

Number: WAG10-11086



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action

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FOREWORD



High quality responsive, citizen centred social services are essential to a successful Wales. That is why we are setting out in this Paper how the Welsh Assembly Government will take social services and social care forward and how we will work with our partners to deliver this change.

The past year has been a year of conversations. The Independent Commission on Social Services, which reported in November 2010, engaged people right across Wales in looking at what they wanted from social services and the challenges they face. Our other reviews, on the workforce and on safeguarding, have also given us important evidence.

The good news is that we are building from a position of strength. We know that we face opportunities and challenges. As our society changes so must social services. We all have new and higher expectations about what we can expect from public services. The demography of Wales is changing. The financial climate is testing.

We remain ambitious for social services. We know that we can build on the desire of the people of Wales to work together and we believe that public services play a crucial role in supporting us all when we face difficulties. We will ensure that service users and carers have a much stronger voice and greater control over their services. We will make the way that social services are delivered simpler and we will make sure that the expertise in social services is used more efficiently and more effectively. We will build a stronger workforce, more confident in its own professional judgement. Our priority is about getting it right first time. The days in which public services could act separately are past. Where appropriate we expect public services to work together to deliver integrated services.

This Paper sets out our priorities for action. We will now bring forward a programme of policy and legislation to deliver them. We look forward to

working together with you to deliver our ambition and to renew social services in Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwenda Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Gwenda Thomas AM
Deputy Minister for Social Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social services are at the heart of Welsh public life. They support 150,000 young, old, and disabled people every year to achieve their potential and help make them safe. Many of these services are delivered in partnership with others, with housing, health or education services. There were 44,000 referrals concerning children and young people and 88,000 assessments of need for adults last year. 12 million hours of home care were delivered. Social services look after over 5,000 children, just over 4,000 of whom are in foster care.

1.2 The net expenditure on social services and social care is about £1.4 billion, with services being delivered by just under 70,000 people. There are around 1,800 regulated care settings. Whilst most social care in Wales is provided by private and independent organisations it is, on the whole, funded through the public purse and aims to meet public needs. It is a public service for Wales and we expect it to be based on our Welsh public services values.

1.3 We are pleased that the Independent Commission on Social Services¹ (the Commission) endorsed the vision and the principles set out in our strategy for social services, *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities*² (FLSC). This Paper builds on that, the work of the Commission and other strategic reviews, in particular the report of the task group on the workforce and those on safeguarding. The depth and breadth of the engagement achieved by that work (the Commission itself spoke to over 150 people and organisations and considered over 100 pieces of written evidence) painted a picture of a service with many strengths and has given us clear advice on the way forward.

1.4 We are pleased to be able to bring forward a Paper that is rooted in those important conversations and based on those strengths. As the Chief Inspector says³, “There is continuing evidence of improvement across services, from referral through to assessment of need, commissioning of services and the delivery of the care plan.” She also made it clear that “we must celebrate the achievements of those social services departments and social care providers who deliver an effective service which makes a real difference to so many lives.”⁴ We know that, every year, many thousands of people receive services they value; children are safeguarded from harm; and innovative solutions are found to what, at first sight, might seem to be intractable problems.

¹ From Vision to Action: The Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, November 2010

² Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities: A Strategy for Social Services in Wales Over the Next Decade, February 2007

³ Improving Care and Social Services in Wales: Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2009-10, page 11

⁴ Improving Care and Social Services in Wales: Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2009-10, page 3

1.5 However, our society is changing, and as society changes so must social services. Unsurprisingly, what we all expect of public services today is very different from a decade ago. There is a need to re-shape and re-focus.

1.6 Families are now more diverse and technology has transformed how we communicate. We are more conscious of our rights. We have stronger expectations about our voice being heard and about control over services we use.

1.7 The demography of our society is changing. We are an ageing society and we see many more people in their middle years with significant disabilities who are able to live fulfilled lives. We are seeing many more children with significant disabilities who, quite rightly, have high expectations of services.

1.8 There are some changes that are not so welcome. Some families and communities have become more fragmented; and issues such as substance misuse are having a major impact.

1.9 Social services and social care are facing real and unsustainable increases in demand and the numbers of looked after children and those on the child protection register are growing. The number of people registered with local authorities in Wales as having a learning disability is increasing and there is an increasing number of older people with complex care needs who can benefit from support - and whose support needs are extensive.

1.10 The financial outlook is difficult. We cannot buy a way forward. This Paper is based on the assumption that efficiencies gained from initiatives such as pooling back office functions and smarter procurement are the bread and butter of day-to-day delivery. The scale of the challenge, however, requires more fundamental changes.

1.11 There is a choice: retrenchment or renewal. Retrenchment would see fewer people receiving services, greater expectations that people find their own solutions, increased burdens on informal carers and a growing number of disputes between services such as the NHS and social care about who is responsible for services. These are not options that will meet the needs of the people of Wales. We are proud of the innovative range of services tailored to meet individuals' needs, but unless we take the direction set by this Paper, financial constraints will lead to institutional solutions with all the difficulties we saw over a decade ago.

1.12 Renewal means focussing clearly on delivery; it means continuing to innovate; and it means creating sustainable services. We have chosen renewal not because it is the easy option but because it is the right option. The recent budget settlement shows that we are prepared to play our part in delivering that ambition.

1.13 The title of the Commission's report, *From Vision to Action*, is our watchword. We agree with the recommendation that we need to focus on a limited number of strategic drivers. These are about stopping doing some

things and prioritising new things, not another layer of activity. Our first priority is to ensure that resources are used in a more joined up way as this will make better use of the capacity that exists. We will ensure that we all are working to the same ends, that duplication is driven out of the system, that we all learn from each other and that we do not reinvent the wheel. We will take our part in leading this renewal by taking greater responsibility for driving the direction of services, supporting local delivery within a framework of strong national outcomes to replace detailed targets.

1.14 We expect to see better focussed services brought about by service users and carers having a much stronger voice and greater control over their services. We will prioritise building a stronger workforce, more confident in its own professional judgement, reducing the volume of guidance we issue to create the space needed. The priority must be about getting it right the first time.

1.15 We expect more efficient and effective delivery through greater collaboration and integration of services. We will galvanise the strength that comes from social services being at the heart of local government, drawing on its community leadership duties and its wide range of services. We will capitalise on the benefits of our unique Welsh approach of integrated family based services; and we will make accountability for delivery simpler by making it clearer, seeing the quality and safety of services being held firmly by providers and those who commission services.

1.16 Wales has considerable experience in safeguarding both children and adults. We will now move on to the next stage in its development.

