

New proposals to strengthen health and care quality and governance in Wales

The proposals are part of a White Paper, Services Fit for the Future, Quality and Governance in Health and Care in Wales, published jointly by Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething and Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans.

The White Paper includes a number of proposals designed to support and encourage more integrated ways of working and better decision-making, putting the interests of people at the heart of service planning and delivery.

The proposals include common standards and joint complaints handling; better decision-making across health boards through a new Duty of Quality for the Population of Wales and a clearer process for service change; as well as further promoting a culture of openness in the health and social care system through a new Duty of Candour.

There are also proposals for strengthening the way the public is represented across health and social care, and for regulation and inspection.

The proposals set out in the White Paper are:

- strengthening leadership of Health Boards to promote stronger governance and leadership to ensure services are led, planned and developed in the way they need to be in the years to come
- the introduction a Duty of Quality for the Population of Wales which will focus on health boards working together to meet the needs of the population in the planning and delivery of quality healthcare services
- the joint investigations of complaints which span health and social care, irrespective of setting – this will involve requiring different organisations to work together to investigate complaints making it easier for people when their concern is about both health and social care services
- strengthening of the voice of citizens – this includes proposals to replace the current model of Community Health Councils with a new independent arrangements which would represent the interests of citizens across health and social care
- a clearer process for service change – introducing an independent mechanism to provide clinical advice on substantial service change decisions, with advice from the proposed new citizen voice body, which will encourage continuous engagement and increase the pace of strategic change
- improving inspection and regulation – including improving the legal framework for the inspection and regulation of health services and questions about whether a new independent body for patient voice and regulation and inspection should be established.

The White Paper builds on work already done following the Well-being of

Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Services (Wales) Act 2016.

The Welsh Government will dovetail these proposals with the outcome of the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales.

Launching the consultation, Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“In Wales, we are fortunate to enjoy some of the best health and social care services anywhere in the world, provided by committed staff at all levels. The well-respected OECD, in their report last year, commented favourably on our systems in Wales but also challenged us to do more to fulfil our potential of providing excellent person-centred care to all our citizens.

“The proposals we are publishing today will ensure our health and social care services are fit for the future. The White Paper looks at a number of key aspects of the health and care system and suggests some changes which we believe could make a real difference by putting people at the centre of service delivery. It will also enable health and social care organisations to work together and across boundaries to ensure they deliver the very best care for people across Wales.”

The consultation on the White Paper will run from 28 June until 29 September.