



## ADSS Cymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau  
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

## ADSS CYMRU PRIORITIES

# 2025 2028

Connecting Social Care  
in the Community



## Foreword

Social care in Wales stands at a pivotal moment. Local government, professional leaders and our partners agree that high-quality care and support must be rooted in local communities, with a continual focus on improving wellbeing and achieving personal outcomes.

We must invest far earlier to support people to live well for longer and help to avoid crisis situations. The pressures we face – demographic, financial, workforce shortages, increased demand and complexity – are profound, yet so too is the sector’s capacity to innovate, transform and lead.

Local government’s *Vision for Social Care in Wales* reminds us that social care is not a peripheral service or an addition to the NHS but a necessity for society that enables people of all ages to live well and allows them to do what matters to them. It calls for sustainable funding, parity of esteem with health, and democratic accountability anchored in local authorities. ADSS Cymru’s refreshed priorities embrace that vision while responding to emerging challenges and opportunities.

At its heart, our vision is clear: social care must be recognised as the cornerstone of thriving communities.

Social care is where care, dignity and hope begin. It lifts people up in the most difficult times, connects them to community and walks alongside them when they need it most. Through every stage of life, it should be a service that supports people to reach their potential. With the right investment and policy environment, social care can be the heart of a fairer, kinder Wales; transforming lives and safeguarding the fabric of Welsh communities.

The Welsh Parliamentary Elections in 2026 offer a generational opportunity to mark out the distinct, standalone nature of social care in the consciousness of the Welsh public and to put it on a sustainable footing for the decade ahead. We must seize this moment to secure long-term investment, tackle structural barriers and reaffirm social care as a foundational pillar of the Welsh economy and our society. Our priorities will help us set out a path for the next government to follow, grounded in evidence, shaped by experience and focused on what matters most to the people we serve.

**Claire Marchant**  
Cadeirydd, ADSS Cymru



## Priority 1

### An Empowered, Valued and Skilled Workforce

A confident, creative and compassionate workforce is our greatest asset. The people working in social care are the drivers of innovation, delivering high-quality outcomes across children’s and adults’ services. Yet recruitment and retention pressures, inconsistent reward structures and limited career and training pathways threaten the sector’s resilience.

We will:

- Embed the National Pay and Progression Framework for social workers to guarantee fair reward, career pathways and parity of esteem with health.
- Promote a culture of wellbeing, intelligent risk-taking and professional autonomy that attracts new entrants and retains experienced practitioners who enable people to thrive independently and interdependently.
- Challenge and change the negative portrayal of social care practitioners and work to foster a more supportive and positive environment for those working in the field.
- Positively champion the diversity, creativity and leadership of the social care workforce, helping to build a career pipeline that sustains and motivates practitioners into the next decade.

The ADSS Workforce Leadership Group will continue to work to align with the following national workforce priorities:

- 10 Year Workforce Strategy for Health & Social Care
- Stabilising Children’s and Adults Recruitment Agencies
- Removal of Profit from the Care of Children Looked After
- All Wales Anti-Racist Action Plan [ArWAP]
- Grow Your Own
- More than Just Words
- Digital Ready Workforce



## Priority 2

# Prevention, Early Intervention and Community Resilience

Social care must not be seen solely as a discharge-from-hospital service or as a safety net when all else fails. Its true value lies in what happens far earlier – in preventing harm, sustaining wellbeing and building strong, connected communities, where people can live the lives they choose.

We will:

- Reframe the role of social care, with partners, as a promoter of wellbeing and healthy living, which keeps families and communities together and reduces the need for reactive services.
- We will advocate for additional, long-term, ring-fenced investment in early help and support services that are community-based and integrated so people can stay connected and well, closer to home.
- Embed prevention in place-based systems by working across local government with health boards and community partners, to integrate services like housing, education, leisure and culture. When universal services act together to support wellbeing, everyone benefits.
- Demonstrate the return on early action by collating data and using evidence to show how prevention reduces demand on acute services and costly interventions, supporting public service sustainability.

Our leadership role is to bring public services together around people, not around pathways and processes. That means championing locally tailored, multi-agency approaches that prioritise prevention, backed by political commitment, shared accountability and the courage to shift resources upstream.



