



AUDIT COMMITTEE - 10TH JUNE 2015

SUBJECT: BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN SOCIAL SERVICES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with information in respect of business continuity planning in place for Social Services, as requested in a previous committee meeting.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report seeks to reassure members that there are robust procedures in place to ensure business continuity in both services directly provided by the directorate and for those services that are commissioned from the independent sector

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Business Continuity Management is a process which supports the delivery of all services and strategies across the organisation. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to put Business Continuity Management arrangements in place.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Social Services has implemented the corporate business continuity management process involving identification of critical services and the impact if these were disrupted or lost. The maintenance of services to vulnerable client groups from both children and adults has been prioritised. The assessment covers all aspects of the services and identifies critical levels of staff that would be required to maintain a safe level of functioning and also indicates requirements for communication in terms of both IT and telecommunications.
- 4.2 Social Services has a very good track record of continuing to deliver services in periods of disruption which have primarily related to prolonged periods of inclement weather. During periods of inclement weather key service areas, such as, South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) Contact and Referral, Adult Services Duty Information Service (ASDIT), Telecare, Home Care, Community Resource Team (frailty) Supported Living and Residential Care for both children and adults have specific action plans.
- 4.3 Specific action plans involve, prioritising these staff groups for attendance at the work place or clients homes via provision of 4x4 vehicles if necessary, which are coordinated and driven by Facilities staff, who in turn liaise with other directorates in relation to access to suitable vehicles. 4x4 vehicles are commissioned each Winter by Facilities staff on behalf of the directorate as part of the business continuity planning arrangements, commissioning in this way is cost effective and ensures vehicles are available.

- 4.4 Home Care and Frailty introduce walking rotas, combine calls with health/independent care staff where appropriate and negotiate with families/carers in terms of reducing calls such as meals if family can assist. Residential, Supported Living and Telecare managers also make use of 4x4 vehicles, extended working days and re rota staff to different establishments within walking distance. Telecare have a specific requirement for business continuity as part of their accreditation, this is known as “disaster recovery”. All calls are diverted to another monitoring centre and answer by operators who have access to relevant information. This can be used, for example, if the monitoring centre has to be evacuated for a fire alarm.
- 4.5 Decisions are made on a daily basis as to whether or not day centres are to open, these decisions are made in conjunction with transport to ensure safety for service users and staff. If centres are closed staff are redeployed to other essential front line services. Arrangements are in place with other directorates for example Meals Direct to ensure any vulnerable resident receives a meal via alternative means and Highway Operations to ensure access roads are passable to essential buildings such as residential homes for emergency vehicles.
- 4.6 Contact and Referral and ASDIT ensure they have sufficient staff in to manage the volume of work and can direct social workers to situations requiring urgent attention. Key staff have IT fobs so are able to access systems/databases from home or any office base to ensure continuity of service.
- 4.7 Discussions have been held with the regulator CSSIW to enable certain staff groups to undertake different tasks in the event of the need to implement business continuity plans for prolonged periods or if key staff are not available, e.g. staff providing meals who have not undertaken basic hygiene course.
- 4.8 Our business continuity arrangements are proactive to minimise impact on service delivery for example front line staff are offered flu vaccinations on an annual basis. Staff are provided with appropriate equipment for use in adverse weather. Contracted services are required to have a business continuity plan which is monitored and is reviewed following any periods of use.
- 4.9 Social Services recently completed climate change action planning process to identify any potential impact on service provision, no risks were identified. As lessons learnt from this and other authorities illustrates social services have a good track record of continuing to provide services to vulnerable people during periods of disruption.
- 4.10 Social Services fully participate in the authority’s Emergency Planning process; contact details are available for key staff to ensure plans are put into place.
- 4.11 The directorate has negotiated with the trade unions that certain posts are exempted should there be any periods of industrial action, this ensures business continuity of essential services.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, however having sound business continuity management arrangements in place in the event of any disruption ensures that the most vulnerable in society are not without the services they need at such a time.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Expenditure of leasing of 4x4 vehicles is illustrated below:

| Service Area | 2013/14 | 2014/15 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| | £000s | £000s |
| Home Care | 21.4 | 17.4 |
| Meals Direct | 16.0 | 14.7 |
| TOTAL | 37.4 | 32.1 |
| | | |

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 All comments have been included in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members note the content of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Report is for information only.

Author: Dave Street Corporate Director Social Services
 Consultees: Senior Management Team
 Cllr Robin Woodyatt Cabinet Member