



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Performance Evaluation Report 2014–15

Ceredigion County Council
Social Services

October 2015

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Ceredigion County Council Social Services for the year 2014–15

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2014 - 2015

Local Authority: Ceredigion County Council

This report sets out CSSIW's evaluation of Ceredigion County Council's performance in delivering its social services functions.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The positive impact of working in a wider directorate is enabling social care to link more effectively with housing and with other departments. This is supported through the heads of service meetings which are contributing to a wider understanding within the council of its corporate responsibility in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and adults. A key challenge for the council going forward is the working relationship with health and its own internal restructuring and refocusing. The impact of this on the council's continued ability to deliver social care services more effectively and affordably is significant.
- 1.2. The social care workforce is well trained, supervised, and valued. Despite challenges, the commitment of staff is very clear and it is recognised that whilst more development is required the core service delivery remains robust.
- 1.3. At a time of austerity the achievements within social services during the year are worthy of note. Adult services have had financial support from the council for the learning disability, transition and adult safeguarding business cases. The service has been given extra funding for transforming its older people services to help ensure that it is sustainable, given the challenging demographics of Ceredigion. Included in this extra funding has been the management of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications and quality assurance development. These areas of work will now be progressed in 2015-16.
- 1.4. Within commissioning services, good progress has been made in developing the domiciliary care market.
- 1.5. In children's services the development of its early intervention and prevention services and models has delivered positive outcomes for both children and families.
- 1.6. However, the council recognises that it is reaching what it describes as a 'pivotal point'. With budget cuts needed in addition to the £25 million already achieved in recent years and a further £25 million of projected

savings necessary over the next three years, it brings into question the future sustainability of services.

- 1.7. The impact of the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 at both council and regional level together with the challenges brought by the impending local government reorganisation cannot be underestimated. Despite this, the work already commenced in the council's transformation of older people's services, its integration with health, its remodelled safeguarding service and the success of its early intervention and prevention services place them in good stead.

2. Response to last year's areas for improvement

Identified improvement last year	Progress in 2014-15
Increase the provision of placements for people with dementia requiring nursing care.	In February 2015 the council commenced an extensive consultation process regarding the review of residential care provision within Ceredigion's own care homes. The recommendations will be considered and future options put forward to cabinet in July and this includes provision of additional nursing care beds for dementia.
The development of a suite of market position statements.	Market position statements for a range of service areas have been or are in the process of development. An overarching market position statement will be developed for children's services over the next six months.
The implementation and roll out of the induction process for staff in children's services.	The staff induction and probationary period for new employees protocol has been finalised and is currently being rolled out in respect of new staff in children's services.
Improve the take up of carers' assessments in learning disability and mental health services.	The focus of work in adult services in 2014-15 was on implementing the carers' strategy and increasing the take up of carers' assessment, particularly in learning disability and mental health services. During the year 32 assessments for carers of people with learning disability were carried out which is an increase on 2013-14 when 15 assessments were undertaken. The community mental health team undertook 11 carers' assessments in 2014-15, which is an improvement on the previous year when three

	carers' assessments were undertaken.
Review the structure and performance of the community team for people with a learning disability.	Joint work with health colleagues continues. Both the Hywel Dda Health Board and local authority have signed the statement of intent and the mid and west Wales regional collaborative has produced a draft "Model of Care and Support" for consultation. The appointments agreed as part of the business case to improve staffing capacity commenced in January 2015.
The ongoing performance management of directly provided services.	The NQA system has been implemented as a framework across adult services. It now requires further work to embed audit process and attain accreditation certification.
The need to progress the development of a more robust transition service, and a sound model and protocol between children's and adult services together with an increase in staffing resources.	A transition steering group now meets on a regular basis in order to address these issues. The transition process for 'Tim Plant Anabl', which includes all young people with disabilities, is considered robust with clear working practises between the teams. There is a protocol in place which is being worked towards and there are ongoing tracking/mapping meetings regarding individual cases.
Review of the adult safeguarding model.	The council commenced its re-modelled adult safeguarding service on 1 April 2015 with the adult safeguarding senior practitioners and a team manager now in post. The team worked on the setting up of systems, processes and procedures in preparation for the team becoming operational.
The establishing of a workforce plan, to aid the delivery of a skilled workforce to achieve the developments in service provision identified.	A comprehensive workforce plan up to 2017 has been developed by a task group drawn from council services, which incorporates a specific annex on care and protection services which focuses on future workforce implications, workforce supply issues, key workforce actions and training requirements.
To monitor the impact of the	The relocation of the director and the

