

CHILDREN ACT 2004

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 3 - Children's Services in Wales

General

Section 25: Co-operation to improve well-being: Wales

133. As in section 10 in relation to England, the purpose of this section is to create a statutory framework for local co-operation between local authorities in Wales, key partner agencies (“relevant partners”) and other relevant bodies (“other bodies or partners”), including the voluntary and community sectors, in order to improve the well-being of children in the area. The duty to make these arrangements is placed on local authorities and a duty to co-operate is placed on the partner agencies listed in *subsection (4)*.
134. *Subsection (1)* imposes the duty on each local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, its relevant partners (listed in *subsection (4)*) and other bodies exercising functions or engaged in activities relating to children in the local authority's area. The duty on each relevant partner to co-operate is in *subsection (5)*.
135. *Subsection (2)* sets out the purposes of the arrangements and *subsection (3)* requires a local authority, when making those arrangements, to have regard to the importance of parents and other persons caring for children in improving the well-being of children.
136. *Subsection (6)* gives a power for all the specified partners to pool budgets and other non-pecuniary resources in support of these arrangements. A pooled fund is defined at *subsection (7)*.
137. *Subsection (8)* creates a power for the Assembly to issue guidance on how these arrangements should work. The guidance will be used to explain the expected practical manifestations of co-operation between the core partners and wider relevant bodies, including the voluntary sector and users of services. These will include: effective working together to understand the needs of local children and young people, agreeing the contribution each agency should make to meet those needs, effective sharing of information at a strategic level, and integrated planning of services. The guidance will, in particular, make clear that there is no expectation that Children's Trusts will be created in Wales. *Subsection (9)* provides that the Assembly must obtain the consent of the Secretary of State before giving guidance under *subsection (8)* to non-devolved bodies.