

Albert Heaney CBE
Prif Swyddog Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru
Chief Social Care Officer for Wales
Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar
Health, Social Care and Early Years



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Rob Simkins
Head of Policy & Public Affairs
Carers Wales

rob.simkins@carerswales.org

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Dear Rob,

Thank you for your request for information to be included in your 'Track the Act' report. I am pleased Carers Wales has resumed this important survey and I look forward to seeing the published results in November.

Question 1: How are the obligations on local authorities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 accounted for within the Welsh Government's funding formulas to local authorities?

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act imposes duties on local authorities, health boards and Welsh Ministers that require them to work to promote the well-being of those who need care and support, or carers who need support. This includes the duty to assess the needs of a carer for support (s24-27) and to meet the support needs of carers (s40-45). Section 34(1) of the Act provides examples of the ways in which a local authority may meet needs under sections 35 to 45 and section 34(2) sets out examples of what may be provided to meet a person's needs for 'care and support.'

Local authority revenue funding is provided through the annual local government settlement. This funding is un-hypothecated, meaning local authorities use this funding according to local need to meet their statutory and discretionary priorities. The local government settlement is determined using a formula-based approach predicated on relative needs for each service area. Full details, by each local authority, can be found in the Green Book which gives the detail of the settlement calculations - [Local government revenue and capital settlement: background information for standard spending assessments 2024 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#).

Question 2: How is the Welsh Government planning to directly support Local Authorities to better implement the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 as recommended by:

A) 'Rapid review of how unpaid carers' rights have been upheld during and after the Covid-19 response'?

We have established a Task and Finish group under the auspices of the Ministerial Advisory Group to take forward actions to promote national best practice. We appreciate Carers Wales' membership of this group, along with senior colleagues in local authorities, health boards, the third sector and individual unpaid carers. This working group is concentrating its efforts on improvement in access to Carers' Needs Assessments and information and advice provision for unpaid carers.

We are grateful to Carers Wales for arranging a series of engagement events with unpaid carers in September. We will then be working with local authorities and health boards to establish how we can bring most value to promoting best practice and agree an action plan.

The rapid review also recommended action to consider the education and training of health care professionals to support and value unpaid carers. Our Carer Aware programme provides £4.4m of Welsh Government funding for 2020-2025. It is jointly delivered by Carers Trust Wales and Carers Wales. The objective of the programme is to work with staff and practitioners at all levels of the health and social care sector to create meaningful cultural change to benefit unpaid carers in Wales. Training is provided to social workers and health care professionals. Guidance and good practice principles have also been established. This includes a hospital discharge guide and a toolkit enabling healthcare settings and patient experience teams to recognise unpaid carers.

Our £9million Short Breaks Fund (2022–25) provides unpaid carers with opportunities to take a break from their caring role to relax or pursue their own interests. The programme will deliver 30,000 short breaks. The funding can be used for overnight breaks or day trips (with or without the cared for person) and other more innovative approaches such as attending a weekly keep-fit class or provision of a small grant to cover the purchase of trainers and earbuds for a carer to take up running or a sports club membership. The intention is to encourage innovation and move away from over reliance on traditional models of residential respite provision. Carers Trust Wales oversees the scheme and co-ordinates a third sector grant scheme, Amser, as an additional aspect of the Short Breaks Fund. The Fund has attracted carers who were not previously known to services, evidencing the additional value of the scheme, in connecting carers with support services.

B) From Act to Impact? Final Report of the Evaluation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The final report asked a series of sector-wide questions. Local Authorities and Welsh Government are instrumental in responding, along with Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales. We are working closely with these organisations to better understand the challenges and needs of the sector to drive improvement.

The new National Office for Care and Support is key in bringing about a more collaborative and coordinated response to these challenges. The evaluation found substantial support for the principles and ambitions of the Act, but that the sector is not yet achieving those ambitions. There is more work to be done, and Welsh Government is working with the sector so that it is better able to meet the needs of local populations both now and in the future.

We are considering the strategic intentions (recommendations) of the report regarding carers' needs assessments. As outlined above, we have established a Task and Finish Group that is working collaboratively with the statutory and the third sector to drive national improvement.

We will consider the remaining strategic intentions in the report as we revise our National Strategy for Unpaid Carers. We intend to undertake this work, including the revision of the Delivery Plan which will underpin the Strategy, in partnership with our stakeholders and will ensure the voice of the unpaid carer is intrinsic to the development of the updated strategy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Heaney', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Albert Heaney CBE
Chief Social Care Officer for Wales