1.17 To support these priorities, we will refocus the way in which we drive improvement. Citizens must have the assurance that comes from inspection and regulation and from knowing that robust action will be taken where needed. We also expect that the changes we are making will reduce the overall burden of regulation and inspection.

1.18 There are other strategic reviews. We will continue to ensure that the implications of the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government's review of local government and the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning's review of education services are considered in taking these changes forward. The Family Justice Review, jointly commissioned by Welsh and English Ministers, will impact significantly on children's social services. The Dilnot Commission on how we all pay for care will require significant decisions by Welsh Ministers. The Munro Review, on children's safeguarding in England, may create opportunities for Wales that the Assembly Government will want to consider. Some reforms, for example the welfare reform programme, will have implications for Welsh families and the agencies that provide services to those families.

1.19 We have set out a direction of travel rather than attempting to squeeze in every policy idea or development. This is not therefore a long treatise on

work that is already underway. It is a framework for change, not a compendium.

1.20 We will develop an implementation plan which recognises that change will not be achieved overnight. Some of the policy changes we will make will be achieved within existing legislation; some will require changes to regulations or to primary legislation. Some will be within our powers, whilst others have implications for non-devolved services and may require Wales and England changes. When we look back from a perspective five years down the road we will see a recasting of the legislative framework for social services in Wales: one that delivers our values and that meets the particular needs of Wales.

2. OUR VISION

Building on Strengths

2.1 In our lives we all know that there are times when things are going well and times when we face difficulties. When we face these difficulties, we look to those closest to us for advice, support, encouragement and practical help. As children, we need support that nurtures us and helps us to grow and develop. This continues throughout our lives. Some of us need more assistance than others; and we need different types of assistance at different times.

2.2 We all expect to make our own decisions, to control the key issues in our lives. Where these decisions involve others, or where the matter is not entirely in our control, we expect our voice to be heard. Sometimes we need help to make our voice strong and clear. We rarely expect, however, to make our big decisions on our own. We value the support that a family, however we choose to define it, provides us with. We look not for independence and separateness, but for interdependency with those around us. We also look outside our family to our web of wider friends and community for assistance.

2.3 Public services are a critical part of that community and it is good news that they are there to support us. They are not an unfortunate necessity for a small group of people who for some reason are not able to resolve matters for themselves. We all need them, sometimes in significant measure, and sometimes in the background. They may be universal in nature or there to underpin us at times of significant difficulty. They are our right as citizens.

2.4 We believe therefore that social services and social care must act in ways that strengthen our voice; that allow us to have the maximum control over our lives; that build on our strengths; which reinforce our family's desire to sustain and strengthen us and enable us to make a full contribution to the community and draw on it to support us.

2.5 These values have been articulated in the Children Act 1989 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the UN Principles for Older People, and in the equalities and Welsh language legislation.

Our Principles

We will work to the following principles:

- **A strong voice and real control**

We all expect to make our own decisions and control our own lives. Children and young people have a right to be heard and to have a significant say in matters that affect them. We will support and strengthen people's ability to

contribute as individuals within their own networks and communities. We will provide help to make people's voices strong and clear. We will actively listen and act on what we have heard.

- **Supporting each other**

We will work to support, strengthen and build on people's desire to help each other, especially at times of difficulty.

- **Safety**

We all, whether young or older, have a right to be protected from avoidable harm and from neglect.

- **Respect**

We all expect that, when we use services, we are treated with dignity and respect. We will treat individuals as responsible people and enable them to make balanced decisions about the risks that they are prepared to take.

- **Recovery and restoration**

When we face a difficulty, whether as children, young people or adults, we very often look for support that enables us to return to living in the way that we choose.

- **Adjusting to new circumstances**

Sometimes we find that our circumstances have changed more permanently. We expect to be supported in adjusting to our new situation.

- **Stability**

We all need stability to grow and develop, and this is especially true of children. Any support we provide must therefore maximise this.

- **Simplicity**

We all need to know how to find out about getting help in the most straightforward way possible.

- **Professionalism**

We all expect professionals who work with us to be competent, confident and safe.

3. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

3.1 In order to make these principles a reality we will, and will expect others to, deliver the following priorities.

A Strong National Purpose and Expectation and Clear Accountability for Delivery

3.2 Wales is small and can be a clever country if we maximise the benefits of small country governance. Our current arrangements of broad national direction, a general legal framework and high levels of local discretion will not build a sustainable future. We need a new accord between the various social services partners.

3.3 The Welsh Assembly Government is not accountable for delivery. Identifying need and determining service priorities for an area are the responsibility of locally elected members. This ensures that the benefits of locating social services in local government are maximised. It ensures that social services are an integral part of local government's responsibility for promoting wellbeing, social inclusion and community safety; and ties social services closely in with the work of other parts of local government such as housing, education, youth and leisure services, economic development, transport and community regeneration. The statutory role of the Director of Social Services is essential in delivering this agenda and in providing a corporate voice for disadvantaged groups in society, although we believe that one individual may exercise this role for a number of local authorities. **We will reinforce corporate accountability, through the statutory role of the Director of Social Services and through the corporate parenting role of the local authority.**

3.4 Doing everything 22 times is not an option. We expect to see positive examples of the planning of services on a regional or, where more appropriate, national basis. **We will work to simplify the planning processes and arrange these across boundaries and we expect to see the number of partnerships greatly reduced.** We want to change the question from "how might we cooperate across boundaries?" to justifying why we are not.

3.5 The clear message from the Commission was that only changing the partnership arrangements will not be enough. The way in which commissioning, procurement and service delivery are organised must also change. The resources, the capacity and the breadth of expertise are not available to sustain the current arrangements. We see merit in the Commission's proposal of the Local Health Board (LHB) footprint being a basis for cooperation - but we recognise that the arrangements for education and other services are also relevant.

