

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2011 - 2012

Local Authority Name: Caerphilly County Borough Council

This report sets out the key strengths and areas for development / improvement in Caerphilly County Borough Council, Social Services Directorate for the year 2011-12

Summary:

Caerphilly County Borough Council social services has a strong tradition of partnership working. It has frequently provided the lead or hosted services that span the five local authorities in the Gwent area and other neighbouring councils. The integration agenda with Blaenau Gwent social services is in keeping with its quest for continuous service development and making the best of available resources. Social services works well in partnership with other councils in addition to Blaenau Gwent and will need to review and adapt these partnerships to be sure they do not inhibit the integration arrangements.

The council has given safeguarding children and adults high priority and is addressing the requirements of national policy robustly. There is a strong focus on developing staff with sound individual professional practice and providing good person centred services. To achieve this, the council has ensured that sufficient funding has been available to social services, despite financial challenges.

The Director's report gives a comprehensive and accurate account of the council's performance and clearly reflects the context for social services locally and nationally. In particular references to achievements in adult and children's services are measured and reflect the focus on improvement and listening to service users and carers. Challenges to securing improvement are acknowledged with indications of how they will be met.

The evidence provided by the council to support its self-evaluation has been clear and comprehensive in relation to both adult and children's services. Caerphilly has constructed its own outcome framework which showed a thoughtful approach that can be built upon.

Adults

Adult services continue to be strong. The council has been active in improving mental health services, with its partners in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board in response to the homicide enquiry recommendations. Services for people with learning disabilities have improved considerably year on year, and are benefitting from improved integration between health and social services. The strong emphasis on reablement services has supported people to maintain independence.

Caerphilly has a strong track-record of involving people who use services effectively both in planning new services and in the re-design of existing ones. CSSIW has confirmed this in discussion with people who use services.

Children

Children's services are effective in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in need. There is a range of services that the council either delivers itself, in partnership with other statutory agencies or commissions from voluntary sector services. Work has been done to strengthen services for disabled children and their families, including eligibility criteria which are more inclusive and recognise wider definitions of disability.

CSSIW has identified the following potential risks:

- The integration agenda raises very complex issues. The robust governance arrangements put in place will be crucial to ensuring that accountability remains clear at all levels.
- During a period of potential change business continuity will need to be sustained to ensure people experience continuity of service.

Response to last year's areas of development:

Progress has been made across almost all areas for development and is evidenced robustly by the local authority. Providing timely assessments is one area which continues to require attention in adult services and indicates continuing pressure on resources through rising demand. The council has set its own overarching priority areas for development and has commented on them in detail in its annual report. These mirror CSSIW's findings.

Good practice identified:

CSSIW has identified the following areas of good practice in Caerphilly:

- **Adult Safeguarding:** This is well resourced with a robust infra-structure. Statutory partners have been well engaged and the profile of safeguarding

within health services has been enhanced. The council applies effective self audit to continue improvement and effectively links procurement and contract monitoring to safeguarding.

- Application of the escalating concerns procedure:
Effective monitoring of commissioned services was exemplified by the withdrawal of contracts from a provider which was upheld by judicial review
- Children's Safeguarding – performance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board:
Aspects of good practice were commended in the Overview Report published in 2011 following the national joint inspection of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. They included quality assurance, establishing a strategic direction, establishing collaboration, delivering outputs, promoting learning and promoting safeguarding across the community.

Site inspections undertaken during the year:

During 2011-12 there were no service reviews, but CSSIW undertook a number of site visits to monitor progress. These included:

- Day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, where the involvement of and input from service users was apparent in every area. Service users expressed high levels of satisfaction about staff members' support to them and the activities themselves.
- An extra care housing unit run in partnership with a housing association providing accommodation and in-house care services providing personal care where required. This demonstrated flexible arrangements where the availability of 24 hour support does not compromise independence.
- Gwent Frailty in Caerphilly. This was the first of a three year development programme and formal evaluation will take place at a later stage. The Community Resource Team is led and hosted by social services. This multi-agency team offers a range of medical, nursing and social care/reablement options to support individuals with health and social care crises in their own homes and prevent unnecessary admission to hospital. The team showed great enthusiasm for this person centred way of working. Letters from people who have received the service and their families gave testimony to its value for them.
- The Leaving Care team. This team provides young people with support and advice to assist them to live independently as well as providing practical support, financial help and reducing isolation. The team works closely with other partners such as housing, education and welfare benefits organisations.

