Executive summary

In September 2015, the Care Council for Wales commissioned ICF Consulting Services to undertake an independent evaluation of the Resources and Learning for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 programme. This report looks at the content of the programme, examines how the training has been delivered up until the end of the 2015/16 financial year and presents early findings on how the training has affected the knowledge and skills of the workforce.

The study is evaluating the success of the Resources and Learning programme, specifically assessing:

The readiness and confidence of the workforce to implement the Act;

The quality of the materials produced and the training activities delivered;

The quality of the programme management/leadership; and

The value for money of the programme.

The study is also examining what is working well in the programme, where there are challenges and how these should be addressed. It looks at the effectiveness of the delivery model used to train the workforce and identifies training priorities for the second year of the programme.

This report has been informed by qualitative interviews with individuals involved in the delivery of the programme, employers who will be affected by the change in legislation, and individuals who have undertaken training. We have conducted interviews with:

Regional social care leads;

Local Authority workforce development officers;

Private care providers;

Voluntary organisations;

Individuals who have taken part in the core training modules; and

Members of the Strategic Advisory Group.

In addition to the qualitative interviews, we have collected information from two online surveys. These surveys have been targeted at individuals who provide the core training modules and individuals who participated in the core training modules. We have also sought written feedback from participants of the leadership and management workshops.

1. Implementation of the programme

The Care Council rolled out several strands of activity in 2015/16, including the development of an online resource/one stop shop – the Information and Learning Hub, the development and delivery   
of awareness raising courses, developing materials for core training modules and training trainers, developing materials for leadership and management workshops, auditing existing materials and commissioning co-produced materials.

The Information and Learning Hub was launched in May 2015. The Care Council has added to and revised the content of the website as more information about the Act has become available. The hub has been advertised using multiple avenues (for example links to the hub from other websites, social media, posters, leaflets and advertising through an e-bulletin). The average number of visitors and page views per day has increased for all areas which were available when the website was launched. In addition, several new pages have been added to the site which have also attracted traffic. This shows that the advertising campaign has had an impact.

The awareness raising sessions were available to all staff in the wider social care sector, including employees in the health, justice and education sectors. The awareness raising courses were coordinated at regional level. The courses started to be delivered in the summer of 2015 and have continued into 2016.

The awareness raising courses have been delivered in a variety of formats, including large-scale events in a hired location for a large number of learners, and more informal sessions, such as to a small group within their workplace. The awareness raising materials are available as an e-learning module on the hub website. Over 7,000 people in Wales have attended an awareness raising event. However, this does not include individuals who completed the e-learning modules.

The training materials for the core training modules were developed in late 2015, and the train the trainer courses were provided in two phases: the first in early January 2016 and the second in February/March 2016. A total of 185 individuals have attended the train the trainer sessions. These individuals cover all the regions of Wales, with over twenty trainers available in each region.

In all regions, a first tranche of staff within local authorities were selected to undertake the core module training before April 2016. These individuals were selected through guidance issued by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), which included team managers, senior practitioners and workers who provide Information, Advice and Assistance.

Over 6,500 attendances at core modules have been reported through the Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) by the end of March 2016. In most regions, the target number of attendances has not yet been achieved. However, as the core module training is expected to continue into the summer of 2016, it is anticipated that the targets will still be met.

The roll out of the core training modules has varied between regions. Some regions have tried to roll out the training regionally (each training event is open to any selected worker in the region); whereas others have opted to deliver training locally (the selected staff attend training in their own Local Authority area). Delivering the training at a regional level can be problematic due to differences in the levels of knowledge of participants prior to the training in different Local Authorities. This leads to the training not being pitched at the appropriate level for all the training participants. The newness of providing training at a regional level in the sector in Wales rather than a Local Authority level can explain these difficulties. A difference in prior knowledge has also been a problem when delivering the safeguarding module, as individuals working with children have a higher level of prior knowledge than individuals who work with adults.

The leadership and management workshops have been developed for the Care Council by the SSIA and IPC, with IPC delivering the regional workshops. The content for the workshops was developed in late 2015, with the workshops being delivered from late January 2016.

1. Views on provision

The majority of responses were very positive about the hub. The consensus among interviewees   
was that having a centralised website was the most effective approach to disseminate standardised dynamic content. The website is easy to access and navigate to find relevant information and new information has been added to the website promptly. All the information the interviewees expected to be on the hub website was available.

The majority of interviewees had attended awareness raising courses, or used the awareness raising materials developed by the Care Council. In general, the awareness raising events were considered to be successful for those who attended. The training materials provided an introduction to the Act and were not intended to be detailed materials of how the Act would change working practices.

The individuals who attended the train the trainer sessions were generally very satisfied with the training provided. They were particularly impressed with the quality of the materials provided and the facilitators’ ability. The two main criticisms of the materials were the length and the quality of some of the case study examples. However, the materials developed by the Care Council were designed to extensively cover the topic and allow trainers to filter content that was appropriate to the audience.

The feedback on the training provided to the workforce has been mixed. Although all the expected content was covered, some interviewees stated that the training only provided a general overview to these topics, and did not go into enough detail. Others reported that the sessions were too long and were repetitive, and did not include the specific tools that would need to be used when the Act is introduced (e.g. assessment forms).

The feedback on the trainers providing the training has also been mixed. Some of the trainers were described as being well-informed and engaging when delivering the training. However others were said to lack a detailed knowledge of the Act or how services are delivered in an area, or did not use practical exercises in the training.

