

# Emerging Arrangements Across Regional Partnership and Public Services Boards

## 20 March 2019

### Conference Summary

#### 1 Introduction and context

This short report has been prepared by Professor Keith Moultrie for the Welsh Government. It summarises some key themes from a conference held by the Welsh Government for members of Public Services Boards (PSB) and Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) across Wales on 20 March 2019.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced RPBs and PSBs which cover different but overlapping regional and local footprints, and different but related priorities, particularly in the areas of health, care and wellbeing.

Local and regional partners across Wales have been working hard to develop various operating arrangements for the Boards which help them secure the most effective use of their time and expertise in improving outcomes for people in Wales. The Welsh Government is keen to promote the continued development of these arrangements, to encourage shared learning between local areas and regions across the country, and to consider whether there are further things that can be done at a national level to support them. It therefore invited more than 100 representatives from PSBs and RPBs to Cardiff to share their experiences and views about how to achieve further progress.

A major part of the conference, after important initial presentations from Hannah Blythyn AM, Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government and Julie Morgan AM, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, involved the opportunity for RPBs and PSBs to describe their local arrangements and priorities to each other. This document does not cover the wide-ranging discussions and information shared during these sessions. They are summarised in complementary materials including:

- Responses from each region across Wales to the request by the Future Generations Commissioner and Children's Commissioner on how the Boards are working together, August 2018.
- A recent review by Social Care Wales of Local Well-being Plans and comparison with Regional Area Plans, December 2018.

The purpose of this document is to summarise some of the common themes from the day, and to consider some of the key messages about how national bodies including the Welsh Government could continue to support the development of both bodies across the country.

## 2 Key themes from the day

Both types of body have now been in place for almost three years across Wales. Participants were positive about the progress that has been made, although it was recognised that both PSBs and RPBs have not yet delivered as speedily or as extensively as they could do in the future.

This wide-ranging change in the way that partners plan and lead the development of shared and integrated services has required extensive adjustments, and it has only been in the last year that most participants have seen them starting to achieve their full potential. Many have needed to undertake comprehensive reviews of their wider governance and shared leadership arrangements to ensure they are effective overall in the new landscape.

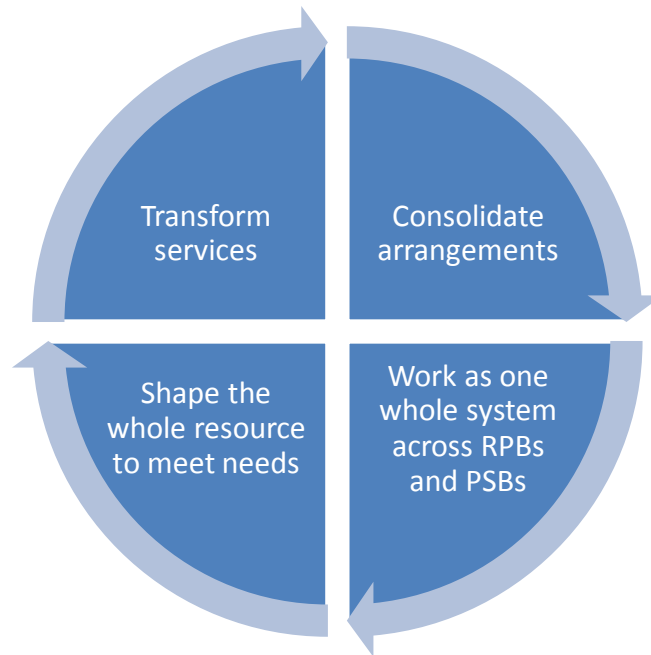
The legislative and policy framework is complex, but participants were clear that they are, in almost all cases, now confident that they have established effective arrangements on the ground, and that they are starting to make these work well.

There have been varying degrees to which RPBs and PSBs have interacted in practice, perhaps not surprising given the very different number of PSBs in RPB regions across Wales. The policy framework is clear about their respective responsibilities, but there are areas of shared concern particularly regarding health and care for the population, and many partners described a clear intention to build stronger and clearer links between them in the future.

The role of both PSBs and RPBs to lead the reshaping of public services in their areas was widely recognised and discussed. Many said that the demands so far on RPBs had driven them to focus on a relatively small area of additional funding and new monies, rather than on the total resource for health and social care, and it was suggested that this needs to change.

There were different perspectives on the extent to which further changes in local and regional structures are needed to deliver more effective shared leadership between PSBs and RPBs. Some partners are considering the potential of further integration of their PSBs, and others are considering how PSB and RPB agendas can be further aligned. There is clearly not one single model which fits all circumstances and a major learning for participants in the conference was that detailed arrangements already vary significantly and for good reasons, between regions.

