

Gwent Police Response to the Health and Social Care Committee re Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act

1. Is there a need for a Bill to provide for a single Act for Wales that brings together local authorities' and partners' duties and functions in relation to improving the wellbeing of people who need care and support and carers who need support?

The intention to bring together local authorities' and partners' duties and functions in relation to improving wellbeing is generally welcomed. Whilst there is a need for legislation and guidance to guide the way that services are delivered to people by public services, simplifying this would be beneficial to services and citizens who sometimes have to negotiate complex systems to get what they need. There is potential reduce bureaucracy and release wider system capacity and energy to focus on delivering services that improve outcomes for people.

2. Do you think the Bill, as drafted, delivers the stated objectives as set out in Chapter 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum?

Yes, however, much of the detail will need to be included in regulations.

3. The Bill aims to enable local authorities, together with partners, to meet the challenges that face social services and to begin the process of change through a shared responsibility to promote the wellbeing of people. Do you feel that the Bill will enable the delivery of social services that are sustainable?

A consistent focus on need and demand across the principality will lead to better service. It will enable more effective joint working and has potential for greater collaboration.

4. How will the Bill change existing social services provision and what impact will such changes have, if any?

The move to focusing on outcomes is welcomed. Streamlining the large number of policies, laws, regulations will potentially reduce bureaucracy and speed up processes.

Using the definition of wellbeing will potentially mean that large numbers of the community who would not previously have involvement with Social Services will request assessments of their needs. The impact on Local Authorities is as yet unknown and requires further exploration.

Regionalising Safeguarding Children Boards is welcomed. . The main concern of members is the loss of local links that has been the focus of much of the work of the Local Boards in South East Wales. The

challenge will be establishing a Board that has an overview of local practice in five Local Authority areas.

5. What are the potential barriers to implementing the provisions of the Bill (if any) and does the Bill take account of them?
 - **The absence of funding formulas for boards could be an issue when public finances are under such pressures.**
 - **The ability of Regional Boards to hold member agencies to account needs to be strengthened as does the role of the Chair of the Board. It is important that Boards are able to demonstrate effectiveness in terms of holding partner agencies to account for safeguarding services.**
6. In your view does the Bill contain a reasonable balance between the powers on the face of the Bill and the powers conferred by regulations?

It is better that only those issues that require legislative change be included in the legislation and that all other guidance be included in regulation.

7. What are your views on powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (i.e. statutory instruments, including regulations, orders and directions)?

This may be required and provides for a level of flexibility to create supportive elements for the legislation which may only become apparent as the changes brought about by the law evolve.

8. What are your views on the financial implications of the Bill?

Please see previous comments in relation to resources.

9. Are there any other comments you wish to make about the specific sections of the Bill?

No.