



# Health and Social Care Committee: Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Bill

## Focus Group Participants

This document outlines the evidence gathered including the specific contributions of the focus groups and participants.

### Methodology

As part of the **Health and Social Care Committee's Stage 1 scrutiny of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill** the Outreach Team has conducted a series of focus groups across Wales. The Outreach Team undertook work to uncover the views of Day Centre users on two key elements of the Bill namely: safeguarding and intervention; and choice and control. Focus groups were conducted in all 5 electoral regions in Wales and a breakdown of all organisations visited is available in the following section.

### Summary

Total number of participant organisations: 7

Total number of focus groups: 8

Total number of participants: 61



Fairwater Day Centre, Fairwater (Cardiff)

Local Authority

*Fairwater Day Centre is situated in Fairwater on the outskirts of Cardiff. The Centre serves the town and nearby area, and attracts service users from both advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds.*

*The focus group was conducted through the medium of English.*

Date: 18/04/2013

Number of Participants: 8 (female)

Bryntirion Day Centre, Tregaron (Ceredigion)

Local Authority

*Bryntirion Day Centre is situated in the small rural town of Tregaron in Ceredigion. The Centre serves the town and nearby rural villages which lay 14 miles outside of Aberystwyth. The Centre is a part of the "Communities First" Scheme.*

*Both focus groups were conducted bilingually through the medium of Welsh and English.*

Date: 30/04/2013

Number of Participants:

Group 1: 4 Females (2 Welsh-speakers)

Group 2: 2 Males (Welsh-speakers), 2 Females



Bridgend Community Carers Café (Bridgend)

Community

*Bridgend Community Carers Café is one of many Community Companions Cafes throughout Bridgend County Borough where carers can meet other carers, make new friends and take part in activities.*

*The focus group was conducted through the medium of English.*

Date: 24/04/2013

Number of Participants: 11 (mixed – 2 male, 9 female)

Melrose Day Centre, Shotton (Deeside – Flint)

Local Authority

*The Melrose Day Centre serves the town of Shotton and surrounding areas of Deeside. The area is considered socially and economically disadvantaged.*

*The focus group was conducted through the medium of English.*

Date: 25/04/2013

Number of Participants: 8 (mixed – 1 male, 7 female) including 2 members of staff

Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend (Bridgend)



Local Authority

*The Minerva Street Day Centre serves the town of Bridgend and the lower Valley areas.*

*The focus group was conducted through the medium of English.*

Date: 24/04/13

Number of Participants: 7 (mixed – 4 females, 3 males) and 2 members of staff

Widdershins Day Centre, Griffithstown (Torfaen)

Social Enterprise

*Widdershins Day Centre serves the areas of Griffithstown within the Torfaen constituency. The Centre is situated in a mainly residential area close to Pontypool.*

*The focus group was conducted through the medium of English.*

Date: 23/04/13

Number of Participants: 12 (mixed – 10 females, 2 males) and 1 member of staff

Encil y Coed Day Centre, Criccieth (Gwynedd)

**Assembly Communications:  
Outreach**



Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

Local Authority

*Encil y Coed Day Centre serves the area of Criccieth and surrounding villages.*

*The focus group was conducted bilingually through the medium of Welsh and English.*

Date: 03/04/13

Number of Participants: 7 (mixed – 5 females, 2 males) and 1 member of staff



Scenario 1 – Choice and Control

*Mr and Mrs A are both in their late 70s and living in the same house in which they raised their family. Mrs A has been caring for her husband who has severe health problems including the early stages of Alzheimer’s Disease but her own health is deteriorating and she and Mr A both need extra help. They are determined to remain independent and that neither of them will move into residential care.*

*They receive home care which has been arranged by the local council and is provided by a private care agency. Mr and Mrs A are struggling to cope with the arrangement which is insufficient to meet their needs. Care workers call at irregular times and the same staff rarely visit more than 2 days in a row. They are both confused by the care system and don’t know whether there are other options available to them.*

Question 1) How do you feel about the amount of choice that Mr and Mrs A have over their social care needs?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>Most participants did not feel as if Mr and Mrs A had enough choice.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants felt that social services should have set times for turning up during the course of the day, particularly with regards to meal times. There was a general feeling that routine is important.</i></p> <p><i>One participant explained that in previous years she and her husband (who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s) did not receive help from outside the family for over 7 years and felt that they did not have much choice of care providers. However, the fact that they both valued their independence was cited as one of the factors behind coping by themselves for an extended period.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<p><i>All participants felt that they did not have enough choice.</i></p> <p><i>However, all participants felt that extended family members should be doing more to support Mr and Mrs A in providing their care. If they didn’t get more choice in this situation, then both Mr and Mrs A should into residential care.</i></p>



