

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2013 - 2014

Local Authority: Caerphilly County Borough Council

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Caerphilly County Borough Council Social Services for the year 2013- 14

Summary

In 2013-2014 Caerphilly Social Services built on its previous good performance and explored opportunities to further develop services to reflect local need and respond to national legislative change.

There were new appointments to the senior management team and the council achieved permanent appointments to the posts of director and assistant director for both children's and adult services. This has provided a more secure platform on which the department can make progress and develop services.

The director's report provides a comprehensive picture of the current status of social services in Caerphilly. This includes reflection on the previous year's priorities and achievements and areas for development in the year ahead. The report sets out how priorities within the council's single integrated plan align with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and describes how the council will continue to develop its services to meet the requirements of the Act. This is reflected in the priorities identified for the coming year.

A review of services has started and there has been a focus on beginning to make the transition to new working arrangements. This included exploration of new ways of working to meet demographic change, future legislative requirements and financial challenges. There is continuing commitment to consolidating and improving the quality of current provision.

Consultation about change and development has been undertaken and the council continues to develop methods for seeking people's views regarding services.

The report outlines plans for integration of health and social care services in relation to services for older people with complex needs in a general context, as well as specific areas of collaboration highlighted for further development.

Links to the corporate policy to support equality and the Welsh language are provided within the report and there is evidence of progress towards meeting the

requirements of “More than Just Words”, the Welsh Government’s strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health and Social Care.

The director reports that social services managed to end 2013-14 with an under spend of £1.9m and is planning for further savings of 2.06m in 2014-15. The council reports that these savings will be achieved through efficiency savings and a review of discretionary services.

Response to last year’s areas of improvement

Area for improvement	Progress
Continue to develop awareness with practitioners of the options available for use of the shared lives project.	Inspection of the adult placement service provided evidence that this service was being extended to include people with a range of needs. This included people outside the traditional learning disability services including older people and sessional support.
Continue to seek out and develop methods to identify and engage carers.	The council has continued to develop methods for engaging with carers although performance indicators demonstrate a slight dip in persons offered an assessment. There has however been an increase in young carers provided with a service.
Identify and collate resources for staff to signpost and continue to develop citizen centred care	The council has commenced compilation of resources for signposting and appointments secured to drive this forward.
Ensure statutory visits to looked after children take place as required	Performance indicators demonstrate that the percentage of statutory visits that have taken place within statutory timescales increased from 74% to 95.5%.
Secure a permanent appointment to the post of director of social services	A permanent appointment was made in Autumn 2013

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

- National Review of Commissioning for Social Care in Wales 2013.
- National Inspection of Safeguarding and Care Planning of Looked after Children and Care Leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours 2014, ('looked after children inspection').

- CSSIW met with senior officers via quarterly engagement meetings to review performance and progress against areas identified in the 2012/13 ACRF evaluation.
- Site visit to the Joint Workforce Development Team.
- Site visit to the Childrens Contact and Referral Team.
- Meeting with carers groups.
- Attendance at provider meetings.
- Observation of scrutiny and corporate parenting meetings.

Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

- Review progress on the development of new systems, teams and structures.
- Mechanisms for quality and audit and monitoring outcomes
- Integration and joint initiatives with health
- CSSIW will contribute to a WAO led review to examine whether councils are effectively supporting older people to live independently, including through joined up working across health and social care.

Performance

Shaping services

The council has developed a single integrated plan 'Caerphilly Delivers 2013 - 2017' in conjunction with local and regional partners. This includes analysis of current and projected needs within the borough and sets out a range of strategies for improving and developing services.

The development of signposting for people to alternative support and advice has continued. Additional resources have been secured for a limited period (a year) which have been used to appoint two community connector posts to develop neighbourhood networks. This should strengthen local knowledge and resources and the director indicates that this will contribute to development of the council website to provide wider public information.

Adults

In line with local and national strategies there has been a focus on reviewing services to ensure that people are supported to maximise their independence and a drive to ensure that people are enabled to remain within their own community. This has included a regional approach with strategies being developed by health and social care partners to meet the needs of people with a learning disability and those with mental health issues. This has identified the need for specialist support and education to improve care provision. The analysis highlights the specialist needs of the aging population of persons with learning disability. The need for

additional support and education is highlighted to ensure these needs can be met locally. Progress with implementation of these strategies has been slow. However, a joint systems review of mental health services across the Gwent area was undertaken to explore how this agenda can be taken forward. Discussion with partners across health and social care in Gwent continue about the potential for integration and a pilot for this has started in Caerphilly. The results of this will be monitored through CSSIW's engagement meetings and site visits.

