

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

PART 1 : STRATEGIC FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME June 2003 to December 2004

1. 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 the Central Council for Social Care in Wales and the Children's Commissioner for Wales and 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 children, health improvement, and older people and carers.

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

“9.7. Each subject committee shall

- i. contribute to the development of the Assembly's policies within the fields for which the relevant Assembly Secretary is accountable to the Assembly;
- ii. keep under review the expenditure and administration connected with their implementation; and
- iii. 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,

- i. advise on proposed legislation affecting Wales, including performing its functions under SO22;
- ii. provide advice to the Assembly Cabinet on matters relating to allocation of the Assembly's budget in accordance with Standing Order 19;
- iii. perform its functions under Standing Order 21(complaints);
- iv. perform any functions assigned to it under the Code of Practice on Public Appointments Procedure made by the Assembly under Standing Order 20; and
- v. 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:

- Monitor implementation of the restructuring of the NHS in Wales, including the associated costs and the effectiveness of the new arrangements in meeting the health care needs of the people of Wales.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Primary Care Strategy
- Scrutinise the Welsh Assembly Government's performance in reducing waiting times and the incidence of delayed transfer of care.
- Scrutinise the Welsh Assembly Government on the action it is taking in addressing capacity issues (Question of Balance).
- Social Care - Standards and Quality:
 - Care Council and CSIW;
 - Future of Joint Inspections between SSIW and Audit Commission;
 - Child Protection
- Legislation:
 - Primary:
 - Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Bill;
 - Possible Mental Health Bill.
 - Secondary:
 - Arising from the Health (Wales) Act and the Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act;
 - Domiciliary Care regulations.
- Policy Review:

Possible subjects include:

- fluoridation of water;
 - health aspects of GM foods;
 - role and remit of the Commissioner for older people;
 - hospital catering, eg dietary and nutritional value in contributing to recovery and healthy living.
- Scrutiny of Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (eg Care Council, Health Professions Wales, Wales Centre for Health).

The Statutory Schemes

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 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.