However, most of this criticism can be attributed to two issues. Firstly, the trainers began delivering the training shortly after receiving the train the trainer sessions. It will have taken time for them to discover what parts of the materials were relevant for specific audiences. Secondly, the training participants’ expectations did not match the aims of the training. Some of the training participants expected to be “spoon-fed” answers, rather than taking the information and processing how it related to their job and organisation.

1. Early impacts of training

Individuals who attended the train the trainer sessions provided feedback about the impact of the training through an on-line survey. Train the trainer attendees were asked to rate their level of knowledge and skill about the Act. The level of knowledge about the Act and the four principles has increased among the trainers following the training. The largest change in knowledge has been for the knowledge of the new legislation described in the Act. The trainers also responded that their level of ability to provide training to the wider workforce had increased after attending the training. The average score for both the level of skill and the knowledge of the Act increased after the training.

Individuals who attended the core training modules provided feedback via a separate on-line survey. As with the responses to the trainer survey, there was an increased knowledge of the legislation and of all four principles of the Act among participants after attending the training. The largest change in score related to knowledge of the new legislation described in the Act. The level of knowledge for the effects of the training has improved following attendance. The survey responses indicate that staff are more confident they have the knowledge and skills to deliver services in line with the Act following the training.

The effect of the training on workforce practices has been more limited than the reported effect on skills and knowledge. This was for two main reasons. Firstly, it is still too early for the training to have a full impact on job roles. The core module training only began in late January. For the training to have an impact on job roles people need time to absorb the information, apply it to their job role and then begin to change their practice.

1. Management of the programme

The Care Council has engaged with representatives from a wide range of sectors affected by the introduction of the new Act, with individuals invited to participate in different groups managing and reviewing the quality of the training materials. The communication from the Care Council was good, with representatives from the sector and from Local Authorities being invited to review draft materials and being kept informed of how the programme was progressing.

The programme faced several challenges. The most common difficulty highlighted was the timescale for developing the training materials and delivering the training. In order to ensure the programme progressed on schedule, such as working closely with the IPC and the Welsh Government to begin the development of the training materials using draft codes of practice. It was widely recognised that the Care Council and IPC had done a good job in developing high quality materials on schedule.

The timescale for the training affected Local Authorities, as there are a large number of staff who required training about the Act. The Local Authorities provided training for the workers specified by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS). This helped the Local Authorities prioritise their training, and meant there were sufficient facilitators to deliver the training sessions in each region.

A further challenge has been engaging with organisations in the private and voluntary sector in social care. The Care Council has engaged with voluntary sector and private sector umbrella organisations and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) with the aim of advertising the programme to all providers of social care in Wales. However, this has proved challenging, with private providers, in particular, signalling a lack of awareness of the Act and the training programme. When the Care Council was made aware of this, it redoubled its efforts to engage with these sectors, using Local Authority networks and the umbrella organisations.

Engaging with organisations outside social care has also been challenging. One potential reason for this is that although the Act will affect other sectors, such as health, education and justice, they do   
not see it as affecting the core of their service. The Care Council has attempted to engage with   
these sectors by inviting them to take part in the management of the programme. Despite having involvement at a strategic level, it has been hard to translate this into involvement among the workforce. The Care Council has attempted to engage with the health sector workforce by supporting the development and dissemination of a leaflet advertising the programme and the hub to every NHS employee in Wales, with the leaflet sent alongside their payslip.

This programme had spent over 90% of the programme budget at the end of 2015/16 (£920,000). The largest expenditure items were for the development of learning materials and staff costs. However, this only covers the expenditure of the Care Council on the programme. Local Authorities have also contributed financially by providing training for the core modules and awareness raising.

Despite some challenges and concerns, the general impression of all interviewees was that the programme was being very well managed, and the major cause for concern was out of the hands   
of the Care Council.

1. Recommendations

The main recommendations for the programme in 2016/17 are presented below. The Care Council has already incorporated some of these into its plan for 2016/17.

To engage with the private and voluntary sectors. The core training modules have mostly focused on Local Authority staff. The Care Council is trying to engage with the independent and voluntary sector through umbrella organisations, but it may need to do more to engage with employers in the private and voluntary sector. This could be through the CSSIW, the Royal College of Nursing, the UK Homecare Association or the Care Forum Wales (to engage with independent providers).

To engage with workers affected by the Act outside the social care sector. The Care Council has made some progress with the health sector workforce, but a sustained effort will be needed to ensure workers in the sector receive training. Similar efforts to the ones made in health (leaflets and contributions for training) may need to be made to engage workers in other relevant sectors.

The Care Council should attempt to manage the expectations of individuals undertaking the training modules. Some training participants felt that the training should provide them with specific details of how the introduction of the Act would affect their job role. However, the aim of the training is to provide information of how the Act will change the legislation in Wales and provide some examples. Training participants are required to consider how these changes affect them directly. What the training will do (and what it will not do) should be made clear in advance, in order to prevent a negative view forming about the training.

The Care Council should take measures to ensure that the trainers provide relevant training which is useful for the training participants. A network has been set up so that trainers can share examples   
of good practice, and the Care Council is hosting Trainer Recall days to bring the training providers together and reinforce the messages to be disseminated to the workforce. This needs to be actively managed, to ensure the trainers continue to provide useful information and examples.