

Social services

Introduction

Responsibility for social services is shared between central and local government. Local authorities provide a wide range of these services for children, the elderly and other client groups through their social services departments. Within a framework of legislation and regulations, the 22 local authorities in Wales have the statutory responsibility for the planning, assessment, commissioning and delivery of social services. Around 1,800 private and independent organisations also deliver social services in Wales. Social services authorities are required to assess people who might require community care services and to decide what, if any, services meet their needs. The services range from advice and counselling to care and support in their own homes, in residential or nursing care homes or elsewhere.

- ◆ The total whole-time equivalent (WTE) number of staff directly employed by social services departments in 2005-06 was 19,900.
- ◆ The total expenditure on personal social services for 2005-06 was £1,164.7 million.
- ◆ 50 per cent of home care services are provided by the independent sector.
- ◆ At September 2005 the total number of adults in Wales receiving home care services was 26,624.
- ◆ At September 2005 the total number of adults placed in care homes in Wales was 16,514.ⁱ

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) regulates, inspects and develops social services in Wales as well as providing independent professional advice.ⁱⁱ

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, alongside CSSIW regulates health and other associated social and care organisations.ⁱⁱⁱ

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly

Social Services is not a field in itself in the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, however, Field 15 of Schedule 5 of the Act is social welfare. This means that the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers over social welfare matters through Legislative Competence Orders.

The following secondary legislation responsibilities of the Second Assembly will transfer to Welsh Ministers in the Third Assembly:

Oversight of social services activities of local authorities in Wales including the issuing of statutory guidance.

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

The *European Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2007*^{iv} states that a European strategy will be put in place in the field of social services building on a consultation process on the impact of European law in this area.

EU policy

Article 2 of the Treaty defines the promotion of social progress and a high level of employment as fundamental tasks of the Community. This is implemented through the provision of a broad range of social services in Member States, including social protection schemes, care services and services to promote social and labour market integration of individuals.

The EU has the responsibility to ensure that they are delivered in conformity with the rules and principles of Community law.^v

Key Assembly Government strategy documents and action plans from the Second Assembly:

- ◆ *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities* was published February 2007. The Strategy sets out the policy direction for social services for the next 10 years.^{vi}
- ◆ New arrangements for handling social services complaints came into force on 1 April 2006. The Welsh Assembly Government produced *Listening and Learning: A guide to handling complaints and representations in local authority social services in Wales* in response to this.^{vii}
- ◆ The Health and Social Services Committee produced a policy review on the interface between health and social care in March 2005.^{viii}
- ◆ *Direct Payments Policy and Practice Guidance* was produced by the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2004.^{ix}
- ◆ *Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategies: Preparing a Strategy* is statutory guidance which sets out the requirements for preparing a Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy under the provisions of the *National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002 (the 2002 Act) and the Health, Social Care and Well-being (Wales) (Regulations) 2003*.^x
- ◆ Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Other Non-Residential Social Services was produced by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2002.^{xi}

Legacy issues from the Second Assembly

The Health and Social Services Committee's legacy paper highlighted the following issues relating to social services for the attention of the Third Assembly:

Protecting the most vulnerable, ie. children, disabled and elderly adults.

Useful links

1. The section of the Welsh Assembly Government website covering Social Services: http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/socialcare/adult_social_care/?lang=en
2. Social Services Improvement Agency: <http://www.allwalesunit.gov.uk/>
3. Welsh Local Government Association: <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/>
4. Local Government Data Unit – Wales: <http://www.dataunitwales.gov.uk/eng/Whatwedo.asp>

Further information

For further information on any aspect of social services, please contact:

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ⁱ Local Government Data Unit Wales, *Personal Social Service Statistics Wales 2005-06*:

<http://www.dataunitwales.gov.uk/eng/Project.asp?nc=UKTE&id=2847>

ⁱⁱ Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/cssiwswebsite/cssiw/?lang=en>

ⁱⁱⁱ Healthcare Inspectorate Wales: <http://www.hiw.org.uk/>

^{iv} Commission of the European Communities, *Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2007*, October 2006:

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/clwp2007_en.pdf

^v Commission of the European Communities, *Background Document Legal Framework*:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_protection/docs/background_en.pdf

^{vi} Welsh Assembly Government, *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities*, February 2007:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health_social_care_strategies/fulfilledlives/?lang=en

^{vii} Welsh Assembly Government, *Listening and Learning: A guide to handling complaints and representations in local authority social services in Wales*, 2006:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dhss/publications/social_services_publications/guidance/2006/listening_learning_complaints?lang=en

^{viii} Health and Social Services Committee, Policy Review: Interface between health and Social Care, October 2003:

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemhealsocsvs/content/inter-e.htm>

^{ix} Welsh Assembly Government, *Direct Payments Policy and Practice Guidance*, July 2004:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dhss/publications/social_services_publications/guidance/2004/direct_payments_guidance_2004?lang=en

^x Welsh Assembly Government/ NHS Wales, *Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategies: Preparing a Strategy*, February 2003:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/dhss/403821215/HSCWB_Strategies_preparing_1.pdf?lang=en

^{xi} Welsh Assembly Government, *Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Other Non-residential Social Services*, 2002:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dhss/publications/social_services_publications/guidance/2002/fairercharging?lang=en