

## **“In Wales, we’re investing in and prioritising social care” – Huw Irranca-Davies**

Speaking at the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) National Conference and AGM in Cardiff, the Minister said the Welsh Government’s vision for the future is that of an integrated health and social care system which provides seamless services for those who need them.

Earlier this week, the Welsh Government unveiled A Healthier Wales, a long term plan for health and social care in Wales – the first national plan in the UK which integrates health and social care.

The Minister told the audience of social workers from across the UK about the four distinctive features of the Welsh Government’s approach: continuing investment in social care, prioritising prevention, developing and supporting the social care workforce and co-production with service users.

Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“In Wales, we have prioritised social care as a sector of national importance and despite significant cuts to the Welsh Government’s Budget, we have continued to invest in social services. This is in stark contrast to the situation in England, where we know social services have suffered due to large cuts in funding over the last six years.

“However, whilst additional funding helps to combat current pressures, sustaining a level of funding to meet the increasing demand for social care remains challenging. I know there are many views about how to address the funding of social care in the long term and raising additional public funds via a social care levy for Wales is one option we will be exploring over the coming months.”

The Minister also set out the Welsh Government’s approach to reforming social care – with the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act 2016.

He said:

“Together these two Acts have radically changed the face of social care, paving the way for a person-centred, outcome focussed approach to the delivery of care and support. One which concentrates on individuals, their families and carers and the outcomes they want to achieve.

“We took a collaborative approach to the development of this legislation and continue to do so in its implementation. As a result we are beginning to establish a culture of real improvement. The need for care and support services is growing and there is pressure to do more and to do it differently – that is difficult.

“Our long-term plan for health and social care was published this week, having been developed through a co-productive process. The plan responds to some of the challenges we face. It sets out a vision for the future based on an integrated health and social care system which provides seamless services for those who need them.”