3.6 **We will expect to see commissioning organised on a regional basis. We see merit in specialist services (for example, a number of children's services, including for autistic spectrum disorders) and services for people with a sensory impairment being delivered regionally.**

3.7 **Significant parts of the infrastructure to support service delivery, such as staff development and training, will need to be organised more collaboratively.**

3.8 We also believe that some services are more effectively delivered nationally. We recognise that we have limited experience of this and we would, therefore, want to pioneer this approach with particular services. **We intend to explore with stakeholders the remit and functions of a national adoption agency.**

3.9 Sometimes a national framework rather than a national service can make a difference. The structure of the care, support and children's services markets has changed significantly in recent years. We think that we can do more to maximise the purchasing power of Wales if we act together. In doing so, we will also improve the consistency of services. **We will ask local government to establish a national framework contract for care homes and non-residential services. Where possible, we will expect these to be developed jointly with the NHS.**

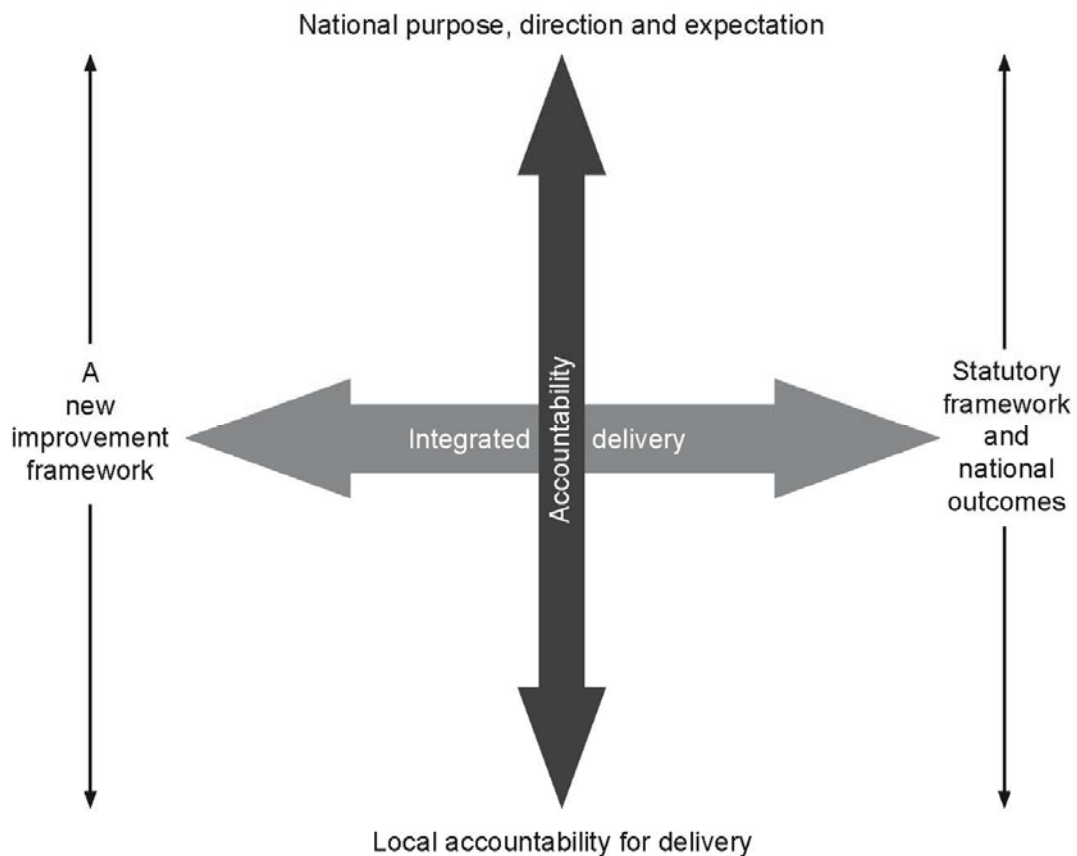
3.10 We believe that there is a commitment within the service to achieve the changes outlined above and we want to build on that commitment. **We will therefore require local government to present outline proposals to us by the end of 2011 about how our expectations may be met.** We place much importance on this strategic change, will challenge the pace of development where needed and will use and, if necessary, seek the powers to ensure that this step change happens within a timescale that meets the needs of citizens.

3.11 We recognise that private and independent providers play a crucial role in social care but do not believe that the market should determine priorities. We believe that, collectively, we should drive the market, not allow market choices to drive us. Social care must be delivered within a public service ethos and we will expect those who wish to be service providers to embrace this value base. **All providers must have a place at the partnership table and we will ensure that the independent sector is able to play its full part. In return, we will assess the quality of all services against the principles in this Paper.**

3.12 In order to drive these changes **we will establish a Ministerially led National Social Services Partnership Forum** made up of the political leadership of the key national stakeholders and carers and service user representation. This **will be supported by a Social Services Strategic Leadership Group** chaired by the Director of Social Services Wales.

3.13 We will reinforce local accountability and expect broader partnerships to reduce complexity and deliver efficiencies and improvements in planning, commissioning and delivery of services. At the heart of this will be a new balance in our relationship with service users themselves. This way we will strike a new accord in our national, regional and local relationships and in our relationship with those who rely on social services in Wales.

We see the new arrangements working in the following way:



A National Outcomes Framework

3.14 To drive forward the National Purpose for social services we **will develop a new National Outcomes Framework**. It will reflect the vision and principles that we have set out here, and will guide our work to improve services. We will expect every part of the system - local authorities and service providers as well as individual professionals - to contribute to achieving these outcomes and we will ensure that the framework does not stand separately from other frameworks across public services. **We will measure progress through a revised set of focused, published, high level indicators**. This will reduce the bureaucratic burden on the frontline by relying less on measures of process and relying more on the small number of measures which test the value of services. It will also reduce bureaucracy by adopting an approach to targets that supports learning within services. It will ensure that, through transparency, citizens have the knowledge they need to hold services to account. **We will work with all stakeholders to review the knowledge, learning and performance management system to produce a comprehensive and cohesive strategy. We will make the necessary amendments to regulations.**

Citizen Centred Services

3.15 Social services can rightly feel proud of their track record of being citizen centred. Children and young people have clear rights, supported by well developed structures to make these a reality, by advocacy services and by a Children's Commissioner. Our Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure will deepen that commitment. Wales has been a world leader in services for people with a learning disability and we will continue to build on this. We have an internationally acclaimed Strategy for Older People⁵ and the world's first Commissioner for Older People.