While there are commissioning strategies in place for mental health, learning disability and physical and sensory impairment services, the council's self assessment for CSSIW's national review of commissioning advised that there is not a similar strategy in place for older people's services.

The authority has however, included provision for older people as part of a wider systems review undertaken early in the year. This has resulted in the establishment of a locally based multi disciplinary team with close links to health. The inclusion of a community connector within this team has resulted in development of local networks to promote independence. Early anecdotal evidence about the impact of this development is positive. This has also included exploring new ways of working with independent providers to provide flexible user led service. The successful initial pilot is being extended for a further 6 months and the team is to become part of the wider locality team for older person services.

The decrease in older people supported in the community from 151.7 to 121 per 1000 of the population may indicate early success of promoting independence.

The recent development of an integrated health and social care centre in Rhymney for both health and council staff will provide an opportunity to continue to build on and develop integrated working. Measures should be put in place to monitor the success of this.

Children

The year 2013-2014 saw the continued development of children's services. This included the co location of preventative services alongside the contact and referral team. Staff reported this to be a positive move for communication between teams during CSSIW's site visit.

Restructuring of children's services has seen the development of a 16 plus team to improve the focus of work with care leavers. This included strengthening relationships with housing and third sector partners. CSSIW'S inspection of looked after children found that young people found this to have been a positive step in supporting them. The council will need to monitor the outcomes achieved.

The council's children's residential home was moved to a, purpose built building which provides a semi independent flat enabling young people to be supported

towards becoming independent. CSSIW's regulatory inspection of this service was positive.

Work continued throughout the year to take forward the development of the new regional adoption service (hosted by Blaenau Gwent) which came to fruition in March 2014. The council will need to work closely with the regional partners to review and develop the service provided.

The council set targets to increase the number of foster carers recruited to the in-house fostering service. Whilst there was success in this ongoing campaign the target wasn't fully achieved.

Areas of progress

- The council has successfully worked with others to implement the regional adoption service.
- Commencing pilot of mental health strategy.

Areas for improvement

- The council should develop the commissioning strategy for older people.

Getting help

The council's website provides a wide range of information regarding social services and provides links for additional advice and support including clear contact details.

The five authorities within the region (previously Gwent) have in conjunction with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board developed a carer's strategy and this has included producing carer's information packs for each council. These were readily available at events within the borough and adult carers have used services and advice from this resource. The council had also developed a carer identity card in case of emergency, although assessment of the effectiveness of this had not yet been undertaken. A designated support worker for carers was employed and has worked with social work teams to improve carer awareness. The director's report is clear in setting out the department's goals in recognising and continuing to develop support carers in their roles.

Adults

Arrangements for getting help from adult services are clearly set out on the council's website. This includes an outline of the range of services provided. The director's report indicates that development of the local resources for this site is underway to reflect development of neighbourhood networks.

Work has been undertaken in the last year to review the structure and systems within adult services including referral and assessment. The review has resulted in the new local service (referenced previously). This team is using new rationalised methods of referral and assessment. This is being kept under close review to inform service and system development.

The council has maintained the previous year's performance in terms of assessment and review, adult care plan reviews slightly decreased in number, but remains above the national average.

The numbers of delayed transfers of care due to social care reasons has increased and the council remains in the lower quartile in Wales. The reasons for this have been discussed in engagement meetings and include the challenge of having to liaise with several different acute hospitals. While closer working relationships with the health service have been forged to provide community based services, further consideration of how to improve performance in the timely discharge of people from hospital should be undertaken. A task and finish group with representatives from health and social services has recently been set up to examine this and develop communication between discharging hospitals and social services.

Children

The way to get help from children's services is clear- with a single point of access. CSSIW's site visit to the contact and referral team found clear systems and processes for referral to locally based teams. Staff had identified options for signposting people for alternative advice and support. The co-location of preventative services offered potential to further develop mechanisms for support.