<p>Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2</p>	<p><i>All participants said that there should be a better dialogue between the service provider, council and Mr and Mrs A. This would give all of the parties an opportunity to openly discuss issues and build a trusting relationship from the onset.</i></p> <p><i>One participant is currently waiting for her Social Services Initial Assessment. She has been waiting over 2 weeks and feels as if she's been "left suspended". It would be helpful to have a single point of contact at the Social Services Department to discuss her care needs and she feels like she has no one to talk to about her options.</i></p>
<p><b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café</p>	<p><i>All participants felt that Mr and Mrs A did not have enough choice.</i></p>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The participants felt that Mr and Mrs A should have more choice over their social care needs and that the social services should facilitate this.</i></p> <p><i>They felt that Mr and Mrs A should have one carer responsible for them most of the time, as they feel that routine is important.</i></p> <p><i>One participant had experience of a particular care agency that were not able to address her medical needs (regular dressing of a wound) and consequently had to use an alternative agency.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>The focus group participants were unanimous in stating that they did not feel Mr and Mrs A had enough of a choice over their social care needs. Continuity of care was especially important in this instance, due to Mr A's ill-health.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>The focus group participants were unanimous in stating that they did not feel Mr and Mrs A have enough of a choice over their social care needs.</i></p>
<p>Encil y Coed, Criccieth</p>	<p><i>Most participants felt that Mr and Mrs A did not have enough choice, but felt that in some way, this was something they had to accept.</i></p> <p><i>Some participants mentioned that if choice came with tasks such as filling in forms, then</i></p>



	<p><i>Mr and Mrs A may not want more choice.</i></p> <p><i>One participant also mentioned that not all older people like to make choices, and would rather have choices/decisions made for them.</i></p>
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Question 2) What would you want more choice over?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<i>Most participants wanted more consistent care and the continuity of the carer was paramount.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<p><i>The focus group participants identified the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>More choice over the continuity of care and the continuity of carer so that a trusting relationship is built;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Once a trusting relationship is built, the carers will be more aware of their needs, likes and dislikes (particularly when it comes to purchasing food)</i></li> </ul>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<p><i>Participants stated there wasn't enough information made available to them on what care options are available to them.</i></p> <p><i>One participant felt that the initial care assessment isn't fit for purpose. Often when you are assessed, you don't realise what your needs are until you are in receipt of care, which can lead to more time and resource in amending that individual's care package.</i></p> <p><i>One participant said that when she tries to get information over the phone from social services, they are reluctant to answer questions and don't have the information to hand to help them.</i></p>
<b><i>Bridgend Carer's Community Café</i></b>	<i>The focus group participants identified the following:</i>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>More choice over the continuity of carer;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Choice over when to go to bed;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>More choice over the person administering the care – trust was seen to be essential, and all participants said that building relationships with care providers was important.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The group initially struggled to come up with a list, however these issues were discussed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The ability to change their care worker if they don't get on- they should be allowed to change;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Fitting appointments into their routine;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Transport allowances and providers.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>A small number of the focus group participants felt that more choice and information should be given about who can provide their care.</i></p> <p><i>One participant highlighted the risk intimidation that can come from receiving care from private firms. Many carers from private companies do not take the same level of time with the elderly, by sitting down with them to have a cup of tea and a chat. This is often the only form of social interaction that an elderly person will have during the day. That participant also suggested that they may not be monitored sufficiently enough in the standard of care they provide.</i></p> <p><i>Other participants in the focus group discussed regulating the number of carers that visit elderly people, limiting them to 2 or 3, so that they are able to establish a relationship. Having the same carers ensures that a relationship is built and developed and opens up dialogue with individuals who provide social services, which can expose issues at an earlier stage.</i></p> <p><i>Any changes to routine should be notified immediately, as this upsets people and breaks</i></p>



	<p><i>up routines.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>The key theme in this section highlighted the lack of information available to elderly people who are in need of care.</i></p> <p><i>One participant argued strongly that someone should outline all their options and the services available, and that this is never explained well. In outlining the services available – both private and council-run services should be included. The participant also highlighted the fact that often organisations, such as the Alzheimer’s Society, are required to lobby on behalf of people, and explain to people the range of services and benefits that they are entitled to.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group participants felt that more information is required and that such information should be made more accessible. A number of participants suggested that more information should be provided at all service contact points such as GPs surgeries, social services and at Health Centres etc. As such, all service areas should have shared responsibility for keeping the public informed.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants felt that carers themselves should also be provided with more information.</i></p> <p><i>One participant also emphasised the importance of choice with regards to the carer that visits them and espoused the benefits of having the same person coming in to help her, thus providing a consistent service.</i></p>
<p>Encil y Coed, Criccieth</p>	<p><i>Participants couldn’t come up with a list of things they’d like more choice over, however, they did note that people like routine and that it’s important that they have the choices available to them if they want to continue to live in their own home for as long as possible.</i></p> <p><i>They felt that greater discussion should be had which would make them feel more involved</i></p>



