

Comisiwn Annibynnol ar Wasanaethau
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru



Independent Commission on
Social Services in Wales

'From Vision to Action'

Professor Geoffrey Pearson

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THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION

- The establishment of an Independent Commission on Social Services was announced by the Deputy Minister for Social Services at the National Social Services Conference in June 2009
- The publication today of 'From Vision to Action' is the culmination of a little over 10 months work

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THE COMMISSIONERS ARE:

Chair – Professor Geoffrey Pearson (Emeritus Professor of Criminology)

Julie Jones CBE (Chief Executive, Social Care Institute for Excellence)

Rhian Huws Williams (Chief Executive, Care Council for Wales)

Phil Robson (retired Executive Director for People and Wellbeing, Powys County Council)

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THE COMMISSION'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Support the further development of professional practice
- Build inclusive Social Services based on the contribution of all partners who work in social care
- Effect a step change in collaboration between Social Services and with other key services
- Ensure integrated Social Services capable of meeting the needs of children, young people and adults and older people in the most effective way

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- We have met with around 150 people – from a 6 year old service user to Ministers of the Assembly Government
- We have made visits across Wales – from formal meetings of Directors of Social Services to a Family Drop-in Centre
- We have received written evidence from around 90 people and organisations
- Our findings are based on, and grounded in, what we have heard and learned from the real experiences of people in Wales

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Social services are building from a position of strength

- Higher profile within national and local government
- Improvements in leadership
- Wider range of services and innovation
- Increased user satisfaction
- Enhanced collaboration
- Improvements in qualifications across the workforce
- Better workforce regulation

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Retrench or Reform?

Retreating into core services and away from prevention and collaborative improvement would undo gains made in recent years and would quickly become unsustainable. Social services need instead to seize opportunities for efficiency and transformational change and assess the longer term impacts of investment decisions. Future investment decisions need to be about 'whole systems'.

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The New Realities

- Increasing proportions of older people
- A projected rise in people with limiting lifelong conditions
- People with disabilities living longer and presenting more complex needs
- Increases in the number of looked after children and children in need

Demographic changes drive the social services change agenda but an appropriate balance must be found between levels of investment in services for older people and children.

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Social services should remain part of local government. We believe that now is not the time for major structural change

We recommend targeted improvements to services, not wholesale change

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The National, Regional and Local models of
service delivery:

National – portable assessments linked to all-
Wales eligibility criteria

Regional – Adopt the LHB ‘footprint’ for social
services planning and commissioning

Local – delivery through multi-agency, multi-
disciplinary teams built around the citizen

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Children's Services

- Clear correlation between poverty and rates of looked after children and children in need: 51% of looked after children live in 17% of neighbourhoods identified as the most deprived
- All local government and health services with the independent and Third sectors must commit to provision for children in need

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Adult Services

- Continuation and further development of preventative services stressing voice and control
- A new emphasis on self directed care
- The mixed economy is a given fact of social services provision and must be better recognised in the planning and commissioning of services

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Older People's Services

- endorse the model suggested by Dr Chris Jones in Setting the Direction
- also the developing Framework of Services for Older people
- the Wrexham Frail Elderly project and the developing Gwent Frail Elderly project
- The emphasis should be on preventative work and re-ablement to promote independence and avoid reliance on high-cost provision
- enhance self-directed service model

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Assessment: A re-balancing of time spent with users and time spent in front of computers is needed, to cut bureaucratic inefficiency and free up time for professional judgement and action

Inspection overload: rationalisation is needed plus a greater focus on outputs and outcomes away from inputs and processes

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Digital inclusion: social services must
live in the 'real', that is, the virtual
world

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Wales is a small country and there is eagerness to work together

The Welsh Assembly Government should focus on a small number of major themes to pursue over a five year period