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**Briefing on Welsh Government Programme for Government 2021-2026–**

On the 15th of July 2021, the new programme for government was published. It sets out the commitments Welsh Government will deliver over the **next five years** in order to tackle the challenges that we face and improve the lives of people across Wales. It is founded on the values of community, equality and social justice. It hopes to put collaboration ahead of competition, showing how Welsh Government will act to maximise fairness for all and eliminate inequality at every level of society.

The Programme for Government consists of almost 100 specific areas of activity. Responsibility for all of these will rest with the First Minister and the full Cabinet as these will require the highest level of co-ordination and integration across the whole of government. Ministers will take direct responsibility for the remaining promises that the government made to the people of Wales during the 2021 election. Both sets of commitments will be treated with equal weight – the distinction between the two reflects the allocation of responsibilities and not their relative importance or priority.

Please see below a summary of the key actions within the documents. Particularly relevant sections have been highlighted in red.

**Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare**

 The coronavirus pandemic has shown our health service at its best, but it has also created extraordinary pressures on staff and services. Welsh Government want to create a 21st century NHS by investing in the post-Covid recovery, tackling health inequalities, improving mental health provision and focussing on prevention.

**Welsh Government will:**

* Provide treatments which have been delayed by the pandemic.
* Deliver better access to doctors, nurses, dentists and other health professionals.
* Reform primary care, bringing together GP services with pharmacy, therapy, housing, social care, mental health, community and third sector.
* Prioritise investment in mental health.
* Prioritise service redesign to improve prevention, tackle stigma and promote a nowrong door approach to mental health support.
* Roll out child and adolescent mental health services ‘in-reach’ in schools across Wales.
* Introduce an all-Wales framework to roll out social prescribing to tackle isolation.
* Introduce an autism statutory code of practice on the delivery of autism services.

**Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people**

 **Welsh Government will:**

* Fund childcare for more families where parents are in education and training.
* Continue to support our flagship Flying Start programmes.
* Prevent families breaking up by funding advocacy services for parents whose children are at risk of coming into care.
* Provide additional specialist support for children with complex needs who may be on the edge of care.
* Explore radical reform of current services for looked after children and care leavers.
* Eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children during the next Senedd term.
* Fund regional residential services for children with complex needs ensuring their needs are met as close to home as possible and in Wales wherever practicable.

**Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise**

 Welsh Government have made a pledge to make sure nobody in Wales is left behind after the coronavirus pandemic, repairing the damage done over the last year. They will continue a programme of reform which includes their world-leading curriculum, vital funding and governance changes in tertiary education, stronger leadership at every level of the education system and a commitment to lifelong learning. They will work with children and young people, their families and the education workforce to ensure the best outcomes for learners, particularly the most vulnerable.

**Welsh Government will:**

* Fund up to 1800 additional tutoring staff in our schools.
* Invest in the learning environment of community schools, co-locating key services, and securing stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours.
* Explore reform of the school day and the school year.

**Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms**

 Welsh Government have pledged to continue to work together for positive change, recognising our common humanity whilst celebrating diversity and difference. They will challenge the structures of power and social relations that create fundamental disparities for our protected communities, including addressing the systemic causes of racism, hateful behaviours and other forms of discrimination, working together with progressive networks and organisations. They will aim to make Wales an anti-racist country, as well as the safest place in Europe to be a woman, support disabled and LGBTQ+ communities and tackle societal inequality.

**Welsh Government will:**

* Implement and fund the commitments made in their Race Equality Action Plan.
* Explore legislation to address pay gaps based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and other forms of discrimination.
* Ensure public bodies and those receiving public funding address pay disparities.
* Strengthen the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy to include a focus on violence against women in the street and workplace as well as the home.

**Well-being objectives**

The Programme for Government also sets out ten well-being objectives that align directly to the ten headings from their manifesto, ensuring that people in Wales will see the policy agenda they voted for delivered in practice. These objectives are designed to maximise the government’s contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals.

The ten well- being objectives are:

Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare.

Continue our long-term programme of

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inequalities narrow and standards rise.

Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people.

Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms.

Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future.

Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive.

Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation.

Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.

Embed our response to the

climate and nature emergency in everything we do.

Lead Wales in a national civic conversation

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The Welsh Labour Government’s manifesto contained further promises to the electorate and these will also be honoured, with the task of delivery falling directly to the lead portfolio Minister, as follows:

**Health and Social Services**

* Continue to fund the NHS bursary.
* Keep prescriptions free in Wales.
* Continue to provide free PPE for health and care staff.
* Fund NHS Wales Test Trace Protect service.
* Focus on end-of-life care.
* Invest in and roll-out new technology that supports fast and effective advice and treatments.
* Introduce e-prescribing and support developments that enable accurate detection of disease through artificial intelligence.
* Invest in a new generation of integrated health and social care centres across Wales.
* Establish three new Intensive Learning Academies to improve patient experiences and outcomes.
* Legislate to deliver better integrated care and health, paying attention to the responses to our White paper on Rebalancing Care and Support.
* Develop more than 50 local community hubs to co-locate front-line health and social care and other services.

**Education and Welsh Language**

* Strengthen the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.
* Implement the new Additional Learning Needs Act.
* Expand the teaching of modern foreign languages in our schools.
* Appoint a Cabinet level minister to develop and take forward the proposals of the Youth Board for Wales.
* Legislate for a new framework for youth services in Wales.
* Support the democratic role of local authorities in education provision.
* Promote parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes in Welsh education.
* Expand our Welsh language early years provision.
* Expand the Pupil Immersion Programme.

**Social Justice**

* Establish an equalities legal service to provide support on unfair or discriminatory employment practices.
* Incorporate the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People into Welsh law.

**Next steps**

Over the coming months, the RCSLT Wales office will be continue to horizon scan to look at developments and seek opportunities to influence for the profession. Please do get in touch to share your thoughts. We can be contacted on wales@rcslt.org

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