



**ADSS Cymru**

Leading Social Services in Wales

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau  
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

# OUR STRATEGY 2018-2021



# CONTENTS

- 3\_ Foreword
- 4\_ Who we are
- 5\_ What we do
- 6\_ External challenges and drivers for change
- 8\_ Issues and activities we are engaged in
- 10\_ Implementing our strategy



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# FOREWORD

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2018 – 2021 Strategy and to find out about the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru – who we are, what we do and more importantly, what we aim to achieve over the next three years.

As the national leadership organisation for social services in Wales, the role of ADSS Cymru is to represent the collective, authoritative voice of Directors of Social Services, Heads of Adult Services, Children's Services and Business Services, together with professionals who support vulnerable children and adults, their families and communities, on a range of national and regional issues of social care policy, practice and resourcing. We are the only national body that can articulate the view of those professionals who lead our social care services.

We are committed to using the wealth of our members' experience and expertise, working in partnership with other agencies, to influence important decisions around social care to the benefit of the people we support and the people who work within care services.

## Our strategy illustrates the important role we play in:

- advising Welsh Government on social care policy through consultation responses, involvement with working groups, and formal and informal representation
- proposing national strategies and initiatives
- providing coordinated briefings and information to cabinet members, cabinets and leaders
- researching, assembling and presenting cutting edge good practice
- providing evidence to National Assembly for Wales scrutiny committees
- engaging with national organisations to promote effective models of service delivery
- supporting national service developments
- coordinating national initiatives to assist frontline workers and their managers
- supporting the work of local government by promoting the use of best practice models
- supporting directors and heads of services in regional service development
- being the first port of call for members wanting to access best practice and professional support and advice.



We operate across a nation that has a rich and important cultural and linguistic dimension; where two languages, Welsh and English are important to the communities we serve. We are fully committed to demonstrating the appropriate leadership in relation to this and to ensuring that all future developments are taken forward within this context.

Delivering social care services is and always will be, a challenging responsibility. New legislation, budget pressures and increasing expectations from the people and communities we serve provide fresh challenges and pressures.

Our role as a national organisation with a responsibility to those people who access care and support is to ensure that we can change and grow in order to meet those challenges, now and in the years ahead.

*D.M. Street*

### **Dave Street**

President of ADSS Cymru 2017 – 2018  
Corporate Director of Social Services,  
Caerphilly County Borough Council

# WHO WE ARE



We represent the profession of Directors of Social Services and senior staff within local authority social services departments. We are therefore unique as the professional and strategic leadership organisation for social services in Wales, leading on national service development initiatives to ensure a consistent, efficient and high standard of delivery for people who use care and support across Wales.

## How we are organised

ADSS Cymru came into being in April 2007, to reflect the specific political and legislative landscape in Wales in regard to social care. For the past 10 years we have been a voluntary unincorporated organisation. However in November 2017, ADSS Cymru voted unanimously in favour of becoming an incorporated body. The advantages of this change of legal status from April 2018 will be to:

- place the organisation on a firmer footing
- confidently restate the national importance of professional leadership in social care
- provide certainty about the future role of the organisation in influencing national policy and driving the transformation of service delivery.

Accountability for the work of ADSS Cymru is and will continue to be the remit of the Governance Board, supported by the Executive Council, which are structured as follows:

### Governance Board

The Governance Board meets every six weeks and is responsible for the operation of the Association as its decision making body. The Board consists of: President, two Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, Past President and seven Regional Director Leads.

### Executive Council

The principal purpose of the Executive Council is to act as a consultative body, advising the Board as required from time to time, but does not take decisions on behalf of the Board. The Executive Council meets at least twice a year and consists of:

- 22 Directors of Social Services
- Chair of All Wales Heads of Children's Services (AWHoCS)
- Chair of All Wales Adult Services Heads (AWASH)
- Chair of All Wales Heads of Business Services (AWHoBS)

## Our Membership

The current membership of ADSS Cymru includes statutory directors of social services, heads of children's services, heads of adult services and heads of business services from all 22 local authorities across Wales. Together with our associates (many of whom are our colleagues who have now retired from their roles as directors) we have over 100 members who are able to participate in supporting our national role.

Over the next few years, it is possible that fewer senior managers will operate at the top of local authorities, as services are merged or operated from within regional boundaries. Directors of social services may be expected to work across more than one local authority and indeed across other agencies. There will be similar impacts on heads of services. This means the challenge of representing the views of social care and the need for the voice of social care to be heard will be greater than ever.