	<p><i>in the decision-making process - everyone should work together.</i></p> <p><i>One participant mentioned that Mr and Mrs A might not want to say no or complain about the choices available to them.</i></p>
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<p>Question 3) Social Enterprises were outlined: how does the Social Enterprise model compare with council care? What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of this model?</p>	
<p>Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff</p>	<p><i>Participants didn't really understand the concept of Social Enterprises.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group generally felt that cost would be the number one consideration - namely how much any potential Social Enterprise would charge for anyone to attend.</i></p>
<p>Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1</p>	<p><i>Awareness of Social Enterprises was very poor. Although there was support for greater choice in the system, the focus group was generally hesitant to the idea of Social Enterprises.</i></p>
<p>Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café</p>	<p><i>Awareness of Social Enterprises was poor. Although there was support for greater choice in the system, the focus group was generally ambivalent to the idea of Social Enterprises.</i></p> <p><i>Concerns outlined included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Potential for Social Enterprise providers to cut corners thus leading to declining standards, would they be monitored effectively?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The differing ideas that local communities may have - leading to a lack of clear decision-making;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Concerns regarding the democratic control and accountability of the Social Enterprise model;</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Concerns regarding privatisation of social care.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The focus group thought that Social Enterprises in theory sounded like better models than private providers as it would be easier to keep an eye on them and monitor their work.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group struggled to discuss this question because of their limited knowledge of Social Enterprises and there was a difficulty in coming up with advantages and disadvantages.</i></p> <p><i>Advantages:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Money going into community;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Improved sense of community.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Disadvantages:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Disagreement within the social enterprise;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>People with lack of experience running it.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>A couple of participants within the group felt that people's opinions of it (the Social Enterprise) would probably depend on their financial background.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>The focus group participants generally felt that Social Enterprises and the community-approach was a good idea, but awareness and understanding of what the Social Enterprise model meant in the context of the Social Services Bill was very poor and getting participants to understand the potential implications was difficult.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>The focus group generally felt that Social Enterprises and the community-approach was a good idea.</i></p> <p><i>The Day Centre Manager highlighted the fact that this model already exists in Torfaen, however social services did not seem to be passing people on to these community assets.</i></p>



	<i>Awareness of what the Social Enterprise model meant, in the context of the Social Services Bill, was poor amongst participants and getting them to understand the potential implications was difficult.</i>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	<p><i>The focus group had no prior knowledge of social enterprises. They did like the idea of social enterprises in principle, but could not really comment on comparing the advantages/ disadvantages.</i></p> <p><i>They did however have high praise for Encil y Coed and that they attend more than once a week for company and social interaction.</i></p>

Question 4) Should care services be provided by organisations controlled or influenced by local communities or service users, and should they be non-profit making?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>Participants didn't really understand the concept of Social Enterprises.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants felt that private providers are usually more expensive.</i></p> <p><i>One participant identified a problem whereby social workers alone decide whether or not you're allowed to attend Day Centres, and that more often than not most elderly people do not receive help until there's a crisis in the family e.g. an accident, broken hip etc.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>See Question 3.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>The focus group agreed that social care services should not be run for a profit.</i>



<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The focus group agreed that social care services should be non-profit making.</i></p> <p><i>The participants felt that if they were using care services then local communities should influence it, and felt it was important that they had the opportunity to have their say.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>Awareness of what the Social Enterprise model meant in the context of the Social Services Bill was poor and getting participants to understand the potential implications was difficult.</i></p> <p><i>However, all participants agreed that the Minerva Street Day Centre was run in a way which encouraged users to participate in decisions involving activities etc.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>Awareness of what the Social Enterprise model meant in the context of the Social Services Bill was poor and getting participants to understand the potential implications was difficult.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants suggested that local communities could raise money/generate revenue for more community-based social care services.</i></p>
<p>Encil y Coed, Criccieth</p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>

<p>Question 5) Would you be willing to take part in the running of Social Enterprises?</p>	
<p>Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff</p>	<p><i>In general, participants didn't know what would be expected of them.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants felt that they did not have the time and energy to take part in Social Enterprises.</i></p>