3.16 The Commission makes it clear that there is further to go. We believe that the label "personalisation" has become too closely associated with a market-led model of consumer choice, but we are taken by the Commission's approach to stronger citizen control. We will therefore expect our recently published guidance on commissioning to drive services built upon this approach. **We will expect service providers to put in place stronger arrangements to involve those who use services directly and we will use our regulatory powers to measure the progress made. Building on the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure, we will also explore the feasibility of bringing forward our proposals to include a child's right to be heard within an expanded definition of wellbeing under the Government of Wales Act 2006.**

3.17 For some people, control means managing their service themselves. Direct payments are an important tool for greater control for some people. Where people make the choice to have direct payments, we will expect them to have a right to receive them. **We will work with all stakeholders, and in particular with service user interests, to develop a model of self-directed support that is consistent with our principles for social care - including a stronger infrastructure of support for those who choose these routes. We will also explore time banking as a way of creating innovative and responsive services.**

3.18 Service users and carers, including children and young people, need a stronger voice in service design and evaluation. **We expect a much greater range of services to be run by citizens themselves, as service users, carers and as people delivering those services. Social care is ripe for the development of social enterprises. We will work with stakeholders to look at how the barriers to their development can be overcome.** It will be necessary to consider how new sources of funding can help create new models of service and **we will explore how social impact bonds could play an important role in this.**

3.19 Without the support of carers, few of us would be able to deal with the difficulties we face. This is why we have already acted to legislate to ensure that carers get the joined-up, accessible information they need, through

⁵ The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2008-2013: Living Longer, Living Better, March 2008

integrated information strategies designed specifically for carers. We recognise in particular the needs of young carers. **The Carers Measure 2010 will be implemented from 2011-12 and we will also refresh the Carers Strategy for Wales** – both of which fully encompass the needs of young carers.

3.20 We want to recognise the diversity of Wales, including its status as a bilingual nation. We have established a task group on the Welsh language in social services. **We will respond to the recommendations of that task group when they are published.**

Integrated Services

3.21 We know that people, both young and older, require integrated service delivery. We need stronger team work that brings the expertise of different professionals and services together. Citizens expect services to be built around their needs, not those of organisations. There are good examples of integrated services that bring together the range of local government services - education, housing and community development. Recent research by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) and the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIH) has shown that there has been real progress in Wales in implementing new models of integrated health and social services (this research will be published shortly). But we need to go further.

3.22 Sustainability depends on picking up the pace of integration. In response to increasing demand and financial restraint, we have seen social services eligibility criteria tighten, with fewer older people receiving services as money has been spent on those with more complex needs. The same has happened to children's services. This is not a sustainable option. If public services are to meet need, we have to change the terms of the debate. The answer is not a return to the "prevention role" for social services, but recognition that the whole local authority has a responsibility for leading community services and promoting community wellbeing and that it should galvanize the communities' own commitment to enable its citizens to play a full part. Without this, those beginning to experience difficulties will soon have to turn to more intrusive and costly solutions, for them, their families and for services. For older people, for example, vital activities such as gardening, cleaning and shopping; luncheon clubs, dial a ride and befriending; exercise and computer classes are essential if social services and the NHS are to focus on what they do best.

3.23 This is why we have led the Strategy for Older People. Despite the real successes of the Strategy, age discrimination is still an unfortunate reality and with the number and proportion of older people in Wales set to increase significantly over the next decade, we must continue to move forward and to build upon the progress that has been made so far. **We will support the review of the second phase of the Strategy for Older People and then launch Phase 3.**

3.24 **We will support the wider development of the community leadership role of local government. We also see public health services playing a key role. We expect the full engagement of the third sector in the provision of community-based support services, particularly in the context of the development of social enterprises in Wales.**

3.25 Similarly, social services have to play their full part in combating child poverty. Strong early years services; active, outward looking and inclusive schools; and strong youth services are essential if social services are to focus on their responsibilities. Initiatives such as Families First and Flying Start are key to supporting families in need and in preventing significant difficulties from

occurring. A seamless link between them and Integrated Family Support Services is crucial.

3.26 In order to add momentum we will prioritise three areas of work where we will expect much greater integration of delivery:

- **Families with complex needs**
- **Transition to adulthood for disabled children**
- **Frail older people.**

3.27 The legal framework for pooled budgets is well established and we have made a considerable investment in building an understanding of how this approach can be made a reality. **We now expect delivery and we will expect regulators and inspectors to work together to assess progress in delivering integrated services.**

Families with complex needs

3.28 Early intervention is critical to successful outcomes. Much of this work has to be planned on a locality basis and across agencies. Models of restorative practice that use the expertise of the school, community organisations, the police and social workers have been shown to make a real difference. **We will work with stakeholders to examine how such locality based, multi-agency ways of working can be strengthened in Wales.**

3.29 We have already legislated to secure integrated services to meet the needs of families with complex needs. The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a statutory duty of cooperation on health and local government. It has established pioneer Integrated Family Support Teams and requires professionals to take the needs of children into consideration when assessing the needs of adults. **We see these as the core building blocks for integrated services for children and will roll out this way of working across Wales.**

3.30 We will explore with stakeholders commencing our powers under sections 66 and 67 of the Measure to require local authorities, health bodies and professionals contracted by them to consider, when assessing or treating an adult, the need to identify any children whose welfare may be compromised or at risk and to consider support and referral to children's services.

3.31 For some children, living away from home is the best answer. However, too many children are placed out of area. Choice of placement is a fundamental safeguard for looked after children and local placements generally produce better outcomes for the child or young person, provide greater scope for co-coordinating services, better contact between the child and the social worker and better contact with the family. We want to see a range of specialist placements at local and regional levels.

3.32 The care population is transient. Research and data show⁶ that where a child is in care for more than one year the chances of a successful return home are greatly reduced.

- Two-thirds of children return home within the first six months, but this reduces to only a fifth after a year in care.
- Success of early return is contingent on “early” influence factors, including the quality of attachment between the child and family, and the parents’ attitude – their motivation, participation and their willingness to accept planned social work intervention. Evidence suggests that as time in care passes, there is less will on the part of families, children and practitioners for re-unification.

3.33 However, the Assembly Government believes that children are best cared for by their families wherever possible. Our priorities for children’s social services policy are:

- To support families to care for their children;
- Where that is not an option, we expect to see greater stability for those children who are looked after, in their friendships, school lives and for those who provide support;
- To ensure that children living in Wales who need to be looked after are accommodated or rehabilitated in Wales, close to their home or neighbouring community unless there is good reason not to do so. **We will build on our policy *Towards a Stable Life*⁷ with the aim of accelerating our policy to require placement close to home. We will work with stakeholders to explore development of a range of specialist care within regions of Wales. This could include requiring commissioning of specialist placements within Wales to take place on a national or regional basis; and**
- To act sooner to find permanency or replacement families for those children for whom a return is not in their interest.

