

Gwenda Thomas AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: LF/GT/0161/13

Jocelyn Davies AM
Committee Chair
Finance Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

19 March 2013

Dear Jocelyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 25 February in which you enclose questions from your Committee arising from the RIA published alongside the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill. I welcome the Committee's interest in this Bill and the challenge you bring via your questions.

I want to start by saying that this Bill is quite unlike any other the National Assembly has thus far scrutinised. It is consolidating over 40 pieces of social care legislation dating back as far as 1948 as well as providing the legislative framework to assist the implementation of *Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action*. The Bill also contains provisions to ensure it is 'future proofed' so that this primary legislation can last for years to come. The Bill is introducing once-in-a-generation change for Social Services and social care in Wales. There are many drivers necessitating its introduction but one of them is the need to provide for long term sustainability. This means being able to do things differently within available resources.

As you know, I consulted last year on the high level policy proposals to be developed into legislation. In our consultation we asked respondents to identify any impacts my proposals would have. The consultation report refers to some comments made in relation to financial implications and you will see my response to question 25 deals with this.

I also see the introduction of the Bill as marking the next phase of a journey on which there is still a long way to go. In particular, the secondary legislation will need to be made. Although this is not due to take place in earnest until 2014-15, I have asked that work on the intent of these Regulations be started now to run in parallel with the passage of the Bill, as it is through the Regulations that much of the detailed financial work will be done. In addition to this, I have referred in the Explanatory Memorandum about the detailed implementation plan that will need to be developed. Clarifying assumptions about cost implications will be undertaken as part of this process.

You should note that on 18 April, I will be giving evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee and on 22 April I will be giving evidence to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee. The Children and Young People's Committee have also invited me to give evidence on 25 April. This latter Committee is interested in the children's elements of the Bill, particularly in relation to the WLGA/ADSS Cymru model for a National Adoption Service. I am therefore copying this letter, along with my responses to your questions, to the Chairs of each of these Committees to help inform their questioning of me. Finally, the responses I have provided to your questions need to be considered in the context of what I have said in this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

Gwenda Thomas AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence: Gwenda.Thomas@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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