



Gwasanaeth Ynni  
Energy Service

# Decarbonising Social Care in Wales

**July 2022**

Foreword

1. Social care in Wales
2. The climate emergency in Wales
3. Carbon assessment of social care in Wales
4. Routemap towards a net zero social care sector in Wales
5. Next steps

## Foreword

---

The social care sector in Wales has faced unprecedented challenges in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. Care providers have gone above and beyond to deliver essential services and strive to ensure no one is left behind.

In Wales, we have demonstrated how powerful a common goal can be to sustain high-quality social care even during a global pandemic. Through necessity, new ways of working have been employed. We now need to build the momentum for change to further stimulate a green recovery from the pandemic which will address the Climate Emergency.

Our Senedd was the first parliament in the world to declare a climate emergency. In Wales, we strive to continue to lead by example and have set the aim for our public sector to be net zero by

2030. This will require changes not only to public sector delivered social care, but also to the – independent sector social care that the public sector commissions.

We have set up a National Programme Board to oversee decarbonisation for health and social care jointly. The Programme Board recognises that it is the most vulnerable in society who are often worst affected by climate change. Addressing climate change will need engagement and support across all areas of the sector; from the Ministers setting policy, to the teams providing social care.

This document summarises the first step towards a net zero social care sector in Wales. The Welsh Government Energy Service supported the Programme Board by assessing the carbon impact of social care in Wales and outlining a

roadmap of 15 initiatives to structure the action needed.

Hard work is now needed to build momentum and activity. A key next step is to further understand the carbon footprint of the sector, in particular the extent of domiciliary care travel. A social care decarbonisation working group has been established, this will dig deeper into the complexities of delivering a net zero social care service. Collaborative action will be needed across the sector, our hope now is that we can sustain the unity built during the pandemic and play our part in transitioning to a sustainable low-carbon sector to support our future generations.



*Albert Heaney CBE*  
*Chief Social Care*  
*Officer for Wales*

# 1. Social care in Wales

## What is social care?

One of the challenges of defining social care is the breadth of services it encompasses. Broadly speaking, social care is concerned with improving the quality of life of people who may be vulnerable or at risk or require extra practical or personal support with day-to-day tasks and activities.

People who receive social care include, for example, older people, disabled people, and children. Care may be provided in a person's own home, in supported accommodation or a care home.

Social care is an integral part of a developed modern society and important to many individuals whether vulnerable and in need of

care, relatives of people receiving care or the social care workforce. Social care is about people and our community – this shall always be the most important aspect.

Who is supported?	Who is involved?	How and where is social care delivered?	
<p>Older adults</p> <p>Adults with mental health</p> <p>Adults with learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorders</p> <p>People with sensory impairment</p> <p>Children &amp; young people</p>	<p>Family Carers</p> <p>Care Home Providers</p> <p>Domiciliary Care Providers</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>NHS</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>Social Care Wales</p> <p>Inspectorate Bodies</p> <p>Third sector organisations</p>	<p><b>Buildings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Homes</li> <li>• Day Centres</li> <li>• Social Housing</li> <li>• Council offices for social services staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Services involving travel:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Services staff</li> <li>• Domiciliary care</li> <li>• Community based services &amp; transport</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Purchased Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent domiciliary care providers</li> <li>• Independent care home providers</li> <li>• Housing associations</li> <li>• Funded support – Age Cymru, Carers Trust, Carers UK etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Purchased Goods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authority purchased consumables</li> <li>• NHS purchased consumables</li> <li>• Independent provider purchased consumables</li> </ul>

Figure 1 Understanding social care, who is involved, and how it is delivered

## How is social care governed and delivered in Wales?

The overarching governance of the social care sector in Wales is depicted in Figure 2.

