

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Cyllid](#) ar [Cyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru 2024-25](#).

This response was submitted to the [Finance Committee](#) consultation on the [Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25](#).

WGDB\_24-25 07 : Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas Alzheimer's Cymru | Response from: Alzheimer's Society Wales

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Gyda'n gilydd, byddwn yn cynnig help  
a gobaith i bawb sy'n byw gyda dementia  
Together we are help & hope  
for everyone living with dementia

Owain Roberts  
Clerk, Senedd Finance Committee  
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Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> November

Dear Owain,

### **Alzheimer's Society Cymru Submission: Senedd Finance Committee Consultation on Welsh Government Draft Budget proposals for 2024-25**

Alzheimer's Society Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Finance Committee's consultation on the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2024-25 in advance of the publication of the detailed draft Budget in December.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity. We provide information and support, improve care, fund research, and create lasting change for people living with dementia in Wales, England, and Northern Ireland. Our mission is to create a society where those living with dementia are supported to live independently in their communities, ensuring that they feel valued and can access quality person-centred care that meets their individual needs.

Dementia needs to be a priority for the Welsh Government to meet the needs of the growing numbers of people living with a diagnosis of dementia. We are a key partner in developing and monitoring the implementation of the Welsh Government's Dementia Action Plan and work with NHS Bodies and other stakeholders to improve dementia services through co-production with those with lived experience.

The quality of national dementia services is key to meeting the needs of the 50,000 people living with dementia in Wales, which is forecast to rise by 70% to above 79,000 people by 2040<sup>1</sup>.

With the number of people living with dementia rising, reduced capacity in healthcare services and a social care system reliant on unpaid carers, Alzheimer's Society Cymru emphasises the need for Senedd Committees to take particular regard of the needs of people living with dementia when scrutinising the Draft Budget for 2024-25, particularly in the context of an ageing population.

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<sup>1</sup> Raphael Wittenberg, Bo Hu, Luis Barraza-Araiza, Amritpal Rehil Policy and Evaluation Centre (CPEC) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Projections of older people with dementia and costs of dementia care in the United Kingdom, 2019-2040 (2019) Available at: [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec\\_report\\_november\\_2019.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec_report_november_2019.pdf)

In particular, we highlight the importance of continued funding for the implementation of the Welsh Government's Dementia Action Plan (the Action Plan) and for the required consultation on a new Action Plan during 2024, increased allocation of funds for the Department of Health and Social Services and for increased funding for diagnosis pathways, which are outlined in more detail below.

### **Implementation of the Welsh Government's Dementia Action Plan**

The implementation of the Welsh Government's current Action Plan is supported by £12m annual funding to Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) to ensure delivery is integrated across services to meet the needs of local populations.

With the current fiscal climate necessitating Departmental savings efficiencies due to inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic, Alzheimer's Society Cymru highlights the importance of protecting the £12m annual funding for RPBs, particularly as demand for dementia services continues to increase in-line with the growing prevalence of dementia across the UK. We are also conscious of the need to ensure that funding is increased where possible to off-set the impact of inflation and the increased costs of service delivery, and would welcome further details around any plans to review annual funding for the implementation of the Action Plan.

A commitment has been made by Welsh Government to publish a new Action Plan in 2024. It will be important to ensure that sufficient funding is allocated to allow a robust consultation on the new Action Plan within the 2024/25 Budget which should support the involvement and participation of people affected by dementia, health and social care professionals, and the third sector as part of making dementia a priority in Wales.

### **Funding for the Department of Health and Social Services: Local Health Boards**

Alzheimer's Society Cymru welcomes the £407.3m net increase as part of the Health and Social Services Main Expenditure Group (MEG)<sup>2</sup> for 2023-24. While the Welsh Government has indicated that the additional funding will be used to support the delivery of 'Core NHS Services', and details of allocations to Local Health Boards (LHBs)<sup>3</sup> have been provided, we are eager for funding for dementia services to be protected as much as possible as LHBs work towards tackling underlying deficits in-line with target controls.