<p>change of location of the director of social services and the additional areas of responsibility now delegated.</p>	<p>additional responsibilities assumed in relation to housing and lifestyle services, together with the need for significant austerity measures to be undertaken within the council has meant that the last year has been challenging. A well-established structure of 1:1 meetings between the director and heads of service, regular joint Leadership group/heads of service meetings and strong performance management regime has been established corporately.</p>
<p>To continue to develop the strong corporate and political support to drive modernisation and to respond effectively to the requirements of the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.</p>	<p>Members have been appraised of the requirements of the new Act, including a recent workshop for members and there has been demonstrable corporate support to the modernisation programme, which has been reflected in service budgets.</p> <p>Officers completed the self-assessment tool to consider preparedness for the Act.</p>

3. Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

3.1. Site visits provide CSSIW with an opportunity to speak with people who use the services, their families and staff who manage and work in the services. During 2014-15, site visits were made to:

- Youth justice service.
- Penparcau Family Centre.
- Team around the family / Tim Teulu.
- Integrated family support service.
- Community mental health team.
- Community team for people with a learning disability and transition work.
- Single point of access.
- Targeted intervention service.

- Planned care and support.
- 3.2. The council's six in-house care homes were inspected by CSSIW in 2014-15. Awel Deg the seventh care home remains temporarily closed. CSSIW issued one notice of non-compliance in 2014-15 to one service, Min y Mor. This is due to the continued lack of a registered manager. The council confirm that steps have now been taken corporately to resolve this issue.
 - 3.3. In November 2014, CSSIW carried out its annual inspection of the regulated fostering and sitting services. Both inspections were positive and identified no regulatory requirements.
 - 3.4. CSSIW followed up the recommendations of the inspection of the council's safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours. Good practice was evidenced in 24 areas. The council was asked to consider 17 areas for improvement that were developed into a detailed action plan which was completed in March 2015. The council has responded well against its action plan with good progress having been made.
 - 3.5. In July 2014 the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) published its report into Ceredigion's corporate arrangements to support safeguarding children, having carried out the fieldwork between March and May 2014. This was a positive audit of the safeguarding arrangements within the county which made only four recommendations, all of which have been actioned.
 - 3.6. CSSIW met with senior officers of the council throughout the year to review social services performance and discuss progress with the areas for improvement identified in last year's performance evaluation. The council were helpful in their engagement with CSSIW and readily facilitated access to enable site visits to take place.

4. Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

- 4.1. A number of specific areas for improvement 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. Specific areas for follow up will include:
 - The progress made toward the implementation of the continuum of need model.
 - The ongoing implementation of the service changes in readiness for the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

- The collaborative work undertaken in relation to the mid and west Wales health and social care collaborative.
- 4.2. Key challenges for the council in 2015-16 will continue to be the budget, the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act, and DoLS together with the implementation of the recommendations following the review of the care homes and learning disabilities day services reconfiguration.

5. CSSIW Inspection and review plan for 2015 -16

- 5.1. CSSIW is also undertaking the following thematic inspections and services in which Ceredigion may be selected for fieldwork:
- National review of domiciliary care.
 - National review of services for people with learning disabilities.
 - National review of care planning for looked after children