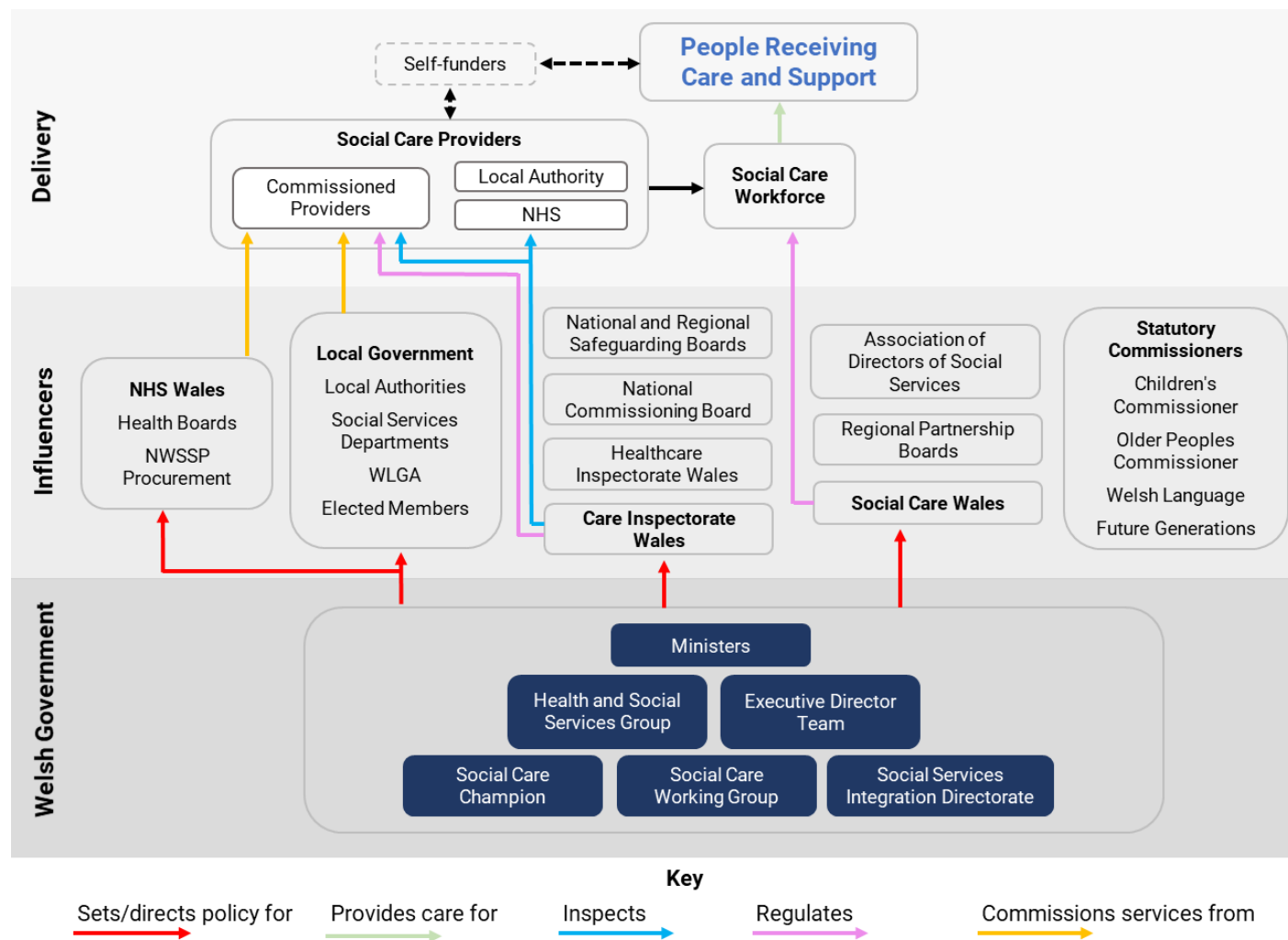


Figure 2 How social care is governed in Wales

**Welsh Ministers** regulate the sector and oversee policymaking, which affects the operation of the NHS, local government, and the role of Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales.

At the **Influencer** level, delivery of care is regulated and inspected. Key demographics (e.g. children and older people) are represented, and policymakers are influenced. The NHS and local government commission services from social care providers. Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales regulate and monitor the social care delivery and workforce.

