

## **Economic Development and Transport Committee**

**Date:** 25 February 2004  
**Time:** 9.00am – 12.30pm  
**Venue:** National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay  
**Title:** Chwarae Teg

### **Purpose of Presentation**

To give a formal presentation to the committee about the barriers to economic activity caused by issues surrounding childcare in relation to the committees policy review into economic inactivity. To make appropriate links to similar issues relating to elder and dependent care.

### **Chwarae Teg's role**

To promote the role of women in the Welsh economy via the following policy themes; Employment, Enterprise, Education & Skills, Public Policy.

To undertake operational and strategic work to identify barriers and propose solutions linked to the above themes.

Work around childcare has included:-

- Under 5's Demonstration Project (support for 30 new nurseries pan Wales)
- Out of School Childcare Initiatives (resulting in new After School Clubs organisation in Wales – Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs)
- the business case for childcare including flexible working and work life balance, employers guide to childcare and employers briefings.
- Membership of newly convened childcare working group chaired by Dr Brian Gibbons Deputy Economic Development Minister.

Work in relation to elder and dependent care has included:-

- Wales Union Learning Fund partnership with Wales TUC and Carers organisations research project – Better Care Better Business
- economic issues of carers and employment

Work on the whole care agenda including both childcare and elder and independent care resulted in the Care Scoping Study - Executive Summary attached.

## Summary

- Wales, as is the UK, facing a care crisis as parents and carers are finding it more and more difficult to bring up children or care for older/dependent adults and be economically active
- Many SME's find it difficult to promote equality and work life balance and keep afloat or maintain productivity
- There is a wealth of expertise and experience that needs to be pooled to harness this agenda effectively
- There is a need to continue to develop the economic case for care

These facts have been obtained through the care scoping study Making the Case for Care, other various relevant pieces of national and European research, and the Chwarae Teg National Conference in November 2003.

## Childcare

- There is a crisis looming for childcare provision in Wales
- Childminders numbers still low
- The cost of childcare set to escalate to meet demand over next 5 years
- Childcare is important as a businesses sector in its own right. Childcare businesses need help to expand/sustain their business
- However, if childcare is left only to private industry there will not be an adequate service for everyone. Childcare in the public sector also needs to be adequately funded.
- There is more need now than ever to adequately resource a formal childcare framework in Wales
- There is an opportunity to tackle these issues from different angles, as childcare cuts across several of the Assembly's key themes, and is a vital ingredient in the Assembly's economic agenda.

## Childcare for children with disabilities

- Childcare provision needs to be more inclusive for those with special needs/disabilities. Childminders often say they can provide for special needs children but they haven't always got the necessary facilities to do so
- There remains a difficulty in recruiting adequate staff to provide special care in day nurseries

## Elder and dependent care

- Initiatives to get carers back into work need to be developed
- There is a need for supported employment schemes for carers in work

- Young carers need the support and advice necessary to ensure their own economic prosperity
- The transitional period between children and adult care services still proves particularly difficult for working carers
- There needs to be a joint approach based on agreed priorities and outcomes

## **Recommendations**

1. To update the Care Scoping Study
2. To submit a full proposal to officials in the following departments-Economic Development, Health and Social Care, Social Justice and Regeneration. Full proposal to consider variety of ideas to take forward the economics of care agenda. This includes development of formal working links between organisations like Chwarae Teg, the Childcare Working Group, the Carers in Employment forum and ACE Equal Project. It also deals with the essential recording and sharing of good practice.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Chwarae Teg ideas for pilot projects and research**

#### **Research**

- Childcare provision mapping in rural counties (Ynys Mon, Conwy)
- Impact of care on gender pay gap (possibly with EOC)
- Care in the social economy
- Barriers to economic prosperity of carers of disabled children
- Young carers and economic development
- Feasibility study of Co-operative model of care provision (with Wales Co-op)

#### **Possible pilot projects with other partners:**

- i. Establishment of mobile crèches in rural areas
- ii. Creation of childcare business peripatetic workers
- iii. Childcare for under 5's Start -up support programme
- iv. Recruitment drive and support programme for childminders
- v. Co-operative services

#### **Reference sources**

University of North Wales Bangor – Review of National Assembly's Carers Strategy  
County Childcare/Young person's partnerships network  
Chwarae Teg National Conference 2003: Women and Social Exclusion  
SARE European Conference on Care, Bilbao, Spain 2003

## Making the Case for Care – Scoping Study (Chwarae Teg)