	<p><i>One participant made the point that it may be beneficial for all if they were to get involved due to the previous knowledge and experience gained from caring for their spouse.</i></p> <p><i>The general feeling was that if an elderly person is capable of making a decision then elderly people should be allowed to take part in the decision-making, however the capacity of most people to do this was called into question.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>All of the participants felt that they were too old to partake in the running of any form of Social Enterprise, and would find it burdensome.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	N/A
<b><i>Bridgend Carer's</i></b> Community Café	<p><i>There was a general willingness among the group to give their time as and when possible.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants raised concerns that the same set of people tend to help and give of their time in most instances and that a formalised system of Social Enterprises may ask too much of these people.</i></p> <p><i>Participants stated that carers do not have much spare time due to the demands of their roles, should they be required to take part.</i></p>
Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<p><i>The focus group weren't really sure of their answer here- it would depend on their circumstances and what they were being asked to do.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group thought that a Social Enterprise would probably benefit from getting social workers involved, as you need experienced people who know what they are talking about.</i></p>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	<i>The group generally felt that they would not be willing to take part in the running of a Social Enterprise. They do not want to be involved in the managerial/administrative aspects of running a Centre/Enterprise, but do wish to be consulted.</i>



Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<i>The focus group generally felt that they would be happy to give their point of view, and would welcome greater consultation with regards to the running of services; however participants were very concerned by their capacity to contribute beyond that.</i>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	N/A

Question 6) With regards to being involved in the running of a Social Enterprise, what concerns would you have?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>The main concerns identified were:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Concerns about the time commitments involved;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Concerns about the general commitment – a number of participants stated that they did not know how they would be feeling from day-to-day;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Logistical barriers that particular individuals may need to overcome e.g. disabilities etc.</i></li> </ul>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>Their ability to take part, and that it could be too much of a commitments for them</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	N/A
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>Time constraints were seen as a barrier to participation.</i>
Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<p><i>The focus group thought that not being an open and transparent organisation would be a concern to them.</i></p> <p><i>They suggested that a Social Enterprise could work while it was a new service with money and resources being put into it, but then there was a danger that the service could deteriorate as time goes by.</i></p> <p><i>One participant was worried about the structure and who would be responsible for what.</i></p>



	<i>This is where he thought the need of experienced staff would be important.</i>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	<i>Covered in question 5.</i>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<p><i>A number of concerns were raised including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>concerns about logistical arrangements;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>concerns about transport;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>concerns about the potential time commitments involved.</i></li> </ul>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	<i>N/A</i>

Question 7) Benefits? What would you expect to get out of the Social Enterprise Model/greater local community control?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>The focus group identified a number of potential benefits from greater local community control. They included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>A greater sense of purpose and self-confidence;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Greater control over services and potential to create greater choice;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Many participants felt that the type of benefit you may get out of being involved in such bodies (keeping minds active, combating loneliness etc) can be achieved by encouraging more older people to attend Day Centre's.</i></li> </ul>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>N/A</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>N/A</i>
<b><i>Bridgend Carer's</i></b> Community Café	<i>The focus group generally felt that giving something back to the community was a good thing and that getting involved in community projects helped to give people a feeling of self-worth and satisfaction.</i>



Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<p><i>The focus group would like the opportunity to have their say, but had doubts about those being put into practice.</i></p> <p><i>They felt that the structure of the social enterprise was very important with all staff and participants being valued.</i></p> <p><i>They felt that the model could help give elderly people more confidence and greater control over what they want.</i></p>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	<p><i>They are happy with the arrangement that they currently have with this particular Day Centre, and that a number of the potential benefits from being part of a Social Enterprise are experiences by attending Day Centres.</i></p>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<p><i>Benefits identified included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>increased personal satisfaction and self-esteem;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>improved services for other users;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>and the social benefits to be gained from supporting someone else.</i></li> </ul>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	N/A

Question 8) Direct Payments were outlined: How do you feel in general?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>The focus group generally felt that they would prefer for the council to allocate spending on their behalf.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants outlined concerns regarding the ability of individuals to manage the responsibility associated with direct payments.</i></p> <p><i>Only 1 participant in the group was in receipt of home care (and therefore likely to be eligible for direct payments). The participant outlined the fact that her daughter currently</i></p>