3.34 The future of the Family Justice System is currently under review. This covers both devolved and non devolved matters as well as public and private law. The review, jointly commissioned by Welsh and English Ministers, is due to report later this year. Many aspects of the proceedings that take place are non-devolved and others – although devolved – are inextricably linked to the courts and UK legislation. Whilst certain aspects of the core processes for children’s services are for Welsh Ministers to determine, any proposals need to be seen within the wider context of the Family Justice Review and the potential legislative changes arising from that work. **We will implement the outcome of that review, based on our principles and in the light of the needs of children in Wales. In particular we will expect that rights and voices of children are at the heart of the process and that there are robust means to ensure that their views are properly represented.**

⁶ Quality Matters in Children’s Services: Messages from Research, Mike Stein, 2009

⁷ Towards a Stable Life and a Brighter Future: Regulations and guidance, June 2007

Transitions

3.35 The Commission made it clear that more needs to be done to enable people to manage transitions. This is at the heart of our commitment to an integrated family model of service, one that refuses to determine need by age. We believe that for disabled children with assessed complex needs, there should be equity with the transition arrangements as they apply to looked after children. Our aim is to ensure that disabled children are supported in their transition to adulthood and in becoming engaged citizens.

3.36 We will consult upon extending the entitlements of disabled children under the Children Act 1989 beyond the age of 18 and up to 21. We will work with stakeholders to determine appropriate arrangements to assist young people towards independent living and to take advantage of opportunities for education and work. These could include requiring local authorities to appoint a personal advisor (transition worker) when the young person reaches the age of 17 or 18, who would have a key role in co-ordinating between agencies and education bodies for example.

Older People

3.37 The Chief Inspector⁸ highlights that there is much to be proud of in the outcomes for older people, with a clear focus on issues of safety, dignity and independence. We also know that the voice of older people is much stronger than before. However, her report expresses concern about how rapidly the balance from institutional to community models of care is being achieved. The report says, “this relatively slow rate of progress illustrates the challenge of delivering step change in adult social care”⁹.

3.38 The growing scale and complexity of need, and the resources available, present major challenges and will do so increasingly. We are not prepared to see a return to the days in which support relied disproportionately on the family (very often on women) or where the answer was large scale institutional care. Work led by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA)¹⁰ on greater efficiency in services for older people, the lessons of the frailty projects around Wales, and innovative extra care and community initiatives, all point the way forward for the transformation of services for older people. Taking this forward, particularly for frail older people with complex needs, will be a priority for the new National Social Services Partnership Forum. We will consider the outcome of the Dilnot Commission within that context.

3.39 We will place re-ablement at the heart of our approach. We believe that by quickly supporting people ‘to do’ for themselves, we will enable them to recover quickly or develop ways of living that fit their new circumstances.

⁸ Improving Care and Social Services in Wales: Chief Inspector’s Annual Report 2009-10

⁹ Chief Inspector’s Annual Report 2009-10, page 17

¹⁰ www.ssiacymru.org.uk

This will also reduce the need to wait for an assessed care package. The role of occupational therapists in helping to deliver re-ablement services will be key. **We will introduce a requirement for re-ablement services to be provided across Wales and will ensure that arrangements are in place for these to be planned and commissioned on a regional basis. We expect these services to be led jointly by social services and the NHS.**

3.40 For people who require longer term support, we will continue to require an assessment of need and the provision of appropriate services. We will, however, expect these services to maximise recovery or to make the most of individuals' new circumstances.

3.41 For some people, a care home will be the right answer. We know, however, how quickly people can settle into an institutional setting and how quickly capabilities can be eroded. But we also know that the effects of institutionalisation can be countered by:

- Maintaining a focus on recovery and rehabilitation;
- Seeing care and support services as short term;
- Maximising real control over daily living choices;
- Encouraging peer support; and
- Embedding advocacy in support services.

We will expect care and support services to work within this proactive model.

3.42 One of the biggest issues for us to address is dementia. The statistics tell their own story about the size of this particular challenge. We know that 1 in 3 older people will end their lives with a form of dementia. 1 in 5 people over 80 has dementia and two thirds of people with dementia live in the community. We also need to be ready to meet the greater challenge that we can see coming over the horizon.

3.43 We have set out our vision for dementia services based on an integrated service across social services, the NHS and the third sector. **We will expect the service transformation that is laid out in that policy to be made a reality for people with dementia.**

Reducing Complexity

Simpler access to information

3.44 Social services and social care have grown incrementally over the years, with one useful development being added to another. The result is a system that is now too complex, contains duplication and therefore does not secure the most efficient use of limited resources. Most importantly, however, it is not sufficiently transparent to those who use it, whether as citizens or professionals. Knowing who and where to go to for help is necessary in any system.

3.45 We will work with partners to promote integrated information and advice services further, and we will look to develop an “information hub” for social care, linked to similar plans for primary care.

3.46 There has been some progress in developing general advocacy services for older people, but coverage of such services is patchy. **We will therefore develop a business case to introduce a comprehensive advocacy service for older people, identifying what infrastructure is needed and setting initial priorities.**

3.47 We want to ensure that service users and their carers with similar needs are treated on the same basis wherever they live in Wales. **Working within the framework of reforms on the funding of care and support, we will work with stakeholders to introduce a national eligibility framework and a portable assessment of need for adult social care.**

Realising the potential of technology

3.48 The new digital world creates new opportunities. The Commission noted that:

“Social services and social care services in Wales need to place themselves firmly in the digital age. New technology can assist in the design and delivery of services and can improve the engagement of service users and workers. It opens up the possibilities of high quality, innovative services that are also resource efficient.”¹¹

3.49 The Assembly Government has articulated these opportunities in its strategy *Digital Wales*¹². This is a key area of modernisation for social care – one which drives innovation and inclusion, and strengthens the voice of citizens and the development of services. We will look to the solutions and opportunities created by the digital environment to reduce complexity,

¹¹ From Vision to Action: The Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, page 32, paragraph 4.57

¹² Delivering a Digital Wales: The Welsh Assembly Government’s Outline Framework for Action, December 2010

duplication and costs; improve efficiency and encourage improvement and innovation; as well as to give voice and control to people who use services.

3.50 We have two priorities. First, to support the development of new service models. Communication opportunities allow service users to share experiences and provide mutual support. Telecare is one such service model and plays an important role in providing support to people at risk of losing independence. It is a service which enables people to remain in their own homes. As at 31 December 2009, telecare services had been delivered to 19,699 people in Wales. **We will expect those responsible for regional commissioning and delivery of telecare to resolve issues such as costs to the service user, and integration with community equipment services and telehealth services.**

3.51 Secondly, technology allows the more efficient use of resources and in particular of information systems that support professional and management practice. We will expect to see technology at the heart of our drive for better efficiency and professional practice.

