



Public Service Reform

Introduction

Public Service Reform in Wales has been taking place within the strategic framework of *Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services in Wales* which was published in October 2004. *Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action* ("the Action Plan") was published in 2005 and outlined plans for the 5 years ahead. The objective is to create a Welsh Public Service that shares common goals and works across functional and organisational boundaries. Reformed public services in Wales should be:

- more citizen focused
- responsive to the needs of communities
- driven by a commitment to equality and social justice
- and deliver efficiency

Making the Connections outlines four main principles:

- Citizens at the Centre: services more responsive to users with people and communities involved in designing the way services are delivered
- Equality and Social Justice: every person to have the opportunity to contribute and the Assembly Government will reach out to those hardest to reach
- Working together as the Welsh Public Service: more co-ordination between providers to deliver sustainable, quality and responsive services
- Value for Money: making the most of resources

The Action Plan states that the Assembly Government is looking for a dividend of up to £300 million a year by 2008 and at least £600 million a year by 2010 through more efficient ways of working, achieving cost reductions or service improvements.

As part of the citizen-centred focus of public service reform the Assembly Government has outlined the 5 Core Principles of customer service. These are access, personal experience, responsiveness, language options and redress.

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly

The Assembly has powers to make a Measure providing for redress in connection with the health services in Wales.

The *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill* currently before Parliament also gives the Assembly Measure-making powers in relation to improvement and collaboration in local government including:

- Altering boundaries of counties and county boroughs (i.e. to effect a reorganisation of local government). This could allow the Assembly to merge local authorities in order to improve service delivery.
- The making of arrangements by specified authorities in Wales to secure improvement in the exercise of their functions, ie. provisions equivalent to the Best Value duties in Part 1 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.
- The power to make a Measure creating a duty for public bodies to collaborate.

Key Welsh Government strategy documents and action plans from the Second Assembly¹:

Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales, October 2004²

5 year action plan, *Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action*, June 2005.³

*Making the Connections: Building Better Customer Service: A Framework for Improvement*⁴, March 2007

In the Second Assembly the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned a Review of Service Delivery in local government as part of its public service reform agenda, *Making the Connections*. The Report *Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-centred Public Services* ("the Beecham Report"), was published in July 2006.⁵

The Welsh Assembly Government's Response to the Beecham Report, *Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries: Transforming Public Services in Wales*, was published in November 2006. It includes proposals for Local Service Boards and Local Service Agreements to promote joint working between local authorities.⁶

The Assembly Government published a 10 year strategy for social services, *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities: Improving Social Services in Wales 2008-2018* in February 2007.⁷

Legacy issues from the Second Assembly

The Local Government and Public Services Committee recommended that successor Committee(s) should scrutinise the proposals in *Delivering Beyond Boundaries* and Local Authority Performance Measurement Data.

Useful Links

- Welsh Assembly Government, Public Services and Performance WebPages:
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dpsp/?lang=en>
- Welsh Assembly Government Making the Connections WebPages:
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/makingtheconnections/?lang=en>
- The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA):
<http://www.wlga.gov.uk/content.php?nID=home;IID=1>
- The Wales Audit Office is conducting a review that will establish the extent to which public services are meeting the challenges of Making the Connections. The WebPages can be seen here:
<http://www.wao.gov.uk/whatwedo/1321.asp>

Further information

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¹ Please see other Topic Briefs for more specific publications in different policy areas.

² Welsh Assembly Government, *Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales*, 2004
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/403823121/40382213/403822133/mtc-document-e1.pdf?lang=en>

³ Welsh Assembly Government, *Delivering the Connections: Action Plan*, 2005
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/403823121/40382213/403822133/action-plan-e.pdf?lang=en>

⁴ Welsh Assembly Government, *Making the Connections: Building Better Customer Service: A Framework for Improvement*, 2006.
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/403823121/40382213/403829/FrameworkEnglish?lang=en>

⁵ Report by the Beecham Review on Local Service Delivery, *Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-centred Public Services*, July 2006.
http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/403823121/40382213/528962/English_Report.pdf?lang=en For more on this see the topic brief on Local Government.

⁶ Welsh Assembly Government. *Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries: Transforming Public Services in Wales*, November 2006.
http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/403823121/40382213/927634/mtc3_english.pdf?lang=en

⁷ Welsh Assembly Government, *Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities: Improving Social Services in Wales 2008-2018*, 2007
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/dhss/403821211/830492/fulfilledlives-e.pdf?lang=en>