In summary, the agenda for the next period for the RPBs and PSBs is described in the following diagram:



### 3 What is needed to help RPBs and PSBs deliver on this agenda?

As noted above, the overwhelming emphasis for RPBs and PSBs is now on delivering transformation through arrangements which are just beginning to work effectively in practice. Participants proposed a number of ways in which Welsh Government and other national bodies can continue to help them deliver on this in the next few years.

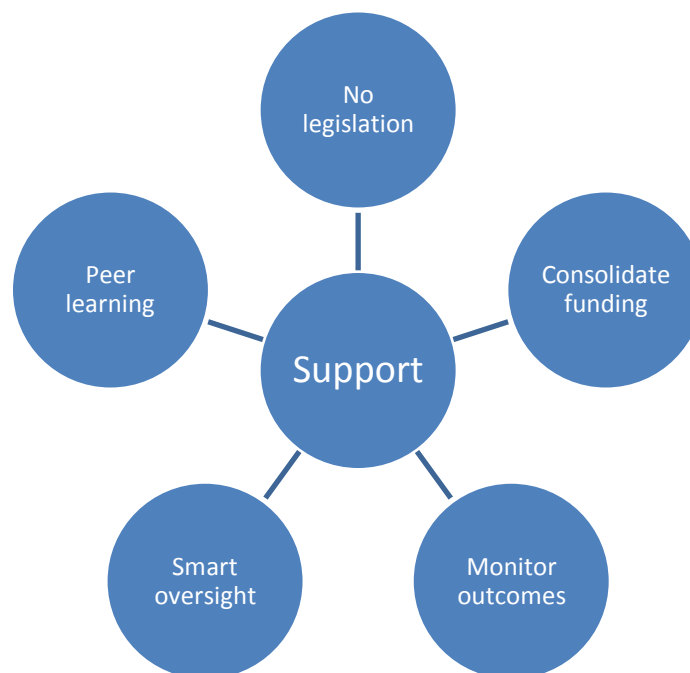
Firstly, the legislation and guidance does not need any further changes. Partners are working on how best to secure better outcomes for their populations using the existing arrangements, and further changes or re-organisations would be likely to draw capacity and resources away from transforming services.

Secondly, it would be helpful if national funding arrangements could be further consolidated so that regional and local Boards are dealing with fewer grants, over longer periods of time, with combined wider priorities attached.

Thirdly, monitoring and oversight of progress could be secured through a stronger emphasis on a clear and common population outcomes framework, against which local and regional partners should be tested, and a single common framework for which RPB and PSB partners are jointly responsible. Participants were clear that the attention locally and regionally needed to shift to how partners are transforming the major elements of services to meet needs more effectively and efficiently, and that Welsh Government oversight should also focus more on this than on detailed monitoring of relatively small-scale additional grants. Some of the requirements attached to grants, including self-assessments and detailed plans, could be reduced.

Fourthly, participants were not clear that a 'traditional' external inspection-based approach would be best for securing effective oversight of the RPBs. These could be streamlined, with regions offered different degrees of support or intervention depending upon the extent to which they are achieving the desired outcomes for their populations. The concept of 'earned autonomy' was proposed as an underlying principle to steer this approach.

Fifthly, participants were very positive about the role of the Welsh Government in facilitating this event, and particularly in emphasising the importance of peer learning and 'sharing approaches that work'. Ongoing support through continued opportunities for peer learning would be appreciated, including in areas such as structures and organisation, transformation and change management, and new service design and development. In summary:



## 4 Conclusion

In terms of potential priorities for Welsh Government, my key observations from the Conference are:

- There is no desire for further legislation or guidance in this area.
- An outcome-based, peer support model for ongoing oversight and improvement is worth further exploration and development
- Further joint working between the Welsh Government teams responsible for supporting RPBs and PSBs will be essential, and activities which they may want to undertake together in the next period include:
  - Default position of joint communications from the teams to both PSBs and RPBs about issues relevant to both or either.
  - Regular liaison meetings between the teams to note developments and changes with both Boards.

- A joint programme of meetings with Chairs and Leads of PSBs and RPBs across the country.
- A joint project, with advice from RPB and PSB colleagues above, to develop arrangements for oversight and outcome-based monitoring arrangements.
- Further occasional events to bring together partners from across Wales to share learning and different approaches that work.

**Keith Moultrie**  
**22 March 2019**