



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Consultation on the Social Services (Wales) Bill

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BY Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services

I delivered an oral statement on the Social Services (Wales) Bill to the National Assembly for Wales on the 24 January 2012. In that statement I outlined, for the first time, the proposed content of the Bill and I was very pleased with the positive response that the statement received.

This Bill has been developed to provide us with the legislative foundation we need to implement the programme of change outlined in our White Paper, *'Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action'*. This programme has built on the extensive engagement exercise undertaken by the Independent Commission on Social Services and its purpose is not only to tackle the many challenges facing social services in Wales but also to seize the opportunities before us.

Not all of this programme will require new or amended legalisation to be implemented. Indeed many aspects are already underway, for example, I have already established the National Social Services Partnership Forum and the Social Services Strategic Leadership Group. Other key aspects will however, require us to create or amend legislation and where this is the case, the Bill is our vehicle for achieving this. It will also allow us, in some areas where no new powers are required, to bring together and simplify the current legislation where there is benefit in doing so.

During the debate that followed my Oral statement, I recognised that Assembly Members and Members of the Public would want to be kept informed of progress on the Bill and to have the opportunity to debate the detail behind the proposals I outlined. I am therefore delighted to announce the publication of the Bill's consultation document, which will be available on the Welsh Government's consultation web pages from today.

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/healthsocialcare/?lang=en>

Supporting this document will be a shorter summary version, a children and young people's version, an easy read version and a consultation pack to allow organisations to run their own consultation exercises. These will be available on our website in due course.

This public consultation marks a key milestone in the development of the Bill and sets out publically the detailed proposals we wish to include in the legislation. The consultation will last for 12 weeks, running from the 12 March to the 1 June 2012 and will be supported by a range of consultation and engagement activities.

I am pleased that to date the Sustainable Social Services agenda has been based on consensus and collaboration. Whilst I recognise that the consultation document is, by necessity, technical and detailed, I sincerely hope that in this vein a broad range of stakeholders across Wales, including yourselves, will respond to the proposals. This will ensure that all views can be taken in to account, prior to the Bill's anticipated introduction into the National Assembly for Wales in the autumn and that we get the detail of this important Bill right.