the provision of social services for children, including the regulation of playgroups, activity centres and childminding.
- Oversight of the social services activities of local authorities in Wales including the issuing of statutory guidance.
- Oversight of

i. the Care Council for Wales;

ii. the Wales Centre for Health;

iii. the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales;

iv. the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales.

- Regulation of private care and nursing homes in Wales.
- Inspection of, and reporting on, the provision of social services by local authorities in Wales (via the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales).
- Adoption and fostering services in Wales (but not adoption of children by UK residents abroad).
- Cross-cutting responsibility for health improvement and older people and carers.

3. The Committee's Responsibilities are set out in Standing Orders :

"9.7. Each subject committee shall

- contribute to the development of the Assembly's policies within the fields for which the relevant Minister is accountable to the Assembly;
- keep under review the expenditure and administration connected with their implementation; and
- keep under review the discharge of public functions in those fields by public, voluntary and private bodies.

9.8. Each subject committee shall also, within the relevant fields,

- advise on proposed primary, secondary and European legislation affecting Wales, including performing its functions under SO24;
- provide advice to the Assembly Cabinet on matters relating to allocation of the Assembly's budget in accordance with Standing Order 21;
- perform its functions under Standing Order 23(complaints);

- perform any functions assigned to it under the Code of Practice on Public Appointments Procedure made by the Assembly under Standing Order 22; and
- consider matters referred to it by the Assembly within its fields."

The Committee's Aims and Objectives

4. The Committee's aim is to scrutinise the policies of the Welsh Assembly Government and to monitor their implementation to ensure that the people of Wales have access to services to improve their health and provide health and social care when it is needed.

5. In reviewing and developing policy the Committee will make recommendations that will lead to high quality, cost effective services that are properly regulated and inspected.

The Committee's Priorities

6. The Committee's strategic focus for the period of the forward work programme will be on the following issues which, together with its responsibilities under Standing Order 9.7 and 9.8, will be its priorities for meetings:

- undertaking a review of cancer services for the people of Wales;
- Monitoring the Assembly Government's progress in achieving the objectives set out in the strategic document "designed for Life", published in 2005 with particular regard to

i. Reduction in hospital waiting times

ii. Addressing inequalities in funding and access to services;

- Services for the mentally ill, especially for children and adolescents;
- Social Care - Standards and Quality:

i. Child Protection and

ii. The Care Standards Inspectorate;

- Legislation

i. Primary legislation remitted by the Assembly;

- Secondary Legislation as identified by the Committee for scrutiny. The Committee may wish to scrutinise a substantial volume of legislation emanating from the Health Bill, which was still before Parliament at the beginning of May 2006. (Current legislation identified at 30 April 2006

is appended).

- Scrutiny of Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies.

Budget priorities

7. The Committee will monitor the Assembly Government's progress in the following areas which the committee identified as priorities for the 2006-07 budget:

- children's hospitals
- Townsend implementation
- Ambulance services in Wales (including Air Ambulance)
- cancer services
- services for diabetes
- epilepsy services
- implementation of the Mental Health National Service Framework.

The Statutory Schemes

8. The Committee will also take account of the National Assembly's statutory schemes for relations with the local authorities and the voluntary sector, and the sustainable development scheme. The Committee will also have regard to the requirements of the Race Relations Act.

9. The Committee will consider a report of the Assembly Minister's meetings with the Voluntary Sector at least once a year in accordance with section 3.7 of the Voluntary Sector Scheme.

* Xenotransplantation is the transplantation of tissue and organs between different species, and in particular the transplantation of animal tissue into humans.