

A person wearing a white lab coat and a blue tie is holding a blue folder. The background is a bright, slightly blurred indoor setting.

# Research Briefing **Health and social care subject guide**

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**National Assembly for Wales**  
Research Service

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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## Research Briefing

# Health and social care subject guide

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This resource focuses on some of the key health and social care policy documents, legislative developments, and major reports/reviews from the Fourth Assembly term. It is not an exhaustive list; please contact the Research Service health and social policy team for any information needed.

Updated versions will be produced annually from summer 2017.

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# 1. Overview

The Welsh Government's plan of action for the Fourth Assembly term was set out in its **Programme for Government**. Key commitments in the areas of health and social care can be found in the chapters **21st Century Healthcare** and **Supporting People**. Annual progress reports and an archive of Programme documents can be accessed from the above links.

## Health

The Government's five year vision for the NHS in Wales – **Together for health** – was published in 2011. This places **primary and community services at the centre of care delivery**, with a focus on **prevention, quality and transparency**. A number of health delivery plans have been published under the Together for Health agenda (most relating to major conditions), and these are listed in the following pages.

In January 2014, the Welsh Government announced its **prudent healthcare** initiative, an approach based on making the most effective use of skills and resources, avoiding wasteful care, and a relationship of co-production between patients and professionals.

To further support the re-focusing of healthcare provision towards community-based primary care services rather than hospital (secondary care) settings, the Welsh Government published its **plan for a primary care service for Wales** in February 2015. An accompanying **primary care workforce plan** set out the approach and actions to be taken to develop a sustainable primary care workforce model.

The **reconfiguration of acute/specialist hospital services** – with the aim of ensuring safe, sustainable services for the future - has also been a key theme throughout the last five years. An **independent review** led by Professor Marcus Longley (May 2012) considered what the evidence suggests about the optimal number, size and distribution of hospital services in Wales. Proposals were developed and consulted upon by **Hywel Dda Health Board** (for west Wales), **Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board** (for north Wales) and the **South Wales Programme** (south Wales and south Powys).

The Fourth Assembly also saw a move towards providing **more transparent information** on patient safety and quality of care. The Welsh Government launched the **My local health and social care** website in September 2013, which has provided an increasing range of performance information, now also encompassing social care.

## Social care

The Welsh Government's published vision for the future of social services - **Sustainable social services for Wales: A framework for action** (2011) - highlights the rising demand for social services, at a time when the financial outlook for all public services is difficult, and that fundamental changes are needed. It notes the demographic changes in Wales, with an increasing number of older people with complex needs, many more people living with significant disabilities, and growing numbers of looked after children and those on the child protection register.

The Welsh Government stated that it would prioritise integrated services, in particular for families with complex needs, transition to adulthood for disabled children, and frail older people.

Two major pieces of legislation – the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** and the **Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016** – were passed during the Fourth Assembly term.

The last Welsh Government’s focus was to move away from separating children, adults with disabilities, carers and older people towards a ‘people’ model of service delivery with a strong focus on individual outcomes, and delivering a stronger voice and greater control to all. There has been a focus on early intervention and a desire to see more needs met through preventative services delivered in the community. There has also been a push for reablement services to be delivered across Wales, jointly led by social services and the NHS.

## 2. Key Welsh Government policy documents

### Performance

Towards the end of the Fourth Assembly, the Welsh Government developed outcome frameworks for the NHS, public health and social services. These identify key population outcomes and indicators:

- an **NHS outcomes framework** was first published in April 2015
- a **public health outcomes framework** was published in March 2016
- the **social services outcomes framework** was published in November 2015

The **My local health and social care** website provides information on performance against the outcome indicators.

**StatsWales** provides a wide range of data on health and social care services in Wales, including waiting times.

### Quality and safety

**Achieving excellence - The quality delivery plan for the NHS in Wales 2012 – 2016**. This sets out how quality assurance and improvement arrangements will operate.

**Delivering safe care, compassionate care** (published 2013). The Welsh Government's response to the report of the Inquiry into failings in the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (the **Francis report**). Also **Safe care, compassionate care - A national governance framework to enable high quality care in NHS Wales** - sets out roles, responsibilities and expectations to ensure the quality and safety of healthcare services.

**Health and care standards** (2015). The Welsh Government's framework of standards to support the NHS and partners in providing effective, timely and quality services across all healthcare settings.

