

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 22ND FEBRUARY, 2016

REFERENCE FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH): 1ST FEBRUARY, 2016

“ UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014 (DSS) –

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 would come into force in April 2016. The Committee had therefore requested regular updates on the progress being made in readiness for implementing the requirements of the Act in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The report updated the information considered by the Committee in January 2016, which included:

- Information on the Implementation Programme’s Task and Finish Groups as they reviewed the requirements set out in the new Regulations and Codes of Practice, to ensure they were fully understood and to put in place the necessary actions.
- Progress of the four national work groups, established to share best practice and produce consistent material on an all-Wales basis.
- Consultation on the final Code of Practice, in relation to part 8 of the Act on the role of Directors of Social Services) and the joint ADSS Cymru / WLGA response on behalf of local government. This Code of Practice would be laid before the Assembly in February 2016.
- Information on the series of technical briefings for the Tranche 1 Codes of Practice. These were described as “gateway” documents that summarised the key points for each code. Access to the briefings was again via the Care Council’s Communications Hub.
- An update on the national awareness raising campaign, led by Welsh Government, which would start in February 2016. The Council’s Communications team would be assisting in dissemination of the key messages.
- Progress update on the workforce development materials being developed by the Care Council for Wales.
- Information on the four Welsh voluntary organisations who had received funding to enable them to develop learning materials to support implementation.

Set up as part of the regional Implementation Programme led by the Director of Social Services for the Vale of Glamorgan, the nine Task and Finish

Groups continued to meet. These Groups comprised: Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA); Planning and Promoting Preventative Services; Eligibility and Assessment of Need; Safeguarding (Adults and Children); Looked After and Accommodated Children; Advocacy; Performance Management; Workforce Development; Cooperation and Partnership.

Many other areas would need concerted efforts to ensure compliance with new legislative framework which comprised the Act itself, 23 sets of Regulations and 7 Codes of Practice. However, it had been necessary to prioritise some of the most important changes. Those currently regarded as providing the greatest challenge were the development of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service, the assessment and eligibility process and the new financial assessment and charging requirements.

Lead officers for the Groups continued to review the requirements set out in the new Regulations and Codes of Practice, to ensure that these were fully understood and to put in place the actions needed for implementation. Representation on these Groups included officers from each Local Authority, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and the Third Sector. Progress had been made on a series of technical briefings for the Tranche 1 Codes of Practice. These were described as “gateway” documents that summarised the key points for each Code:

- Technical Briefing: Measuring social services performance
- Technical Briefing: Part 2 - Information, Advice and Assistance
- Technical Briefing: Part 2 - Population Assessment and Prevention
- Technical Briefing: Part 2 - Social Enterprises
- Technical Briefing: Part 2 - Well-being and overarching duties
- Technical Briefing: Part 3 - Assessing needs
- Technical Briefing: Part 4 - Care Plans
- Technical Briefing; Part 4 - Direct Payments
- Technical Briefing: Part 4 – Eligibility.

The report further advised that good progress was being made in setting up the Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA), especially in the area of Adult Services where the service was able to build upon the positive work undertaken in integrating social care and NHS staff and processes alongside Contact One Vale. Resources had been identified to secure for local use a customised version of the national information portal, Dewis Cymru, for Cardiff and the Vale region.

The region had been selected by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) to pilot a new training course aimed at officers working at the First Point of Contact so that they fully understood the changes introduced by the Act. This would include focusing on the “what matters” question in initial discussions with the people who could contact them. Discussion would take place in January with evaluation taking place in February before the training was rolled out to other regions.

Further to this, the report advised that the four all-Wales working streams would continue to meet. The region had sent officers to each of these Groups so that they could contribute to developing national toolkits / checklists and, where possible, avoid duplication and ensure that procedures and processes fitted in with the local context. The national checklist for Common Recording Requirements for Assessments had been completed. This would be made available to staff on the Getting In On The Act Hub.

The national training materials for the four core modules had been finalised and officers had been working with the external trainers to ensure that these materials were responsive to the service needs. A training plan setting out workforce requirements had been approved by the Regional Implementation Steering Group.

The Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University was to provide support for the new Regional Partnership Board which would be established in accordance with statutory guidance under Part 9 of the Act. This stipulated that Local Authorities and Local Health Boards would be required to establish a Board to manage and develop services to secure strategic planning and partnership working between Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to ensure effective services, care and support were in place to best meet the needs of the respective populations. In its meeting on 4th February, the Integrated Health and Social Care Governance Board would consider a report, setting out how it would need to be reconstituted so that it complied with the Co-operation and Partnership requirements. The Institute had been appointed also to deliver training on the implications of the Act for Elected Members. Provisional dates for the training events in March 2016 had been agreed.

In January, the Wales Local Government Association produced an e-Bulletin for Social Services. This was attached at Appendix A to the report. Parts 3 and 4 gave an update on the Act. Part 12 contained a link to the “What Matters to You – Matters to Us” animated video, which outlined the changes being introduced with the new Act in a user friendly format.

The Chairman, referring to paragraph 17 of the report and the Welsh Government Minister’s statement around the uncertainty about UK reforms, asked if officers could explain what this meant. In reply, the Director of Social Services stated that this related to a policy vacuum around paying for social care services which was linked to the implementation of the Care Act 2014 England which had been deferred until 2020. This had meant that little work had been undertaken around the implications and costs of this Act (Care Act 2014). In those areas devolved to Welsh Government, it was looking to progress its own reform of the arrangements for paying for social care and support.

In reply to a Member's question around how would future funding for implementing the Act be allocated to the Council, the Director of Social Services advised that for this current financial year, £414,000 had been allocated across the Cardiff and Vale region, with the Vale being the Lead Authority for this money. However, Welsh Government had yet to indicate how the £3m allocated across Wales for 2016/17 could be used.

A Committee Member queried Welsh Government plans regarding the national maximum charge for non-residential care and support services and the Member asked if the Council had contacted Welsh Government about this. In reply, the Director of Social Services stated that no other Council in Wales had made stronger representations to Welsh Government and Welsh Government had not yet provided clarity on the scope for change around the review of the charge or the eligibility criteria. He further advised that it was possible that there may be some adverse financial consequences for the Council following any potential change to this legislation.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Committee continue to receive regular updates about the implementation of the Act.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet in order to provide an update around the approach being taken to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Reason for recommendations

(1-3) To ensure that Elected Members are kept informed about fundamental changes to the policy and legislative framework which underpin the work of Social Services.”

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Scrutiny Committee \(Social Care and Health\): 1st February, 2016](#)