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30th November 2020

Nick Ramsay MS
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Dear Mr Ramsey,

Evidence Submission from Powys Teaching Health Board to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

1. I am pleased to provide this written evidence to contribute to the Public Account Committee's inquiry.

Context

2. Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) serves a population of approximately 133,000 people, across three broad geographies in North Powys, Mid Powys and South Powys.
3. Powys makes up a significant footprint in the rural heartland of Wales, covering a large geographical area which makes up a quarter of the landmass of Wales, but with only 5% of the population of Wales. This makes it one of the most sparsely populated areas.
4. Powys borders England and all but one of the other health boards in Wales. As an entirely rural County with no major conurbations and no acute general hospitals, it is one of the most deprived areas in Wales for access to services. People have traditionally had to travel outside the County for many services, including secondary and specialist healthcare. Cross border links are a crucial part of the socio-economic life of Powys.
5. There are generally good health and well-being outcomes in Powys with a greater sense of community and satisfaction with life when compared to the national average. There are, however, pockets of deprivation and health inequalities, with low income employment and hidden poverty. Five Lower Super Output Areas are among the most deprived 30% in Wales, clustered around the main market towns with

higher residential populations. A child born in the most deprived area will live 10 years less than a child in the most affluent. (For sources refer to Powys Well-being Assessment <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/5794/Full-Well-being-assessment-analysis>).

Awareness and understanding of the Act and its implications

6. The Act has been effectively communicated across the health board and is one of the elements of the strategic context that informs the strategic planning and partnerships in Powys.
7. There are of course other pieces of legislation that also act as a key driver, for example the Social Services and Well-being Act. These two pieces of legislation have to be understood together (and in the context of other policy and guidance). They also have to be transacted in different ways, as each required separate mechanisms to be established, in the Public Services Board and the Regional Partnerships Board.
8. In Powys, the Regional Partnership Board agreed a set of Powys outcomes and shared well-being objectives as part of the long term Health and Care Strategy first published in 2017, 'A Healthy Caring Powys'. This followed extensive engagement with residents and stakeholders and was the first health and social care strategy to be launched in Wales.
9. This in turn is set in the context of the inter-generational Powys Well-being Plan, Towards 2040. This is overseen by the Powys Public Service Board and sets out twelve steps towards a sustainable and thriving Powys.
10. There has been regular communication within the health board and with other statutory bodies and partnerships since publication of the Act, supported by self assessments and audit which has ensured a continued review and refresh of the use of the Act.
11. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the profile and use of the Act this year. This included the suspension of the annual NHS Wales Planning Framework and Integrated Medium Term Plans. These were replaced by Quarterly Operational Planning frameworks. These frameworks were intrinsically shorter term and focused on immediate service delivery.
12. This year the Future Generations Commissioners Office (FGC) produced 'Report 2020'. This provided useful areas to focus on going forward, for example the health board's Environment and Sustainability team have used the findings to inform a draft Estates Framework which could be adapted as a blue print for departments to deliver against the Act.

13. As the focus shifts back to longer term recovery and strategy, it will be necessary to reframe and refresh awareness and understanding of the Act and its ongoing translation into practice. It is one of several pieces of legislation that will inform the longer term view.

The resources available to public bodies to implement the Act and how effectively they have been deployed

14. The Act did not provide specific or additional financial resources however statutory bodies have existing resources to be used in accordance with its strategic plans, in the context of legislative and policy requirements. The Future Generations Act is not the only legislative driver but is an important component in setting the long term, collaborative approach in Powys, as demonstrated in 'A Healthy, Caring Powys'.
15. Welsh Government Transformation Funding and other funding such as the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) indirectly provides a source of resources which can be used to support delivery against the Act. This was not provided specifically for this however there is a close link between transformation objectives and the principle of sustainable development, well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working.
16. For example, the North Powys Well-being Programme has been successful in obtaining Transformation funding for its first phase and this is critical in developing a sustainable Powys Model of Care based on our shared long term Well-being Objectives.
17. The health board has also developed a draft Estates Framework which is considering how resources are used, against the Well-being Goals and Five Ways of Working.

Support provided to public bodies by the Future Generations Commissioner

18. There are a wide range of resources available from the Future Generations Commissioner's office including resources accessible online. They have been shared widely for use in the health board for strategic planning, research and development.
19. The Future Generations Commissioner also led a Self Assessment process in 2018/2019 which enabled a mapping exercise against a 'Journey Checker' and contributed to the development of the health board's Integrated Medium Term Plan.
20. The health board was also supported by the Future Generations Commissioner to develop its Well-being Objectives as part of its long term strategy. This was a key part of the development of a collaborative approach to health and care and set the foundation for the North Powys Well-being Programme.
21. The Welsh Audit Office, now Audit Wales, have also carried out an examination of the application of the Act in the North Powys Well-

being Programme. It provided helpful feedback and was positive in its findings.

22. The Future Generations Commissioner's 'Report 2020' also provided a broad but helpful view of progress against the Act and highlighted areas to focus future work.