This work was in addition to CSSIW's routine inspections of regulated services provided by the council.

Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year:

A number of specific areas for improvement or further development have been identified in the body of this report. The council's progress in relation to these will be discussed with the council during regular engagement meetings in the coming year.

- Progress on integration with Blaenau Gwent social services will be discussed regularly.
- Review of progress made in implementing the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales Homicide review recommendations, including the outcomes of integrating health and social care management and working
- The expanded eligibility criteria and its impact on families accessing support from the Children with Disability team
- Support to carers
- The role of the statutory Director of Social Services (This is part of a national review.)

PERFORMANCE

Shaping Services:

The existing planning framework has enabled social services to estimate future increasing need within specific populations and to ensure there will continue to be an appropriate balance between preventative services and services which respond to entrenched or complex difficulties. Feedback from people who use services and their families has been used constructively to shape change. For example, adult carers and young carers have been engaged in the development of the new joint health and social services Carers' Strategy. Staff also contributed to individual team and service improvement plans that feed into corporate priorities.

The council is working towards a Single Planning Framework based on the Welsh Government's guidance under the direction of the Local Service Board. The Single Plan will use common population indices and sets out the direction for the Single Integrated Plan which will be in place in April 2013. This will unite the statutory strategic plans (the Children and Young People's Plan, the Health Social Care and Well-Being Plan and the Community Safety Plan) that are most relevant for social services. This will be an aspect of integration with Blaenau Gwent which will require careful consideration so that the strategic direction of other key partners such as education will also be compatible.

The integration agenda offers major opportunities for shaping services in partnership with Blaenau Gwent and the Director's report indicates that the successful integration of social services will be the main priority for 2012-13. The two directorates have put in place mechanisms, including a Joint Scrutiny panel,

for planning the integration at all levels. A timetable for integrating teams has already been identified, with the merger of the first team in April 2012. Monitoring arrangements are being agreed to ensure the process is managed successfully. CSSIW has observed that both social services directorates have worked to establish common values, and are committed to providing sustainable services. It will be important to agree areas of strength and areas for improvement and for staff at all levels to contribute.

Social servicers have demonstrated that they consistently engage with people who use services and members of the public to shape change.

Adults

The council has a long standing modernisation programme focussing on support to people within their own communities to maintain well-being and independence. It has well-developed commissioning plans in place which acknowledge the challenges that demographic changes will bring. It has been prepared to de-commission its own services or to withdraw contracts from the independent sector if the services are no longer relevant or do not offer consistent quality. It has drawn up a de-commissioning protocol which gives helpful guidance. Managers have also recognised the potential issues that can arise when contracting with companies providing domiciliary or residential care that change or merge after contracts have been settled. Senior managers have actively managed situations to ensure that people who use these services are well supported. Where appropriate they have worked well in partnership with CSSIW.

Mental health and learning disability services are being redeveloped as integrated health and social care services. This includes new regional strategies for both Mental Health and Learning Disability services, as part of a wider programme of collaboration between health and the five local authorities that previously constituted Gwent.

Children

A range of parents and children have been encouraged to give feedback about their experience of statutory services from the child protection process to looked after children leaving care. The feedback has been used to inform training for social workers and foster carers to ensure that the voice of the child is heard throughout. This represents good practice.

Services for children and young people with disabilities have been redesigned with carer and parent representation, consultation events and a postal survey to capture the views of parents unable to attend an event. The council has since launched its Children with Disabilities Improvement plan which will continue to take this work forward. CSSIW will explore the impact of this work in the next year.

Area for improvement

- Evidencing the impact of the Children with Disabilities Improvement plan on families accessing support

Getting help:

The council has made relevant information available in different formats. It has set up or participated in a number of topic-based websites, as well as the council's own website.

Adults

Access to advice and signposting is made as straightforward as possible. Information is reviewed regularly, although a few of the information leaflets about social care services would benefit from a Plain English check to make them even clearer. The public can make contact through the Adult Services Duty and Information team (ASDIT), First Access (for adult mental health services) Gwent Frailty and the out of hours Emergency Duty Team (which is managed by Caerphilly on behalf of all five Gwent local authorities). ASDIT provides a link to the other services when required. Social services evidenced that regular surveys of people who use services have found the contacts to be effective. Managers also follow up specific comments or concerns from respondents, ensuring a robust process.