**Delivery** of social care is primarily funded by local authorities, with a cross over with the NHS where there is a health / nursing need. In addition, self-funders may source their own care, for which they may receive an allowance from the local authority. Social care providers employ the workforce who deliver

the care and support. The type of care and support provided includes supported living, residential and nursing care, domiciliary care, respite care, and other support and advocacy.

The 22 Welsh local authorities are responsible for providing social care to the residents of their local area. This includes initial interventions, financial support, direct provision of care, and safeguarding of vulnerable people to minimise risk to recipients of care and support.

For individuals with complex and changing needs, the boundaries between health care and social care may not always be clear. NHS health care is fully funded, whereas local authority-supported social care is means-tested.

Social care is primarily provided by independent providers regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales.

#### *Number of staff*

##### *Local authority social service have:*

- *~21,000 staff, of which ~18,500 provide direct care*

##### *Independent providers have:*

- *26,000 - 28,000 residential care staff*
- *22,000 - 23,000 domiciliary care agency staff*

#### *Scale of social care delivery*

##### *In March 2021 there were:*

- *1,050 adult residential care homes*
- *240 children's residential homes*
- *600 domiciliary care agencies*
- *50 fostering agencies*

## 2. The climate emergency in Wales

The UK Climate Change Act formally committed decarbonisation targets into law in 2008. This was later enacted within Welsh legislation in the Environment (Wales) Act in 2016.

In 2019, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) recommended a new emissions target for the UK to emit net zero greenhouse gases by 2050.

In addition, the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015) requires public bodies to account for the impact of today's decisions on future generations.

In April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency.

Wales now has the legally binding target to deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the

ambition of a net zero public sector by 2030.

These targets will drive a decisive shift away from fossil fuels and a reduction in carbon emissions. Wales is committed to maximising the wider benefits from the transition to a low carbon economy, ensuring a fairer and healthier society for all.

The Welsh Government published their Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021 – 2025), their second statutory decarbonisation plan. This describes the policies and approach the Welsh Government intend to take and proposes policies and actions for the longer term.

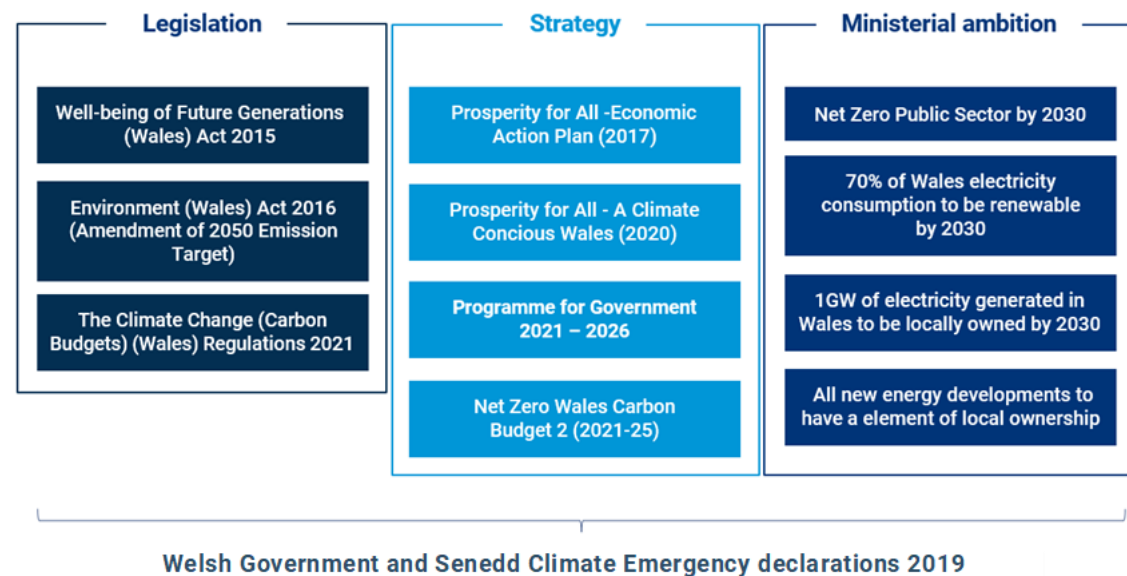


Figure 3 Legislation and key drivers for decarbonisation in Wales

One key policy highlighted within *Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021 – 2025)* states:

***Policy 83 – A joint NHS Wales and Local Government Social Care Decarbonisation Plan should be created to support the achievement of a collective net zero by 2030***

The Welsh Government has also set a target for the public sector within Wales. ‘*The Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030 routemap for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector*’ provides a strategic overview of the priority areas for action, and milestones needed, for the Welsh public sector to collectively reach net zero by 2030.