## Priority 3

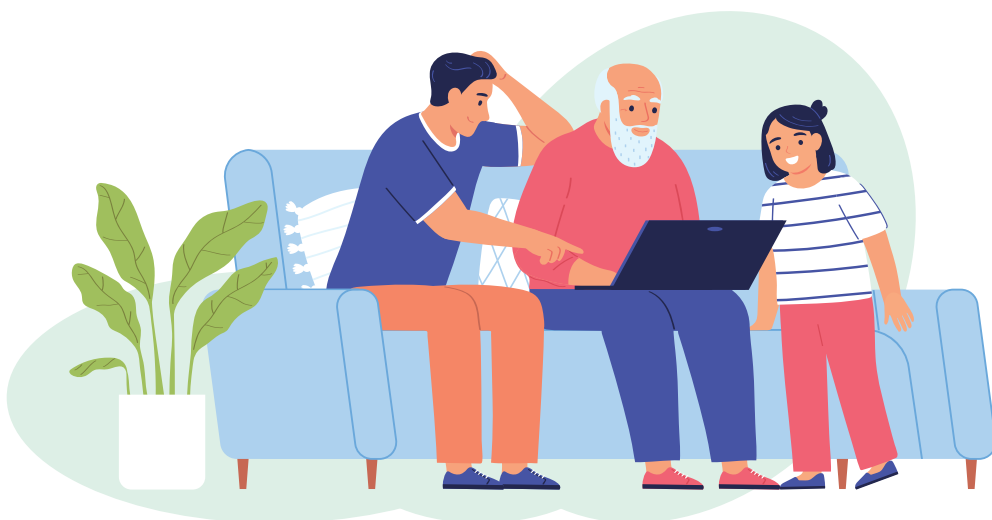
# Choice, Control and Safeguarding Across the Life Course

Everyone in Wales deserves to live with dignity, make informed choices and exercise control over their own lives, regardless of age or circumstance. Upholding rights, supporting autonomy, and safeguarding from harm are not competing aims, they are core to a balanced and ethical care and support system.

At the same time, social care must help individuals, families and communities to work confidently within the resources available – delivering value for money and supporting public service sustainability.

We will:

- Support the reform of children’s services in partnership with care experienced children and young people, the Welsh Government and other partners. We will advocate for a co-produced, evidenced-based, not-for-profit care model, with expanded fostering and residential capacity.
- Put voice and rights at the centre of what we do by embedding co-production and ‘what matters’ conversations into common practice, so decisions reflect lived experience and personal outcomes.
- Harness technology with care by promoting digital and assistive technologies that enhance independence, while protecting people’s privacy and right to opt out.
- Balance protection with autonomy. It is important to support confident, positive risk-taking that respects people’s right to live fully.
- Ensure safeguarding is a shared public duty. We will help shape joined-up, trauma-informed approaches across social care, health, education, housing and the police and justice system. Safeguarding must be inclusive, community-anchored and responsive across the whole life course.



## Priority 4

### Fair, Sustainable and Innovative Funding and Infrastructure

To deliver on our ambitions, the system must be funded and equipped for the future. This means ensuring fair pay, aligning core budgets to inflationary increases, moving away from reliance on grants to provide core and statutory services, fully funding new national policies and legislation, and investing substantially in capital infrastructure to create modern digital and data systems.

We will:

- Work with our partners in local government to secure a multi-year funding model aligned to demand, inflation and the Real Living Wage, recognising social care as part of our foundational economy.
- Secure investment to implement resilient, interoperable digital solutions, which will form the new Connecting Care digital platform.
- Collaborate with the Welsh Government and our partner networks to secure the necessary investment to harness the untapped potential of data analytics and ethical AI.

Funding must be sufficient to deliver transformation. ADSS Cymru will advocate for a new funding model between government, providers, communities and individuals that enables care to be sustainable, person-centred and digitally enabled.



## Priority 5

### Strategic Partnerships that Deliver Outcomes

Partnership is at the heart of delivering for people but it must be purposeful, accountable and grounded in shared values. Integration for its own sake risks eroding the unique contribution of social care. Our goal is outcome-focused collaboration where roles are clear and impact is measured.

We will:

- Act as conveners, ‘weaving’ the skills, knowledge and expertise of local government, NHS, third and private sector innovators into seamless, community-based offers.
- Advocate for statutory parity of esteem and joint investment mechanisms under existing legislation.
- Codify what good partnership looks like – mutual respect, clear accountability, co-production with citizens - and share practice through ADSS Cymru networks and the National Social Care Conference.

Members have highlighted the opportunity to strengthen integration by addressing underlying challenges such as internal collaboration within sectors, the development of shared metrics and ensuring balanced narratives across health and social care. To support this, we must champion models that promote shared responsibility for prevention, flow, and community wellbeing, recognising social care as a vital partner, not solely a discharge service.

