

Measuring the Mountain: Understanding Experiences of Social Care in Wales

Measuring the Mountain is a co-productive approach to evaluating the impact of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It's a Welsh Government-funded, all-Wales collaboration of the public sector, third sector and, most importantly, the people who live here.

We want to collect hundreds of stories from the diverse people and communities that access social care throughout Wales: stories about their experiences of social care and so, stories about the impact (or lack of impact) of this important piece of legislation. We want to hear from people who receive care and we want to hear from people who are carers.

The themes and key issues that arise from this rich research will inform later stages of the project, including a Citizens' Jury: an exciting approach to engaging people in complex areas of policy, as well as the more formal 3-year evaluation of the Act starting in late 2018.

The Citizens' Jury will bring together members of the public to consider, in depth, key issues that arise from the stories we've collected. Jurors will be fully supported to examine evidence and question 'witnesses' before reaching conclusions to share with Welsh Government, social care professionals and people in Wales.

Throughout its lifetime, Measuring the Mountain will share its findings, conclusions and recommendations through reports, presentations and the website.

Our ultimate aim is to ensure that the Act lives up to its promise and makes a real and positive difference to how social care is delivered in Wales.

We need your help

We want people to be at the centre of this project and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved. It's vital that Measuring the Mountain hears from as many people as it can, and that people who are involved in social care are well represented throughout the project.

We will be using SenseMaker® to collect people's stories - it's a tool that enables people to describe an experience and then self-interpret it. This approach encourages someone to share an experience and their thoughts on it, without asking them to evaluate it or identify what service providers should be doing differently. This process creates numeric data, underpinned by narrative, from which key themes emerge. These themes can be examined more closely and recommendations for future action and policy made.

We are looking for organisations from across Wales that can recruit and support story-collectors or Listeners: people who are 16 or over, good listeners, who know their community well.

Listeners can be paid staff or volunteers, ideally a mix of both, with time available for story-collecting until the end of May. We would like Listeners to collect people's stories of experiences of social care from the last 12 months. Collecting a story and supporting someone to self-interpret it takes around 30 minutes. This can be done most easily on a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer but paper copies are also available and will be uploaded to SenseMaker® by the project - if an alternative format would be more suitable for your organisation or Listeners please contact the project.

Why get involved?

Getting involved with Measuring the Mountain will ensure that the experiences of people you support, work, and engage with help form the picture of social care in Wales. These experiences will play an essential role in informing the debate around the future delivery of social care and the ongoing implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The data we gather will be shared and can help inform the future work of organisations and service delivery bodies. We will be listing organisations who supported the project in our reports and keeping you updated about events and other opportunities you, or people you know, may be interested in.

How do Listeners and story-tellers benefit?

We hope that people will want to share an experience with the project and will enjoy talking to a Listener. The experiences of individuals are vital to understanding the impact of social care and the early implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) Act 2014, and will be the foundation for identifying what's working well and what could be done differently.

Listeners will gain experience of using SenseMaker® - an innovative and transformative approach to gathering data and understanding people's experiences. They will be kept aware of other opportunities within the project they can get involved in, for example, the Citizens' Jury. And volunteer Listeners will be able to sign up for Time Credits.

Time Credits work very simply: for every hour that someone contributes as a volunteer, they receive one Time Credit. This Time Credit can then be exchanged for an hour of activity provided by one of the hundreds of corporate and community partners in Spice's network, including the Wales Millennium Centre, Llanelli Scarlets, the Tower of London, Madame Tussauds and Ice Arena Wales.

When volunteer Listeners become involved in the project they will have the opportunity to register with Spice who, with the project, will manage all aspects of the Time Credits.

Keeping people safe.

We understand that, from time to time, a story may be shared that will be upsetting for the teller to repeat or for the Listener to hear. In many cases, an organisation's safeguarding, volunteer and/or staff policies will outline how to offer support and any processes that should be followed.

If you feel that your organisation may need additional support in this area please contact the project. Additionally, if you are aware of individuals who are not directly connected to an organisation but who wish to undertake the Listener role independently, please encourage them to contact the project.

SenseMaker® is compliant with data protection requirements and all story-tellers will be explicitly asked to consent to sharing their story and the data attached to it: people will be able to choose whether to share their story with others, and the software allows us to capture how they feel without sharing their story, if this is their preference.

How do you get involved?

You can contact the project to request an Expression of Interest form, or download one from the website to complete and return. The Eoi enables us to build a picture of who is collecting stories, where and from whom. It also ensures you are added to the mailing list to receive occasional project updates and news about project events.

We encourage everyone to get involved, and are very happy to discuss any support you might need to enable this to happen.

Contact details

For information about the project and how to get involved visit our website or contact Katie:

www.mtm.wales / www.mym.cymru

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