ADSS Cymru must continue to be the channel by which that voice can be heard and to grow its membership in order to increase our impact. Over the next few years we will:

- seek to increase our membership base to reflect the changing roles of those who lead our social care services
- ensure that we involve a growing number of professionals in our work
- review the scope of our associate membership to expand the range of individuals and include the potential for organisational membership.

# WHAT WE DO\_



## Our Vision

Our vision as the voice of the professional and strategic leadership of social care services in Wales is to safeguard all individuals and to make a positive difference to the well-being and independence of people who access care and support, by:

- > arguing the case for strong and responsive social care services
- > giving citizens real control and a stronger voice
- > enabling people to live their lives fully and achieve what matters to them by focusing on preventative services and support
- > building on citizens' strengths and the strengths of those around them, particularly in relation to safeguarding and personal responsibility
- > supporting the professional development of our social care workforce to provide the highest level of care and support to our citizens.

As a membership organisation it is our role to support and assist the professional development and understanding of ADSS Cymru members and to support them to provide the professional advice to cabinet members and leaders across local government.

## Our Purpose

Our purpose is to work closely with individuals and carers, Welsh Government and a range of national organisations across different sectors to secure the best outcomes for the people who access our services and who need care and support.

### Our purpose is to:

- support individuals to have a greater voice and more choice and control over the development of future support and services
- work with all partners to lead on the transformation of social services in Wales to ensure we provide modern, accessible and responsive services, which are delivered flexibly, consistently and sustainably across organisational boundaries
- champion and drive the implementation of ADSS Cymru priorities
- shape and influence public policy development across Wales
- provide strong leadership for the social services workforce that is appropriately qualified, trained and professionally competent
- ensure social services has a strong voice within the corporate centre of local government, providing professional support to elected members
- work with all partners to ensure excellent public service across Wales
- develop and strengthen relationships between commissioners and providers of social services in Wales
- promote and enhance public understanding of social services and the positive role it plays by engaging with the media, opinion formers and the wider public.

# EXTERNAL CHALLENGES > AND DRIVERS FOR CHANGE\_



## Changes in legislation

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 continues to be the major driver for change for social care and will be for years to come. It brings many opportunities for improvement, but also signifies a huge cultural change for organisations and the communities we serve.

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 introduces further challenges – new ways for services to be inspected, the registration of most social care workers in the industry and the creation of Social Care Wales, which builds on the legacy of the Care Council for Wales. Social Care Wales has now also assumed responsibility for service improvement from the Social Services and Improvement Agency (SSIA), an agency that has served local government social services well for many years.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places duties on public sector bodies to engage better with their communities, concentrating on longer term sustainable strategies to deal with well-being issues in their communities.

New arrangements for local government to govern, plan and deliver its services in the future could well be a feature of change in Wales. This will certainly include social services as the drive for greater regionalisation of services continues.

## The Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales

The Parliamentary Review into the long-term future of health and social care in Wales was commissioned, with an independent panel of experts tasked with producing a report that focused on the sustainability of health and social care in Wales. This report published in January 2018 will act as a significant evidence base to guide the Welsh Government's strategy for health and social care for the foreseeable future. The report states that our health and care system needs to fundamentally change, with a need to deliver high quality care for individuals who are empowered to take decisions about their care, is far more proactive and preventative, and is provided as close as possible to people's homes.

ADSS Cymru will alongside colleagues in local government respond to the findings of the review and ensure that professionals in social care influence the change that this review might create, recognising the importance of the workforce in delivering the ambitions of the review.

## Austerity

We believe that social care needs to be both a higher political and funding priority for Welsh Government. Since the advent of devolution, Welsh Government ministers have provided resources to the NHS at the expense of local government. Working with our colleagues in the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), we have championed the importance of our social care services and the need for Welsh ministers to recognise the pressures we face.

Whilst demand for services, along with expectation, continues to grow, the funding base for local government from national government is shrinking, placing ever greater pressure on local authorities and their partners. Local authorities have been required to find significant budget savings at the same time as improving quality and service delivery.

We continue to provide joint evidence to the National Assembly for Wales about the impact of budgetary pressures and will use our annual ADSS Cymru budget survey to influence Welsh Government policy and to support the scrutiny role undertaken by the National Assembly.