6. The extent to which the experiences and outcomes for people who need care and support are improving their wellbeing.

Adults

Overview

- 6.1. The council continues to transform its services to better meet the needs of people within Ceredigion. People have good access to both adults' and children's services through the remodelled contact centre, within which sit the third sector broker and senior practitioner. It ensures that information is timely and responsive and appropriate to peoples needs. The council reports that the effectiveness of this service is evidenced by a noticeable reduction in the number of referrals going straight from the single point of access through to the planned care and support service. Feedback from providers and CSSIW inspectors is that the already very effective contact centre arrangements have been bolstered by the changes and now provide a fuller and more comprehensive service.
- 6.2. Transformation of the council's older peoples' services has commenced. The council now provides comprehensive targeted intervention and a range of personal care services to people who require a period of reablement for up to six weeks. The newly configured multi agency integrated team consists of a range of health and social care

professionals, and also brought together two former assessment and care management teams, it also links effectively with agencies providing longer-term care. The council has carried out a lengthy and detailed consultation on the future of its in-house residential care homes. Engagement with members, staff, families and residents was undertaken. Recommendations on the preferred way forward will be known in mid 2015. CSSIW has been kept up to date throughout all stages.

- 6.3. As a consequence of reshaping service delivery, the council reports a positive impact on delayed transfers of care, and the performance indicators at year end show a further improvement on last year. The service is working effectively to avoid unnecessary delay in supporting people to return home following a hospital admission and therefore reducing the risk of harm associated with an extended hospitalisation. This is evidenced by Bronglais Hospital being the only hospital in Wales to remain at level one at the height of the winter pressures period.
- 6.4. Early feedback from CSSIW inspectors regarding the council's revised adults safeguarding arrangements is very positive with improved liaison, consistency of decision making and communication. Resources within the team have increased with the appointment of a safeguarding manager and two senior practitioner posts. There is good evidence of integrated working with health colleagues including management within the locality teams at both strategic and operational level. However, implementation of the new safeguarding policy causes pressure on work loads and relationships. Clarity and consultation with the health board and the need to have an open and honest discussion around the new proposed safeguarding structure must be considered as a priority.
- 6.5. All teams within adult services have seen a significant rise in the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) applications as a consequence of the Supreme Court judgement in March 2014. This has put increased pressure on adult services to respond to the authorisation requests. Between 2009 and 2014 there were 32 applications for assessments received. The total number of applications for DoLS under the Mental Capacity Act in all service areas in 2014-15 was 212. To date the council have not had the capacity to undertake this work and this too will be a significant priority area of training in the year ahead, together with the scoping work and awareness raising required. It is recognised that social workers in other teams who are best interest assessors will need to support the work of the community team, but clearly this will have an operational impact on resources elsewhere.
- 6.6. Performance in the review of older people's care has dropped from 85% in 2013-14 to 76% in 2014-15. This was envisaged by the council due to the restructuring of older peoples' services, but this dip in performance

will need to be addressed in the coming year. Within learning disability services the council has achieved year on year improvement in undertaking reviews which needs to be sustained. In order to achieve this, additional staff have been employed to focus on ensuring that all service users have their care packages reviewed as required. Performance in care treatment plan reviews within mental health services has achieved 90 % completion.

- 6.7. People who need mental health services, their families and carers, do not experience good outcomes due to the closure of vital mental health beds by the health board as part of its local restructure. This has led to the transfer of service users to Carmarthen or Llanelli and is proving to be distressing for people with no locally accessible respite services to meet their needs. The need to develop mental health advocacy and better links with children's services, carer's services and community adolescent mental health teams to address the resource gap is recognised.
- 6.8. There is no overarching strategic view in mental health services due to the lack of progress in developing the mental health strategy with partners in health, and capacity issues in the council meaning that the focus is on crisis intervention. The oversight of the service manager, who is also covering both learning disability and safeguarding in adult services is not sustainable and only crisis intervention and not service development is the result, with little or no overarching strategic view. The development of a mental health strategy for the county is dependent on health colleagues also, and this has yet to be achieved.
- 6.9. Outcomes for some young people in transition from children's to adults' services could be improved if engagement with them and their families began earlier at the age of 14 years instead of 18 years, as is currently the case. There is an adverse impact on continuity of care and the development of services for young people despite matching existing services to meet their needs. There are still shortfalls because planning for transition doesn't commence soon enough. The department does carry out a mapping exercise and this goes some way in enabling the shortfall to be identified. Collaboration between adults' and children's services to support the transition of young people has improved as a result of a pilot in 2013, even though the staffing resource was not maintained. A transitions process and plan is in place with good evidence of cooperative working between 'Tim Plant Anabl' and the community team for people with a learning disability
- 6.10. There has been success in identifying a greater number of carers. This is attributed to raising awareness through the carer aware scheme and the investors in carers' initiative which has helped GP practices to identify them. The number of carers known to the council has increased

