

C12

Ymchwiliad i Effaith Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014 mewn perthynas â Gofalwyr

Inquiry into Impact of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to Carers

Ymateb gan Vision 21 – Cyfle Cymru

Response from Vision 21 – Cyfle Cymru

Dear Sir/Madam

In response to your consultation on the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 I would like to add the following comments in relation “ *Other changes since the Act came into force which may impact on carers, for example changes to the services provided to people who are cared for*”

I represent Vision 21, a Welsh charity that provides vocational training for adults with learning disabilities in one of 17 projects across S.E. Wales. The majority of our service users are referred by local authorities and come from six different S.E. Wales authorities. We regularly have dealings with carers (usually parents) who are trying to find the right provision. Has the Act improved things? Do they get the right information? Is it still a battle? Our experience is that it varies enormously across authorities and that in the case of some authorities it is hard to discern any real change.

Recent examples include:

- (1) A student who has been withdrawn from our woodwork section and offered something that he does not want in his own authority area. The reason is not transport costs, or something nearer to home and does not seem to relate to funding. It seems to be a reluctance to fund anything outside the authority area. The carer is fighting this decision.
- (2) A student who has lost his place in one project and will probably lose his place in another project. The place was previously funded through ILF and was presumably re-assessed when the grant came across to the local authority. His carer is fighting the decision and would definitely say it is a battle.
- (3) A student withdrawn after 18 years when the family moved to a neighbouring authority. No consultation with the student (or with us). Again the issue seems to be about “catchment areas” not transport. The student may be coming back to us for 2 days, although at present is doing nothing and rings us in tears every day. It is stressful for the student, her carer and my staff.
- (4) We have a number of students withdrawn because the local authority will no longer fund. In some cases the authority refuse to fund both a place and support.
- (5) We have had other issues where LA are pressuring students to move to their projects, this is more difficult to report because the information we receive is anecdotal with no written evidence. We also have a few where the LA has removed transport funding and the place has ceased.

In my opinion some of these issues arise because individuals within authorities have not embraced the changes brought about by the Act, but also because of the financial pressures that all authorities are under. Local authorities are all seeking “free” provision and are looking to direct service users into their own provision wherever possible. In some cases this directly conflicts with the individual’s right to choice and the carer’s efforts to exercise that choice.

We regularly get carers ringing up for information and advice when seeking places, which suggests they are still not sure where to go. We have also seen no increase in carers using direct payments, although it is not clear whether this is a reluctance on the behalf of local authorities to give advice or on the carer to take advantage of direct payments.

I hope this helps inform the consultation. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

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Vision 21 (Cyfle Cymru)

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