

A Healthier Wales, Welsh Government's plan for health and social care

Evidence paper to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, 11 July 2018

Background

1. The challenges facing health and social care are well understood. Services are under great pressure largely because of increased and more complex demand, driven by changing demography and lifestyle factors, and by advances in medicine and medical technologies. Health and social care services have struggled to adapt, for example due to outdated approaches which prove hard to change, and as a result of workforce challenges which hold back capacity and capability. This set of circumstances is not unique to Wales.
2. In early 2017 the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care was commissioned in response to these challenges, with cross-party support. The Review's remit was to make recommendations on how health and care services might be realigned to manage current and future demands. Its final report, which made ten high level recommendations, was published in January 2018.
3. Welcoming the report, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services confirmed that Welsh Government would consider the report and respond in the form of a long term plan for health and social care to be published later in the year. That plan, [*A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care*](#), was published on 11 June.

Developing the Plan through Engagement and Co-production

External Engagement

4. The Parliamentary Review panel advised that the Welsh Government's response to its recommendations should be developed with a meaningful level of input from its partners and the public. Based on this recommendation, the Welsh NHS Confederation, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) and the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) worked together, and alongside Welsh Government, to inform the content of the plan. A number of working groups chaired by health and social care senior leaders helped identify priorities and develop content in the following areas:
 - vision of how people should experience services differently in future;
 - national 'once for Wales' design principles;
 - citizen voice;
 - digital;
 - leadership;
 - workforce development;
 - governance including de-cluttering the planning landscape; and
 - financing seamless local models of care.
5. In addition a major workshop event, arranged by the Welsh NHS Confederation and involving over 200 senior health, social care and voluntary sector staff, was held at the Principality Stadium in March. Given the importance of the health and social care workforce as a key

stakeholder sector, specific engagement was also undertaken with many of the royal colleges, trade unions and other professional representative bodies, through one-to-one meetings and attendance at group meetings which bring together healthcare professionals.

6. Engagement with local leaders at political and senior official level also took place through a series of face-to-face meetings between the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services, the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, health board chairs and chief executives, and local authority leaders and cabinet members with responsibility for social services in all Regional Partnership Board areas in Wales. Each partnership was invited to submit suggestions for issues they would like to see addressed in the plan, and their returns were considered as part of the evidence base which helped identify the areas for action included in the plan.
7. Responses to the publication of the Parliamentary Review report from opposition parties were also monitored and considered as part of the evidence-gathering process to ensure that perspectives from across the political spectrum were taken in to account.
8. Perhaps most importantly, the views of patients/service users and the wider Welsh public were gathered through engagement with representative groups, statutory commissioners, and citizen panels.

Internal Engagement

9. Within Welsh Government ongoing interdepartmental working ensures join-up between policy teams in support of the strategic objectives of *Prosperity for All*. In developing *A Healthier Wales* there has been close engagement between officials within the various departments that comprise the Health and Social Services Group, and more widely across Welsh Government policy departments, both at Ministerial and official level.
10. *A Healthier Wales* takes a whole-system approach to health and a holistic approach to wellbeing. As such, it recognises the importance of the many factors which also influence health and wellbeing outside of traditional healthcare services. For example, there is a close interface between housing and social care, between education and health promotion, and between social deprivation and health inequalities. The plan therefore includes references to a range of wider commitments across Welsh Government to embed 'health in all policies', including:
 - closer engagement between housing organisations and health and social care providers through Regional Partnership Boards;
 - expanding on the *Healthy Schools Programme* through the inclusion of Health and Wellbeing as one of the six domains in the new national curriculum;
 - encouraging employers to support the wellbeing of their staff through the *Economic Contract* and taking further steps to support a sustainable social care sector as part of the foundational economy in our *Economic Action Plan*; and,
 - recognising the importance of good quality employment in promoting and sustaining individual health and wellbeing in our *Employability Plan*, and further integration of health and employability policy through the NHS Integrated Medium Term Planning framework.

A Healthier Wales – the Structure, Approach and Ambitions of the Plan

11. The plan itself is divided into three main sections: *Our vision for the future*; *How we will drive transformation*; and *Making our system fit for the future*. The plan directly addresses the main recommendations of the Parliamentary Review and, more widely, sets out a series of 40 actions to be taken over the next three years to drive the transformation needed to ensure that health and social care services are able to meet future challenges and opportunities.

