

Voluntary sector meeting with the Minister and Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services and the Deputy Minister for Mental Health

Wednesday 8 December, 11.15am-12pm

Notes

Attendees

Voluntary sector

- Clair Swales, PAVO
- Dan Roberts, Wales Coop Centre
- Donna Coyle, Wales Coop Centre
- Faye Patton, Care and Repair Cymru
- Gemma Lelliot, CTA Cymru
- Kate Griffiths, British Red Cross
- Thomas Davies, Macmillan
- Simon James, Interlink RCT
- Kate Young, All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers
- Katie Till, Cancer Research UK
- David Cook, WCVA
- Ruth Marks, WCVA
- Lucy Wilkins, WCVA

Welsh Government

- Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services
- Julie Morgan, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services
- Lynne Neagle, Deputy Minister for Mental Health
- Albert Heaney
- Carlotta Lami
- Kate Edmunds
- Shelley Davies
- Ian Turner
- Ruth Parness

Welcomes and introductions

Ruth noted the importance of strengthening the integration of volunteering into care and service planning. She noted useful meetings recently between the group and Social Care Wales and Health Education and Improvement Wales. She cited the importance of the voluntary sector being hardwired into resilience, as recommended by the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee. She commented on the work of the TSPC on relationships with local government.

The Minister thanked the sector for its incredible work during the pandemic, saying Wales wouldn't have got through without its efforts.

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act

- *The importance of the Act, and the sector's role in it to support prevention and early intervention*
- *Ensuring wellbeing, and the sector's role in supporting wellbeing, are integrated into health and care services*

Kate Griffiths talked about the need for improved volunteer coordination during emergencies – The Red Cross in Wales has received Welsh Government Strategic Volunteering funding to lead a project in this area, exploring a framework for statutory bodies and the voluntary sector.

Clair spoke about the importance of the health and care facilitators' roles based in the County Voluntary Councils across Wales and the need for a strategic approach to health and care in the voluntary sector. A paper is being developed on this. Caring roles should not be undervalued, and it is important to work with statutory partners in coordinating local responses. She asked for a meeting on this with Welsh Government. Shelley said she looks forward to the paper and exploring opportunities with Clair.

Wynne spoke about the faith communities' work in mental health and health.

Donna discussed a Wales Coop Centre project about influencing change in procurement practice and the importance of the Act. Social value principles should be mainstreamed into care services – she can offer detail on doing this to government and RPBs. An action plan rooted in investment in communities could bring together primary care, mental care and social care.

Dan highlighted the launch of Newid, and the importance of digital for the voluntary sector.

Gemma highlighted the work of PIVOT in helping people access help in communities rather than 'deteriorating' in hospital. However, there is concern around its short-term funding and that it will not be able to meet growing demand.

Action:

Clair to circulate paper to group and Welsh Government

Share case studies with officials

Funding - ensuring involvement of the sector in the detail and rollout of the Revenue Investment Fund.

Simon commented that many funds are still being allocated without a requirement to work in partnership, which can lead to duplication of work. He asked if RPBs should be notified before funding distributed to avoid this. Funding must be strategic and sustainable. He added there should be networks linking communities to Welsh Government evidence-gathering processes.

Kate said a key ask of the group is about recognising the voluntary sector in terms of planning – for instance, in planning for public health related restrictions, voluntary sector facilities are often closed first and last to reopen, making it harder for the sector to offer support to people, which impacts negatively on the preventative agenda. On funding, she said useful meetings had taken place to look at learning outcomes from ICF and help build integrated approaches to funding streams. The Social Services and Wellbeing and Future Generations Acts should be key components of the recovery. RPBs should be more co-productive in their work. She reminded the meeting that the sector is keen to support Welsh Government in its work.

The Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services said it was good to be reminded of how brilliant the Social Services and Wellbeing Act is. A key issue is having enough people to manage social care. It is essential for RPBs to collaborate and listen – they will be strengthened and made more effective.

The Deputy Minister for Mental Health thanked the sector for its work in the pandemic. She is keen not to have an overmedicated approach to mental health, and the sector is key to that.

The Minister said there will be three-year funding cycles from next year. Some of the £43m earmarked to shore up social care has been ringfenced for the sector – more will be available before April if practical ideas are made known. Conversations are being had with Health Boards – most budget goes straight to them, they are being told to release some money. Health Boards should be moving into the preventative space, but others are doing preventative work better for now. Serious conversations need to be had about all this, and relationships need to be embedded.

The Minister noted that the ICF, RPBs, PSBs, etc, are clunky and take a long time get decisions. She wants the sector to be part of this decision-making process, but the system can't be slowed further. She asked the group to consider how the sector can be part of the system while making the process faster. This is necessary, or the sector may be shut out.

Action

Sector to discuss Minister's proposal and respond to officials.