Childrens services have seen continued strong performance in assessment and plans for permanence (100% performance maintained from the previous year). The year 2013-2014 saw a drop in performance in relation to statutory visits undertaken to looked after children, there has been good progress made in improving this to 99.2% completed within timescales. While there has been an overall decrease in referrals to children's services those that proceed to allocation for initial assessment have increased from 67.1% to 79.9%. In addition, the number of open cases allocated to someone other than a social worker has decreased significantly from 32% to 19.9%. Case management oversight by qualified staff may be having an impact on re-referrals as these have decreased by 2.5%.

CSSIW's review of looked after children's services found that care and pathway planning was positive and inclusive of children and young people as well as a range of professionals involved in their support. This in turn contributed to the development of an outcomes based approach for this group.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- improved performance in undertaking statutory reviews of looked after children within timescales; and
- Developed a 16 plus team to provide a focus on longer term outcomes for young people leaving care services.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- Interrogate the reasons for delayed discharge and put in place strategies to monitor and improve the progress of this.

The services provided

The council retains a number of in house services for children and adults as well commissioning services from external providers.

The director's report references the drive to collaborate with a range of partners to develop current services and explore new ways of working.

A clear policy and procedure for complaint management is in place and this is reported departmentally and at corporate level. Good quality of complaint investigation was illustrated by two referrals to the Ombudsman that were not progressed as the council was viewed to have investigated appropriately.

The council has strategies in place to support people to receive services in their language of need. Staff training and support for Welsh learners is available and this was evident at CSSIW's site visit to the joint learning development team.

Adults

Quality of internal and commissioned services is monitored closely by the contracts monitoring team and regular meetings for service providers are facilitated. These have provided an opportunity to share new service developments and provide a platform to improve quality of provision for example continued roll out of education regarding dementia care.

Regulatory inspections of the council's own services has been generally positive, notably the provision of dementia care and the adult placement service (Shared Lives) which the council hosts on behalf of the wider Gwent region. Inspection of commissioned services for older persons – particularly for those requiring nursing

care has illustrated some areas of poor quality. This is monitored closely by the commissioners via their provider performance process and the council has taken strong action where services have failed to improve.

While there is a decrease in the numbers of people receiving care within care home settings the council retains some internal care provision including care homes for older people the director is clearly sighted on the increasingly complex needs of older people. The lack of specialist provision is an area which has been considered more widely with both health and regional local authority partners.

Children

The council maintains nursery provision providing Flying Start services, regulatory inspection of these services provided positive feedback regarding the quality of the services provided and support available from the council to develop this.

The council recognises the valuable role played by carers. The director's report references collaborative work undertaken to raise awareness of carers resulting additional young carers being identified. A review of support for young carers had been undertaken and this year saw an increase of assessments offered to young carers, back to 100% from a dip last year at 96.9%. In addition to this, the number of carers provided with a service has increased. Maintaining this performance will assist in maintaining peoples independence while recognising the need for supporting for young carers in their own right.

Performance indicators demonstrate that the number of placement changes for children and young people looked after by the council has increased and CSSIW's inspection of looked after children's services also identified this as an area for improvement. This was an area that social services had already noted for priority in 2013-2014. CSSIW's inspection found that, although there was a range of foster placements, the carers did not always have the skills to effectively safeguard the young people who exhibit vulnerable and risky behaviours. The council has made the continued recruitment of foster carers as a priority, including consideration of a regional marketing strategy led by South East Wales improvement Collaborative. The council need to consider methods to support and enhance the skills of carers to meet the needs of this small but complex group.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- Put in place measure to identify carers and improve carer support mechanisms.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- Continue to develop methods for supporting and developing skills of foster carers.

Effect on people's lives

Adults

Local arrangements for adult safeguarding are well established with clear pathways for referral. The addition of a permanent appointment of registered nurse to the team has increased capacity for investigation of referrals which include health care concerns (there has previously been delay in this).

The council falls in to the lower quartile for of referrals where risk has been managed and the council needs to explore, understand and respond to the reasons for this performance. Oversight of adult safeguarding has moved into regional arrangements. The Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board includes five regional authorities aligned to the health board footprint and a broad range of partners and this is currently chaired by the council.

The current sub groups of the board have provided a drive for training staff across five local authorities as well as independent sector providers. The Board has undertaken a review of its terms of reference, structures and membership and recently appointed a development officer to support progress with this. Making progress with the actions arising from this review should be made a priority. This should provide a firm foundation to support new safeguarding legislation from Welsh Government and drive forward the development of new opportunities for shared learning between partners and promote consistency in determining thresholds and management of risk.