The leadership role of the Welsh Government

23. The Act is one of a number of legislative instruments that the Welsh Government promote and embed into policy and planning frameworks. For example, it is one element reflected in the NHS Wales Planning Framework and 'A Healthier Wales'.
24. The plurality of legislation and policy by its nature drives a complex and multiple set of requirements, often with differing structures and reporting routes, such as the establishment of Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards. There are also multiple policy lead requirements on specific health conditions and category led approaches such as planned care or winter protection. These have multiple structural and delivery requirements and do not normally reference back to the Act.
25. Some areas are communicated with a stronger focus in specific circumstances, for example decarbonisation is an increasing priority in relation to capital developments.
26. There is an opportunity for the national policy and legislative requirements to have greater alignment and for policy to have shared cross cutting goals.
27. The annual NHS Wales Planning Framework and the Integrated Medium Term Plans were suspended this year as a result of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Quarterly Operational Planning Frameworks have been focused on immediate delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic and have not explicitly referenced the wider legislative background including the Act.
28. Moving forward, the re-introduction and reframing of actions that deliver the ambition of the longer term strategy will be key to the ongoing management of the pandemic and its wider societal and inter-generational impacts.

Any other barriers to successful implementation of the Act

29. There are barriers that are common across sectors and some specific challenges.
30. Common barriers are the complex and multiple legislative and policy requirements as noted previously. These lead to differing structural and reporting requirements which can create competing priorities and are resource intensive at regional and local levels.

31. Partnership working is intrinsically complex particularly where it is focused on transformational, large scale whole system changes. The opportunities are greatest in the partnership arena however these at times come with the most difficult challenges in terms of cultural and structural differences and considerations. The Regional Partnership Board and Public Services Board are helpful delivery mechanisms to support implementation of the Act.
32. For Powys, there is also the complexity of the cross border relationship and the further consideration of the legislation and policy requirements in England, which impact on the health and care provision for residents of Powys.
33. The response to the pandemic has necessitated a faster, more immediate frame of reference and the institution of emergency measures and ways of working. The ongoing management and recovery from the pandemic will require both this immediacy and a longer term view. This will be challenging and complex and it will be crucial to be as streamlined and consistent as possible on policy priorities.
34. The ongoing response to the pandemic and its impacts is likely to continue, for a significant period of time, with significant effects on the wider determinants of health that will be experienced for generations.
35. There is no avoiding the fact that the decisions we make now affect future generations and that will not change. Sustainability should be at the heart of everything we do and enable us to better face future challenges, even those as unexpected as a pandemic.
36. As noted in 'Report 2020', the individual, community and organisational responses to the COVID-19 crisis illustrated that we can adapt during extremely challenging times and that when we work together for the good of all, we can achieve great things.

How to ensure the Act is implemented successfully in the future

37. The turnaround and pace still required for the complex and interrelated plans and delivery for Covid and non-Covid healthcare remain significant. The impact on the capacity of the healthcare system to respond to legislation and policy does need to be carefully considered and balanced with the life-critical work needed at the current time.
38. There is also a need to refresh longer term strategy and goals so that the whole system responds to the longer term impact of the pandemic. Systemisation and regularisation of what has been learnt during the pandemic is critical so that we are able to write the learning into future policy, processes and protocols.

39. The pandemic shone a light on the importance of self-care, family, neighbour, carer and community support. Moving forward there is a unique opportunity to harness this experience and build a more holistic public service model. This has the potential to accelerate the Act by realising a sustainable, long term, model of well-being.
40. The public sector is however faced with a new challenge, to manage greater emergent complexity. This is likely to be a difficult and lengthy journey. The global pandemic is characterised by significant uncertainty and unknowns. It will be necessary to consider new ways of working across all aspects of public life.
41. The supporting mechanisms for legislative compliance will have to transform and adapt to enable progression. For example, the funding, contracting and commissioning arrangements will need to be reviewed and adapted to ensure that the opportunities grasped in this challenging time are not eroded by mechanisms that gradually force the system back into compliance with a framework that no longer provides the best outcomes for its citizens.
42. The key will be to use the Act as an enabler and part of a framework for recovery. As part of the wider consideration of impact and population needs, it will help to balance decisions and ensure that the adaptations made this year are built upon in a way that promotes sustainability and the furtherance of well-being.
43. It will continue to be important to understand local and regional differences. For example, whilst the pandemic has not impacted as strongly in Powys as other areas, there are signs already emerging that the wider socio-economic impact is hitting hard in Powys due to its rurality. Powys communities are experiencing the same set of restrictions on their lives often with greater isolation and a lower income and employment base.
44. The management and recovery from the impacts of the pandemic is a wide ranging and long term challenge, likely to have inter-generational effects on the way people live. Initial analysis by Powys County Council points to effects on the population of Powys over a very long period ahead. The full report 'Understanding the impact of Covid-19 in Powys' is available at <https://sway.office.com/sxfU525TCBDFv9PE?ref=Link&loc=play>
45. The key partnerships in Powys including the Regional Partnership Board and Public Services Board have begun to reframe key programmes and areas of work. A greater co-ordination and bringing together of statutory partnerships such as these will be helpful in building the longer term recovery. It will enable local bodies to focus resources on meaningful local engagement.
46. It will be important to maintain and build on this more meaningful, direct and transparent collaboration between and across agencies, communities and local geographies, to understand together, what we

want and need to focus on to ensure the well-being of current and future generations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Shillabeer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Carol Shillabeer
Chief Executive