

From: Policy and Legislation Committee Service
To: Members of the Health and Social Care Committee
Date: 09 October 2013

Social Services and Well-being Bill – Stage 2 Order of Consideration

Actions

1. The Committee is asked to agree the order of consideration for Stage 2 of the Social Services and Well-being Bill.

Background

2. Following the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being Bill (“the Bill”) on 28 January 2013, the Business Committee remitted the Bill to the Health and Social Care Committee (“the Committee”) for Stage 1 and Stage 2 scrutiny. During Stage 1, the Committee was granted two extensions for the publication of its Stage 1 report. The deadline for Stage 2 consideration was extended from 18 October 2013 to 13 December 2013. It is anticipated that a large volume of amendments will be tabled during Stage 2.

Order of consideration

3. The order of consideration is the order in which the sections and schedules of the Bill are arranged for the purposes of disposing of amendments¹. The order in which amendments are debated is determined by the order of consideration (which is determined by the Committee) and by the groupings (which are determined by the Chair²).
4. Under Standing Orders:

Amendments are to be disposed of in the order in which the sections and schedules to which they relate arise in the Bill, unless the committee considering Stage 2 proceedings has decided otherwise.³

5. This means that a committee undertaking Stage 2 scrutiny may vary the order in which the sections and schedules are considered.

¹ An amendment is disposed of when a decision is taken on it, or it is either not moved or withdrawn.

² SO26.64

³ SO26.21

6. The thematic nature of the Bill means that it is likely that amendments which affect different parts of the Bill will be grouped for debate. Under the default order of consideration under Standing Orders, this could mean that amendments debated as part of an early group might not be disposed of until late in the order of consideration. The likelihood that more than one meeting will be required to dispose of the anticipated volume of amendments means that amendments might be debated during one meeting, but disposed of at a later meeting.
7. To reduce the likelihood of this, the Committee is asked to consider ordering the sections and schedules such that schedules would be considered immediately following the section that introduces them, and considering amendments to Section 1, which is an overview section, last, once the substantive amendments to the rest of the Bill have been disposed of:
 - a. Sections 2-69
 - b. Schedule 1
 - c. Sections 70-119
 - d. Schedule 2
 - e. Sections 120-160
 - f. Schedule 3
 - g. Sections 161-169
 - h. Section 1
 - i. Long title

Other measures

8. To further improve the clarity of proceedings, a number of other measures are being explored, including:
 - a. subdivision of thematic groupings by the location of amendments within the Bill to reduce the potential gap between the debating and disposal of amendments; and
 - b. reconsideration of the way in which information is presented to Members and the public prior to and during Stage 2 proceedings, and the potential for the provision of additional information, or improved presentation of information.

Stage 2 meeting dates

9. The Stage 1 debate is scheduled for 8 October. If the Assembly approves the general principles of the Bill, Stage 2 will begin on 9 October, from

when any Member may table amendments. At least 15 working days must elapse between the beginning of Stage 2 and the first meeting at which amendments are considered⁴, and amendments must be tabled at least five working days before they are due to be considered⁵. By convention, Welsh Ministers table amendments to Government Bills two working days before the five working day deadline.

10. Stage 2 proceedings have been scheduled to take place on the following dates, subject to the volume and nature of the amendments tabled.

| Meeting date | Tabling deadlines | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Welsh Government | Members |
| Wednesday 13 November | Monday 4 November | Wednesday 6 November |
| Wednesday 27 November | Monday 18 November | Wednesday 20 November |
| Thursday 5 December | Wednesday 27 November ⁶ | Thursday 28 November |
| <i>Wednesday 11 December⁷</i> | <i>Monday 2 December</i> | <i>Wednesday 4 December</i> |

11. Following each meeting tabling will reopen, but only to those sections and schedules of the Bill which have not yet been deemed agreed. Members will also wish to be mindful that amendments will not be admissible if they are inconsistent with decisions already taken during Stage 2 proceedings⁸. Members are therefore encouraged to table all amendments that they wish to table prior to the first meeting at which amendments will be considered.

⁴ SO26.17

⁵ SO26.59

⁶ The deadline for Government amendments has been adjusted so that it is after the meeting on Wednesday 27 November.

⁷ Based on current understandings of the likely volume of amendments, it is estimated that Stage 2 consideration will be completed on Thursday 5 December. The meeting on Wednesday 11 December has been allocated as a backup. Members should note that the deadlines for amendments to be tabled for 11 December are prior to the meeting on 5 December, meaning that it would not be possible to table further amendments after the meeting on 5 December.

⁸ SO26.61(iv)