by 118 on the previous year, to 942 at the end of 2014-15. Implementation of the council's carers' strategy remained a focus especially regarding the need to increase the take up in both the learning disability and mental health services. The figures for these services whilst improved on 2013-14 remain small, and further progress is necessary. The target for the national performance indicator offering carers needs assessment was achieved with almost 96% of carers known to social services having been offered a carer's needs assessment. This area of work will continue to be a priority in the year ahead.

Key National Priorities (adults)

Preventative and early intervention services

- 6.11. To support the reablement agenda, the council has effectively developed the independent domiciliary care provider market and has successfully worked with them and service users in the gradual transfer of their care from the council's own provision to the independent sector. Good joint working was evidenced which achieved a smooth and seamless transfer. Effective links with the planned care and support team ensure that referrals are most appropriately responded to.
- 6.12. Direct payment numbers continue to steadily improve and there has been a year on year increase. Difficulty in the recruitment of personal assistants continues to be a barrier and challenge to the take-up of direct payments, the council is working closely with the existing support provider to explore new and innovative ways of expanding the pool of potential personal assistants.
- 6.13. The council together with the health board has submitted an outline business case for the £8 million innovative Cylch Caron Project in Tregaron. Recently Ministerial approval was granted to proceed to the development of a full business case, and if successful this will become a flagship for other similar projects in Ceredigion.

Integration of health and social care services for older people with complex needs

- 6.14. Initiatives are in place which demonstrates integration between health and social care, but also there are significant risks to further development of consistent, cost effective services. Meeting peoples' health and welfare needs, together with improved and more targeted services is central to the council's modernisation of older people's and physical disability services. The development of the targeted intervention service and the planned care and support teams, in partnership with the health board is testament to this, as is the Cylch

Caron project. Meetings have also been initiated by the county director for health involving the director of social services, with GPs which will further develop integrated working between health and social care. However, the newly formed teams will be further re-organised as part of the ongoing discussion with health in relation to the memorandum of understanding and associated funding. Consequently achieving the expected savings target in 2015-16 will be a challenge as will be the consistent delivery of integrated care services to vulnerable people.

Areas of progress

- The remodelling of the single point of access.
- The remodelling of adult safeguarding.
- The modernisation of older peoples and physical disability services.
- The development of the market.

Areas for improvement

- Consultation with the health board regarding improved engagement with the safeguarding process.
- Awareness raising in the sector and scoping of work around DoLS.
- Development and progression of mental health advocacy services.
- Effective operational management capacity and strategic overview of the mental health service.
- Development and progression of a mental health strategy with the health board.
- Progress on partnership working in mental health, children's services CAMHs and the carers' service.
- Effective engagement in transition services with young people at age 14.

Children and young people

Overview

- 6.15. Children benefit from strong strategic and operational focus with clear plans which focus on delivering preventative services to support families within their communities.
- 6.16. The council has developed and consulted upon a new initiative to enable children's services to assess and plan to meet the needs of children and young people in a more universal and consistent way. An ambitious multi-agency action plan has been developed with partners, and key to its realisation will be the ability to deliver at the pace required. CSSIW will monitor the progress of this plan during 2015-16.
- 6.17. The number of referrals has increased by 14% over the previous year. This has meant an increased workload on initial screening and assessment of children and families. However the council ensured the safety of those referred by screening 98% of cases within 24 hours.
- 6.18. Through its early intervention programme the council has developed a new respite service, 'Support Care', which provides respite to struggling families. It has enabled the council to maintain its looked after population at 78 children. This equates to 63 children per 10,000 population, well below the Wales average of 91 per 10,000. Those leaving care were able to maintain placements with their existing foster carers through the implementation of the "When I am Ready" scheme supported by the leaving care service.
- 6.20. The number of children's names on the child protection register remains low. Conferences are held in a timely manner and the majority of cases having good attendance from other agencies. Two young people challenged their registration during the year and these were considered at an appeal panel, with one being upheld. CSSIW recognises this as a positive example of hearing the voice of the child.
- 6.21. The council will introduce an innovative electronic children's consultation and participation package as part of its participation strategy for young people called 'Viewpoint'. This will enable young people to participate more in their reviews and child protection conferences. The numbers of children subject to proceedings has dramatically reduced which the council attributes to preventative work as well as following the pre-proceedings protocol and Public Law Outline, both processes having been introduced in the last two years.
- 6.22. Regional arrangements have progressed well with the mid and west Wales adoption service commencing in April 2014 prior to the launch of the national adoption service in November 2014. Several children have