Sharing Personal Information

3.52 Some of the complexity that citizens face comes from our approach to sharing information. We will start from the assumption that the information belongs to the citizen not to the organisation. So, if individuals are clear about what information will be shared, from the moment at which they first make contact, the potential for complexity will be reduced.

3.53 Work has already begun to improve the way in which personal information is shared. It is based on four themes:

- Commonality – the willingness of stakeholders to adapt, to work to a shared strategic agenda and to adopt a common approach and set of procedures;
- Collaboration – a willingness to work together at local management level;
- Clarification at frontline level, both of roles and responsibilities, and of guiding procedures; and
- Coherence at the technical level in storing information.

3.54 **Having put in place the *Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information*,¹³ we now intend to support the development of Information Sharing Communities locally, bringing together representatives of key agencies so that they can jointly manage, advise on and support implementation. We will expect to see citizens fully and formally engaged in those communities. We will support a national system of governance.**

¹³ Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI), 2007

A Confident and Competent Workforce

3.55 The past decade has seen a transformation in the workforce across Wales. Through made-in-Wales solutions, we have made significant gains in recruitment and retention; quality standards have improved; qualifications have spread throughout the service; and partnerships between employers and providers have been strengthened significantly. The social work degree, the first year in practice and the content of training have moved us on significantly.

3.56 We believe, however, that citizen-focused, sustainable services will not be possible without placing the professional contribution of social workers and social care workers even more at the heart of services. Whilst leadership, collaboration, integrated services and a focus on performance make a huge impact, it is the way in which frontline staff deliver the day-to-day work with citizens that ultimately makes the difference.

3.57 We see the quality of professionals and their professionalism as central to responsive and sustainable social services. Whilst we will build on our strengths, this will require a very different focus.

3.58 Recognising that social workers play an important role in securing and allocating resources we believe that a model of social work rooted in assessment and care management is not one that is fit for the next stage of development. Obviously good quality assessment is vital, but it has come to dominate services. We want to see social work and the relationship with the social worker as a means of enabling people to make the changes they need in their lives. We believe that the concept of “care management” is outmoded - conveying a sense of control by the service, not by the citizen. We know that social workers are not simply the deliverers of pre-determined care, but co-creators of the support that people need.

3.59 The Commission expressed concern about the over-bureaucratic approach to assessment. We agree. An effective assessment helps the service user to clarify what support he or she needs. Professional assessment requires analysis and judgment, and underpins all subsequent actions. Whilst specific assessment tools will be required to understand the needs of particular people, our aim is a coherent assessment process across social services. We also need to learn lessons from joint approaches - such as unified assessment - to ensure that assessments across different professional groups are supported.

3.60 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 provides an opportunity to change the regulations governing care planning, placement and case review for children in England and Wales. **We will lead a review of the existing and proposed arrangements for children and adults, taking account of any recommendations emerging from the Family Justice and Munro reviews in England, where we feel they would produce better outcomes for children in Wales.**

3.61 The ICT systems to underpin these arrangements will need further discussion. We see this ultimately as a matter for local government to resolve as these are systems to underpin its core business. We recognise that there is a need for national direction around strategic requirements and a need to ensure that we have systems that can interface with each other – and with the citizen. We will not expect to see 22 different commissioning, procurement and system support arrangements.

3.62 We know that this will require a much greater focus on evidence-based practice, and therefore on the way we validate and disseminate such evidence, in the career structure for social work and in practice governance arrangements.

3.63 Strengthening social care research in Wales is a priority. Drawing on the recommendations from the Huxley report¹⁴, our aim is to grow high quality research from the platform of the National Institute for Social Care and Health Research (NISCHR), to strengthen the quality and quantity of social care research, build capacity, and develop collaborations between practice and the research community.

3.64 **Through NISCHR, we will establish a Centre of Excellence for Social Care Research.** This will improve the research base and also the use of research through improved collaboration and coordination; capacity building; skills development, dissemination, and implementation; and user and carer involvement. It will also deliver high quality, policy-related research and generate income from the Research Councils and European Union.

3.65 Quality services require quality leadership. We have welcomed the work by SSIA to support team manager and senior manager development, but we believe that there is more to do. **We will expect improvement agencies in Wales to bring forward proposals to establish a nationally-led, senior management development arrangement to stretch existing leaders and to grow the next generation.** We see this as encompassing all sectors, not just local government. Some may call this a “National Leadership College”. We are less concerned about a title or particular set of arrangements than with being clear about the outcomes.

3.66 The task group on the workforce has mapped out the next steps needed to continue the development of the workforce and ensure that it is equipped to deliver into the future. That report has provided us with an evidence base for moving forward and highlighted the pressing need to professionalise the workforce further, to strengthen practice governance and to continue to support the workforce through training and development opportunities. We support that.

3.67 Under the leadership of the Care Council for Wales, much has been achieved to lay the foundations for a new model of professionalisation of

¹⁴ Better evidence for better commissioning: a study of the evidence base of generic social care commissioning guides in the UK, August 2010

social work. Many of the necessary institutional arrangements to realise our objectives have now been met: we have regulated training and a qualification-based register and we have protection of title. We still have work to do – for example, we need to ensure that we have ongoing qualification requirements linked to licence to practice in certain areas and at certain levels for those on the register, and we need to use this model to advance the contribution of the profession further – but we also want to extend this model to other key roles in social care. **We will expect to see clearer career pathways both for social work and social care, which will allow high quality practitioners to remain in practice to make a real difference to citizens' lives.**

3.68 We have begun the journey of professionalisation for children's home managers and managers of care homes too. But **we will extend and deepen this approach through regulated training and qualification-based registers and post registration qualifications; and we will take all care service managers into this system.**

3.69 In this way, we will enable professional practice and judgement within a framework of public assurance and practice governance. This will be a key lever in driving up the quality of services and **we expect the Care Council as the professional regulator to lead this development work, to ensure that we have a strong set of arrangements to deliver this new professionalism.**

3.70 Comprehensive and robust information about the workforce is key not only to workforce planning, but also as intelligence in the process of policy development. Employers themselves must take responsibility for ensuring that good workforce information is available to them. However, current arrangements allow us to understand only part of the workforce fully. **We will therefore put in place arrangements, through the regulatory system, for the gathering of mandatory information on the social care workforce.**

3.71 We want to boost the esteem in which social work is held in the public eye. This will not only offer fairer recognition for the good work done by social workers and social care workers, but it will also help us to recruit and retain the brightest and the best to the sector. We do not believe, however, that this requires a commitment to the creation of any new institution in the Welsh architecture at this point. **Therefore we are not, as a Government, minded at this point to develop a National College of Social Work in Wales.** We do, however, call on all parties to support and encourage the development of a culture of strong professional representation for social work, and take part in a debate about the proper institutional arrangements to support that ambition. We want social work to be listened to widely.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Wellbeing of Citizens

3.72 It is a basic right that each of us should be free from exploitation, abuse and neglect. We expect that the relationships with those that use services will be based on dignity and respect.