Social services reported that the volume of contact has been high (32,450 calls in 12 months) but that over half were dealt with on the telephone. ASDIT duty officers are able to authorise the provision of non-technical equipment or basic services with clear eligibility criteria. Where necessary, they prioritise information using a risk evaluation matrix and make social work teams aware of the needs for urgent assessment. This has helped social services to manage rising demand effectively.

Social services indicate that nearly everyone (97%) receiving services had their care plans reviewed with social workers annually to check whether the services are of good quality and that the intended outcomes have been achieved for them. This builds on the previous year's good performance. Managers undertook audits to check the general quality of care plans, including whether they reflect individualised outcomes. The audits also found that the inclusion of contingency arrangements for emergencies enabled social services to respond much more quickly to unplanned events. CSSIW recognises that this work represents good achievement and indicates a thoughtful approach to supporting people who use services and their carers.

Social and health services have responded to HIW's recommendations for mental health services with up-dated action plans that have sought to create more co-

ordinated working, better communication and accountability. Many of the actions have focussed on improving processes and systems, and senior managers recognise that the next step is to ensure they bring better outcomes, such as improved responsiveness to people who challenge services. CSSIW will review the developments with staff and explore the opportunities that more collaborative working has brought.

Children

The council provides good evidence for its approach to providing information in accessible ways, and involving young people in the creation of imaginative material. For example, a young person made a recording for the website setting out what involvement has meant to him. It has also evidenced its efforts to ensure that staff are well informed about the range of family support services that can be drawn upon. Information is regularly exchanged in team meetings, with provider partners invited to attend to improve dissemination.

Social services reports that children and young people receive a good and timely response to their needs, with clear eligibility criteria for social services involvement, consistent decision making and clear processes for transfer between teams. Service managers with responsibility for these teams work together and use performance information to check performance levels and consistency. Although demand rose, a decision was made on all referrals within 24 hours. The number of initial assessments completed within 7 working days has decreased slightly, although most core assessments are completed within 35 working days. The proportion of children seen by social workers during initial assessment was however lower than most other councils and this is something the council should monitor. Most (85%) Child in Need plans were reviewed as required. Senior managers report that they are updating the assessment and care management strategy to continue to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of assessment, review and care planning. CSSIW will review this with them in the coming year.

Area for improvement

- Analysis of outcomes resulting from the mental health service action plans

The services provided:

The council provides a range of services and facilities either directly, with partners or by commissioning and procuring them from service providers. The Director's report details many of the developments made during the year and describes innovative new services or improvements in the way existing services operate. The council continues to examine the most effective balance of services that they provide directly and those they commission from independent providers. They state explicitly that they expect the same high standards from both. CSSIW

inspections have found that Caerphilly County Borough Council's own registered social care services for adults and children are generally well run and that issues identified are responded to appropriately.

Integration with Blaenau Gwent social services will mean that future improvements will need to sit within an overall joint strategic direction. Senior managers recognise that in the longer term a review of the level and range of service in each area is required and where necessary reconciliation of any major service differences. CSSIW will continue to explore this with social services.

Adults

The council responds to adults of all ages who meet their criteria under Fair Access to Care. Social services have provided evidence that suggests eligible adults receive a good and timely service. The Community Resource Team has been operating since the beginning of the year, and is proving very effective in supporting older people to maintain independence. Over half of the people who received short-term support have not needed longer term services. However, where people have been admitted to hospital, there can be delays in securing appropriate discharges often because of the complexity of need presented. The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons was 8.02 per 1,000 population aged 75 years or more. While this rate is higher than the average for Wales (5.03) it is slightly lower than the two previous years. The council is considering how to provide more "step-down" facilities which give support for longer, but do not commit the individual to long term residential care prematurely.

Social services have continued to develop services, where possible in partnership. This includes:

- A new six county collaborative called Shared Lives, which aims to make adult placement more available to adults of all ages where the experience of living in a family home is required permanently or for respite. This has the potential to offer more choice particularly for older people who may not have considered this option before.
- A new volunteer befriending service for people with a physical disability or sensory impairment who are socially isolated. This is part of a general exploration of more flexible resources for people with disabilities.
- Expanding the range of person centred facilities for people with learning disability which offer day opportunities and supported accommodation. People have been supported to move on from group living accommodation where appropriate.
- Additional resources within mental health services to meet the requirements of the Mental Health Measure and the local Mental Health Strategy. Social services and health contract with the voluntary sector for a number of services, including support to the carers of people who experience mental health problems. Respite services for older people and their carers have become more flexible.

