

Health and Social Care Committee
Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill
SSW 13 – Royal College of Physicians

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Legislation Office

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15 March 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

From The Registrar - O'r Cofrestrydd

Patrick Cadigan MD FRCP
patrick.cadigan@rcplondon.ac.uk

Re: Consultation on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill

The Royal College of Physicians (Wales) plays a leading role in the delivery of high quality patient care by setting standards of medical practice and promoting clinical excellence. We provide physicians in Wales and across the world with education, training and support throughout their careers. As an independent body representing more than 28,000 fellows and members worldwide, including 1,000 in Wales, we advise and work with government, the public, patients and other professions to improve health and healthcare.

Mae Coleg Brenhinol y Meddygon (Cymru) yn arwain y ffordd o ran darparu gofal o ansawdd uchel i gleifion drwy osod safonau ar gyfer arferion meddygol a hybu rhagoriaeth glinigol. Rydym yn darparu addysg, hyfforddiant a chefnogaeth i feddygon yng Nghymru a ledled y byd drwy gydol eu gyrfa. Fel corff annibynnol sy'n cynrychioli mwy na 28,000 o gymrodorion ac aelodau ym mhedwar ban byd, gan gynnwys 1,000 yng Nghymru, rydym yn cynghori ac yn gweithio gyda'r llywodraeth, y cyhoedd, cleifion, a gweithwyr proffesiynol eraill i wella iechyd a gofal iechyd.

Overview

Our response is informed by our fellows and members in Wales. Because our fellows and members work primarily in the health service providing acute care, we have focused our response on part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill which outlines new arrangements for cooperation and partnership between local authorities and local health boards in Wales.

Our response to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill

The RCP welcomes the core commitment of this legislation to improve the wellbeing of people who need care and support, especially the clear promise to better integrate health and social care services and to support people of all ages as part of their families and communities. We are also pleased to see a commitment to improving the quality of services, promoting patient centred care and better provision of information. Finally, we welcome a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.



In particular, we are pleased to see that the Bill will:

- Put a duty on local authorities and local health boards to promote the wellbeing of people who need care and support and to provide information, advice and assistance to help people better understand the health and care system and how they can access services now and in the future
- Put a duty on local authorities to promote cooperation with partner bodies, including their local health board, to improve the wellbeing of people who need care and support. The RCP welcomes the suggestion that, as part of these arrangements, local authorities and health boards should establish and maintain pooled funds and that they should share resources and information
- Put a duty on local authorities to ensure the integration of health provision with care and support provision where it will promote wellbeing of children, carers with needs for support, or adults with care and support needs. We believe that this is an important step forward for improvements in health and social care in Wales
- Allow for future regulations which could specify individual partnership arrangements to be made by one or more local authorities and one or more health boards.

Integrated, patient-centred care

The RCP strongly urges the Welsh Government to create an NHS which puts the patient at the centre of our health and social care services. Patients should be involved, empowered and enabled to achieve the very best outcomes for their health. We welcome the right to a single needs assessment which focuses on outcomes and wellbeing as well as person centred care and support plans.

Within two decades, almost one in three people in Wales will be aged 60 or over,ⁱ and a growing percentage of our elderly patients are being admitted to hospital with multiple conditions, including dementia. One third of adults in Wales have at least one chronic condition, and with life expectancy increasing, the numbers of people living with chronic conditions will increase.ⁱⁱ The RCP articulated the impact of this on acute hospitals in its 2012 report [Hospitals on the edge?](#)ⁱⁱⁱ However, these demographic changes will be evident across health and social care, and it has been estimated that Wales will need an extra 5,000 care homes by 2020.^{iv} It is increasingly clear that we need to develop collaborative solutions across traditional boundaries of care.

The RCP advocates a collaborative model of care in which traditional professional boundaries are broken down to ensure seamless pathways of care for patients, designed by local clinicians. As a royal college which represents around 1,000 specialist doctors in Wales, we know that continuity of care is vital for patients with long term, chronic and complex conditions. The RCP, RCGP and RCPCH publication, *Teams without walls (2008)*, emphasises the importance of shared working as the most effective way of managing patients with long term conditions.^v The RCP is also looking at this issue as part of its ground-breaking [Future Hospital Commission](#), which is due to report later in 2013.^{vi}

An increasing number of patients have complex medical needs which require ongoing management from physicians and specialist teams working collaboratively across hospital and community settings. This will mean greater coordination, including the merging of hospital and community teams to ensure that patients see the right person, at the right time, in the right setting. In-hospital and community settings must be underpinned by common standards, and it is crucial that increase in the capacity of community services before this transfer can be done safely and effectively, without destabilising already stretched inpatient and emergency services.



To guarantee safe and quality health and social care services, the Welsh Government must ensure adequate investment, resourcing and planning for these changes. Furthermore, there must be adequate monitoring and mechanisms put in place to ensure local authorities and local health boards are held to account in respect of their new responsibilities under this Bill. Policy and legislation must be matched by excellent delivery at the front line.

Better communication between GPs, specialist clinicians and social care professionals will be also essential to ensure that a truly integrated health and social care system delivers excellent care for the patient. Integrated working allows patients and their carers to benefit not only from specialist knowledge, but also from general primary care and the help and support of social care services. Good integrated care should support people as long as possible in their own homes, helping them to live productive, independent lives. This is why the Welsh Government should ensure, through the criteria in this Bill, that as many people as possible are made eligible for this care and support once this legislation is enacted.

We would like to see the NHS in Wales adopt a preventative approach to illness: currently, as little as 4 per cent of our health budget is being spent on prevention.^{vii} Real investment in preventative care services will mean less pressure on our frontline healthcare services. This, in turn, will mean that people in Wales have a better quality of life for longer.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Cadigan'.

Dr Patrick Cadigan
Registrar / Cofrestrydd

For more information, please contact:

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Further reading:

- 'Teams without walls', a joint working part report of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2008
- 'Making the best use of doctors' skills, a balanced partnership', a joint statement by the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of General Practitioners
- 'A guide to understanding pathways and implementing networks', a paper by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- 'Delivering high-quality surgical services for the future', a paper by the Royal College of Surgeons
- 'A clinical vision of a reformed NHS', a joint paper between the NHS Confederation and the Joint Medical Consultative Council



ⁱ NHS Wales Chief Executive's Annual Report 2011/12, p5, available at

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/120731chiefexecannualreporten.pdf>

ⁱⁱ NHS Wales Chief Executive's Annual Report 2011/12, p5, available at

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/120731chiefexecannualreporten.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ For more information, please visit <http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/hospitals-edge-time-action>

^{iv} WRVS response to Social Services (Wales) Bill, March 2012, available at <http://www.wrvs.org.uk/news-and-events/news/wrvs-response-to-social-services-wales-bill>

^v Please see suggested further reading at the end of this document

^{vi} For more information, please visit <http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/future-hospital-commission>

^{vii} Hale et al., 'Making the economic case for prevention – a view from Wales', *BMC Public Health* 2012, 12:460