	<p><i>manages all her finances, and that it is unlikely that she would have the time for the additional administration required by direct payments.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants reiterated the fact that other family members have responsibility for finances and did not want to place more of an onus on family members.</i></p>
<p>Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1</p>	<p><i>The focus group had no prior knowledge or understanding of direct payments.</i></p> <p><i>Some participants outlined the difficulties they already experience in accessing money via a third party (i.e. carer/family member). This involves writing a letter/providing proof of identity for the third party to carry. Having to deal with Direct Payments could pose similar problems.</i></p>
<p>Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2</p>	<p><i>The participants felt that that this was a fairly good idea, though one participant had concerns over the provision of services, and the potential for individuals living in heavily populated urban areas such as Cardiff to have more choice of service providers, which may result in more competitive prices, and services which may not be the case in a rural area such as Tregaron, which may lead to a postcode lottery.</i></p> <p><i>One participant said he hoped that assessments would result in people with the same health problems receiving the same amount of money.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Bridgend Carer's</i></b> Community Café</p>	<p><i>The focus group had no prior knowledge of direct payments.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group was generally hostile to the idea of direct payments. The concerns raised included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Lack of knowledge and expertise with regards to spending the money;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Lack of time and energy to deal with the administrative burden associated with direct payments;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Concerns that too much responsibility is placed on the individual;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Concerns that the system may be open to abuse and fraud;</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The fact that using direct payments, an individual could enter into legal contracts with care providers only to find that the service does not meet their needs and is not up to scratch, that they don't have the recourses to pay for it, and no way of exiting the contract;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The risk that direct payments will only hasten the end of state-provided care;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Concerns about the lack of regulation and the lack of accountability.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The focus group had no prior knowledge of direct payments.</i></p> <p><i>Some participants liked the idea as they would feel like they were in 'control' of their money.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>Awareness of Direct payments was poor, and a number argued that Council's should provide them with more information.</i></p> <p><i>In a mixed response, participants generally felt that Direct Payments should be made available to choose as an alternative to Local Authority allocated care, but many voiced the concern that someone would have to help them manage that sort of financial responsibility.</i></p> <p><i>Although many participants felt that they would like to have a grip of their own affairs, they felt that personally, they would need their family members (who already manage their finances) to help and bear the burden.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>Awareness of Direct payments was poor, and a number argued that the Council should give them more information about it.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants were receptive to the idea of receiving direct payments.</i></p> <p><i>One participant outlined the fact that she was due to receive a hip-replacement and that direct payments could help her to tailor her own care post-operation.</i></p>



	<p><i>Another participant knew of someone who had also been given direct payments, and that that person's experience had been good – receipt of direct payments had opened doors for that person and with regards to the administrative burden; family members had helped him to manage his affairs.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group did not generally feel that there were many disadvantages to direct payments – although it was stated that Government needed to recognise that direct payments would not suit everyone.</i></p>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	N/A

General Comments	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	N/A
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>A number of participants said that they would like to see more Day Centres across Wales. More people should be made aware of them, and be given information about how they can support individuals to remain independent for longer – as one participant outlined, “they don’t have to compromise their independence by coming here”.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>One participant felt that he would like some assurance that once a Direct Payment would be made that members of the public would not be able to find out how much he received.</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<p><i>The focus group considered more effective communication to be key:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Participants felt that different public sector organisations such as the Police, the NHS and Social Services, did not speak to each other;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Participants stated that they often have to repeat themselves and that there was a general feeling that they different service providers do not know what is happening</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The focus group also felt that the lack of information available to care users needed to be</i></p>



	<p><i>addressed. One participant stated that the lack of information “adds to the stress of an already stressful situation”.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group participants also reiterated their general hostility to the idea of direct payments.</i></p>
Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<p><i>The group highlighted that there were issues with finding out what services are out there.</i></p> <p><i>They praised the day centre staff for providing what information they did have and felt that Mr and Mrs A would benefit from going to a day care centre themselves.</i></p> <p><i>They noted that routine was very important to older people and this should be a factor in all services provided.</i></p>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	<p><i>Most participants felt that more information is required and that the services available to people need to be better advertised. Also, participants of the focus group discussed future changes to social care for the next generation who will have very competing demands to their own.</i></p> <p><i>There was a strong feeling that building better relationships between service users and providers would help combat situations of abuse, whilst simultaneously keeping service users socially interactive on a daily basis.</i></p>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<p><i>Most participants felt that more information is required and that the services available to people need to be better advertised.</i></p> <p><i>There was a strong feeling that Day Centres are of strong community benefit and help to keep people active, engaged and help to fight loneliness.</i></p>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	N/A



Scenario 2 - Safeguarding and Intervention

*Neighbours are concerned about Mrs B who is elderly and lives with her son who has a history of drug abuse. She appears not to be looking after herself and is increasingly unkempt. On one recent occasion she had a cut above her eye. Some electrical items were recently repossessed to cover unpaid debts. Neighbours suspect that Mrs B's son may be forcing her to give him money to pay for his drug habits. A social worker has called several times but has been refused entry.*

Question 9) Do you think that social workers should be allowed to enter if they suspect abuse?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<i>There was a general feeling that intervention should happen.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>Yes - all participants were of the opinion that social workers should be allowed to enter in any instance where they suspect abuse.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>All of the participants agreed that the social worker should be allowed to enter.</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>Yes - the majority opinion was that social workers should be allowed to enter in instances where they suspect abuse.</i>  <i>One participant outlined the fact that she had been in a similar situation whereby an elderly neighbour had an anti-social son. The participant got in touch with Social Services who said that they couldn't do anything unless given permission to enter the property and therefore there was no help available for the neighbour who was suspected to be at risk of abuse.</i>
Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<i>The overwhelming response from participants was yes to this question, and that the social worker should be allowed to enter.</i>  <i>Mrs B obviously needs help, and due to her age and circumstances probably wouldn't feel</i>