### Complaints

**Putting things right** (2011). Sets out the arrangements for the management of concerns in NHS Wales. Detailed **guidance** for the NHS was also issued. See also:

- Keith Evans' independent **Review of concerns (complaints) handling in NHS Wales** (June 2014).

**A guide to handling complaints and representations by local authority social services** (2014). The arrangements for handling social services complaints aim to provide an improved experience for people making complaints, a simplified process and clearer guidance for local authorities.

### Welsh language

**More than just words ... - Strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care** (2012). A **consultation** on a follow-on strategic framework ended February 2016.

### Cross-border healthcare

**Protocol for cross-border healthcare services** (2013). For patients who live on the Wales/England border, the protocol sets out the arrangements for cross-border healthcare commissioning between the Welsh Government and the NHS Commissioning Board in England.

**Cross-border healthcare and patient mobility - Guidance for the NHS** (2015). Advice on handling patient requests for treatment in countries of the European Economic Area (EEA), and requests from patients from the EEA requesting treatment in Wales.

## Major conditions etc.

Most of the delivery plans published during the Fourth Assembly term were due to end in 2016. The last Welsh Government indicated that the plans will be extended until 2020, but that each plan will be reviewed and refreshed at the end of its current cycle to reflect new priorities, including a prudent healthcare approach.

### **A strategic vision for maternity services in Wales** (2011)

**Stroke delivery plan** (2012). See also:

- Health and Social Care Committee **inquiry into stroke risk reduction** (report published 2011, follow up 2014)

**Cancer delivery plan** (2012). See also:

- Health and Social Care Committee **inquiry into progress made on implementing the cancer delivery plan** (report published 2014)
- **End of life care delivery plan** (2013)
- **Heart disease delivery plan** (2013)
- **Delivery plan for the critically ill** (2013)

**National oral health plan** (2013). See also:

- Children, Young People and Education Committee **inquiry into children's oral health in Wales** (report published 2012)
- Health and Social Care Committee **inquiry into orthodontic services in Wales** (report published 2014)

**Diabetes delivery plan** (2013). See also:

- Health and Social Care Committee **inquiry into the implementation of the national service framework for diabetes in Wales** (report published 2013)
- **Eye health care delivery plan** (2013)
- **Neurological conditions delivery plan** (2014)
- **Respiratory health delivery plan** (2014)
- **Liver disease delivery plan** (2015)
- **Welsh implementation plan for rare diseases** (2015). Also: the **UK strategy for rare diseases**

## Mental health

**National dementia vision for Wales** (2011)

**Together for mental health - A strategy for mental health and wellbeing in Wales** (published 2012, 10 year strategy). Also: **Together for mental health - Delivery plan 2012-16. Consultation on Together for mental health – delivery plan 2016 – 2019** (ended April 2016)

**Talk to me 2 - Suicide and self harm prevention strategy for Wales 2015-2020** (2015)

**The duty to review final report - Post-legislative assessment of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010** (2015). The Welsh Government's evaluation of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 (this is a requirement of the legislation). See also:

– Health and Social Care Committee **post-legislative scrutiny of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010** (report published January 2015).

**Together for children and young people** (2015). Multi-agency programme aimed at improving the emotional and mental health of children and young people in Wales. See also:

– Children, Young People and Education Committee **inquiry into child and adolescent mental health services**

**Refreshed autistic spectrum disorder strategic action plan Wales** (consultation, ends May 2016)

### Armed forces personnel

In 2015 the Welsh Government indicated it was reviewing its **Package of support for the armed forces community in Wales** (first published 2011), which set out new and on-going commitments to the armed forces community on devolved matters. Section 4 relates to healthcare.

The **Veterans' NHS Wales** service was set up to improve the mental health and well-being of veterans living in Wales. Each local health board has appointed an experienced clinician as a 'veteran therapist' with an interest in/experience of military (mental) health problems.

### Public health

The most recent **Chief Medical Officer for Wales' annual report** (published October 2015) provides an **overview of population health in Wales**. It highlights challenges and actions in some key areas, including in relation to health inequalities, an ageing population and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours.

