

The state of the third sector: health and social care

July 19



The purpose of this paper is to take a ‘temperature check’ on the key areas of interest identified by the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Planning Group to drive the agenda of ensuring citizens are at the centre of service design and delivery. The paper is suggested as a standing item for our meetings with the Minister and Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, as a mechanism to enable on-going dialogue.

1. Co-production and citizen voice

The group would like to engage in a discussion around Citizens Panels, both nationally and regionally:

- The role of RPBs in relation to the facilitation of Citizen Panels is very variable and the links between how their role is enhanced by local and national service user and carer representative bodies is unclear.
- At national level, third sector organisations have been partners in Measuring the Mountain and are involved in the government’s evaluation of the Act.

The Act places the responsibility on local authorities. What are the roles and responsibilities of Welsh Government and RPBs in relation to Citizen Panels and what expectations does Welsh Government have of these panels?

What is Welsh Government’s response to the recommendations within the Measuring the Mountain Report in relation to citizen voice and control?

2. Commissioning

Co-productive approaches to commissioning are challenged by the tight timescales for new funding schemes are launched. There is simply not enough time for organisations to involve, collaborate and integrate services within the timescale. For example, ICF Guidance is issued shortly before the deadlines for regional submissions, and this can cause issues with poorly formed proposals that can harm relationships rather than increase collaboration.

The third sector should be seen as not just having been ‘commissioned’ to deliver services, but as equal, trusted partners who support the development and shape the future of services.

Commissioners often lack the skills, experience and capacity to commission in a way that secures the outcomes envisioned by the Social Services and Well-being Act and the Future Generations Act, and there is little tangible support to enable behaviours and

culture change of commissioning and legal professionals. Care and Repair Agencies have reported that the process of receiving ICF is ineffective and often feels rushed through.

Some good practice exists, with Gwent providing an example of how ICF can be used to develop different service models, with the employment of an Innovation and Development Manager. See case study: [Better Lives - Working Co-productively in Gwent in Learning Disability Support](#).

What measures has government put in place to monitor, evaluate and report on changes in commissioning practices through the ICF and Transformation Fund?

What action can government take to enable a step change to behaviours to promote co-productive commissioning, in line with the vision of the Act?

3. Funding streams

Integrated Care Fund

The purpose of the ICF needs to be reviewed and clarified. ICF is intended to be used for trialling new approaches and ways of working to encourage innovation through coproduction. However, in practice it funds some of the same initiatives, year after year.

The Wales Audit Office is due to publish a review of the ICF. **We would be interested to hear government's response to the report.**

Enabling strategic use of investments

Siloed funding streams continue to present a challenge. Short-term initiatives are inefficient, poor value for money and prevent RPBs and the third sector from focusing on longer-term planning. Longer-term funding models for public bodies are essential, due to the impact on their ability to fund third parties.

The third sector would like to offer to work with Welsh Government and RPBs to co-create a map of funding streams available to each RPB.

What is government's process for designing funding streams in line with the five ways of working?

4. Governance

Review of strategic partnerships

In light of Welsh Government's review of strategic partnerships, led by the Minister for Housing and Local Government, with WLGA, **what are the expectations of Welsh Government in relation to future joint working between RPBs and PSBs?**

The Young Wales Project's main link into governance is with Public Service Boards (PSBs). **How does Welsh Government envision developing the capacity to support the voices of children and young people to feed into RPBs - e.g. through the Young Wales programme?**

Social Value Forums

A workshop on 'Maximising the role of Social Value Forums' was held at WCVA's national health and social care conference for the third sector on 21 May 2019. The workshop called for further conversations with Welsh Government about the longer-term purpose envisaged for Social Value Forums and a request to review the current state and shape of the fora. There was a strong feeling that the Social Value Forums must be embedded in the RPB structure, and there must be clarity about their link to strategic planning as well as delivery. Experience of some Care and Repair agencies describes a small number of influential RPB members dominating decision-making with little opportunity for genuine coproduction.

What longer term purpose does Welsh Government envisage for Social Value Forums and how do they connect effectively with the wider RPB governance structures? Are they meeting this purpose and encouraging a flourishing social value sector and how is this being monitored?

Citizen involvement in RPBs

RPBs need a citizen involvement strategy which makes clear how service users and carers are involved in decisions that affect them, how they are represented on the governance structures of RPBs, and how they are supported and connected to enable members to perform their roles effectively. **What mechanisms does government have in place to monitor citizen involvement in RPBs?**

Evaluation

What are the mechanisms for third sector organisations to feed into and receive feedback from the evaluation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act?

5. Building community resilience

Building community resilience is a shared priority amongst many RPBs. There is an opportunity to transform the provision of local information, advice and assistance with the involvement of citizens and communities and make it everyone's business. However, there is a danger that social prescribing approaches take advantage of rather than support informal groups and community organisations. Research on the impacts of social prescribing on communities and citizens is ongoing. In order to build local community capacity to reduce pressure on public services, relevant support and resources must flow into rather than out of communities.

What is Welsh Government's policy position and approach to providing information, advice and guidance within the community?

Currently there is a risk that social prescribing becomes overly focused on primary care (GP Practices) rather than a more collaborative shared community model with open referral pathways. The complex and short-term nature of funding presents a challenge and does not encourage collaborative and longer-term thinking to build community resilience.

What is Welsh Government's policy position on social prescribing and community coordination?