	<p><i>comfortable asking for help. She might be afraid.</i></p> <p><i>Participants felt that if they were in her situation they would want someone to help them.</i></p>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	<i>Yes - there was overwhelming support and a general consensus for social workers to intervene in instances where they suspect that abuse is taking place.</i>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<i>Yes - there was overwhelming support for social workers to intervene in instances where they suspect that abuse is taking place.</i>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	<p><i>The majority of the participants thought no, that it was of not the concern of social workers to enter and that Mrs B should have privacy in her own home. She should decide if the social worker should get involved.</i></p> <p><i>One participant did however recite a story of someone she knew who was in a similar situation, and had she not ended up in hospital then the abuse would have carried on. She could not understand how neighbours had not noticed what was going on and not got the authorities involved.</i></p>

Question 10) Is the social worker the right person to intervene?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>It was generally felt that social workers should be allowed to intervene.</i></p> <p><i>However, a number of participants raised concerns with regards to the safety of social workers as well as Mrs B.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>Whilst the focus group felt that it was the social workers duty to enter, all participants agreed that the social worker should be accompanied by a police officer or another social worker.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>All of the participants felt that the social worker should not enter the premises alone (given the severity of this situation), and should be accompanied by a second social worker or a police officer.</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b>	<i>There was general agreement that the social worker should intervene.</i>



<p>Community Café</p>	<p><i>Concerns were raised that the mother may not welcome the intervention of social services and that the situation should be dealt with sympathetically.</i></p> <p><i>There was general agreement that the police should be involved at all times, and that consideration should be given to also involving another family member from the extended family.</i></p> <p><i>The participant from question 9 said that the Police knew about the anti-social son but stated that there was little that they could do. The vulnerability of the elderly mother was often used as an excuse by the son to avoid a custodial sentence. Instead he was given a number of fines for drug offences.</i></p>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The focus group agreed that the social worker was the right person to intervene, as social workers are qualified and has the right skills to do this, although they may need police assistance as well.</i></p> <p><i>The participants wanted to note here that people should trust their social workers, as they can help people access other help and services available.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group also made a comment that within communities these days there is too much 'brushing under the carpet' with many having the attitude that it's not their problem and that they should leave it to social services to deal with. Mrs B would probably appreciate support from neighbours and friends.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>The focus group all agreed that the social worker was the right person to intervene, as it is likely that the social worker will already have an established relationship with Mrs B.</i></p> <p><i>The group stressed the importance of the Day Care setting in this instance. By being able to come to a Day Centre on a weekly/daily basis, Mrs B would be around professionals</i></p>



	<i>who could identify any abuse that may be happening, as well as providing her with an opportunity to discuss issues at home with someone who isn't a member of the family.</i>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<i>The focus group generally agreed that the social worker should be the people to intervene. A number of participants emphasised the fact that social workers often have a good understanding of how their local community works and that they are trained to deal with such situations.</i>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	<i>The focus group weren't really sure on this one (see answer to question 9 for reference), but did agree that if it wasn't the social worker then nobody else (including the Police) would care.</i>

Question 11) Do you agree or disagree that social workers should have the right to force entry?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<i>It was generally felt that, in order to ensure the safety of everyone involved, the police should support social workers in doing so, and that they should be allowed to force entry if they felt that an adult is at risk.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>The focus group unanimously agreed that social workers should have this right; however the police should be involved.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>The focus group unanimously agreed that social workers should have this right; however the police should be involved.</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>The focus group unanimously agreed that social workers should have this legal right; however the police should be involved.</i>
Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<i>All participants agreed that yes, the social worker should be able to force entry. Due to the issue of drug abuse in this scenario that the Police should also be involved, as Mrs B could get hurt.</i>  <i>The focus group suggested getting other family members involved if possible, especially in</i>



	<p><i>this situation as Mrs B could get distressed if the social worker forced entry.</i></p> <p><i>In general, the focus group felt that there was a lack of understanding of the role and responsibilities of social workers and that service users and carers should receive this information.</i></p>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	<p><i>The focus group did not reach a consensus to this question.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants stressed that the social worker shouldn't have the right to force entry, even where abuse was suspected. The other participants felt that if forced entry was necessary, then the social worker should be accompanied by another person, for example, a police officer or another social worker.</i></p>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<p><i>Participants generally felt that the situation was difficult.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants highlighted concerns about the personal safety of the social worker.</i></p>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	<p><i>The participants had mixed reactions to this question - they were very concerned about Mrs B but then she is entitled to privacy in her own home.</i></p>