**Tobacco control action plan for Wales** (2012) and accompanying **Tobacco control delivery plan**.

**Working together to reduce harm - The substance misuse strategy for Wales 2008-2018**. A **consultation** on a delivery plan for 2016 – 2018 (relating to the last three years of the 10 year strategy) ended March 2016. See also:

– Health and Social Care Committee **inquiry into new psychoactive substances** (report published March 2015)

– Health and Social Care Committee **inquiry into alcohol and substance misuse** (report published August 2015)

**Draft Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) Bill** (consulted on during 2015)

**Sexual health and wellbeing action plan for Wales 2010-2015**. The plan renewed the Welsh Government's commitment to improve the sexual health and wellbeing of the population, to narrow sexual health inequalities, and to support open discussion about relationships, sex, and sexuality.

**All Wales obesity pathway** (2010). Sets out the actions that health boards, working with local authorities and other stakeholders, should take to help tackle the issue of obesity in Wales. The Pathway sets out a four tier framework for obesity services.

**Turning the curve on childhood obesity in Wales - Preventing childhood obesity steering group: Final report** (2015). Looks at cross-public service preventative action to address the problem of childhood obesity

**Child measurement programme for Wales.** Surveillance programme which monitors patterns of child growth to inform service planning. The programme publishes **annual reports**.

See also:

- Children, Young People and Education Committee **inquiry into childhood obesity** (report published 2014)
- Health and Social care Committee **inquiry into the availability of bariatric services** (report published 2014)

## Statistics

**Health statistics Wales** – published by the Welsh Government - brings together a range of data including population statistics, lifestyle, illness, preventive medicine, family health services, waiting times, hospital treatment statistics, community health services, staffing, finance, and private healthcare. More detailed data on these topics can usually be accessed from the relevant sources (noted in the Health Statistics Wales publication), including **StatsWales**, the **Welsh health survey**, and **Public Health Wales**.

## Social care

**Sustainable social services for Wales: A framework for action** (2011)

**Three year plan for social services improvement: 2013-14 – 2015-16.** The Welsh Government's approach to sustainable social services and outline three year plan for improvement.

**Carers strategy in Wales** and **Carers strategy delivery plan 2013-16 (PDF 75 KB)**. The Welsh Government's refreshed carers strategy and delivery plan, up to 2016.

**A framework for delivering integrated health and social care for older people with complex needs** (2014)

In 2014 the Welsh Government launched its **National adoption service for Wales** to speed up the adoption process.

See also:

- **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** - Reforms and integrates social services law. The Act aims to give people greater freedom in deciding which services they need, and to ensure provision of consistent, high-quality services across Wales.
- **Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016** - provides a revised and streamlined legislative framework for the regulation and inspection of care and support in Wales.

### 3. Key reports/reviews published during the Fourth Assembly term

May 2012 - **Best configuration of hospital services for Wales: A review of the evidence.** This independent review, led by Marcus Longley (Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care), considered the clinical evidence around the optimal number, size and distribution of hospital services in Wales.

April 2013 - **Strategic review of Welsh ambulance services.** Independent review led by Professor Siobhan McClelland. Responding to the review, the Welsh Government announced a series of reforms including establishing a national delivery model based on a commissioner/provider relationship between health boards and the ambulance service, investment in frontline staff and to upgrade the ambulance fleet, and developing a 'more intelligent' set of indicators with a greater emphasis on patient outcomes. See also:

– During 2015, the Assembly's Health and Social Care Committee undertook work on the **performance of ambulance services in Wales.**

October 2013 - **Shape of training review.** Professor David Greenaway's review looked at potential reforms to the structure of postgraduate medical education and training across the UK. Representing the four UK countries, a UK Shape of Training Steering Group was subsequently established to take forward the review's recommendations on the basis of a four-nation consensus.

March 2014 - **The management of chronic conditions in Wales - An update.** Wales Audit Office report discusses the growing challenge to health and social services from an increasing prevalence of chronic conditions.

April 2014 - **The four health systems of the United Kingdom: How do they compare?** Nuffield Trust report assesses the performance of the NHS on the quality of patient care in all four UK countries since devolution.

April 2014 - **Review of the individual patient funding request process.** Individual patient funding requests (IPFR) are requests for treatment/medicines that fall outside the range of routinely-funded NHS services. The review explored how the current process could be improved, with a particular emphasis on transparency and inter-panel consistency. See also:

– **Review of the appraisal of orphan and ultra-orphan medicines in Wales** (2013) Following the IPFR review, the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC) was tasked with developing a new appraisal process for orphan and ultra-orphan medicines (medicines for very rare medical conditions).

