

Carwyn Jones AM

Annual Report 2012-13



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TRANSFORMING THE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

A major piece of legislation that is set to transform the way people in Wales receive care and support has been introduced by the Welsh Labour Government.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill was recently presented to the National Assembly. It aims to address key challenges including demographic changes, increased expectations of those who access care and support, and continuing hard economic realities. It will give people greater freedom to decide which services they need while offering consistent, high-quality services across the country.

The legislation will:

- Strengthen powers for the safeguarding of children and adults, so that anyone at risk in our society can be protected effectively.
- Allow Welsh Ministers to consider extending the range of services available by direct payments, meaning people will have more control over the services they use.
- Introduce national eligibility criteria and ensure that people are assessed on what they need, rather than just on what services are available locally.
- Introduce portable assessments, which means that if people move from one part of Wales to another they will not require their needs to be re-assessed if they haven't changed.
- Introduce a National Outcomes Framework to set out very clearly what children and adults can expect from social services, to measure achievements and see where improvements are needed.
- Introduce equivalent rights for carers so that people who care for someone such as an elderly or disabled relative or friend would get equivalent rights to the people they care for.
- Establish a National Adoption Service to improve the outcomes of child placements.

It is anticipated that, if passed, the Bill will come into force later this year.

 **FIND OUT MORE... Further information about the Bill can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/b5pvrtd>**

GCSE AND A-LEVELS RETAINED IN WALES

GCSE and A-levels will be retained in Wales, alongside a revised, more rigorous, Welsh Baccalaureate, the Welsh Labour Government has announced.

As part of the Welsh Government's response to the Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds, new GCSEs in English Language and Welsh First Language, as well as two new GCSEs covering numeracy and mathematical techniques will also be created. These will be introduced in September 2015. The aim is to introduce the revised Welsh Baccalaureate for teaching from September 2015.

Further details are available at:
<http://tinyurl.com/b657mrt>

£39 MILLION INVESTMENT IN BROADBAND FOR SCHOOLS

Teaching and learning in Welsh schools will be transformed by £39m worth of investment in faster broadband services.

The recently announced new Learning in Digital Wales Grant will ensure that learners are able to access faster, high-quality broadband services which are both robust and reliable. The funding will allow local authorities to improve connection speeds to a minimum of 100Mbps for secondary schools and 10Mbps for primary and special schools by 2014.

NEW ONLINE HEALTH CHECK FOR OVER-50s

Online assessments and community-based support are being introduced to enable over-50s in Wales to assess and improve their own health, the Welsh Labour Government has announced.

The aim is to support and empower people over 50 to have greater control over their own health and wellbeing. Health checks are part of a greater shift in emphasis towards improving and protecting health, rather than simply treating illness. Under the arrangements, people will be provided with high quality advice on a range of health and social issues which can be tailored to their own personal circumstances, as well as improved access to the most effective national and local prevention services.

Public Health Wales will develop the health check programme, which will include alternative assessment methods for those unable or preferring not to access services online. The programme will be introduced over a three year period starting at the end of 2013.

NEW PATIENT SAFETY WEB-SITE

A new dedicated website for patient safety in the NHS in Wales has been launched.

The website - www.patientsafetywales.org.uk - provides information on how well each NHS Wales organisation is doing in implementing over 70 measures - called patient safety solutions - which are designed to improve safety and the quality of care. Data will be published each quarter.

HOSPITAL FOOD GETS MAKEOVER

Hospital food across Wales has been given a makeover to ensure that patients have tasty choices which can address their individual nutritional requirements.

The 'All Wales Hospital Menu Framework' was launched recently and includes a database of recipes that can be used in all hospitals.

The database currently consists of 18 soups, 38 main course items and 42 desserts, snacks and accompaniments that have been analysed and meet strict nutritional standards.

VITAL SUPPORT DELIVERED FOR COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT CLAIMANTS

The Welsh Labour Government recently announced additional help for people who were facing a reduction in their Council Tax support following a funding cut imposed by the Tory-led UK Government.

