



## **Consultation: Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill**

- 1. Is there a need for a Bill to provide for a single Act for Wales that brings together local authorities and partners duties and functions in relation to improving the well being of people who need care and support and carers who need support? Please explain your answer.**

Yes if it will simplify the law and clarify roles and responsibilities and aid consistency. There needs to be clarity, however, about which legislation it supersedes and the responsibilities of partner agencies. At present, local authorities are experiencing difficulties with Health colleagues around services and responsibilities. Roles and responsibilities need to be enshrined within legislation. There also needs to be community ownership and an understanding of the changing role of Social Services.

- 2. Do you think the Bill, as drafted, delivers the stated objectives as set out in Chapter 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum? Please explain your answer.**

It would appear so. There needs to be some more clarity around the single duty to meet eligible needs and what this will mean and how applying an eligibility criteria fits in with preventative services. There needs to be clarity about what is a preventative service as opposed to a care and support service in light of proposed regulations giving authorities the provision to charge for them. The regulations, backed up by a code of practice, should clarify much of what is stated in the Bill. The National Outcomes Framework is to be welcomed.

- 3. The Bill aims to enable local authorities, together with partners, to meet the challenges that face social services and to begin the process of change through a shared responsibility to promote the well being of people. Do you feel the Bill will enable the delivery of social services that are sustainable? Please explain your answer.**

At the moment partnerships are voluntary and this often hinders their chance of success. If they were imposed by WG then they would have to work. However, the driver mustn't be just to cut costs, it must be to also provide a better service. Across North Wales there are many successful collaboratives that have developed in a strive to improve services. The Bill places an emphasis on local authorities to co-operate in improving the well being of individuals. Equal emphasis should be placed on other statutory bodies to do likewise.

The Bill emphasises preventative services. This will reduce the number of people coming through the front door of social services. This should help in the sustainability of social services but the community need to be well aware of the role that the local authority will play and what role they must also play in supporting each other.

**4. How will the Bill change social services provision and what impact will such changes have, if any.**

By concentrating on preventative services it will mean only the most vulnerable people and the most complex cases will receive input from social services. There will be a need for people to re train within the service. People have been entrenched within either adult or children services and will need updating on the part of the service they may not have worked in for many years. Many social services will have to transform and put more of an emphasis on the front door to redirect services away from social services. The private and not for profit companies/agencies will need nurturing/supporting to ensure capacity and capability to provide support for those people who will be directed to them for services. Social serves will have to consider how they will ensure the service user voice is heard and is able to contribute to service provision.

**5. What are the potential barriers to implementing the provisions of the bill (if any) and does the bill take account of them?**

There is an assumption within the bill that partner agencies will work with social services to implement the bill. Already other agencies refer to it as the social services bill and see it as an obligation upon social services and not themselves. In renaming the bill it would have been helpful not to have called it the social services and well being bill.

**6. In your view does the bill contain a reasonable balance between the powers on the face of the bill and the powers conferred by regulations? Please explain your answer.**

There are many powers to be conferred by regulations. This will allow for flexibility in the future. There is some concern that the scope of the powers within regulations could fundamentally change how a social services department works e.g. sections 19(3), (4) and (5) and section 119. There is only so much change a service can take.

**7. What are your views on powers in the bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (i.e. statutory instruments, including regulations, orders and directions).**

See above.

**8. What are your views on the financial implications of the bill?**

Training social work staff to adopt the new law: - the planned redirection of the SCWDP grant to retrain social workers does not take in to account the need to maintain mandatory training such as child protection and safeguarding adults and manual handling, health and safety etc.

The provision of preventative and early intervention services: - does not take in to account the cost to transform service provision in order to do this.

The provision of information for individuals, carers and families: - this will require an additional cost in relation to published material to update and inform members of the public.

Create a more nationally consistent system for assessments and eligibility criteria for both users and carers: - a cost will be incurred if present assessment systems change. Computer systems are built around our existing assessment processes and so would have to be rebuilt.

Reduction in the administrative burden on social workers: - this a laudable but does not take account of the fact that social workers will then have time to 'do' social work and so isn't a saving in real terms.

Reduction in the number of complaints to local authorities and reduction in the level of litigation local authorities will face: - the savings are speculative.

It is expected that a preventative service and a more community based service will, in the long term, be cost effective and save money. However, the transition could be costly when taking in to account training, updating computer systems, restructuring and informing the community at large.