# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Rebalancing Care and Support White Paper- next steps** |
| **DATE** | **29 October 2021** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services** |

Members will recall I provided an [oral statement](https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/12321#C371787) on the [summary of the consultation responses](https://gov.wales/improving-social-care-arrangements-and-partnership-working) to our Rebalancing Care and Support White Paper on 6 July 2021. I committed to bringing forward proposals from the White Paper and plans to co-produce those proposals with stakeholders.

In line with our Programme for Government, I am committed to introduce a strategic National Framework for care and support. The Framework will set standards for commissioning practice, reduce complexity and rebalance commissioning to focus on quality and outcomes. What matters to people will be at the heart of the Framework.

We will establish a National Office to oversee the implementation of the National Framework. I understand the sector’s concerns about proposals to establish an arms- length body, therefore the National Office will be established within Government. Consultation responses highlighted the clear link between the roles of the National Office and the National Commissioning Board and this relationship, alongside that with a NHS Executive, will be important in considering implementation.

We know that partners need to work together at a number of levels to maximise resources and meet the needs of their population. Building on the strong partnership working demonstrated during the Covid pandemic, I want to see effective partnerships thrive at a cluster, local, regional and national level. There are clear examples of where that could happen at a regional level, for example in relation to regional residential services for children with complex needs.

I have paid close attention to the consultation responses about Regional Partnership Boards. There are very mixed views between sectors. What is clear, is that there is a need to do more, to strengthen regional partnership arrangements, so that better joint working delivers for local populations. Our Programme for Government sets out our intention to legislate to strengthen partnerships, and we will do just that. We will work with Regional Partnership Boards to strengthen their arrangements in relation to:

* governance and scrutiny;
* planning and performance;
* engagement and voice;
* integrated service delivery; and
* rebalancing the social care market.

Whilst we will not be establishing Regional Partnership Boards as legal corporate entities at this time, I am confident that we can continue to evolve and lever change in these areas to support stronger partnership working and integration of services and better prepare a path for further development of these key partnerships in the future.

I will continue to engage with the sector and citizens to develop these important proposals further. My officials will set up Technical Groups in the Winter made up of representatives from across the sector to co-produce this policy. It is anticipated that these Groups will provide final advice to Welsh Government in the Summer and I will update Members on the outcome of this work.