

Care Forum Wales Manifesto 2011

Sustainable Social Services for Wales

Care Forum Wales welcomes the Framework for Action and endorses the intention of the previous Assembly Government to take greater responsibility for driving the direction for the transformation of social services. Firm and decisive actions are essential in order to implement the bold vision set out in this White Paper to renew social care services and put them at the forefront of Welsh social policy developments.

The politicians elected to form the National Assembly for Wales in May 2011 will be responsible for ensuring the success of the plans to transform social services in Wales. The challenges facing those Assembly Members include:

- *listening to the people in Wales who use services and respecting their and their carers' choices of where and how they have their care needs met;*
- *recognising the value of the social care workforce by promoting workforce development initiatives;*
- *ensuring that all public agencies recognise and respect the important contribution of independent sector care providers;*
- *ensuring that value for money takes account of outcomes for people using services;*
- *ensuring funding enables quality services to be provided;*
- *making service specifications proportionate to the costs of provision;*
- *making geographically combined commissioning arrangements for all social care services in Wales, with a standard contract for purchasing and a national fees framework, to reduce duplication and inefficiency in commissioning and purchasing by multiple public agencies;*
- *ensuring assessments for services are based on personal care needs and not distorted by bureaucratic criteria;*
- *supporting residential child care as a placement of choice to meet the needs of some of the most disadvantaged and highly vulnerable children and young people.*

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Actions needed to achieve the vision of

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1. Respecting the rights of vulnerable people of all ages to make informed choice, or have influence over, where and how they live.
2. Establishing joint working by local authorities in commissioning and purchasing social care services.
3. Determining a standard model contract for all social care day and residential and nursing care services with provision for flexibility to meet individuals' care needs.
4. Ensuring fees paid meet the true cost of the provision required with commissioners using open and accountable methods for fee setting.
5. Removing the anomaly of nursing care fees being less than residential care fees.
6. Prohibiting the proposed blanket restrictions on care home placements until all other options have been tried and shown not to be suitable.
7. Recognising the importance of ensuring placement stability for vulnerable children and young people who have significant attachment issues.
8. Ensuring better and more consistent support for care leavers with clear transitional pathways from children's to adult care services.
9. Recognising the important role of small and medium enterprises in providing a flexible range of local personal social care services.
10. Giving CSSIW more powers to regulate local authorities and to enforce compliance with statutory guidance.
11. Supporting the setting up of a professional body for social care workers – e.g. the Academy of Care Practitioners.

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Care Forum Wales - Statement of Principles

The people of Wales, who use services, and their carers, should be put first as a key principle in all community care services.

The development of independence, self-esteem and social inclusion depend on people using services and their carers having confidence in the care provided. They need to feel that their views and wishes are heard and taken into account by commissioners and regulators, as well as by providers. They need assurance that their assessed care needs will be met consistently and for as long as necessary.

Service commissioners and providers must ensure that social care services (domiciliary services, day care, substitute family placements and care homes):

- offer quality services;
- maintain personal dignity with comfort;
- provide continuity for those who rely on them;
- acknowledge the wishes and feelings of young people;
- take account of personal choice;

The Assembly Government has comprehensive policies for health and social care services. Those policies can only be made a reality with full support and commitment to them by local authorities, NHS organisations and independent sector providers.

The independent health and social care sector is a major part of public service provision and must be recognised as such. The sector has to be an equal partner in decision making and be funded realistically to meet the real costs of providing the services required.

Resources expended by commissioners, purchasers, providers, regulators and service users and carers, in duplication of effort, waste resources that would be better spent on service provision. Care Forum Wales acknowledges its responsibilities set out in the *Memorandum of Understanding – Securing Strong Partnerships in Care*. Care Forum Wales expects all signatory agencies to do the same and avoid the need for legal challenges to the reasonableness of their decision making processes when they disregard their legislative requirements and statutory guidance – as well as their commitments confirmed by their signing the MOU.

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People using services are often the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and needy citizens in terms of disability, health, housing, income and capital. Many are disempowered by their personal circumstances making it necessary for them to access care services. Many are unable to speak out effectively against the discrimination they experience from the impact of disability or the cumulative result of oppressive practice on people who are old, ill and poor. Anecdotal evidence suggests it is only those who care for people – *relatives and friends at home, domiciliary carers and care home staff* – who are truly aware of the indignities and uncertainties experienced by those of us who need care services that we are unable to afford to purchase ourselves.

More efficient use and better targeting of resources across health and social services is essential. It is the only way to guarantee best value for money, and secure the increased resources that will ensure continuity of care for our increasingly ageing population. Resources must be directed to the achievement of WAG policies; priorities must not continue to be distorted by local political and managerial decisions and by duplication of effort and expenditure. It is this that dilutes the value of the resources available for the provision of services.

Summary

Care Forum Wales calls on the Assembly Government to take effective action with local authorities, the NHS, Independent Sector care providers and CSSIW to implement the Framework for Action in order to achieve the vision of Sustainable Social Services for Wales.

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About Care Forum Wales (CFW)

CFW is a not-for-profit organisation representing around 500 independent sector care businesses throughout Wales that are dedicated to offer high quality care for people who use those services and excellent value for money for commissioners of services.

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Our members provide day, residential and nursing services for adults and children. We seek to:

- influence health and social care policy and practice in Wales as the principal voice for the independent care sector;
- encourage access to education and training for all care providers;
- promote high standards and quality of care and life experience for all service users and their carers;
- inform and update our members on the impact of health and social care policy and legislation on their services;
- promote dignity for service users through our Dignity in Care Charter;
- engage effectively with partners through the Memorandum of Understanding with the WLGA and ADSS Cymru to achieve the outcomes of the Assembly Government policies and aspirations for social services in Wales.