benefitted with seven being suitably matched and placed for adoption at year end. The regional children safeguarding board, CYSUR, became operational in June 2014, supported by a strengthened local operations group to consider arrangements within Ceredigion and the inauguration of a junior safeguarding board for Ceredigion supported by Tros Gynnal Plant.

6.23. In 2014-15 in review of the corporate safeguarding arrangements in the council, WAO state that;

6.24. *'Ceredigion County Council has identified what information it needs to monitor and evaluate whether its children's safeguarding arrangements are working effectively. The council utilises a number of performance indicators to measure performance across the council. Each indicator has a baseline target and is reported and discussed internally within the relevant department and formally through standardised quarterly reporting to the Deputy Leader and the council's Head of Performance and Improvement.'*

Key national priorities

Preventative and early intervention services

6.25. The council's early intervention and prevention services are achieving very positive outcomes for children, young people and families. The youth justice service supports this work by having in place a clear risk management approach which is being supported by the new bureau service. This multi-agency team works closely with the Police whereby information is shared across all of the statutory services to promote the best outcome for the child. Good reciprocal links are in place with Aberystwyth University, who, whilst carrying out research work in the area of early intervention and prevention is also able to place students within the team. Crucial to the success of this early intervention service is the early screening process and multi agency working. The risk management process enables the service to target the lowest prevention level and is working well with the university, the team around the family, and education.

6.26. There are positive outcomes for children who present as low risk on the council's continuum of need, which is working well and providing a structure to the assessment and delivery of services. The continuum approach is progressing in the north of the county with a good range of engagement activities, group work and clubs having been established as methods of early intervention and prevention. This development will now need be rolled out to the mid and south of the county. The council is progressing with its work around the prevention of sexual exploitation

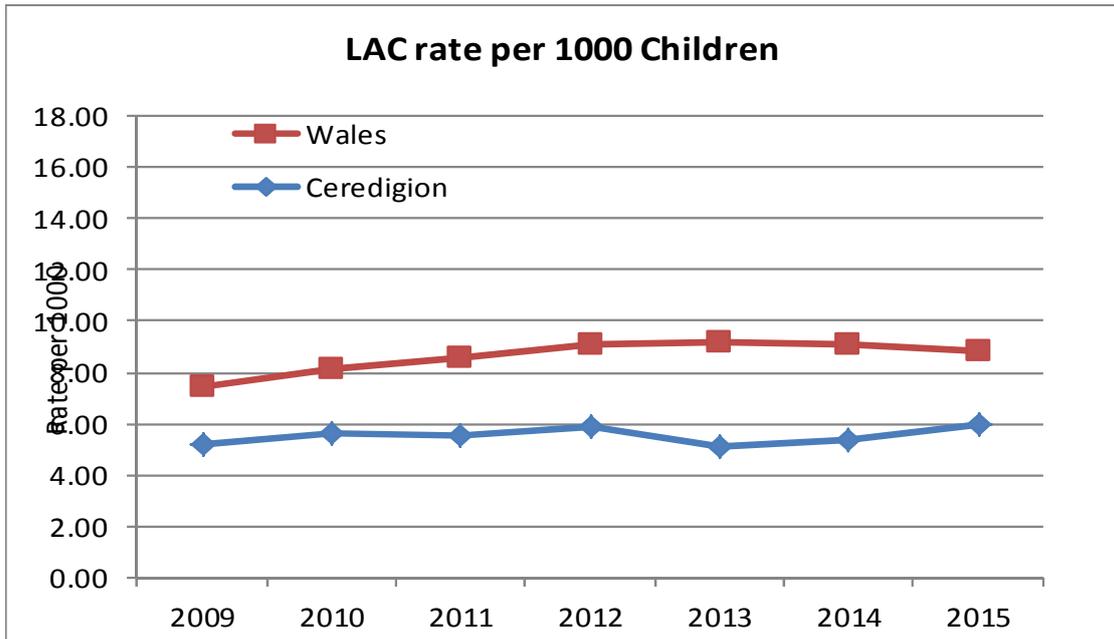
of young people, and is engaging well with the education services and other statutory bodies in this aspect. There is a clear referral route and pathway.