Over the next few years, there will be greater emphasis on authorities challenging current procurement and commissioning practices, as more community-based, individually-focused and preventive approaches need to be developed. There are challenges too for social care providers in thinking differently about how they organise and deliver services to people.

## Integration and partnership working

Pressure to integrate services with health in particular will grow as Regional Health and Social Care Partnerships become more established. Regional solutions will become more common, and regional workforce boards and strategies will be developed. Our role is to work with others across different sectors to deliver innovative solutions in health and social care. We will also continue to work with individuals, carers and community groups to develop the principle of co-production.

The focus will inevitably be given to a range of issues such as delayed transfers of care and the implementation of pooled budgets for care home provision. ADSS Cymru are continuing to work on both regional and national solutions to some of these key challenges, and will continue to do so in partnership with other agencies.

## Safeguarding

Whatever else changes, the focus on safeguarding will remain fundamental to the work of ADSS Cymru, as the organisation representing those who are responsible for safeguarding the well-being of children and protecting adults from harm or abuse. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 introduced new powers and statutory arrangements in adult safeguarding, which must be delivered. Moreover, work will continue in order to codify safeguarding procedures across children's and adults services, supported by a rigorous staff training framework. We continue to view the work of the Regional Safeguarding Boards as critically important to working across localities and organisations.



# ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES >

## WE ARE ENGAGED IN\_

### National Policy Engagement, Support and Advice

A significant element of the work of ADSS Cymru, particularly carried out by the leadership team, is conducted through formal and informal discussions with Welsh Government, partner agencies and organisations across Wales; and across the whole health and social care sector.

#### Over the next three years, we will:

- articulate the views of the professional leaders in social care by engaging in national debates to ensure that we influence those crucial issues and challenges
- provide professional advice to Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales through consultation responses, involvement in policy working groups and evidence to scrutiny committees
- participate as members of Welsh Government boards and committees including the National Commissioning Board and the Ministerial Advisory Group on Improving Outcomes for Children
- provide a range of practical support to our members such as good practice guidance
- continue to produce an annual national budget survey which sets out the key financial challenges facing social care
- work proactively with other partner agencies such as Social Care Wales, the continuing professional education and learning partnerships, and the National Strategic Partnership for Social Work Education
- engage across the health and social care sector, working with other national organisations such as the WLGA, Care Inspectorate Wales and the NHS Confederation
- provide regular communications, such as periodic newsletters to inform those outside our organisation of the work we are engaged in.



### National Initiatives

ADSS Cymru continues to work with Welsh Government and others partners and stakeholders including WLGA, to ensure effective implementation of national policy and subsequent service change, playing a key role in converting the rhetoric to reality. The introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 translated a large amount of policy development into statute and ADSS Cymru continues to play a pivotal role in supporting its implementation and identifying those areas of innovation.

Recent examples include our work with:

- National Fostering Framework
- National Adoption Service
- Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) rollout
- National Approach to Children Statutory Advocacy Service
- Co-ordination of regional and local authority activity in supporting the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- National Commissioning Board.

## National ADSS Cymru Events

Each year, ADSS Cymru hosts important events in the Welsh social care calendar, giving our members, partner agencies, councillors, carers and people who access care and support the opportunity to meet and engage in addressing and responding to specific important and relevant issues of the day. These events include:

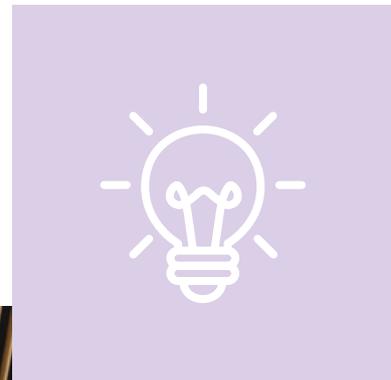
- Spring Seminar
- Annual Social Care Conference
- Autumn Seminar

Our events are vital to bring together strategic partners from government, external agencies, commissioners, service providers, voluntary, community and private sectors and anyone with responsibility for or an interest in social care, to share experiences and best practice, and improve understanding of new legislation and emerging policy changes.

2017/18 has seen the development of a new relationship with Social Care Wales, leading in 2018 to a jointly hosted National Social Care Conference. The realisation of this event formally recognises a new and exciting relationship and we welcome the unique opportunity to bring together the whole social care sector – from frontline staff and service providers, to leaders and decision makers in local and national government.