3.73 The last decade has seen a step change in the way in which safeguarding is delivered. There is now a coherent approach to adult protection that did not exist 10 years ago and there is a much deeper understanding of adult abuse. Children's safeguarding arrangements and practice are now much stronger. Many children and adults are protected from harm by dedicated and skilled staff across Wales on a daily basis. We cannot be complacent. We have established an Adult Protection Advisory Group and a Welsh Children's Safeguarding Forum to review current arrangements. There have also been comprehensive inspections of safeguarding.

3.74 Responsibility for safeguarding is a shared responsibility across a number of statutory partners: the NHS, education and the police, as well as social services. Recent inspection reports have questioned how consistently full ownership is delivered by all parties. Social services have a pivotal role in safeguarding. It is their responsibility to pull partners together but it is not their responsibility alone.

3.75 Building on the progress made to date, we believe that safeguarding and protection should now be driven more strongly by national leadership. In due course **we will establish, on a permanent basis, an independently chaired National Safeguarding Board for Adults and Children.** This Board will provide national leadership across all stakeholders, will develop and promote high quality standards, and be a focus for learning from experience. We recognise that this will take time to establish on a formal basis and **we will therefore retain separate national leadership arrangements whilst the Board is brought into being. We will ask the Forum to provide us with initial advice on the potential scope and remit of such a Board and to include this in its final report due in late July 2011. We will consider ways of including service users in the work of the Board. We will also consult with the Adult Protection Advisory Group.**

3.76 In the light of the recommendations of the Adult Protection Advisory Group¹⁵, **we will revise and publish updated statutory guidance to replace *In Safe Hands*¹⁶. We will introduce a more robust statutory framework for adult protection in Wales. As an initial step, we will consult on our plans to legislate to ensure social services' lead co-ordinating role is put on a firmer statutory basis, and to ensure agencies and service providers co-operate in investigations of adult abuse, including the sharing of information.**

¹⁵ Report of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Project Board, February 2011

¹⁶ *In Safe Hands: Implementing adult protection procedures in Wales*, July 2000

3.77 Following the outcome of the Law Commission report on adult social care law, we will also consider where other changes to strengthen adult safeguarding in Wales can be achieved, taking into account the experience of the new system in Scotland.

3.78 The Children's Safeguarding Forum has identified its priorities. We have made it clear that we do not believe that 22 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are sustainable and are right to deliver the support that professionals across agencies need. We take the same view in respect of adult protection. **We will announce our decisions on the future of LSCBs in the light of the Forum's recommendations and within the context of any new partnership arrangements.**

3.79 We will continue to ensure that the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people meet current needs - for example, we recently announced innovative changes to our approach to serious case reviews. **We will review the statutory guidance *Working Together*¹⁷ in the light of the Forum's report.**

3.80 In June 2010, Professor Eileen Munro was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education to undertake a further review of child protection arrangements in England. Aspects of the legal framework are shared between England and Wales, and, in particular, duties on specified non-devolved agencies such as the police and probation services. We will continue to develop a distinctly Welsh framework within our legal powers and we will consider any lessons that we may wish to learn from Munro against the principles and approaches that we have adopted in relation to children's services in Wales, in particular our commitment to a rights-based approach which ensures that the voice of children and young people is central to services.

¹⁷ Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004, February 2007

A New Improvement Framework for Wales

3.81 We have already acknowledged that social services and social care have come a long way, underpinned by the Care Standards Act 2000 - specifically the establishment of the Care Council and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). These were groundbreaking developments. There is now a baseline of performance, much greater consistency, stronger protection from abuse and exploitation, and greater exposure of sub-standard services to commissioners and the public. But because the system has grown incrementally, its lack of clarity now adds unnecessary burdens to the job of providers and regulators. There is added complexity from the overlap that has grown up between regulators and commissioning arrangements. A model based on minimum standards was right for its time, but our ambition now is to move beyond that approach. The systems we have in place today need to take full advantage of new technology.

The Improvement framework

3.82 The new National Purpose, supported by the National Outcomes Framework, will be the basis for our approach to improvement.

3.83 We believe we have two key levers to enable the achievement of our ambitions for excellence. They are:

- Regulation of care and support services and of staff; and
- Programmes of improvement.

Regulating services and staff

3.84 Sir William Utting's report on children's safeguarding¹⁸ concluded that the best safeguard is an environment of overall excellence. We believe that regulation and inspection are essential in ensuring that citizens are able to access good quality and safe services. We must recognise more clearly that the prime responsibility for ensuring quality, a clear voice and control by service users, safeguarding and protection lies with organisations themselves, with professionals and with commissioners of services - and not with regulators and inspectors. Regulation plays an important role, and we expect regulators to take robust action where necessary. We also understand that it is by focusing on the wider arrangements that long term change and protection will happen. **The time is now right to shift the balance of regulation and inspection from the point of service delivery to the organisation which provides the service and to specific professional roles in the workforce.** This will enable us to **reduce the burden and the quantity of regulation.**

¹⁸ People Like Us: The Report of the Review of the Safeguards for Children Living Away From Home, 1997

3.85 To achieve this shift we will:

- Expect regulation to be citizen led;
- Be clear about the standards expected of the service and its governance;
- Reinforce the expectation that organisations providing care and support should take primary responsibility for the direction, training and support of staff; and
- Ensure that there is transparency so that information about services and professionals is readily available and service users, carers and professionals are able to assess what it can tell them.

3.86 We are committed to the independent scrutiny of services, to an approach to scrutiny that examines the experience of service users, and to the publication of the outcomes of that scrutiny. We believe that objective professional judgement by the Chief Inspector, unfettered by political or policy concerns, is central to effective social services. CSSIW is part of the Welsh Assembly Government. In order to support the professional objectivity of the Chief Inspector, we will consult on ways in which citizens and other key interests can provide advisory support to CSSIW's work.

3.87 The primary focus of service regulation will shift from the current inspection-led model to a model which fully develops the role of the registration authority for Wales. **We will focus our new model on registration of organisations to be service providers and employers of registered social workers and social care professionals and staff – a licence to operate in our sector. We will expect services to re-register on an appropriate basis. Where the standards required at registration are not maintained, the licence will be revoked.**

3.88 We want this 'licence to operate' to have high value – to the commissioners and planners, and to the businesses that provide care, as well as to the public – as a mark of quality and assurance. We want to take account of the business value that the licence status gives providers.

