



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

Title: The roll-out of Integrated Family Support Services – Phases 3 and 4

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By: Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services

Our commitment in Programme for Government was to deliver for the people of Wales a fairer society and one where everyone has the opportunity to contribute. These shared values are at the heart of our programme for Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) where we have prioritised our action to better support those children and families in our society who face multiple difficulties.

Today, therefore, I am pleased to announce the final roll-out of the IFSS programme across Wales a year earlier than the anticipated date of the end of 2014. By late 2013 IFSS will be available across all of Wales to ensure equitable and timely access for children and families who value the additional support that IFSS can provide them, to help them overcome their substance misuse and other difficulties.

A year ago, almost to the day, I announced the implementation of Phase 2 of the programme with two IFSS regions coming on stream in Cardiff & the Vale and Mid and West Wales. From this month both consortia are operating IFSS through five new teams bringing coverage to date to 10 local authority areas across Wales. Local authorities and Local Health Boards (LHBs) have truly embraced IFSS, and have forged strong partnerships to introduce this new way of working across their regions to better support their communities.

The attached Map shows the pan-Wales IFSS position which will be in place by the end of 2013. Further expansion will start this summer with the implementation of three new IFS teams in the Swansea Bay regional partnership of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea local authorities, and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University LHB.

We are grateful to the Phase I Pioneer areas for their innovation and in testing IFSS. They have spent considerable efforts in sharing their experiences with new

IFSS areas, so they can draw on the learning to effect a smooth transition towards implementing IFSS. The Pioneer areas have displayed great leadership in this role, and this does not stop for them as from next year (2013) Newport and Wrexham local authorities with Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board will start to merge and expand their IFSS across their regions of Gwent and North Wales.

Working closely with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire & Torfaen; and Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, & Gwynedd; Newport and Wrexham respectively will use this year to effect the transition of IFSS across their regions, with the establishment of two additional IFSS teams, one in each region, as a minimum.

We have made significant financial and other investment in building capacity and skills not just those of the IFS teams themselves, but training professionals and others across their partnership in key techniques. These techniques help the professionals to better engage families and to embrace the ethos of working with the families strengths to empower them to effect changes in their lives.

In total, when IFSS is fully rolled out by late 2013, over £4.5m will be made available to local authorities (who must agree expenditure with their LHB partners). Funding profiles will be agreed through the regional statutory IFSS Boards, to support a minimum of 10 statutory IFS team across Wales.

Some regions have taken a corporate decision to implement a greater number of IFS teams to service greater numbers of families in their community. These matters are for local decision and there are no legal barriers to prevent this happening. Indeed, we encourage this approach and some areas have implemented (or plan to) a greater number of teams than their prescribed minimum. These are identified in the attached Map.

I believe IFSS offers good value for money in that it is not only helping the most vulnerable children and families in Wales, where the impact of parental substance misuse is being so keenly felt; but also championing 'transformational change' in the way the service interacts with families. Having a confident and highly skilled workforce is critical to families engaging with IFSS. It is important that the practitioners are encouraged and given the opportunity to progress their skills and careers post qualification, to enhance practitioner roles, such as those of the Consultant Social Worker.

A key plank of the transformation that is proposed by the Social Services Bill is about achieving greater integration, building stronger trust between the service users and skilled professionals, offering services that people need - in a way in which people are valued, and their voice is heard. IFSS offers all of this and although it is early days, there are positive indications that IFSS is making a difference to the way in which these families view professionals and the help they are offered. Most importantly, children in need are able to experience a better quality of life.

It is less than two years since the passage of the Children & Families (Wales) Measure 2010 that enabled us to implement this unique way of working in Wales through IFSS. It demonstrates that we can deliver swiftly and effectively to the front line to make a real difference to the services for people in Wales. It also

signifies the power and mobilisation that devolution has brought for the people of Wales.

I extend to each of you my gratitude in your corporate parenting role to supporting this excellent programme that truly is starting to transform the lives of some of our most disadvantaged children and families in Wales.