Contract monitoring has been developed to include consideration of the outcomes for people using services. Ongoing development of methods for collating and measuring outcomes for people receiving new services is an area which will need to evolve alongside the development of new provision.

Children

In children's services there is a commitment to improvement of the quality of safeguarding and services provided to support children and young people. Oversight of children's safeguarding has moved into new regional arrangements. The South East Wales Children Safeguarding Board has now been established for

over a year. The board has a comprehensive strategic plan in place along with the structure to support this. Locally this includes learning and development groups. The last year has seen the council improve performance in its response to safeguarding with group meetings held increasing from 95% to 98 %.

There has been a significant rise in the number of children on the child protection register from 167 last year to 216 in 2013-14. Review of the contributory factors to this should be undertaken.

CSSIW's inspection of looked after children established that structures were in place to support safeguarding and staff were skilled and aware of their responsibilities.

The council has focussed and been successful in enhancing educational achievement for young people although there was a slight dip in school attendance for secondary school pupils. Evidence that there is a longer term strategy to continue to drive up achievement was demonstrated by increased numbers of and young people with personal education plan in place (up by 10% from the previous year).

Areas of progress

The council has:

- continued to improve educational progress for children and has strategies in place to maintain this; and
- Developed methods for assessing outcomes for older people.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- examine factors contributing to the rise in children placed on the register; and
- Continue to develop outcome measure for new services.

Capacity

Delivering Social Services

The director's report provides clear information regarding departmental finances and the implications for future service provision.

The report describes the 2013-14 underspend of 1.9m and puts this in the context of future changes in that this provides a basis of a better position for future savings. This includes the need for continued savings set out for the current year (2014-2015) at 2.06m.

Reconfiguring services and exploration of new ways of working to deliver social services has started to reflect national and local strategies. The director has identified potential areas for savings in the future and provides clear direction in his report regarding this.

The establishment of the joint workforce development team with Blaenau Gwent has provided an opportunity to build a platform for staff learning and development for the full range of staff employed by social services, as well as providing support to the independent sector. CSSIW received positive feedback from social work staff and external employees that we met during our reviews and regulatory inspection regarding access to ongoing education and training. Ongoing development of the service based on a training needs analysis was evident from site visits and provider meetings we attended. The director highlights the need for ongoing review and workforce development within his report.

Recruitment to key positions to underpin new strategies supporting the prevention agenda had been undertaken and successful bids for additional funding sought to pursue this further.

CSSIW's inspection of looked after children found that staff were well motivated, skilled and well supported by the management structure to deliver the service. The inspection found that quality assurance arrangements could be improved to fully capture learning from independent reviews. The director reflects this as an area for continued improvement in his report.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- commenced reconfiguration of services in line with national strategies; and
- Implemented the joint workforce development team.

Areas for improvement

- The council should continue to develop method/frameworks for quality review.

Providing direction

The permanent appointment to director and assistant director posts has brought stability to the department's senior management team. Internal appointments to cover these posts in the interim provided a level of consistency through what could potentially have been an unstable period.

CSSIW's looked after children inspection and other site visits have found that in general there is clarity regarding roles and responsibilities at all levels within social services.

In addition, there is evidence of clear lines of communication between education and social services with staff on the ground and at director level.

The wider need to make progress with integrated working between health and social care is reflected at a corporate level with a joint scrutiny committee for health and social care.

There is corporate commitment towards social services. This is demonstrated by the regular attendance of the member at engagement meetings with the CSSIW. Performance management systems are in place; these include regular reporting to scrutiny committee and council. Work has been undertaken to drive up the challenge and participation within scrutiny meetings and to strengthen corporate parenting.

The findings of CSSIW's inspection of looked after children indicated that while at a corporate level there was oversight and commitment to children and young people, additional work should be undertaken to collate a specific profile of those with risky behaviours.

The corporate parenting panel includes representation from a range of internal and external partners. This commitment, alongside the newly formed Childrens and Families partnership board (led by health and including education), should provide a strengthened approach to managing information for all partners in meeting children and young people's needs.

Social services work constructively with the regulator and responded constructively to the verbal feedback from the inspection of looked after children -putting in place measures for improvement prior to the report being issued.

Areas of progress

- The council has responded positively to recommendations from inspection.

Areas for improvement:

- The council should continue to develop mechanisms to improve corporate oversight.