The framework is intended to support public sector organisations in the development of their own strategic plans setting out a three-staged journey towards net zero:

#### **Moving up a gear 2021–2022**

Where understanding the context and what needs to be done is vital, and where action needs to accelerate.

#### **Well on our way 2022–2026**

Where there is an expectation that low carbon is becoming the norm and we are definitely on the way to a net zero Welsh public sector.

#### **Achieving our goal 2026–2030**

Where choosing zero carbon has become routine, culturally embedded, and self regulating.

*Figure 4 Welsh public sector net zero routemap stages*

Private and independent care organisations who provide social care would be aiming for the wider net zero Wales by 2050 target. However, because most of this care is commissioned by local authorities and the NHS, the closer target of a net zero public sector by 2030 is more applicable.

Also of note is the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan, which covers the period 2021 – 2030 and describes how the NHS will meet the net zero 2050 target in Wales. This report links the plans for the health care sector with social care, primarily through *Funded Nursing Care* provision.

Welsh Government have also launched the *Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide*. This sets out how emission reporting will be undertaken, including procured social care services. The guidance will evolve and require further engagement and data sharing between suppliers and public sector commissioners. This is backed up by the Welsh Procurement Policy Note for decarbonising procurement, which strongly advocates supply chain engagement.

### 3. Carbon assessment of social care in Wales

The carbon footprint and emissions hotspots of the sector must first be understood to target impactful carbon reduction,

A carbon footprint is the **total amount of greenhouse gas emissions** directly or indirectly associated with a particular activity or organisation.

Emissions will typically include heating and electricity in buildings, travel, and emissions related to goods or services purchased.

The **Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide** details the principles for carbon accounting and reporting. The Reporting Guide was published in 2021, and an evolving approach will be taken to improve data availability and accuracy over the coming years.

#### Social care in Wales carbon emissions in 2019/20

Establishing a definitive carbon footprint for the sector has not been possible at this stage, however, total emissions have been estimated using sectorial data from StatsWales, and primary data from local authorities and the NHS.

**Welsh Social Care Sector –  
estimated emissions**  
**~460,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

Emissions have been split by local authority delivered social care and local authority / NHS commissioned social care. A large proportion of the commissioned social care is procured through local authorities.

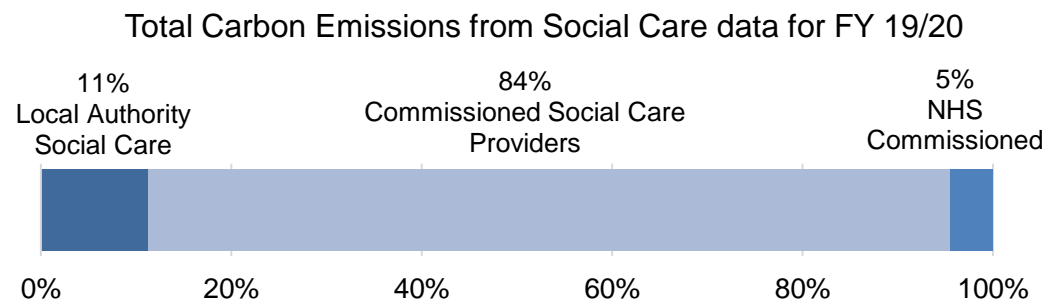


Figure 5 Total carbon emissions FY19/20 using StatsWales data



## Conclusions of the carbon assessment

Data availability and data quality has been challenging, along with defining the boundary of the sector.