Question 12) Should social services have legal powers to remove vulnerable adults?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>Participants were unsure of the practicalities of removing vulnerable adults and many agreed that the response should take into consideration the circumstances of each case.</i></p> <p><i>Many felt that it should be the son in the scenario that should be removed, not the mother.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<p><i>The focus group felt that social workers should have the legal power to remove vulnerable adults in this situation.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<p><i>Whilst the majority of the focus group felt that social workers should have this right, the group discussed the issues surrounding the aftermath of intervention.</i></p> <p><i>One participant said that the son should be removed, rather than the mother.</i></p>



	<p><i>The group felt that if the son wasn't removed, the mother may be returned to the home if she is well enough not to warrant a stay in hospital (for example) and could be at the son's mercy a second time.</i></p> <p><i>A second participant outlined the need for social workers to be trained, and gain a recognised "qualification" to exercise this power. Guidelines should be in place to ensure that standards are met and maintained as this has the potential to be abused, though they didn't detail how they thought it could potentially be abused. There needs to be a check and balance.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Bridgend Carer's Community Café</i></b></p>	<p><i>The focus group generally agreed that social services should have the legal power to remove vulnerable adults.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants highlighted the fact that carers (and likewise the cared for) may sometimes end up becoming abusive due to the pressure of caring/the difficult circumstance that they are in. As such they highlighted the need for greater provision of respite care, more support and the value of schemes such as the Carer's Community Café.</i></p>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The focus group agreed that they should have these powers but most felt that these should be jointly with the police, and other relevant agencies should get involved on a case by case basis.</i></p> <p><i>Participants discussed the need to ask a lot of questions before the decision is made to 'remove' a vulnerable adult, and that people should be encouraged to get involved, as some might feel too scared or worried about getting into trouble.</i></p> <p><i>One participant noted that there should be a limit to social workers powers, and that if they had too much power then it 'would go to their head'.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day</p>	<p><i>The focus group could not agree whether social services should have these legal powers. If</i></p>



Centre, Bridgend	<i>there is clear evidence of abuse, they should have the power to remove, but other focus group participants felt that the power to remove vulnerable adults should lay on the police and not the social worker.</i>
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	<i>The focus group agreed that social services should have these legal powers. A number of participants stressed that social services should intervene if they have proof that the person may be in danger.</i>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	<i>The focus group felt that Mrs B (or another family member or next of kin) should be involved and that the social worker shouldn't make the decision independently.</i>

Question 13) Where should the mother (Mrs B) be moved to?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<i>Participants agreed that convalescent-style homes should be reintroduced in Wales and the provision of respite care in Wales is poor.</i>  <i>It was strongly emphasised, that they must be moved to somewhere that is appropriate.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>The focus group found it difficult to envisage a situation whereby Mrs B couldn't be moved to stay with other family members. Again, the participants highlighted the point that the son should be moved.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>The focus group felt that if Mrs B had the option to return home without the son being there, then she should take it. In any other event, she could have the option of going to a day centre like Bryntirion.</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>General feeling that removal of vulnerable adults would depend on the situation. A number of participants suggested Sheltered Accommodation and/or 'Extra Care'.</i>  <i>The focus group also highlighted overwhelming support for Day Centres, with a number of participants suggesting that attendance at a Day Centre/Community Café or other social</i>



	<p><i>space may help Mrs B to open-up and communicate her troubles to others.</i></p>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The focus group felt Mrs B should be moved to a 'safe house'- probably owned by the Social Services. The location of the 'safe house' should depend on circumstances in terms of how far from the home it is.</i></p> <p><i>The son should be kept away until he had sorted his drug issues. He should not reside with Mrs B but should be allowed contact in a controlled environment.</i></p> <p><i>Some individuals felt that social services should get 'proof' that the son is on drugs, and that the son should not be treated as a 'suspect' without proof.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>A number of participants stated that the mother should stay in her home and that it is the son who should be removed in order to receive treatment.</i></p> <p><i>Other participants thought that the mother should be moved to a place of safety. A number of participants highlighted the use of "extra care facilities" (formerly known as sheltered accommodation) as well as removal to a complex.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>A number of participants stated that the mother should stay in her home and that it is the son who should be removed in order to receive treatment.</i></p> <p><i>Other participants thought that the mother should be moved to a place of safety, especially if the mother is a target for the son's potential abuse.</i></p> <p><i>Places of safety included - residential homes and/or the homes of other family members.</i></p>
<p>Encil y Coed, Criccieth</p>	<p><i>The first option should always be to move to a family member's home or close relative.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise then she should be moved to a place of safety.</i></p>



