

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Eiriolaeth Statudol | Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy Provision

SAP 12

Ymateb gan : Cyngor Gofal Cymru

Response from : Care Council for Wales

The Care Council for Wales is responsible for the regulation and development of the social care workforce. From April 2017 it will be re-named as Social Care Wales with additional responsibility for research and service improvement. We are pleased to be able to contribute to this inquiry.

Advocacy is central to training materials on the Social Services and Well-being Act

Our response to this inquiry focuses our role in preparing training material for the social care workforce on the implications of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 including the central role of advocacy within the new legislation.

The Care Council has led the national programme for learning and development for the 2014 Act. Between 2015 and 2017 the Care Council developed an Information and Learning Hub. It includes core learning modules on the Act¹ and the codes of practice for each part of the Act, including part 10 on advocacy². This work has been undertaken in partnership. One set of national resources has been produced. They have been designed so that they can be used in many different settings

When we commissioned the materials we specified that advocacy should be described as a vital function for achieving well-being outcomes for service users. The specification described advocacy as a 'golden thread'. The training materials are clear that there are specific references to advocacy provision in parts 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 of the Act. They emphasise the need to put the individual at the centre of their care, whilst giving them voice and control in achieving their well-being outcomes.

The Care Council invited third sector organisations to bid for funding under a co-production grant to develop specific materials on advocacy as laid out in part 10 of the Act. Age Cymru and Tros Gynnal Plant were successful. There are now two sets of materials on the Hub relevant to adults, children and carers on independent professional advocacy and non-professional advocates³. We have also commissioned the delivery of the national expert classes on advocacy which will use these materials.

Tros Gynnal Plant have already delivered a workshop on advocacy involving children and young people at a joint Care Council and Looked After Children Network event at Glyndwr

¹ [Learning resources](#), Information and Learning Hub, Care Council for Wales

² [Codes of practice and statutory guidance](#), Information and Learning Hub, Care Council for Wales

³ [Advocacy](#), Information and Learning Hub, Care Council for Wales

University for residential child care workers and foster carers on 15 September 2016. Attendees said that they appreciated the importance placed on hearing the voices of children and young people.

An independent evaluation of the impact of the training is being undertaken. The longer term impacts will be an area of interest for our successor body, Social Care Wales. The feedback and statistics on the Information and Learning Hub suggest it is well used and that the learning materials are rated as accessible and of good quality.

Regulation of advocacy services

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act, 2016 makes provision for the regulation of advocacy services. A recent Welsh Government consultation on secondary legislation has proposed a definition for such services. Evidence from our work in regulating residential child care workers supports the proposal in the consultation that a phased introduction starting with the looked after children sector would be beneficial. The cases dealt with by the Care Council would suggest that it would be in the interest of looked after children and the staff working with to have an effective advocacy service.

Advocacy and other Care Council training tools and material for the care workforce

The Care Council produces practice guidance for a range of registered social care professionals. The guidance is important as it describes what is expected of workers and forms part of their regulation. The guidance emphasises the importance of advocacy to professionals. For example, the social worker practice guidance states:

“In a particular situation or over a longer period of time, it may be necessary to represent people’s views, needs or wishes when they are not in a position to do so for themselves. If people require advocacy, you must first work with the person to determine an appropriate approach. Independent advocacy has many potential benefits and you should support people to access information about this option and be proactive in making arrangements, where appropriate⁴.”

Acting as an advocate is included in the National Occupational Standards and in the qualifications for social care workers. Care qualifications are being reviewed by Qualifications Wales currently. The knowledge and understanding of the advocate’s role and the importance of independent advocacy will be integrated into this review.

Advocacy and service improvement

As noted above, the Care Council will become Social Care Wales in April 2017 with a new remit to work with partners to improve services. A consultation identified outcomes for looked after children as one of the main improvement priorities for Social Care Wales. This work could provide an opportunity to roll out best practice on statutory advocacy provision for children and young people.

⁴ [The Social Worker: Practice Guidance for Social Workers Registered with the Care Council for Wales](#), (PDF), Care Council for Wales