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Alun Ffred Jones AM
Chair, Environment and Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

8 December 2014

Dear Alun Ffred,

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill

As you will be aware, one of my statutory functions under the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006 is to review the adequacy of the law affecting older people in Wales, alongside a statutory duty to ensure that the interests of older people are safeguarded and promoted.

As I did not have an opportunity to provide oral evidence to the Committee, and having now seen the Committee's report on the Bill, I thought it would be helpful, as the statutory Older People's Commissioner, to share my formal position on the Bill.

I was very clear when I published my Framework for Action, which sets out my priorities as Commissioner, that I wanted and expected to see wellbeing sitting at the heart of public services, detailing what this should look like. There is significant read-across between my expectations on behalf of older people and the intent of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill and I have therefore been clear in my strong support of its intent and its importance to the 800,000 older people that I act on behalf of as the independent Older People's Commissioner.

The Committee report makes a number of detailed recommendations aimed at strengthening the Bill. As Commissioner, my focus, on behalf of older people, is on several specific areas, which I thought it would be helpful for you to be aware of.

- There is a need to provide a stronger, clearer statement of intent and sense of direction for public bodies.
- There is a need to clarify the definition of wellbeing on the face of the Bill.
- The wording of the national wellbeing goals and their descriptors must be clarified and strengthened to ensure that they fully relate to the needs and priorities of older people.
- There is a need to review the approach to local wellbeing planning, particularly in relation to the 'health in all policies' approach.
- The Bill should not undermine the current duties to protect and safeguard unpaid carers. I do not consider that the combined effect of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill, as currently proposed, are sufficient to safeguard the position of carers, and those they care for, or ensure that the action now being taken under the Carers Measure can be guaranteed to continue.

I have raised these issues with the Minister for Natural Resources and the Minister for Health and Social Services, and I have also sent a briefing to Assembly Members to assist in the debate during the passage of this bill.

Notwithstanding the above issues, in particular the need to address the issue in respect of carers, the potential of this Bill from the perspective of older people's health and wellbeing is very significant and I would be happy to provide any further assistance to the committee as you feel might be helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Rochira
Older People's Commissioner for Wales