Question 14) The law does not include anything on Independent Advocacy. Do you think Independent Advocacy services are important?	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<i>Although there was a general consensus that Independent Advocacy services lack geographic coverage in Wales, most participants would prefer for their children/close family members to act as advocates on their behalf.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	<i>The focus group had poor awareness of Independent Advocacy services. None of the participants had made use of Independent Advocacy.</i>  <i>One participant felt that having the option of using an Independent Advocacy Service would be beneficial where there were no family members to support them.</i>  <i>In principle, the service should be there to choose if/when needed.</i>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	<i>Some participants had a general awareness of what Independent Advocacy would entail. While all of the participants felt that it was a good thing, one individual highlighted the benefits of a Befriending Service which is primarily run by third sector organisations. She felt that just having someone available to call on would be enough for her to know that she could discuss any issues that were worrying her. Though she isn't receiving that service at the moment, she drew comparisons between the Befriending Service and Independent Advocacy these services.</i>  <i>A second participant felt that if Independent Advocacy became widely available, any recommendation/support given should be vetoed by a second Independent Advocate.</i>  <i>Generally, the group felt that it was not always easy to confide in ones relations.</i>
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>The focus group had a poor level of awareness of Independent Advocacy services. None of the participants had made use of Independent Advocacy.</i>



	<p><i>In principle, there was support for the idea of Independent Advocacy, and the focus group was unanimous in supporting the inclusion of Independent Advocacy in the Bill.</i></p> <p><i>A number of participants stated that there is no single point of contact when it comes to accessing services, and that no one sets out all care options.</i></p> <p><i>One participant highlighted the fact that changes (that lead to a requirement of social care) can happen very suddenly, and that in their experience social services are “good at telling us what we can’t get, but never explain to us what we can get”.</i></p>
<p>Melrose Day Centre, Shotton</p>	<p><i>The group in general felt that these services are important and that they ‘put things right for us’.</i></p> <p><i>They did note though, that it did depend to a certain degree on the Advocacy Officer and their attitude and experience.</i></p> <p><i>Some felt that their personal carers and staff in the day centre also provide this service.</i></p>
<p>Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend</p>	<p><i>The focus group generally agreed that Independent Advocacy is important. None of the participants, however, had received the support of Independent Advocacy nor had they used the services available. The group agreed that such a service should be made widely available to all as many individuals in their position aren’t able to speak for themselves.</i></p> <p><i>The Centre Manager signposted the Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend Independent Advocacy Service which has been Big Lottery Funded for 3 years, but awareness and understanding of the Independent Advocacy services available in their area was poor.</i></p>
<p>Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen</p>	<p><i>The focus group generally agreed that Independent Advocacy is important. None of the participants, however, had received the support of Independent Advocacy nor had they</i></p>



	<p><i>used the services available.</i></p> <p><i>Awareness of the Independent Advocacy services available in their area was poor. However, a number of participants felt that the Centre such as this could indirectly provide such services if needed.</i></p>
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	N/A

General Comments	
Fairwater Day Centre, Cardiff	<p><i>The service providers involved in the focus group highlighted the benefits provided by Day Care Centres in relation to scenario 2. They argued that had the mother been offered care (in a Day Centre format) she may have had an opportunity to voice her fears, not least because there are staff on hand to look after them. They also argued that the safe environment provided by Day Centres may make elderly people more like to talk to social workers than their own home/unsafe environment.</i></p> <p><i>One general comment made during the focus group was that the reassessment of people's needs (which currently happens at periodic junctures depending on the severity of an individual's needs) should happen more regularly.</i></p> <p><i>The focus group also felt that ensuring that old people are not alone and neglected is of paramount importance, and that providing friendly, social places for them to go is of massive benefit to their wellbeing.</i></p>
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 1	N/A
Bryntirion Day Care Centre, Group 2	N/A
<b>Bridgend Carer's</b> Community Café	<i>One participant, a former nurse and now an ex-carer highlighted the fact that there was a large time gap in care between the point where an elderly person is discharged from</i>



	<p><i>hospital and the point at which social care provision begins. The participant also highlighted that care assessments do not always receive a complete picture of a person's needs and often take too long.</i></p> <p><i>This point was reiterated by another participant who stated that some elderly people want to leave hospital so desperately that they say that home arrangements are sufficient for them to leave hospital, whereas this may not always be the case. A greater role for wider family/next-of-kin during the care assessment process was seen to be one way of overcoming this.</i></p>
Melrose Day Centre, Shotton	<i>A few of the participants noted that getting transport to the day centre was an issue, and reflected on their attendance to the centre.</i>
Minerva Street Day Centre, Bridgend	N/A
Widdershins Day Centre, Torfaen	N/A
Encil y Coed, Criccieth	N/A