

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL- BEING (WALES) ACT 2014

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Section 184 – Research and provision of information

457. **Section 184** sets out the powers of the Welsh Ministers, local authorities and Local Health Boards to conduct, commission or assist in the conduct of research into specified matters. Additionally it places requirements on local authorities, LHBs and voluntary organisations to provide information to the Welsh Ministers within certain defined parameters.
458. This section to a large extent mirrors the approach in section 83 of the Children Act 1989 and, in relation to children, is a partial re-statement of that provision.
459. This section enables the Welsh Ministers to require local authorities, LHBs and the lead partner of a Safeguarding Board (prescribed by regulations under section 134) to provide them with information. The Welsh Ministers can also require voluntary organisations to provide information about adults that they accommodate. The equivalent power of the Welsh Ministers in the case of children accommodated by voluntary organisations is in section 83 of the Children Act 1989.
460. The Welsh Ministers can request information from local authorities that identifies individual children (see subsection (9)). However, this is only if the information is needed to inform the review and development of policy and practice relating to the well-being of children, or for the conduct of research about the well-being of children. Identifying information may be needed so that the Welsh Ministers can match data received from a number of sources, and can then assess the data more meaningfully. For example, children’s educational attainment data may sometimes include identifying information such as pupil reference numbers. The Welsh Ministers, in the context of developing policy and practice relating to the well-being of children, may wish to consider the educational attainment of certain cohorts of children, such as looked after children. Information about children may also be used to inform the Wales Children in Need Census. Details of individual children are not included in such reports and their data is processed securely by the Welsh Ministers in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
461. The Welsh Ministers must lay a summary of the information provided to them under this section in an annual report to the National Assembly for Wales, but that summary must not contain any information that identifies a child or that allows a child to be identified.