Our seminars are an opportunity to share best practice, and to invite leaders and practitioners from other sectors to work with us to identify practical ways to support the transformation of social care and improve the services that people need.

As part of our work programme to deliver the annual conference and our seminars, we will continue to build on our relationship with WLGA, NHS Confederation and others, to explore opportunities to collaborate with partners and widen the opportunities for organisations and professionals to attend and participate in these key events.



# IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY\_

Strategies give a sense of direction and purpose. To fulfil our purpose and deliver our vision, ADSS Cymru has an annual national work programme that articulates our activities and how they support our vision. This development will be done through the work of our Heads of Service Groups and our Professional Leadership and Strategic Groups.

## National Work Programme

Through our heads of services and professional leadership groups, and Welsh Government Delivering Transformation Grant-supported workstreams, ADSS Cymru has developed a comprehensive work programme, and will continue to create opportunities to work with others on the extremely challenging agenda of change in social care in Wales.

As part of our national work programme, we will review annually the progress we have achieved on implementing our strategy.

## Professional Leadership and Strategic Groups

### All Wales Heads of Children's Services (AWHoCS)

The AWHoCS group consists of heads of children's services from all local authorities and meets on a quarterly basis. As one of our key groups, it is responsible for leading on all aspects of children's services, formulating the ADSS Cymru responses to policy consultations and articulating the voice of those local authority professional leaders who deliver care and support to children and families across Wales.

For the foreseeable future the work of AWHoCS will be aligned to the work of the Welsh Government's Ministerial Advisory Group on Improving Outcomes for Children, as the programme is key to AWHoCS and its partners. This important work is scheduled to run for the 2016 – 2021 Assembly term with a variety of workstreams that AWHoCS members will engage with.



### All Wales Heads of Adult Services (AWASH)

The AWASH group consists of heads of adult services from all local authorities and meets on a bi-monthly basis to discuss those issues that contribute to the effective delivery of services for adults, and in particular older people. These all-Wales discussions allow senior staff to share best practice and to consider how services for adults are changing across Wales. AWASH is focusing on a range of strategic issues over the next few years, including the embedding of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, examining the changes needed in the provision of domiciliary and residential care, and responding to the challenges in providing care and support to an increasing number of the older population with dementia.

### All Wales Heads of Business Services (AWHoBS)

The AWHoBS group consists of representatives and heads of business services from all local authorities. Over the past few years this group has been instrumental in working with Welsh Government officials to improve data collection, performance management and reporting of information which demonstrates how people are being supported by a range of services in their areas.



### Safeguarding Leadership Group

The Safeguarding Leadership Group is a multi-agency group and takes lead responsibility for coordinating ADSS Cymru's policy on adults' and children's safeguarding issues. The group meets on a six-monthly basis.

### Workforce Leadership Group

The Workforce Leadership Group includes representatives from Social Care Wales, WLGA, HR directors in local authorities, health, social care workforce managers and lead workforce directors from each of the six regions. It meets on a six-monthly basis. It is linked to the All Wales Workforce Managers Group and has lead responsibility in ADSS Cymru for issues relating to:

- workforce planning and development
- training and qualification frameworks
- recruitment, retention and careers initiatives
- ADSS Cymru representation and links with national regulatory and training bodies.

### Leading on the language of choice / More than just words

A key aspect of the skills required by our workforce is the ability to deliver on the requirements of the Welsh Government strategy *Mwy na geiriau / More than just words* – to ensure Welsh speakers are offered and receive care and support in their first language. ADSS Cymru currently provides a leadership role on this important agenda and our lead director is also a member of the National Welsh Language Partnership Board, which is chaired by Welsh Government.

As a national organisation we are committed to giving more choice and control to citizens and ensuring they receive care and support in their language of choice. This will mean making sure that the workforce possesses the appropriate linguistic skills to deliver services through the language of choice, and that the appropriate leadership and environment is in place to ensure the language needs of the workforce are met.

## Business Support

Based in Abercynon, the ADSS Cymru Business Unit handles a wide range of administrative and financial activities on behalf of the organisation. As well as providing direct support to members, the team ensures the business runs smoothly and is the first point of contact for media and other queries.

For more information about our work please contact the ADSS Cymru Business Unit.

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