



# How well do we care for the elderly?

## What's in a name? - the Welsh Government?

From now on The Welsh Assembly Government is to be known simply as 'the Welsh Government'. Presumably the statutory title will have to be used for legal and formal purposes, but the government has exercised its prerogative to rename itself for practical purposes. There are precedents for this: the renaming of the Scottish Executive as the Scottish Government, in 2007, and the creation of the 'Welsh Assembly Government' as a term to describe the executive part of what was still one legal institution in 2002. The use of the term 'Welsh Assembly Government' was a confusing anachronism after the legal separation of the executive and legislative institutions in 2007, as well as leading to the regrettable acronym of 'WAG'. The Welsh Government has responsibility for:

- education
- health
- local government
- transport
- planning
- economic development
- social care
- culture
- environment
- agriculture and rural affairs.

The Welsh Government has a budget of over £14 billion, of which over £5 billion goes to the NHS in Wales and over £4 billion directly to local authorities which deliver many other services.

The UK government is still responsible for police, prisons and the justice system. Matters such as tax and benefits, defence, national security and foreign affairs are also dealt with by the UK Government.

*From an article by Graeme Francis, Head of Policy at Age Cymru ...*

How we care for some of the most vulnerable people in our society has recently been near the top of the UK news and political agendas, highlighted by the financial troubles at Southern Cross, also concern about the impact of cuts in local authority care budgets.

Care services are of major importance to many people in Wales. In 2009-10 93,379 adults received community based services from local authorities in Wales and on 31st March 2010 there were 13,643 placements of adults in residential care.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Welsh Government has signalled its intention to bring forward a Social Service (Wales) Bill to provide "a coherent Welsh legal framework for social services" for the first time, using the primary legislative powers gained in the March referendum. Replacing the existing patchwork of legislation and case law which has been built up since the Second World War will be a major task and will likely end up being the largest single piece of Welsh legislation to date.

The legislation has the potential to deliver improvements to the protection offered to some of the most vulnerable older



*Image: The Bevan Foundation*

people in society: those who are at risk of abuse.

Extensive work carried out by Age Cymru has shown that much abuse and neglect of older people occurs in their own homes, often at the hands of friends or family members. This is contrary to more widespread public recognition of abuse in institutional care settings or criminal scams.

It is hoped that 'The Social Service (Wales) Bill' will provide an opportunity to establish clear and appropriate entitlements to vital care services and to improve the way we safeguard some of the most vulnerable people in Wales.

<sup>[1]</sup> WAG, Social Services Statistics Wales 2009-10

## KEEPING AN EYE ON THE CUTS

Cuts Watch Cymru was launched in July 2011 to monitor public expenditure cuts in Wales. They will be working with a coalition of organisations including Oxfam Cymru, Age Cymru, Disability Wales, Community Housing Cymru and many more to monitor how cuts are affecting Welsh people. 700,000 people in Wales already live beneath the official poverty line. Cuts Watch Cymru has grave concerns that cuts in public spending and services will make this situation even worse.



## “The earth is the Lord’s”



Image: xedos4 / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

**For Christians the energy debate takes place against a background of a theology of creation and a continuing care for God’s world.**

Psalms 19:1–6; 147:1–11.

Job 38 & 39.

Colossians 1:15–20; 3:11.

Ephesians 1:17–23.

Romans 8:18–25.

### **Meditation with Julian of Norwich**

I saw that God was everything that is good and encouraging. God is our clothing that wraps, clasps and encloses us so as never to leave us.

God showed me in my palm a little thing round as a ball about the size of a hazelnut. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and asked myself: ‘What is this thing?’ And I was answered: ‘It is everything that is created.’

I wondered how it could survive since it seemed so little it could suddenly disintegrate into nothing. The answer came: ‘It endures and ever will endure, because God loves it.’ And so everything has being because of God’s love.

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Bless to us, O God,  
the moon that is above us,  
the earth that is beneath us,  
the friends who are around us,  
your image deep within us, Amen.

Material: The Iona Community

Further reflection on the environment at <http://www.shrinkingthefootprint.org/>

## Planning for Renewable Energy in Wales

**Discussion surrounding wind farm development in mid Wales has both strong proponents and opponents. In June 2011 Carwyn Jones, First Minister for WAG, made the following written statement:**

*The Welsh Government takes its responsibilities to deliver sustainable development, tackle climate change and deliver energy security very seriously. Our energy needs in a modern society will remain considerable and must be met securely from low carbon sources. We have a number of obligations we must fulfil, both in terms of our sustainable development duty, and in playing our part in helping to meet the UK Government’s targets for carbon reduction set out in European and UK law.*

*The Welsh Government’s Energy Policy Statement published in March 2010 sets out the actions that will be taken to promote a diverse mix of renewable energy technologies, including onshore and offshore wind, biomass and marine, and we remain committed to promoting the widest range of renewable energy technologies we possibly can.*

*In addition, the Welsh Government has made significant progress to promote micro-generation of renewable energy, for example by removing planning restrictions for most forms of domestic micro-generation equipment, as well as supporting community based renewable energy projects.*

*However, while we continue to promote all forms of renewable energy, onshore wind is currently the most commercially mature form of renewable energy. The Welsh Government remains committed to the principles of planning for onshore wind in a strategic way, which seeks to optimise the production of renewable energy whilst protecting Wales’ environment.*

*Our policy in TAN 8 (Technical Advice Note) seeks to restrict the proliferation of large scale wind farms across the whole of Wales and focuses on the Strategic Search Areas which were derived following an independent assessment. The indicative capacities set out in TAN8 in 2005 reflected a considered view of the potential impact of grid and transport connections. However, in a number of the SSAs (Strategic Search Areas), developer interest has now greatly exceeded those indicative figures. The Welsh Government believes this level of development is unacceptable in view of its wider impacts on the local area.*

*In our view the TAN 8 capacities should be regarded as upper limits and we call upon UK Government to respect this position when they finalise the Renewable Energy National Policy Statement and to not allow proliferation when they take decisions on individual projects in Wales. It is this overcapacity which has led to proposals for major new overhead grid infrastructure. We contend that the level of capacity within the Strategic Search Areas which we set in 2005 would negate the need for the large obtrusive pylons which are causing such concern. My Government would not support the construction of large pylons in Mid Wales and my Ministers are pressing this case with National Grid Transmission and with Ofgem. It has always been our position, as set out in our Energy Policy Statement that such connections should be delivered by less intrusive techniques, and as sensitively as possible, including the use of undergrounding. In cases where communities get the disbenefits of major infrastructure without the economic advantages high voltage power brings to city areas, we believe a new approach must be taken to the undergrounding of high voltage power lines ... consents for major energy infrastructure projects must be devolved to Wales. We cannot accept a position where decisions made outside Wales will lead to inappropriate development for the people of Wales.*

The debate will continue ...

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