CSSIW supports the focus on flexible and person centred services and will seek direct feedback from people who use these services where possible.

Children

The council offers a range of services to promote the welfare of and to protect children and young people. It offers early intervention to support families effectively through Barnardo's which provide the Family Support Service.

CSSIW's annual inspection of the fostering service was positive but indicated some areas for improvement. In response, senior managers organised discussion between foster carers and social workers to improve mutual understanding.

Social services have evidenced that services to children with disabilities and their parents have moved forward. Parents of children with disability can draw on a range of available services including the Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN). Respite from caring responsibilities is available with the Shared Care service which provides an expanded sitting service. An outreach service supports children to participate in activities outside of the family home. The Family Link fostering service supports children and their parents, and offers longer term planned placements. Children referred to occupational therapy (OT) in health and social services will be able to have their service provided by one OT from the most appropriate service. This avoids duplication and delivers a more efficient service while taking less time from hard-pressed parents. CSSIW supports the focus on flexible and preventative services available seven days a week and will seek direct feedback from families who use these new services where possible.

Area of progress

- People who use services and their families have been engaged in shaping service development with good results.
- The range of flexible services that support children, adults and older people to live in their own community.

Area for improvement

- Continued examination of service effectiveness and value for money as part of the overall integration agenda with Blaenau Gwent social services

Effect on people's lives:

Direct payments have been used for children and adults with assessed needs where individuals or their families want to be in control of the way support is delivered. Social services has given further attention to making the Direct Payment Scheme more user-friendly and flexible.

Adults

There is good evidence of opportunities for people to maintain control of their own lives or to lead more fulfilled lives. Direct payments were made available to 97 adults which is an increase on the previous year. The focus on reablement services with short-term intensive support at times of crisis has been successful. Most adults provided with a service, including older people, are helped to live at home which maintains independence. The proportion of older people funded by the council to live in residential care homes is similar to last year and is lower than the average for Wales. Social services requires staff to embrace person centred and citizen directed approaches. This was particularly apparent to CSSIW when looking at day opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

Support to carers has been a developing area for some years. Information and services to carers have all been given priority with a greater focus on flexibility to meet individual needs. The development of the Carer's Newsletter is an initiative to provide information and reach a wider group of carers. While most (89%) carers were offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right, far fewer (29%) carers accepted. Where carers' needs were assessed, 18% more carers received services than the previous year. Senior managers have explored this aspect of performance with carers and continue to ensure that assessments are offered. To meet the requirements of the Carers' Measure, health and social services have made further progress on the drafting of the local Carers' Strategy which has involved carers.

There is legislation which can be used to safeguard people and improve their well-being. The Mental Capacity Act and the Mental Health Act are both examples which can also provide access to statutory advocacy. The council authorised 17 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards this year with a further 13 applications which were not considered to be deprivations. This suggests that care homes in the area were alert to the potential for depriving people of their liberty and wanted to ensure that people's rights are respected.

Social services' Annual Report on Adult Protection services gives strong examples of the partnership approach to keeping people safe and responding to actual or alleged abusive situations. Managers gave attention to feedback from service users and family members so they can avoid using systems and processes that are disempowering.

Children

Social services is responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in need. The council as a whole has corporate parenting responsibilities towards looked after children and young people and social services has specific statutory duties for children in its care. There are a number of national performance indicators linked to statutory requirements for safeguarding children and looking after children. Overall, social services has achieved a sustained level of good performance in meeting them.

Social services acknowledges the importance of skilled foster carers to successfully care for looked after children and has improved its communication with them. This has included giving better information to foster carers at the point of placement and generally by making a resource library and foster carer's website available. Peer mentoring and support groups enable foster carers to learn from each other. Social services demonstrate how they have listened to the voices of children and young people who are in care through the Shout Out Forum. All reviews for looked after children occurred in a timely way. Preparation for independence is promoted by foster parents of older children as well as through the council's own residential facility. The leaving care team work hard to promote and support the needs of care leavers with a range of partner agencies. The three placements in supported housing dedicated to young people leaving care that help promote independence skills are an example of this.