- 6.27. The service, with its stable workforce, has made significant progress in reducing the numbers of statutory orders down from 70 in 2013-14 to 24 in 2014-15. Good engagement with young people utilising motivational interviewing and a cognitive behaviour work is seen as vital. Every young person who requires the support of an appropriate adult is able to benefit from an innovative voluntary scheme, managed by a voluntary and sessional co-ordinator.
- 6.28. Children and families benefit from advice and support from family centres within the county which provide an invaluable and popular service. Staff work closely with the team around family to achieve good outcomes but there is a need to consider the future role of this crucial and important resource. Formal evaluations into the current provision and future development should be undertaken in consultation with the young people, families, staff and partner agencies who access the current service.
- 6.29. Children and families continue to be well supported by the team around the family which through innovative and creative approaches are able to respond flexibly to a wide range of need, with holistic and coordinated services to children and families. It has established good links with education, housing and health. The streamlined and coordinated service works with families strengths and identifies goals to work towards. Staff are very committed to the model and are well supported by management. The relationship with the CAMHS is an area for development where getting families referred is proving difficult.
- 6.30. Families benefit from the integrated family support service (IFSS) which is delivering a consistently good level of support and intervention. The service's strength based approach, not dissimilar to the 'Signs of Safety' model, is proving successful, with case conference reports beginning to reflect this goal setting approach with families. Through a service level agreement with a third-sector children's centre based in Cardigan, the council has provided creative and vital support to two families. The model is one that could be progressed and developed in rural parts of the county. The IFSS has also established good links with other third sector organisations that play an important part in encouraging confidence building and community awareness. Ceredigion provides business administration and staff development support to the other three counties in the collaboration.
- 6.31. The success of the IFSS service should be built upon, identifying which parts of this service could contribute to wider service development. For example, adult services involvement in this process should be

embedded, and better links developed with housing and adaptations, assistive technology and financial assessments.

Looked after children

- 6.32. The council has introduced a specialist fostering scheme, enabling the retention of foster carers for a small group of young people with complex needs. This, along with initiatives such as team parenting has enabled the council to reduce the number of children who have had three or more placement moves to 9%, this represents seven children, a significant reduction on two years ago when the council had 19 children in this category and Ceredigion now compares favourably with the rest of Wales. Those requiring residential care has reduced to two and the use of independent agency foster care providers to 10. For a third year in succession levels of remands and custody for young people who offend is zero.
- 6.33. All looked after children are visited regularly, although the council's performance is not as expected in visiting them within statutory timescales. Despite an improvement of 2% over last year, the figure remains below the Welsh average and there is a need to prioritise this over the coming year.
- 6.34. The council commissions advocacy services for young people through Tros Gynnal Plant, who also offer an independent visitor service for those who have no contact with their own families. This year the council also established a working protocol with Tai Cantref to ensure advocacy is offered to eligible young people placed in their accommodation, and the introduction of an 'active offer' of advocacy for all children and young people becoming looked after.
- 6.35. All looked after children have had their plans reviewed within the statutory timescales in 97% of cases (197/203), and compares favourably with the Welsh average.



6.36. The council currently has 78 looked after children. Numbers had increased in 2010-11, but have remained fairly constant over the last four years. For families involved with substance misuse, increased availability of early intervention such as 'Families First', the involvement of the team around the family, and targeted support from the IFSS, has ensured that numbers remain relatively low. Only three children are currently subject to court proceedings, the same as last year.

