

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

A Level Health and Social Care



This act underpins the delivery of all services within the health and social care sector in Wales. You will need to be familiar with its terminology and principles.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is a landmark piece of legislation for health and social care in Wales. It became law in 2014 and came into force in April 2016. It sets out a new legal framework that consists of three elements:

- the Act itself
- the regulations, which provide the detail about the requirements of the Act
- the codes of practice, which explain how it should be implemented in a practical way.

The Act covers:

- adults, children and carers.

The Act consists of 11 parts, is built on five principles and explains which people it affects. This can be remembered as the 3 Ps:

- people it affects
- parts within the Act
- principles throughout the Act.

The 5 Principles

- The Act is focused on the well-being of people in Wales and helping those who need care and support to achieve it.
- People who use services are central to this Act and are given an equal say in the support they receive.
- Partnership and cooperation in services is a key part of this Act.
- Prevention is promoted within this Act by providing help when needed to prevent needs increasing.

The Act is built on the following core principles:

- Voice and control – ensuring the needs of the individual are at the centre of their care, giving them voice and control over the outcomes that will help them achieve well-being.
- Prevention and early intervention – accessing advice and support at an early stage. This helps people maintain a good quality of life and reduces or delays the need for long term care.
- Well-being – supporting people to achieve well-being in all aspects of their lives.
- Co-production – involving people in deciding what support and services they need and recognising their expertise.
- Multi agency – strong partnership working between all agencies is essential to improve the well-being of people and carers in need of support.

At the heart of the Act is people's right to well-being. While people have a responsibility for their own well-being, the Government recognises that some will need help to achieve this. The Act changes the way social services, health services, voluntary and community groups work together to help and support people. It emphasises that everyone has the right to enjoy well-being in every area of their lives. There are many interpretations of well-being. The Oxford English Dictionary defines well-being as **"the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy."** In supporting people with their well-being, it is important to understand what this means to them, as everyone has different needs and goals in their lives.

Key Terms in the Act-What is Wellbeing according to this Act?

(2) "Well-being", in relation to a person, means well-being in relation to any of the following –

- (a) physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- (b) protection from abuse and neglect;
- (c) education, training and recreation;
- (d) domestic, family and personal relationships;
- (e) contribution made to society;
- (f) securing rights and entitlements;
- (g) social and economic well-being;
- (h) suitability of living accommodation.

(3) In relation to a child, "well-being" also includes –

- (a) physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development;
- (b) "welfare" as that word is interpreted for the purposes of the Children Act 1989.

(4) In relation to an adult, "well-being" also includes –

- (a) control over day to day life;
- (b) participation in work.

Key Terms and Definitions:

Law - Law is the rules that govern a society. These rules are enforceable which means that people can face negative consequences such as fines or prison sentences if they break the law.

Legislation – Legislation is the whole or part of a country's written law. The Welsh Parliament passes legislation in key areas such as health. The Welsh Government puts legislation into practice by developing strategy.

Strategy - provides a statement of the Welsh Government's position (what it thinks), intentions (what it is going to do) or actions (what it is doing already) in relation to a particular piece of legislation.

Rights - Everyone, adult or child, can be given a voice – an opportunity – a right – to be heard as an individual, as a citizen, to shape the decisions that affect them, and to have control over their day to day lives. This is a key aim of the Act.

Outcomes - The WHO (World Health Organisation) defines an outcome measure as a "change in the health of an individual, group of people, or population that is attributable to an intervention or series of interventions." This Act aims to secure best outcomes. All partners in support and care must work together to put people at the centre of their care. It also aims to support people who deliver social services to co-produce solutions with the people who need care themselves. Ensuring people are at the centre of their own care and their own wishes are listened to and achieved is the desired outcome.

Advocacy - Advocacy underpins all the principles of the Act and is vital to support people's voice, control and well-being. Advocacy services help vulnerable people access information and services. It allows them to be directly involved in decisions about their own lives, make choices and express their needs and wishes. Advocacy is about giving people their rights and representing their interests in order for them to receive the services they need.