The Director's report and the supporting evidence provided to CSSIW show that the Caerphilly Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) has been active in promoting strategic multi-agency and partnership working. It has a clear improvement plan in place with learning from serious case reviews. The CSCB co-ordinator is based with children's services and has driven the development of the planned regional safeguarding board. Work with individual families has been given high priority by social services and its partners. Efforts have been made to intervene at an earlier stage. The Immediate Response Team offers intensive intervention to families when difficulties arise seven days per week. This has resulted in fewer children being placed on the Child Protection Register during the year as well as reducing the numbers of children and young people in care. Timeliness of action has improved in child protection this year with nearly all case conferences held within the required 15 days from strategy discussions, and child protection reviews were generally held within statutory timescales. CSSIW recognises that this is good and sustained performance.

Transition from receiving children's services and moving to adulthood is an important time for young people with disabilities and their parents, with the potential for anxiety over the different kinds of facilities and levels of support available to them. Caerphilly is a party to the transitions agreement in place across five social services and education directorates of local authorities, the health board and other partners. This agreement seeks to ensure that young people are identified early on, planned with and well supported when they become

adults. It can be a challenge for specialist teams in Adult Services to respond to young people coming into services. No evaluation of the outcomes of transition for young adults has yet been undertaken and it will be an area of discussion between CSSIW and social services over the coming year.

Area of progress

- Social services demonstrates respect for diversity and individuality, coupled with an appropriately challenging approach to evaluating its own performance and how far it has achieved its key goals

Areas for improvement

- Evaluate the value of the transitions work for young people needing support and the impact on both children's and adult services
- Continue to assist the understanding and impact of support provided to carers

CAPACITY

Delivering Social Services:

The council has ensured that sufficient funding has been made available to social services. Part-way through the year the Cabinet agreed budget increases for adult services in recognition of the increasing demand for services to older people as their numbers rise. This took effect from 1st April, 2012. Social services have provided CSSIW with evidence setting out the mechanisms for agreeing budgets at both corporate and directorate level. Budgets reflect identified priorities and take account of the predicted levels of demand upon services. A medium-term financial plan incorporating efficiency targets is in place alongside robust monthly budget monitoring to manage expenditure and provide early warning of budget pressures. There are mechanisms to achieve service efficiencies and to seek value for money in service provision.

The workforce as a whole has found meeting the rising demand challenging, although managers report that staff work hard to meet expectations and respond effectively to service users. Senior managers reported to the Scrutiny Committee that services have been sustained despite some challenges in recruiting to key posts. Some management vacancies have only been filled temporarily through acting up arrangements to allow flexibility when moving integration forward. Attendance levels and staff retention has been good.

Compliance with the supervision and appraisal policy is routinely monitored and found to be good. Staff have been involved in regular briefing meetings with senior

managers and were consulted about change, giving them opportunity to raise issues. In adult services a quality assurance framework is in place which informs workforce planning and organisational learning and development.

Social services reported that the integrated workforce development team became operational from April 2012. Commissioning and contract monitoring will be the next integrated team to be implemented. Feedback from assessment and care management teams, including adult protection, has been an integral part of contract monitoring in Caerphilly social services, and it will be important to maintain these connections following integration with Blaenau Gwent.

Areas of progress

- Financial planning and budget management
- Workforce planning and the Social Care Workforce Development plan

Providing direction:

Caerphilly County Borough Council has structures which support social services to achieve its objectives and responsibilities. The statutory Director of Social Services is a member of the corporate team working with the Chief Executive and his deputy, and the Director of Education, Lifelong Learning and Leisure. The local authority's constitution includes a dedicated cabinet member for social services.

The whole council has supported the integration initiative and a Joint Scrutiny Panel has already been set up. CSSIW notes that elected members are generally very supportive of social services. During the year, senior officers in social services worked effectively with elected members and in particular the Cabinet member with a portfolio for social services. Following the election in May 2012, a new administration has been formed. Senior managers in social services have the same expectations of working effectively with the new Cabinet member with that portfolio.

A self assessment of the implementation of the role of Director of Social Services concluded that the role was compliant with Welsh Government requirements. In the next year, CSSIW will undertake a further examination of the role of statutory Director of Social Services and the organisational structure within which social services sits. This will involve Caerphilly as one of a small sample of local authorities.

Members of the senior management team within the social services directorate have been in post for some time and work effectively together. They are visible to staff and readily accessible to them. The integration agenda requires close working across the two social services. As managers leave either organisation, consideration has been given to how best to respond to this jointly and

strategically. CSSIW have observed senior managers working together for the future benefit of people who use services.

Areas of progress

- Effective leadership across social services.
- Whole authority support to deliver social services and the integration agenda.