As a result of the extra £22 million in Welsh Labour Government funding which is going to local authorities in 2013-14, people who are eligible for council tax support in Wales will continue to receive their **full** entitlement.

The additional funding has come from Welsh Government reserves and departmental budgets and has been made possible by careful financial management.

The Tory-led UK Government has introduced a number of changes to the welfare system, as well as a 10% cut in the amount of funding for Council Tax support - the responsibility for which has been passed to the Welsh Government.

The previous scheme which was published in December would have meant a cut in support for some people. The Welsh Labour Government has been greatly concerned about this, particularly since the cumulative impact of the Tory-led UK Government's welfare cuts has started to become clearer since December.

NEW LAWS RECEIVE ROYAL ASCENT

Two new Welsh Labour Government laws have received Royal Ascent:

- The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 will strengthen school standards and reduce complexity and bureaucracy in Wales' education system .
- The Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013 will see Wales become the first country in the UK to introduce a mandatory scheme requiring food businesses to openly display their hygiene rating.

DEVASTATING IMPACT OF WELFARE CUTS REVEALED

A recently published report from the Welsh Labour Government has revealed the devastating impact that the Tory-led UK Government's welfare cuts will have on the people and economy of Wales.

The report was commissioned to better understand the impact of changes to the UK welfare system announced prior to December's Autumn Statement. It shows that total benefit and tax credit entitlements in Wales will be reduced by around £590 million in 2014-15. Additional cuts announced in last December's Autumn Statement mean losses will be even higher than this.

Overall, families with children and those from low to middle income families will suffer the most from the changes. Reforms to Disability Living Allowance account for some of the greatest cuts in Wales. It is estimated that around 42,500 people in Wales will lose their entitlement - an average loss of up to £83 per claimant, per week and an annual loss of up to £183m in Wales as a whole.

Although the Tory-led UK Government claims that its welfare reforms are aimed at getting more people into work, this research also suggests that any effects on employment in Wales are likely to be small and will depend on wider economic conditions.



FIND OUT MORE... *The report is available at:*
<http://tinyurl.com/c49zwj9>

SECOND PHASE OF WALES ECONOMIC GROWTH FUND

The second phase of the Welsh Labour Government's £30m Wales Economic Growth Fund aimed at creating jobs, growth and wealth has got underway.

The non-repayable funding is designed to help create and safeguard up to 3,000 jobs and assist around 200 businesses across Wales by providing the capital that businesses need to invest in new equipment, grow their companies, win new contracts and create jobs and wealth. More than £31million was committed to support 119 business investment projects during the first phase, with the potential to create 1,800 jobs and safeguard around 1,600 jobs.

ACTION URGED TO INCREASE WOMEN ON PUBLIC BOARDS

The Welsh Labour Government has asked public bodies in Wales to take a lead by developing plans to increase the number of women on their Boards.

In line with Welsh Labour's manifesto, the Welsh Government is committed to working with public bodies to ensure that at least 40% of appointments to public roles in Wales are women.

Welsh Labour Ministers have now written to all public sector bodies asking them to take action to increase the number of women and other under-represented groups on their Boards. Chairs of public sector bodies have been asked to:

- Discuss the good practice findings of Sport Wales with their Board and agree an action plan to increase diversity, including steps to be taken around the application process.
- Undertake an evaluation of the make-up of their Board with aspirational targets set for increasing the number of women.
- Provide a short report to the Welsh Government on the progress made by the end of July 2013.

NEW MAPS SHOW NOISE LEVELS ACROSS WALES

The Welsh Labour Government has published a series of maps to illustrate levels of noise across Wales. The noise maps show estimated levels of road traffic, railway and industrial noise in Wales' three largest urban areas, and noise from the busiest roads and railways across the country.

One of the Welsh Labour Government's top priorities is to improve the local environment for people living in our most disadvantaged areas and believes that noise pollution should be treated with particular seriousness when it coincides with other factors such as poor air quality, low housing standards and lack of green space.

