

Briefing paper for the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Children and Social Care

11 December 2017

Prosperity for All and the third sector

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The third sector health and social care planning group (see [Appendix 1](#)) welcomes Prosperity for All, the national strategy to deliver the Welsh Government's key priorities for the rest of the Assembly term.
- 1.2 In particular the group supports the First Minister's aspiration to *"build a sustainable relationship with the Voluntary Sector, based on the outcomes we all want to achieve for communities and the right funding model to deliver them"* (p20) and commitment to *"a radically different way of working for us and our partners"* (foreword).
- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to articulate some initial observations from third sector networks on the strategy, and to provide some context to hear and discuss the views of the Cabinet Secretary and Minister on the third sector's role in implementing the strategy, and to identify some concrete actions for joint work.

2. Third sector observations on Prosperity for All

- 2.1 The third sector health and social care planning group received a briefing from officials on Prosperity for All (20.11.17), and raised the following initial observations about the strategy.
- 2.2 The important shift in 'how' services are delivered is noted and the intent to encourage greater cross-portfolio working and collaboration is wholly supported. Governance structures to support this approach will be important to ensure that third sector organisations are able to engage appropriately, report back to, and involve a wider network of stakeholders.
- 2.3 The inclusion of social care and mental health as key priorities is welcomed, alongside cross-portfolio action to maximise the potential of social care as a growth sector in our foundational economy. However, the sector is concerned about the disparity between levels of pay for care workers in the public, private and third sectors. This presents an operational challenge to third sector organisations to recruit and retain staff in the delivery of public sector contracts where budgets are squeezed, which has the impact of reducing the salaries organisations are able to pay. For example, Caerphilly Council is a 'Living Wage' employer, applying this principle to its direct staff and contractors - apart from social care contracts.
- 2.4 Third sector networks are reporting a trend for local government and wider public sector to take services that may have previously been delivered by third sector organisations

'in house'. Whilst budget pressures are widely understood, the impacts of this approach include disruption to services for citizens; and the lost opportunity to commission external, integrated delivery which capitalises on the added value of involving volunteers in third sector service delivery. It also works contra to the Welsh Government's overarching approach to building a sustainable relationship with the sector.

- 2.5 The [Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector](#) applies directly to Welsh Government and Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies. Whilst it does not apply directly to local government, to realise the vision of Prosperity for All to build a sustainable relationship with the voluntary sector, the important principles of the Code, including early and constructive dialogue, timely decisions, security of funding, fair procurement, payment in advance and working on a 'who does what best' basis, should be adhered to by all public services. References in the United and Connected priority to *"building a sustainable relationship with the Voluntary Sector, based on the outcomes we all want to achieve for communities and the right funding model to deliver them"* are relevant to supporting the third sector to maximise its involvement in delivering the 'Healthy and Active' priorities in Prosperity for All, and to realise the vision and spirit of the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- 2.6 Co-production is seen as essential to achieving well-being for the citizens of Wales, as embedded principles within the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Social Services and Well-being Act Wales. Third sector networks reflected the view that the term 'co-production' and the principle of 'involvement' are often misunderstood as engagement and consultation, as opposed to listening to citizens on a 'what matters' basis. Resources and incentives to facilitate behaviour change in public service delivery, particularly in relation to health and social care, are much needed.
- 2.7 The goal for the Healthy and Active theme to *"take significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention"* and the overarching intent to *"do things differently"* by necessity involves taking a risk based approach. Third sector organisations observed that public services by and large, have a limited appetite for risk and would encourage Welsh Government to use its powers in terms of regulations and funding to incentivise public services to trial bold, new ways of working, accepting that not all approaches will result in a successful outcome.
- 2.8 The commitment to *"expand the community health and social care workforce, with innovative new roles, such as 'community connectors' that support social prescribing and more formal partnerships with volunteers and the third sector"* (p. 14) is welcomed and the paper we provided for our July meeting gave examples of third sector activity. Since July we have made links with the work of Public Health Wales to map social prescribing activities. It is understood that Welsh Government will have oversight of commissioning research and evaluation to strengthen the evidence base. Third sector networks are keen to work with officials on this research and evaluation activity, and the Government's commissioning of a [social prescribing health pilot project](#) is noted and welcomed as an opportunity to undertake robust evaluation.
- 2.9 Third sector networks reflected that investment in services that support early intervention and preventative approaches, such as leisure centres, community centres, libraries and other community facilities, are reducing and will have an impact on the health outcomes for citizens, families and communities. In some instances, third sector organisations are taking on 'asset transfers', but this is often at high risk and requires support from experienced practitioners.

- 2.10 In relation to the work of Regional Partnership Boards (RPB), the lack of representation of the perspective of children and young people's services was noted, with observations about the absence of Children's and Young People's partnerships to provide the governance structures to underpin the RPB governance arrangements.
- 2.11 References to transport, and in particular community transport, could be strengthened in respect of ensuring access to the services that people need.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Cabinet Secretary and Minister are asked to:

- Write to the public bodies listed on pp.29-30 of the Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector to remind them of their duty to adhere to the Code and to strengthen references to the Code in relevant corporate documents;
- Write to the Chief Executive of each local authority to encourage them to adopt and follow the principles of the Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector and to strengthen references to the Code in relevant corporate documents;
- Consider whether public bodies should be asked to report to Welsh Government on an annual basis on funding to the third sector;
- Provide some insight into the outcomes framework(s) that will be used for Prosperity for All, to encourage cross-portfolio working;
- Comment on how the Living Wage might become a commitment across the social care sector.

Appendix 1: Members of the third sector health and social care planning group

Age Alliance Wales
All Wales Forum
Arthritis Care in Wales
Care & Repair Cymru
Cartrefi Cymru
Children in Wales - Plant yng Nghymru
Community Transport Association
Co-production Network for Wales
Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
Cymorth Cymru
Cytûn: Churches Together in Wales
Disability Wales
EYST
Multiple Sclerosis Society Cymru
NSPCC Cymru Wales
Play Wales
RNIB Cymru
Safer Wales
TSPC BME Communities Network
Vision in Wales
Voluntary Arts Wales
Wales Association of County Voluntary Councils
Wales Co-operative Development and Training
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Wales Environment Link
Wales Mental Health Alliance
Welsh Refugee Council
Welsh Sports Association
Welsh Women's Aid
WEN Wales