**Disparities in critical procurement spend data are apparent.** This may be due to spend being categorised incorrectly, or that other social care-related activities are excluded. The significant discrepancy between financial data sets indicates the **need to improve the way social care spend is being captured and reported.**

**Local authority building-related raw energy data was not available for all of Wales** and emissions were estimated via public Display Energy Certificate data. Distinguishing relevant buildings on the database is challenging so there is a **need for a defined asset register and local authority individual building level reporting.**

**Transport-related activities within the social care sector are complex to capture.** The fuel consumption of local authority fleet vehicles and the mileage claims of social services staff were drawn from the recent fleet survey data generated by the Energy Service. This data is reasonable, but does not include information about other means of transport such as public transport or social care related commuting. **There is a need for**

**active engagement and regular travel surveys with social care staff.**

**NHS commissions a significant amount of social care** independent from but aligned with, local authorities. While this assessment focussed on local authorities, the emissions for NHS commissioned social care were estimated from sources which include several activities other than social care. **There is a need to further understand and define the boundary with NHS activity data, and how best to capture emissions data and decarbonisation responsibility.**

**Self-funded social care was not included** but is known to be significant. We suggest investigating the scale of self-funded social care on a local authority level so that the amount of spend coming from this group is captured and can be linked to the sector's carbon emissions.

**In conclusion, this carbon assessment of the social care sector is highly estimated. It is likely that the sector's carbon emissions are significantly underestimated, in particular with uncertainty on the scale of spend and self-funded care. Local authorities have a key role to play in data improvement, both for their own operational data, and in engaging with the independent sector to capture and influence emissions.**

## 4. Routemap towards a net zero social care sector in Wales

---

In Welsh Government's recently published '*Routemap for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector*' it is stated that by 2030, choosing zero carbon will be routine, culturally embedded and self-regulating across the Welsh public sector.

The social care sector has recognised its significant role in helping to decarbonise Wales and is aware that it is the most vulnerable in our communities who are increasingly impacted by the consequences of climate change and global warming, direct consequences of man-made carbon emissions. The same individuals that much of our health and social care system is dedicated to supporting. The Welsh social care sector is therefore committed to:

- Understand the current magnitude of carbon emissions
- Identify how Carbon emissions can be reduced
- Outline what measures are necessary to deliver a high-quality and affordable service without Carbon emissions
- And most importantly, take immediate decarbonisation action.

In 2021, existing policies, data and other information were reviewed, stakeholder engagement workshops with key actors in the Welsh social care sector were undertaken, and good practice examples collated. This has created an overview of the current awareness of decarbonisation in the sector and to what extent decarbonisation is already being acknowledged.

To inform a future decarbonisation strategy development, several initiatives for decarbonisation of the Welsh social care sector have been created. These have been shaped into the following structure:

- **Moving Up A Gear** (2021-2022) Short term – understanding the context, formalising actions to accelerate and securing stakeholder sponsorship.
- **Well On Our Way** (2022-2026) Mid term – an expectation that low carbon is becoming the norm for a net zero social care sector and stakeholders are aware of what has to be done.
- **Achieving Our Goal** (2026-2030) Long term – net zero has become routine, is culturally embedded and self-regulating.

## Moving Up A Gear (2021 - 2022)

*Short term – understanding the context, formalising actions to accelerate and securing stakeholder sponsorship.*

Moving Up A Gear (2021 – 2022)	
1.	The ‘Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme Board’ will embrace the decarbonisation of the social care sector and support the delivery of a future decarbonisation strategy.
2.	Local authorities will fully support the Climate Emergency for Wales declaration in the delivery of social care, by championing a future decarbonisation strategy.
3.	Local authority ‘Carbon Management Plans’ will specifically address decarbonisation in the social care sector and set out actions to be undertaken within the identified time frame. Where Plans are already in place and social care has been omitted, social care addendums will be developed.
4.	Welsh Government and local authorities will further understand and appraise the assessment of carbon emissions of the social care sector. This will include identifying the sector’s emissions within a local authority’s whole footprint, improving the approach to data management, and putting in place a system that enables stakeholders to monitor progress.
5.	Key stakeholder groups, including the National Commissioning Board, ADSS Cymru, and social care provider forums will add decarbonisation as a fixed item on their agenda.