NEW SCHOOLS INFO PORTAL BOOSTS PARENT POWER

A new website which provides information on every maintained school in Wales has been launched by the Welsh Labour Government.

The website, mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk, provides an easily accessible portal for parents and carers and those interested in school education statistics in Wales. It is part of the Welsh Labour Government's drive to give parents a clearer picture of how schools are performing and to improve the openness and transparency of school statistics.

The site allows users to view a range of statistical information about an individual school including:

- Contextual information such as the type of school, school population and the number of teachers.
- Performance information at foundation phase, key stage 2 and 3, GCSE and A level as well as banding and underlying banding indicators.
- Financial information such as expenditure per school.
- A link to the most recent Estyn report.

£800,000 TO BUILD ON IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

£800,000 of Welsh Government funding has been announced to help regional education consortia drive up levels of school attendance.

The new grant funding will be made available over two academic years, with £200,000 to be divided amongst the four consortia in 2012/13 and £600,000 in 2013/14. This will be the first opportunity for consortia to work directly and jointly on attendance. Historically, this issue has been dealt with at a local authority level.

To secure the funding, consortia will have to submit costed proposals to the Welsh Government, outlining the actions they intend to take to secure continued, long-term improvements in school attendance.

The grant is designed to build on the progress being made in driving up levels of school attendance. Welsh Government figures for 2011/12 show that primary school attendance stood at 93.8% – an improvement of 0.5% on the previous year.

Figures for secondary school attendance showed an overall attendance rate in secondary schools in 2011/12 of 92.2% - a rise of 0.8% on the previous year.

£4.4M YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERVICES LAUNCHED

The Welsh Labour Government is investing £4.4million in a range of new youth services to nurture and develop the entrepreneurs of the future - building on Wales' lead as a country of young business innovators.

The Welsh Labour Government's new Youth Entrepreneurship Services (YES) targets children and young people from primary school through to further and higher education, as well as those outside education and training, through the [Big Ideas Wales](#) campaign.

YES will involve innovative activities to increase awareness and aspirations for entrepreneurship and support the Government's commitment to promote economic growth and provide jobs for young people. *Further information on the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy is available at*

www.BigIdeasWales.com

Local Update

- **Numerous surgeries and meetings with constituents and organisations have been held. I have also visited local schools, businesses and attended a number of charity events. Many thanks to all for their hard work in the constituency.**
- **Special thanks to Edith and Marilyn for the dedicated service they have given to the CLP.**

- **BAVO** - I joined Ogmores AM, Janice Gregory, at the BAVO Annual General Meeting to celebrate the organisations achievements over the past 12 months. The meeting highlighted the important role that volunteering plays and the crucial contribution it makes to the economy.



- **Y Centre** - I had an enjoyable visit to the recently refurbished Y Centre in Porthcawl, which provides the residents of the town and the surrounding area with access to first class facilities that promote health and wellbeing, community involvement and active and passive learning.
- **Porthcawl Shout** - I paid a visit to the Porthcawl Shout over 50's group where I held an engaging discussion with members concerning the planned regeneration of the town.

- **Wales, Europe and the World** - I joined Ogmores MP, Huw Irranca-Davies at Archbishop McGrath Catholic School in Brackla for an event which looked at Wales' role in Europe and the wider world. Huw and I were very impressed with the knowledge and understanding of pupils in such an important area.



- **Barclays Bank** - I attended the opening of the newly refurbished Dunraven Place branch of the bank, which features state of the art facilities to make banking a more pleasurable experience for all customers. It is encouraging to see the bank investing heavily in Bridgend.
- **Surgeries** - The next available surgeries are in April, please contact the office for details.

GET IN TOUCH....

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WE ARE MOVING!

In April 2013 my Bridgend constituency office will be moving to new premises at:
 3 Cross Street, Bridgend, CF31 1EX