




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act

A young person's
summary





Social services help families when they need it and make sure people are safe if they are at risk.

They also help children and young people who:

- are in danger of being hurt;
- have family problems;
- have a disability;
- are in trouble with the police;
- are looked after in care; or
- aren't cared for as they should be.

Wales has really good social services.

We help between 150,000 and 200,000 people every year, but Wales is growing and changing. We want to make sure that everyone gets the help they need.

This means changing the way we do some things.

A new Act

We have made a new
Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act

This sets out everything local authorities (councils) have to do to help people in need of care and support.

An Act makes changes to the law.

The new Act is set out in 11 parts.



Part 1: Introduction

We want people to have healthy, happy lives.

The Act will change the way local authority social services and other care services work together in partnership to help and support people.

The Act will help make sure people enjoy well-being in every area of their lives.

Well-being doesn't only mean being healthy; it means:

- being well in your emotions;
- feeling safe where you live;
- having every chance to do well at school;
- having friends;
- being a part of good, strong communities;
- being safe from violence; and
- lots more.

Part 2: Roles

The Act means that everyone will have to work together to improve the well-being of people who need care and support from social services.

This includes:

- listening to their views and feelings;
- treating them with respect; and
- making room for their different culture, beliefs, language needs and other issues.

Outcomes and goals for Wales.

Welsh Ministers will write a statement of the goals and outcomes we want to reach and have a Code of Practice so everyone knows what they have to do to reach these goals.

Local authorities and Local Health Boards have to know and understand the needs of the people who live in their area so that services can support and care for them.

Supporting people quickly

Stepping in early to help people is really important.

This helps:

- children stay in families;
- reduce the effect of disabilities;
- stop abuse and neglect;
- fewer children get involved with crime; and
- fewer children end up in care.

Social enterprises can help local authorities to do this.

Information and advice

The Act also means that local authorities must give all the up-to-date information and advice people need. This will help people understand how care and support may work.

A Social Enterprise is an organisation that is more interested in helping people or the environment than making lots of money in profit.



Part 3: Assessments

The Act means that everyone has the right to have their needs looked at.

Local authorities have to involve the person being assessed, their families and carers, and listen to their opinions about decisions that affect their lives.

Local authorities also have to look at and assess the needs of people who are 'carers'. This includes young carers.

A person also has a right to say no to an assessment, but local authorities can still carry out one if they think a person is at risk.



Part 4: Meeting needs

The Act means that after a local authority does an assessment, they must look at what support and care people have a right to have free from social services, and what they may have to pay for.

Meeting the needs of adults:

All adults have the right to care and support but sometimes there is a charge they will need to pay. The new Act sets out guidelines for this.

Meeting the needs of children and young people:

All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to be kept safe.

Meeting the needs of carers:

The Act makes things easier for carers and helps to make sure they get the support they need from social services as they need it.

Special powers:

Local authorities now have 'special powers' to step in if they need to, and help those most at need. This will help keep people safe.

Direct payments:

Sometimes people want to sort out their own care and support. They can ask local authorities to give them the money to do this. The new Act sets out steps for how this works.

Right to a 'care and support plan':

Local authorities will have to make sure care and support plans are looked at and changed if needed. Local authorities have to work with other services and groups where their plans overlap.

The plans move with the people:

If someone moves from one part of Wales to another, their care and support plan now moves with them. This is until their new local authority arranges a new assessment and care and support plan.

Meeting other needs:

The Act also makes sure that:

- if people have to go into care, they can move into the care home or other supported living they want if it's possible; and
- when anyone over 16 goes into hospital all their property is protected.



Part 5: Money

The Act means that local authorities have the power to charge for support and care if they need to, but only when someone is able to pay. They will have to look at people's finances to check what they can afford, as we don't want anyone to miss out on the care and support they need.

Part 6: Looked after children

The new Act helps to make sure those children and young people get all the help and support they need to:

- have a place to live;
- have an education;
- be healthy;
- have contact with family if it's safe; and
- have support when they're leaving care and becoming an adult.

Looked after children and young people are those who are in foster care, children's homes, secure places like prisons and other accommodation, like hospitals. They're cared for by local authorities.



Part 7: Keeping people safe

The new Act has steps to make sure that people are kept safe because it is really important this happens. This is called safeguarding.

Adults:

There are some adults who need care and support to stay safe from abuse and neglect. Local services have to work together to spot people at risk of this, and help them stay safe.

The Act:

- gives local authorities the right to apply to a court for an 'adult protection and support order' so they can step in and offer help; and
- makes other organisations tell local authorities if they think an adult is at risk.

National independent safeguarding board:

The Act means there will be a new group made up of professionals who help and advise Welsh Ministers on safeguarding people.

Safeguarding and protection boards:

New safeguarding groups will be set up so all services in every local authority area work to keep adults and children safe from harm, abuse or neglect.



Part 8: Social Services

The Act sets out all the different roles people have in social services to make sure everyone gets the help and support they need.

The Director of Social Services

The director's job is to make sure social services in their local authority are doing what they are supposed to do and working to reach the goals we have for people living in Wales. The new Act allows the Welsh Ministers to say what experience and qualities a director should have, so that they are the best person for the job.

Code of Practice

This will set out all the things social services should be doing and how they should be doing it.

The new Act means Welsh Ministers can step in and have the power to take any action needed if they feel a local authority is not doing what they should.

Part 9: Working together

This Act makes it easier for local authorities to work with:

- other government departments that give services;
- partner organisations; and
- health services.

Working together helps everyone get the help and support they need.

Adoption:

There are many children and young people in Wales who want a family. The Act gives power to Welsh Ministers to guide local authorities so that adoption is safe but happens quicker.



Part 10: Complaints

Sometimes people may not be happy with their support from social services and want to complain. The Act sets out steps that are easy to use so everyone understands how complaints should be handled.

It also makes it easier for people to:

- have a say;
- make a complaint if they need to; and
- have an advocate to help them if they need.

The new Act makes it possible for people to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales about care they've paid for themselves through direct payments as well as care given from local authorities.

An advocate is someone on your side who helps you be heard. It can be a parent, carer, teacher or if you don't have someone like that then [MEIC](#) can help.



Part 11: Other things

The Act works alongside other goals and laws that we have in Wales to make people's lives better and help them enjoy well-being.

There are many other issues to do with social services that the Act helps to deal with. These include changes in our society like:

- how much social services cost;
- the fact people are living longer;
- people want control over the support and care they get;
- the higher amount of prescriptions and medicine people need; and
- changes in welfare benefits and tax credits people get.

The Act also covers:

- how local authorities will be affected by this;
- how plans will be put into action and delivered;
- how the money will be given to local authorities so they can do what they need to; and
- the risks local authorities will face if they do not carry out this new law.

Timescales

The Act introduces a lot of changes, but some of these need more detail on how they will work. We will consult on these further details in Autumn 2014 and later, then make any changes that we need to.

We will also make sure that staff working in social services get the training they need to put the changes in place.



The background features a stylized landscape. At the top, a bright yellow sun is partially obscured by several white, fluffy clouds. Below the sky, there are rolling green hills. On the left side, a white house with a chimney and a small fence is visible. On the right side, a young girl with long brown hair, wearing a blue shirt and white pants, stands next to a tree with a brown trunk and a large, solid red circular canopy. The overall style is simple and colorful.

Thank you for reading this.

If you want to read the full Act you can find it here:

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