## Well On Our Way (2022 – 2026)

*Mid term – an expectation that low carbon is becoming the norm for a net zero social care sector and stakeholders are aware of what has to be done.*

### Well On Our Way (2022 – 2026)

6. Education and carbon literacy programmes will be undertaken for social care workers and those who commission and procure social care services. The sector will share activities and learnings via social care stakeholder groups.
7. Welsh Government and local authorities will develop the approach to the procurement of independent social care providers to appraise their sustainability credentials and exert greater influence in the supply chain.
8. The carbon impact will be appraised in planning, commissioning and the delivery of social care. The reduction of carbon emissions will be mandated within new procurement contracts for social care providers and the social care-related supply chain.
9. New developments and refurbishments of social care buildings will be designed and built according to net zero building standards, which includes the provision of low-carbon heat, the generation of renewable electricity and the provision of EV charging. The Welsh Funding Programme or other incentives are considered as funding routes for energy efficiency and renewable energy technology.
10. Local authorities and social care providers will promote active travel, consider models of care that reduce travel mileage and strengthen the local community workforce while Welsh Government will provide incentives to pursue the provision of ultra-low emission vehicles, the necessary infrastructure as well as public transport.

## Achieving Our Goal (2026-2030)

*Long term – net zero has become routine, and is culturally embedded and self-regulating.*

### Achieving Our Goal (2026 – 2030)

11. Social care-related carbon emissions will have reduced, and the sector will be aware of how to achieve net zero by 2030. Focus groups and panels will concentrate on lessons learnt, and progress monitoring and related activities such as biodiversity, and adaptation.
12. A smart and positive approach to modern, environmentally friendly, low carbon, high-quality social care will be incorporated into all processes, and energy and carbon reporting/monitoring is common practice.
13. Every building used for social care will have undergone energy-efficiency upgrades – low carbon heating will be utilised and renewable energy will be generated on-site where feasible.
14. Low carbon travel will be established, and social care providers will be implementing low carbon travel plans as standard.
15. Any procured social care related service or product will also be appraised in terms of carbon. Besides delivery of social care at the highest standards, the commissioning of social care will have a clear low carbon approach.

# Social care in Wales - Decarbonisation Routemap towards Net Zero by 2030

## Moving up a gear (2021-2022)

Understanding the context, formalising actions to accelerate and securing stakeholder sponsorship.



### Short term

The 'Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme Board' will **embrace the decarbonisation of the social care sector** and support the delivery of a future decarbonisation strategy.

Local Authorities will fully **support** the Climate Emergency for Wales declaration in the delivery of social care, by championing a future **decarbonisation strategy**.



**Key stakeholder groups**, including the National Commissioning Board, ADSS Cymru and social care provider forums will **add decarbonisation as a fixed item on their agenda**.

Welsh Government and local authorities will further understand and **appraise the assessment of carbon emissions of the social care sector**. This will include identifying the sector's emissions within a local authority's whole footprint, **improving the approach to data management**, and putting in place a system that enables stakeholders to **monitor progress**.



Local Authority **'Carbon Management Plans'** will specifically address **decarbonisation in the social care sector** and set out actions to be undertaken within the identified time frame. Where Plans are already in place and social care has been omitted, social care addendums will be developed.

## Well on our way (2022-2026)

An expectation that low carbon is becoming the norm for a Net Zero social care sector and stakeholders are aware of what has to be done.



The carbon impact will be appraised in planning, commissioning, and the delivery of social care. **The reduction of carbon emissions will be mandated** within new procurement contracts for social care providers and the social care related supply chain.

Local Authorities and **social care providers will promote active travel**, consider models of care that reduce travel mileage and strengthen the local community workforce while Welsh Government will provide incentives to **pursue the provision of ultra-low emission vehicles**, the necessary infrastructure as well as public transport.

### Medium term

**New developments and refurbishments of social care buildings will be designed and built according to Net Zero building standards**, which includes the provision of low-carbon heat, the generation of renewable electricity and the provision of EV charging. The Welsh Funding Programme or other incentives are considered as funding routes for energy efficiency and renewable energy technology.



