

**Julie Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Deputy Minister for Social Services**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Russell George MS  
Chair  
Health and Social Care Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

29 June 2023

Dear Russell,

The Minister for Health and Social Services, Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing and I [wrote to you](#) on 7 March in response to the Health and Social Care Committee's report titled *Welsh Government draft budget 2023-24*.

Under Recommendation 9 the Committee recommended that Welsh Government should commit to providing six-monthly updates on:

- (1) the work of the Social Care Fair Work Forum, and
- (2) actions taken to progress the recommendations made by the Expert Group on the development of a national care service for Wales.

In line with the Committee's recommendation, we committed to providing the first written updates by the end of June 2023.

I am writing to you today to with an update on these areas, enclosed at Annex A. I hope you find this update helpful and please let me know should the Committee have any further queries. I will write to you again in December 2023 enclosing the next six-monthly update on these areas.

Yours sincerely

**Julie Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Deputy Minister for Social Services**

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**Annex A****Written update on Recommendation 9 areas within Health and Social Care Committee report 'Welsh Government draft budget 2023-24'****1. Update- the work of the Social Care Fair Work Forum****Background**

The Social Care Fair Work Forum was established in September 2020, bringing together government, employers and unions to work in social partnership to look at how the definition of fair work should be applied for social care workers in Wales. Throughout 2022 and through collective partnership discussions, the Forum has continued its work to set out what good working practices and fair work should look like in social care.

**Progress against fair work priorities****A fair reward, recognition and progression opportunities for the Social Care sector.**

In addition to our programme for government commitment to pay social care workers in Wales the Real Living Wage, the Social Care Fair Work Forum has been working in partnership to look at how the working conditions of social care workers can be improved in Wales. This includes the development of a draft Pay and Progression Framework for the social care sector. With a focus on direct-care roles in the first instance, the draft Framework aims to provide more consistent pay, progression and development opportunities by setting out broad bands of roles within social care, aligned with skills, learning and pay levels. The draft Framework is currently being consulted on as part of the Welsh Government's [Rebalancing care and support programme](#). The Forum believes that providing a clear progression route for those in the sector is a vital component of fair work.

**Parity of terms and conditions through collective bargaining.**

A Forum Task and Finish Group has been considering how a unique model of collective bargaining could be developed for the independent social care sector in Wales. This model would ultimately incorporate many Fair Work elements currently being progressed by the Forum. By the Autumn, the Social Care Fair Work Forum will agree and establish its broad principles and vision for collective bargaining and provide a memorandum of understanding for voluntary membership. Due to the complexity, there will be a phased approach to implementation with a voluntary collective bargaining partnership arrangement for social care in Wales to be tested, evaluated and further developed through 2023-24.

Further update on the forums progress and priorities for 2023-24 can be found here [Social Care Fair Work Forum: annual progress update 2023](#)

**2. Actions taken to progress the recommendations made by the Expert Group on the development of a national care service for Wales.****Background**

The Expert Group was established in February 2022 to advise on the shared ambition for a National Care Service, as per the commitment in the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid

Cymru. They subsequently produced a detailed report containing a series of recommendations about how a national care service could be developed.

## **Update**

The existing Rebalancing Care and Support programme complements many of the findings within the Expert Group, and an update on this work was given via the [Oral Statement of 20 June](#) on national measures to strengthen social care. Specifically, the proposals on the National Framework for the Commissioning of Care and Support in Wales, and those on the National Office for Social Care will be amongst the first building blocks of a National Care Service. The formal consultation on the Rebalancing Care and Support programme launched on 22 May and includes a draft National Framework Code of Practice, proposals relating to the function of the National Office as well as the draft Pay and Progression Framework proposals described above. The consultation is due to conclude on 14 August at which point officials will carefully consider the feedback received before the proposals are finalised.

Alongside the Rebalancing Care and Support programme we are also developing a specific Initial Implementation Plan for the National Care and Support Service (to note this name was a recommendation of the Expert Group). This will include the existing proposals within the Rebalancing Care and Support programme, as well as additional areas in line with the Expert Group's recommendations. We intend to make a further announcement on the Initial Implementation Plan in the near future.