Our vision for the future

12. Given the fundamental importance placed on ‘seamless’ services by the Parliamentary Review, *A Healthier Wales* is a single plan for health and social care. Its first section begins by setting out a clear long term future vision of a ‘whole system’ approach to health and social care which is focussed on wellbeing and on preventing illness, a system which will support and anticipate health needs and reduce the impact of poor health.

13. This whole-system approach builds on the philosophy of Prudent Healthcare, and on the close and effective working relationships we have in Wales, to make a positive impact on health and wellbeing throughout life. There will be a greater emphasis on preventing illness and on enabling individuals to manage their own wellbeing, with support provided when required by joined-up person-centred health and social care services which are delivered closer to home rather than in hospitals, and which make use of the latest technologies.

How we will drive transformation

14. The second main section of the plan sets out the actions Welsh Government will take to support service providers to achieve the vision. This part of the plan begins by confirming that, as recommended by the Parliamentary Review, the four components of the Quadruple Aim (improved population health and wellbeing; better quality and more accessible health and social care services; higher value health and social care; and a motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce) will be adopted as the underpinning strategic objectives against which transformation and future success will be evaluated. Ten national design principles, which describe characteristics service models will be expected to demonstrate in future, are also included to steer transformative change and to prioritise support for change.

15. Next, the plan describes how these concepts and principles will be practically and systematically applied to drive change, aligned to achieving the future vision set out in the plan. In particular, the plan sets out how local Clusters and Regional Partnership Boards will drive the development of ‘new models of seamless local health and social care’. These will be the main vehicle for introducing new service models, which originate locally and scale up through the regional to the national level. The plan commits to each RPB identifying and promoting at least two models, which taken together will provide new seamless services in a range of settings and for different population groups.

16. A new Transformation Programme will oversee and be accountable for the implementation of the plan, including management of a £100 million Transformation Fund in 2018-19 and 2019-20. This additional funding will be targeted to priority projects and to supporting new models of health and social care, with the aim of speeding up their development and demonstrating their value. The initial focus of the Transformation Fund will be on selected models which make early progress on: seamless alignment of health and social care services; local primary and

community-based health and social care delivery; and new integrated prevention services and activities.

Making our health system fit for the future

17. The third section of the plan sets out a wide range of steps Welsh Government will take to ensure health and social care services have the capacity, resources and support necessary to deliver and sustain the required change. This section contains the majority of the 40 actions included in the plan, which are listed under nine discrete but interrelated areas including *sustainable health and social care funding*; *the health and social care workforce*; and *national leadership and direction*.
18. Amongst the actions included are: a commitment to improve co-ordination of research, innovation and improvement activity; increased investment in digital and new technologies as key enablers of change; continuous engagement so that everyone has a voice in shaping our whole system approach; and a new national executive function to speed up decision making and make the system more responsive to national priorities.

Next Steps

19. All of the 40 actions included in the plan are to be implemented over the next three years. The plan includes an action to submit a national overview of the overall performance of the health and care system against the Quadruple Aim to the National Assembly for Wales at the end of the three year period. It is important to note that this will have the character of a 'progress report', which is designed to evaluate the impact of the first three years of the longer term plan, and to inform new actions which follow. In many cases the outcomes which the plan seeks to achieve will take longer than three years to realise: for example, in relation to the transformative change required to deliver seamless locality-based health and social care services across Wales, the plan acknowledges that this is likely to continue 'over the next decade'.
20. The Transformation Programme will oversee and be accountable for implementation of the plan and will be led by the Director General for Health and Social Services. Work on establishing the Transformation Programme and arrangements for deploying Transformation Funding is already underway, with a series of further actions to be initiated over the coming months.

Conclusion

21. As we mark the 70th anniversary of our NHS and social care system it is right that we take time to reflect on the endurance and achievements of these services, and to acknowledge with pride their distinctly Welsh roots. However, as a Government our focus remains firmly on the future, and in *A Healthier Wales* we demonstrate our commitment to taking the steps necessary, however difficult, to ensure that we have a health and social care system that is configured and equipped to deal with the demands of tomorrow, so that it is made sustainable for future generations.