May 2014 - **Trusted to care.** Independent review led by Professor June Andrews into care quality and patient safety at the Princess of Wales and Neath Port Talbot Hospitals. See also **documents relating to Trusted to care follow up work/progress**, which include a summary of the work undertaken by the Trusted to Care steering group, the findings of the 2015 follow up review, and results of spot check visits.

June 2014 - **Review of concerns (complaints) handling in NHS Wales.** Keith Evans' independent review into the way NHS Wales handles concerns and complaints. The review concluded that NHS Wales' complaints arrangements '**Putting things right**' were sound in principle, but that there was wide variation in how the arrangements had been implemented across Wales. See also:

- Ann Clwyd MP's **review of NHS hospital complaints handling in England** published in October 2013 (Ann Clwyd publicly referred to correspondence she'd received from patients/carers in Wales).
- The Assembly Health and Social Care Committee's 2014 **inquiry into the NHS complaints process**

June 2014 - **Review of mortality data**. Independent review led by Stephen Palmer looking into the way NHS Wales collects and uses data to describe mortality in Welsh hospitals.

June 2014 - **A decade of austerity in Wales? The funding pressures facing the NHS in Wales to 2025/26**. Independent report by the Nuffield Trust explores rising cost pressures on the NHS in Wales, and options for reducing the funding gap.

October 2014 - **Mid Wales healthcare study**. This Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care study explored options for the provision of high quality, sustainable healthcare services in Mid Wales.

October 2014 – **Future of paying for social care in Wales - Second report**. The Welsh Government commissioned an independent research study on the future of paying for care in Wales to help identify and appraise a set of options for reform. Also: **Future of paying for social care in Wales - First report** (April 2014).

November 2014 - **'A place to call home?' - A review into the quality of life and care of older people living in care homes in Wales**. The Older People's Commissioner for Wales' report on life in care homes for older people in Wales.

December 2014 – **Reablement services in Wales**. Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) report on the provision of reablement services.

January 2015 - **An independent review of the work of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales**. The purpose of Ruth Marks' review was to assess whether HIW's regulatory and inspection functions need to be reformed and improved. The Welsh Government subsequently **consulted** on a green paper re. NHS quality and governance, including arrangements for the effective regulation and inspection of health services. This was intended to inform any future legislation in this area.

March 2015 - **Health professional education investment review**. Independent review of the way the Welsh Government invests in the planning, development and commissioning of health professional education and workforce development in Wales.

May 2015 (date published) - **External investigation into concerns raised regarding the care and treatment of patients at Tawel Fan Ward, Glan Clwyd Hospital - Final report September 2014 (the Ockenden report)**

July 2015 - **In search of accountability - A review of the neglect of older people living in care homes investigated as Operation Jasmine (the Flynn report)**.

**Targeted intervention: January/February 2015**. Ann Lloyd's report followed the Welsh Government's decision in November 2014 to escalate Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to 'targeted intervention' under NHS Wales' escalation and intervention arrangements. Note: the Health Board was placed in special measures in June 2015.

January 2016 – **Factors that affect the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers.** Interim findings of research commissioned by the Welsh Government to explore the factors which affect the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers and the extent to which these factors impact upon the quality of domiciliary care. Also: **Consultation on the domiciliary care workforce** (ended April 2016) about improving the quality of domiciliary care in Wales.

## 4. Primary legislation passed

**Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013** - Establishes a food hygiene rating scheme for Wales. It requires food businesses to display their food hygiene rating, and local authorities to enforce the mandatory scheme.

**Human Transplantation (Wales) Act 2013** - Introduces a soft opt-out system for deceased organ and tissue donation.

**Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** - Requires local authorities to improve routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and requires that the development of new road schemes considers the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

**National Health Service Finance (Wales) Act 2014** - Replaced the previous annual financial duty with a three year rolling financial duty, allowing Health Boards to plan and implement over a longer, more manageable period.

**Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** - Reforms and integrates social services law. The Act aims to give people greater freedom in deciding which services they need, and to ensure provision of consistent, high-quality services across Wales.

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** – Embeds the ‘sustainable development’ principle. It identifies well-being goals which specified public authorities should seek to achieve in order to improve the well-being of Wales both now and in the future.

**Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016** - provides a revised and streamlined legislative framework for the regulation and inspection of care and support in Wales.

**Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016** - Seeks to ensure that nurse staffing levels within the Welsh NHS are sufficient to provide safe, effective and quality nursing care to patients at all times.