

Annex A: Overview Milestone Timeline for Implementation of The Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025

From 9 February to 7 April 2026:

- **Consultation taking place** in relation to the local authority sufficiency plan duty (removing profit from children's care)

End March 2026:

- **Publication of statutory guidance** to support understanding and application of the National Health Service (Direct Payments) (Wales) Regulations 2026, *in relation to continuing NHS healthcare ('CHC') – subject to approval of the Regulations by the Senedd on 24 March.*

From 1 April 2026:

- **No new 'for-profit'** children's home, secure accommodation or fostering services permitted to register in Wales.
- **Existing 'for-profit' providers** of these 'restricted children's services' cannot vary their registration to add a new service or place.
- **The sufficiency duty** under section 75(1) of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 Act is amended to require local authorities to take all reasonable steps to secure suitable accommodation for looked-after children; prioritising options within or near their area; and using only local authority or not-for-profit providers.
- **All social care service providers** registered with Care Inspectorate Wales, under the Registration and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, **must publish their annual return** on their own website, by 30 June every year.
- **Service providers who wish to cancel their registration** in its entirety will be required to submit certain information, specified in regulations, to ensure service closures are managed safely, transparently and with due regard for the well-being of individuals.
- Strengthening the Welsh Ministers' **powers relating to 'Information and Investigations'** – in practice exercised by Care Inspectorate Wales – to support investigations into suspected operation of unregistered services.
- **Social Care Wales' Interim Orders Panels or Fitness to Practice Panels** will be able to extend an interim order for a period of up to 18-months in total, from the date it was first made, without requiring the need to apply to the First Tier Tribunal.
- **Adults eligible for continuing NHS healthcare ('CHC') will be able to request direct payments** be made to them (or to their representative) by their Local Health Board, to enable them to secure services to meet their assessed needs for health care, in lieu of receiving services provided or commissioned by the NHS in Wales.

No later than 1 December 2026:

- **Local authorities will be required to submit their first, draft annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2027-28 financial year) to Welsh Ministers for approval.

Statutory guidance for local authorities on the preparation of annual sufficiency plans will be in development with the sector and published by this time.

From 1 April 2027:

- **No additional beds** can be added to existing 'for-profit' children's homes.

- **Local authorities will be required to publish their first, approved annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2027-28 financial year).
- **No new foster carers** can be approved by existing 'for-profit' providers of a fostering service.

No later than 1 February 2028:

- Local authorities will be required to **submit their second, draft annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2028-29 financial year) to Welsh Ministers for approval.

From 1 April 2028:

- Local authorities will be required to **publish their second, approved annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2028-29 financial year).
- **Publication of local authority annual reports** covering the 2027-28 financial year, now including – as required under new section 75D of the 2014 Act – information on how they have increased or expect to increase suitable accommodation under section 75(1).

No later than 1 February 2029:

- Local authorities will be required to **submit their third, draft annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2029-30 financial year) to Welsh Ministers for approval.

From 1 April 2029:

- Local authorities will be required to **publish their third, approved annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2029-30 financial year).
- **Publication of local authority annual reports** covering the 2028-29 financial year including information within new Section 75D.

By no later than 1 February 2030:

- Local authorities will be required to **submit their fourth, draft annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2030-31 financial year) to Welsh Ministers for approval.

April 2030:

- **Children cannot be placed into the care of a 'for-profit' service provider, apart from in exceptional circumstances** (e.g. if no suitable places are available in not-for-profit services).
- Local authorities will be required to **publish their fourth, approved annual sufficiency plans** (covering the 2030-31 financial year).
- **Publication of local authority annual reports** covering the 2029-30 financial year including information within new Section 75D.
- **Provisions around local authority applications to Welsh Ministers, for approval to place children in 'supplementary' placements** with existing for-profit providers – in exceptional circumstances – to come into force.

Statutory guidance for local authorities about making these applications to Welsh Ministers regarding supplementary placements, will be developed with the sector, and published by this time.