

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Senedd Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

26th November 2021

Dear Peredur,

Re: Response to Finance Committee Consultation on Draft Budget

I am writing in response to the Finance Committee's consultation on the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2022-23.

We believe that **investment in social care** has to be one of the key priorities for the Draft Budget. The social care workforce in Wales is undervalued and understaffed. There is a desperate need to improve the profile of social care and retain staff whilst reducing shortages. We recommend that the Welsh Government should introduce the Real Living Wage for all care staff at the earliest opportunity, because urgent intervention is needed to stabilise and improve prospects for the social care workforce in Wales. Social care in Wales is in a severe crisis, with a backlog of people requiring care waiting to enter the system.

Moreover, we recommend the **integration of health and social care funding**. The social care sector has warned that greater emphasis needs to be placed upon

creating a holistic and cohesive service, that puts the person at the heart of their care plan. We believe that uniting the health and social care funding streams would lead to improved wellbeing in the community; minimised competition between the two sectors for adequate funding;¹ fewer delayed hospital discharges; fewer inappropriate care assessments and packages; and streamlined services that prioritise patients' wellbeing alongside their health. We believe that streamlined funding between health and social care would minimise the need for competition or incompatible practices. Funding needs to be focussed on establishing a coherent and holistic social care sector which puts the individual and their requirements first, facilitated with information technology that shares information seamlessly.

We also believe that **funding needs to be invested in bespoke employment programmes** aimed at overcoming the barriers which disabled people face in gaining and maintaining employment, and raising awareness of funding schemes such as Access to Work. Disabled people offer a wealth of talent, experience, and perspective to the workforce, but many disabled people still face significant barriers when accessing employment. In Wales, many people are unaware of Access to Work, a scheme by which funding adjustments (for technology, travel, support) can be achieved that go beyond what might be considered 'reasonable' for the employer to pay.² As a result, there remains a significant gap between the employment rate of disabled people and that of the rest of the population.

¹ Welsh Government and Swansea University: A Realistic Evaluation of integrated health and social care for older people in Wales, to promote independence and wellbeing: Interim report. 2013. Link: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/131015-evaluation-integrated-health-social-care-older-people-interim-report-en.pdf>

² Only 14% of disabled adults in Wales reported to Leonard Cheshire that they currently or previously receive Access to Work support, compared to 25% of disabled adults in England. Leonard Cheshire, Reimagining the workplace: disability and inclusive employment, 2019.

Funding for transport also needs to be aimed at addressing the barriers that society places in the way of disabled people, that stop or hinder access. 21 per cent of rail stations in Wales do not have step-free access, and at the current rate, all stations in Wales will not be accessible until 2070. Disabled people should not have to wait 49 years for a train.

Finally, we are calling for increased funding for the provision of training, ICT and Wi-Fi equipment to disabled people in Wales to **improve digital inclusion** and tackle loneliness and isolation. Only 79 per cent of disabled people in Wales use the internet, compared with 93 per cent of non-disabled people.³ This uneven access to digital technology means that those with arguably the most to gain from using digital services are often the least likely to be able to do so.

I would be very happy to meet with you or other members of the Finance Committee to discuss these issues further should you wish to do so.

Many thanks,



Glyn Meredith
Director of Wales, Leonard Cheshire Cymru

³ Welsh Government, Internet use and digital skills (National Survey for Wales) 2018-19, <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-09/internet-use-and-digital-skills-national-survey-wales-april-2018-march-2019-207.pdf>

Annex A: References

- Delayed transfers of care database, NHS Wales cited in StatsWales, *Delay length by LA of residence and delay band*. Last updated: 23rd April 2020. Accessed at: [Delay length by LA of residence and delay band \(gov.wales\)](#) [Date accessed: 19th November 2021]
- Leonard Cheshire Cymru, *Manifesto Asks: Annex 3: Integration of health and social care funding*. Accessed at: [Manifesto-Asks-Annex-3.pdf \(leonardcheshire.org\)](#) [Date accessed: 22nd November 2021]
- Welsh Government, *Written Statement: Rebalancing Care and Support White Paper – next steps*. 29th October 2021. Accessed at: [Written Statement: Rebalancing Care and Support White Paper- next steps \(29 October 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#) [Date accessed: 22nd November 2021]