**Education and carbon literacy programmes** will be undertaken for **social care workers** and those who commission and procure social care services. The sector will **share activities and learning** via social care stakeholder groups.

Welsh Government and local authorities will develop the approach to the **procurement of social care providers to appraise their sustainability credentials** and exert greater influence in the supply chain.



## Achieving our goal (2026-2030)

Net Zero has become routine, is culturally embedded and self-regulating.



### Long term

A smart and positive approach to modern, **environmentally friendly, low carbon, high-quality social care will be incorporated into all processes, energy and carbon reporting/monitoring is common practice**.

**Every building used for social care will have undergone energy-efficiency upgrades** - low carbon heating will be utilised, renewable energy will be generated on-site and/or provided by community projects where feasible.



Any procured **social care related service or product will also be appraised in terms of carbon**. Besides delivery of social care at the highest standards, the commissioning of social care will have a clear low carbon approach.

**Low carbon travel will be established** and social care providers will be implementing low carbon travel plans as standard.



Social care related carbon emissions will have reduced, and the sector will be aware of how to **achieve Net Zero by 2030**. Focus groups and panels will concentrate on lessons learnt, progress monitoring and related activities such as biodiversity, and adaptation.



NET  
ZERO



Gwasanaeth Ynni  
Energy Service

## 5. Next steps

The key next steps for decarbonising the social care sector are summarised across the themes of:

- Building engagement
- Understanding the footprint
- Enabling and making change

### Building engagement

To recognise the net zero ambition for the public sector, Welsh Government has a leadership role to play in supporting the social care sector as a whole to decarbonise.

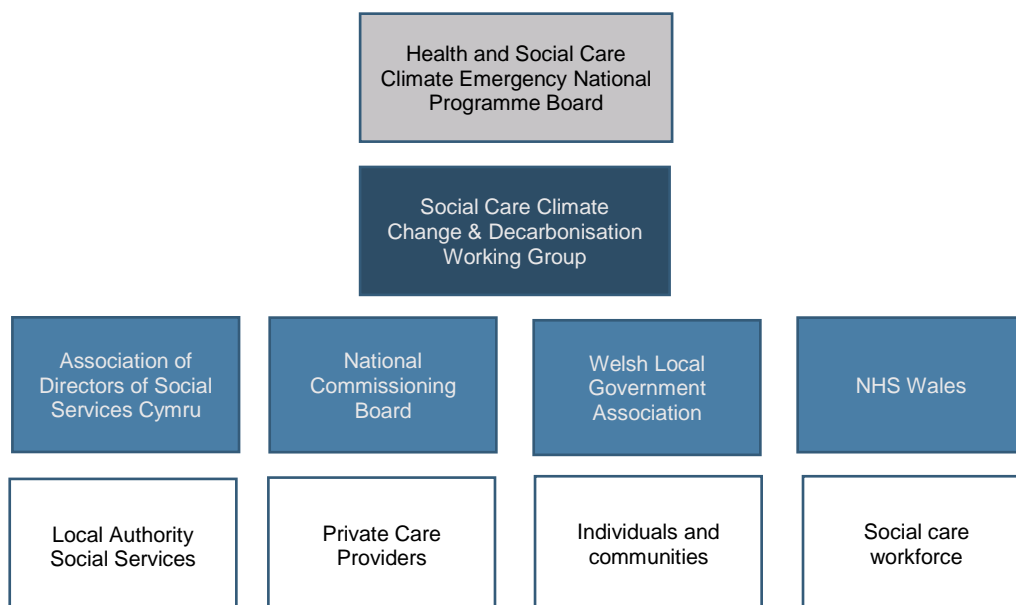


Figure 6 Decarbonising social care governance structure

In developing this routemap, a Working Group has been set up; this includes members from ADSS Cymru, National Commissioning Board, WLGA, Social Care Wales, and independent providers. A key next step is to build upon the momentum gained, to put in place further resource to support and drive activity (such as topic leads and focus groups), and to have a governance structure which is clearly linked back to the National Programme Board.