The protection of dementia services will help to ensure that people living with dementia have access to person-centred care and support, as any cuts to frontline services could lead to an increase in unnecessary A&E admissions, a lack of access to quality care in community settings and isolation,

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government, Welsh Government Draft Budget 2023-24, Ministers' Written Evidence to Senedd Scrutiny Committees on allocations within each MEG (2022) Available at:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-02/ministers-written-evidence-to-senedd-scrutiny-committees-2023-2024-v1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government, Written Statement on LHB Allocations and Target Control Totals (2023) Available at:

[https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-lhb-allocations-and-target-control-totals?utm\\_source=rss-announcements&utm\\_medium=rss-feed&utm\\_campaign=announcements-Written+Statement%3A+LHB+Allocations+and+Target+Control+Totals](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-lhb-allocations-and-target-control-totals?utm_source=rss-announcements&utm_medium=rss-feed&utm_campaign=announcements-Written+Statement%3A+LHB+Allocations+and+Target+Control+Totals)

particularly in rural communities. It is important for appropriate support to be in-place to support LHBs to deliver against their individual target control targets and that deficit control measures can be re-assessed as appropriate to protect frontline services where necessary.

### **Funding for the Department of Health and Social Services: Social Care**

It will also be important to resume the Welsh Government's Rebalancing Care and Support Programme and for continued funding for the consultation process towards developing a National Care and Support Service for Wales. The social care system continues to be under-resourced, with a high number of unfilled vacancies, a lack of career progression and training, and reliance on agency staff leading to higher workforce costs. The Social Care Wales Workforce Survey 2023 identifies 5,323 unfilled vacancies, representing 9% of the total workforce<sup>4</sup>, highlighting the need for equal value and parity of funding with the NHS for resourcing, training and qualifications.

We would also welcome further details on any funding allocated to Local Authorities to improve workforce retention and training opportunities for social care workers, and to enhancing access to support for unpaid carers who collectively provide £10.1bn worth of care to the economy in Wales<sup>5</sup>.

### **Funding for Diagnosis Pathways**

We are also eager for any update on the progress of the £25m investment to improve diagnosis infrastructure and availability of PET-CT Scanners as announced in September 2021<sup>6</sup>. The new scanners will be vital to enhancing access to national diagnosis services, increasing the national dementia diagnosis rate and facilitating access to post-diagnosis care and support for people living with dementia.

Whilst the Action Plan outlines plans to set Local Health Boards a target to increase diagnosis rates by 3% per year<sup>7</sup>, the lack of consistent national and regional dementia diagnosis data in Wales limits the extent to which progress can be measured, and the delivery of targeted support where needed.

Alzheimer's Society Cymru emphasise the need for dedicated additional funding to improve diagnosis pathways, and for the collection and publication of regular dementia diagnosis data (including by sub-type) to close the diagnosis gap and improve access to quality post-diagnosis care.

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<sup>4</sup> Social Care Wales, New report shows almost 85,000 people work in the social care sector in Wales (2023) Available at: <https://socialcare.wales/news-stories/new-report-shows-almost-85-000-people-work-in-the-social-care-sector-in-wales>

<sup>5</sup> Carers UK, Valuing Carers research report (2021) Available at: <https://www.carersuk.org/media/2d51e03c/valuing-carers-report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government, Welsh Government to invest nearly £25m in four new digital scanners to cut waiting times and meet service demand (2021) Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-government-invest-nearly-ps25m-four-new-digital-scanners-cut-waiting-times-and-meet-service>

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Government, Dementia Action Plan for Wales 2018-2022, p.16 (2018) Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/dementia-action-plan-for-wales.pdf>

While we are conscious of the limited availability of additional funding as a result of the fiscal climate that all Local Health Boards are operating within having exceeded their authority to spend<sup>8</sup>, we would welcome any further details on the points highlighted above. It is vital for dementia services to remain appropriately funded throughout the next Budgetary period and for dementia to be recognised as a priority for the NHS.

Please let me know of any questions in response to our written submission and thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Committee's Call for Information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Laura Courtney**  
**National Influencing Manager – Wales**  
**Alzheimer's Society Cymru**

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<sup>8</sup> Audit Wales, Six health boards breach break even duty amid wider financial pressures (2023) Available at: <https://www.wao.gov.uk/news/six-health-boards-breach-break-even-duty-amid-wider-financial-pressures>