

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-501  
Ein cyf/Our ref GT/00643/13

William Powell AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

17 October 2013

*Dear William,*

Thank you for your letter of 3 October addressed to the Minister for Health and Social Services in relation to the petition to make day centres for older people a statutory requirement for the whole of Wales. As I have responsibility for this matter, I have been asked to respond.

Whilst I can appreciate the intention behind this, it is also important to take account of the needs of individuals and whether this is something that all older people would want. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill places a duty on local authorities to assess the needs of people requiring care and support. In carrying out this assessment the local authority must identify the outcomes the individual wishes to achieve in day to day life and to what extent the provision of care and support could contribute to the achievement of those outcomes.

The Bill aims to ensure that the needs and outcomes identified as being important to the individual are met. This may involve support from family or friends, the use of community resources, the use of direct payments where the individual can manage their own care and support or the allocation of specific services. In some cases, for example, an older person who has become isolated may benefit more from help to enable them to use community transport to visit friends, go shopping or attend church, rather than attend a day centre.

The Commissioning Guidance issued in 2010 requires local authorities to develop commissioning plans which should specify the services required to meet the needs of their residents. These plans must be based on an understanding of the needs of citizens and must develop clear service development priorities to meet these needs.

The development of services will therefore depend upon an analysis of both the needs of individuals and groups of service users and therefore should be a matter for local decision making.

I would suggest the Petitions' Committee explores the purpose of day centres and the needs they are designed to address. If day centres are focused on addressing loneliness and isolation there may be other more effective options. If the purpose is to provide respite care for carers, again there may be more effective options. Local communities may also want to explore potential developments with third sector partners.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Gwenda'.

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