3.89 The focus of registration will shift from the service to the provider organisation, moving from a site-specific basis to the corporate level. Accountability for performance and improvement - measured against the new National Outcomes Framework and indicators - and for reporting publicly on these matters will be clearly located with the provider organisation. At the heart of this approach will be the register. We want this to be dynamic and meaningful and to provide transparent, up to date and accessible information about social care providers and staff. This approach will also clarify the role of commissioners, who have responsibility for ensuring that the services they purchase meet their expectations and legal and policy requirements.

3.90 Inspectors examining people's direct experience of services play a role in the delivery of a safe and quality service, and site-specific inspection of practice will remain a key part of the system. But they must be proportionate,

include sampling and provide evidence for organisation-wide assessments. The effectiveness of corporate governance and management oversight in assuring quality and safety will then become a key test for the regulator to assess. It is essential that the regulator makes sure that citizens can see clearly the quality of what the service offers.

3.91 We will review the regulatory framework to ensure that it focuses adequately on the corporate responsibilities of providers and commissioners, and we will require the Chief Inspector to modernise the approach to registration and inspection further - particularly focusing on creating the transparency to deliver this change.

3.92 Workforce regulation needs to follow the same principles. The existing policy ambition to register the whole of the social care workforce does not support that approach because it would involve transferring the focus and responsibility to the regulator. Vetting and barring arrangements should deal with issues of safety, and conduct should be understood to be primarily the responsibility of the service provider. This approach underpins our commitment to registering organisations both as providers of care services and as employers of social workers and social care workers. We want to set standards in relation to the employers' role, and to make sure that they are maintained. We expect those standards to include requirements for professional governance and practice supervision as well as for training and ongoing development.

3.93 We will not pursue plans to register groups of workers beyond social workers and social care managers; and we will review existing workforce regulation arrangements to ensure registration focuses on the leadership and improvement role of managers.

3.94 Our approach will be limited to mandatory systems of registration. Voluntary registers will be closed on the basis that they do not offer the clarity and simplicity that service users and carers require.

3.95 Increasing levels of self funding, and other arrangements such as direct payments, have led to a growing number of people being employed directly by service users. The workforce task group considered this, and **we will launch a public debate on the principles that should apply in understanding the proper boundaries of the duty of care owed by the state, service users' responsibilities as employers, support to service users, and the implications for safeguarding.**

Making quality more transparent

3.96 We expect that information about providers – both as providers and employers - will be transparently linked to information about the registered professionals they employ. We expect that this development will significantly improve the evidence available about the sector and its registered professionals and enable the regulators to deal more effectively with practice that falls below an acceptable level. We also expect that this will improve the

quality of professional advice available to commissioners and government about the state of the sector. Technology will be key to achieving these objectives, but this must be underpinned by a truly collaborative approach to this work by the bodies that are currently responsible – the Care Council and the CSSIW.

3.97 We are not immediately taken with structural change, and at this stage do not wish to use resources in this way; but we must seek efficiencies in the delivery of regulatory functions.

3.98 We expect the CSSIW and the Care Council to come forward with a joint proposal for the development and implementation of these key changes, and for the delivery of efficiencies in business and administrative processes, by December 2011, to implement from July 2012. If changes in legal powers and duties are necessary, we will seek them.

A new strategic improvement collaborative

3.99 In recent years, a range of measures to support improvement have grown up. This has happened in a somewhat piecemeal way, as specific arrangements have been developed to respond to particular aspects of social services. We fund the SSIA to support local authority social services to improve; the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru to provide professional leadership to directors; the Social Care Institute for Excellence to provide the evidence base for what works in practice; the Care Council to encourage improvement in the social care workforce, including funding streams for social work bursaries; and CSSIW to encourage improvement in social care and social services. We also have funding streams in government that are targeted on improvement such as the Social Care Workforce Development Programme.

3.100 We believe that our current resources for improvement are too dissipated. Better co-ordination will deliver the support that is needed to drive through the changes, and will make the best use of resources. There are a number of examples of how working together can pay dividends in driving forward the change we want to see. For instance, SSIA, CSSIW and government worked together to create a framework of leadership and accountability for directors of social services. This is now embedded in the inspection and review framework, and more broadly in the overall local government framework. Our objective must always be to look for opportunities to collaborate to bring about significant improvement of this kind. We expect improvement to be an active process, able to challenge as well as support.

3.101 We will create a new collaborative, evidence-based approach to improvement, to enable the improvement community to deliver a strategic framework which will encourage, and where necessary drive, improvement in social care and social services.

3.102 We want the strategic framework to:

- Support local authorities in delivering their social services accountabilities;
- Support service providers to achieve excellence;
- Support and develop professionals in their practice; and
- Enable the wider workforce to deliver citizen centred services.

3.103 We will bring all those with an interest in this agenda, including CAFCASS and the research community, together to share and analyse information about social services and social care and the workforce, to develop a three year strategic plan for improvement based on the achievement of our national outcomes. This must be informed by the views of service users and carers and their families and representatives.

3.104 We recognise the different legal status of the Children's and Older People's Commissioners, but we believe that they too hold evidence that could contribute to this approach, and we expect the strategic plan to take account of that evidence.

3.105 The three year strategic plan will be brought forward to the National Social Services Partnership Forum for consideration and comment before being agreed by the Minister for approval and funding. This will **be underpinned by an annual business plan** setting out the priorities, proposed work streams, intended outputs and outcomes, and lead organisations for funding and delivery. Funding that is currently available for improvement will be brought into one programme and released to lead organisations on the basis of the plan.

3.106 The plan will also take account of the pressing need to ensure that we are not diverting funds for front line improvement into duplicated 'back office' functions in the organisations themselves – so the plan will also set out how efficiencies will be delivered in basic administrative and business processes.

3.107 Individual organisations will be held to account for the delivery of the funded programmes. These organisations will also account for their performance through their own governance arrangements.

3.108 We want these new arrangements to be in place for the year 2012-13, and will expect agreed proposals for how the new arrangements will work and an outline strategic plan to be in place by January 2012. We recognise that there will be some complexities to resolve, including how funding is shifted from current individual pots to a new Welsh Social Services and Social Care Improvement Fund, and for this reason **we will build the approach in a staged way over the three years 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15. During 2012-13, we will set out the totality of that 'pot' for future years.**