Critical to success will be to build engagement where change will be delivered. Local authority social services that run care facilities, employ social care workers, and commission independent providers have a significant part to play in directly reducing emissions, engaging independent providers, individuals, and the workforce to influence change.



## Understanding the footprint

Gaining a better understanding of the carbon footprint of the social care sector is essential to targeting activities, engaging stakeholders, and tracking progress. It is recognised that data improvement should be an evolving process, in particular with the major challenge of engaging a significant number of independent providers. Delivering routemap action 4 will be key to improving understanding of emissions:

***4. Welsh Government and local authorities will further understand and appraise the assessment of carbon emissions of the social care sector. This will include identifying the sector's emissions within a local authority's whole footprint, improving the approach to data management, and putting in place a system that enables stakeholders to monitor progress.***

To support this, the Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme Board will take on the following next step actions:

- Seek to influence how the Welsh Public Sector Carbon Reporting guidance evolves, in particular, to incorporate the following:
  - individual building level reporting
  - fleet and staff travel related to social care can be distinguished

- social care related procurement spend categories are clear
- Support local authorities to engage staff and undertake travel surveys to better understand business travel and fleet vehicle utilisation.
- Better engage with the NHS to clearly define the social care boundary, data, and how NHS can align with social care decarbonisation activity.
- Better understand the role of self-funders, the interaction with local authority funding, and the overall scale of spending in the sector.
- Support engagement with independent providers to understand emissions data availability and sustainability credentials.

## Enabling and making change

This routemap provides guidance at a strategic level for decarbonising the social care sector. However, to make the essential changes necessary to meet the ambition for a collectively net zero public sector by 2030, tangible actions must be derived from the initiatives. These actions should be implemented and monitored on an ongoing basis, and an individual or group should be identified to take responsibility and accountability for the implementation.

Welsh Government have a critical role in enabling change in the sector, both driving from a policy perspective, but



also supporting through funding. Local authorities have an important role in delivering change for their direct emissions, and those they influence through the supply chain. Routemap activity 3 sets out the requirement for local authorities to address social care through their Carbon Management Plans, this is where specific actions will be specified and managed.

**3. Local authority 'Carbon Management Plans' will specifically address decarbonisation in the social care sector and set out actions to be undertaken within the identified time frame. Where Plans are already in place and social care has been omitted, social care addendums will be developed.**

An important next step in delivering change will be to create a joined-up Health & Social Services delivery plan for decarbonisation. The '*NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery*' is in place, and is driving action through the National Programme Board – a similar social care focused approach is now needed to drive activity from care providers to commissioners to policymakers as well as a collective commitment to embed a low carbon mindset into decision making across the sector.

**Decarbonising the sector will not be easy. Sustained collaboration and ongoing evolution of the approach will critical to success. The drive for net zero should be seen as central to securing the well-being of future generations, and addressing the climate and ecological emergency.**



Figure 7 Climate action activities required across the social care sector



## Gwasanaeth Ynni Energy Service

The Welsh Government Energy Service (“**WGES**”) is funded by the Welsh Government with the aim of developing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that contribute to public sector decarbonisation and national energy targets. The WGES is delivered by the Carbon Trust, Energy Saving Trust and Local Partnerships (the “**Delivery Partners**”). This report (the “**Report**”) has been produced by the Delivery Partners and, whilst the views expressed in it are given in good faith based on information available at the date of this Report:- (i) these views do not necessarily reflect the views of the Welsh Government, which accepts no liability for any statement or opinion expressed in the Report; (ii) the Report is intended to provide general guidance only, rather than financial, legal or technical advice for the purposes of any particular project or other matter, and no-one in receipt of the Report should place any reliance on it in substitution for obtaining their own advice from an appropriate third party advisor; and (iii) any person in receipt of this Report should therefore obtain their own financial, legal, technical and/or other relevant professional advice insofar as they require specific guidance on what action (if any) to take, or refrain from taking, in respect of any project, initiative, proposal, involvement with any partnership or other matter to which information contained in the Report may be relevant; and (iv) the Delivery Partners accept no liability in respect of the Report, or for any statement in the Report and/or any error or omission relating to the Report.