Areas of progress

- Development and initial implementation of the continuum of need model.
- Introduction of Viewpoint.
- Partnership working in early intervention and prevention services.
- The reduction in statutory orders.
- Ongoing development of the IFSS and the team around the family.

Areas for improvement

- Improve performance in carrying out statutory visits to looked after children.
- Development of effective methods for evaluating and measuring service delivery against the expectations and standards set out in the 'continuum of need'.

- Progress a system of case audit in the growing prevention work.
- Progress evaluation on its family centre in consultation with partners and stakeholders.
- Build on the success of IFSS to contribute to wider service development.

7. The extent to which leadership, governance and direction for the council is promoting improvement in outcomes and wellbeing for people who need care and support.

- 7.1. People receiving or accessing social care services receive a more coherent response due to changes within the council's corporate management structure. This has now been embedded, and the positive impact of working within a wider directorate is enabling social care to link more effectively with housing and with other departments. This is supported through the heads of service meetings which is contributing to a wider understanding within the council of its corporate responsibility in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and adults. This is borne out by the Wales Audit Office's annual improvement report for 2013-14, which included the outcome from the corporate assessment which, states;
- 7.2. *"The council benefits from strong and clear leadership and, having carried out an internal restructure, are demonstrating a corporate performance culture which has good potential to drive the necessary improvement in services and outcomes for its citizens".*
- 7.3. The statutory director of social services role is held by the strategic director for 'Care Protection and Lifestyle Services' who is a full member of the senior corporate management team, having direct access to the chief executive and senior elected members of the council. There are no plans for these arrangements to change with the departure of the current director at the end of 2015.
- 7.4. The retirement of the head of children's services and subsequent successful recruitment to the post, together with the impending departure of the head of 'Strategic Commissioning (Care), Assurance and Housing Services' planned for summer 2015 has required reallocating a number of departmental functions and changes of responsibility. The impact of this on service delivery and management capacity will need to be carefully monitored.
- 7.5. A key challenge for the council is the working relationship with health and its own internal restructuring and refocusing. The impact of this on the

council's continued ability to deliver social care services more effectively and affordably is significant.

- 7.6. The council has evidenced progress against its own priority areas during 2014-15. Its review of learning disability respite services, improvements in domiciliary care and direct payment performance, progress with the regional collaborative work and the development toward the Cylch Caron project are examples. Within contracting and commissioning, market support to deliver effective and efficient services, improve systems and support the service teams in the commissioning of services for long term care has been challenging. However, the successful reconfiguration of respite services, the transfer of in-house domiciliary care to private sector providers with minimal disruptions to service users and families greatly assisted the modernisation programme within adult services.
- 7.7. Contract monitoring has been strengthened and CSSIW inspectors report that good communication and joint working has provided timely and effective responses to poor performance in provider services. Good engagement with the provider sector is evidenced by good attendance at provider forums. The development of a market position statement for older people has been progressed regionally and publication is expected in 2015.
- 7.8. The council has effective and well managed budget setting and financial planning processes to deliver the medium term financial plan. Elected members are fully involved in planning, budget setting and budget monitoring, and in the scrutiny of its delivery. Increased oversight of departmental performance and function has been provided by the council's overview and scrutiny committee. Regular performance and update reports are presented to the committee whose members provide a robust analysis and public assurance role.
- 7.9. In 2014-15 there was an increased budget allocation to adults', children's and commissioning services. The council allocated £6.7million to children's services, £21.2 million to adults' services and £2.9m to strategic commissioning. This included coverage of the additional costs associated with the job evaluation programme. By the last quarter the projected overspend in adult social care increased to £1.2m with underspends of £560,000 in families & children services and £43,000 in strategic commissioning.
- 7.10. There are excellent outcomes evidenced for older people residing in the successful extra care development in Cardigan, delivered through partnership working with the third sector. The council continues to grow and develop the local market, evidence of its commitment to the future

in the light of demographic changes. It now contracts with 12 domiciliary care agencies. There has been an increase in providers following a successful market place event. The council continues to recognise an increase provision of EMI nursing care is needed in the north and the requirement to increase the number of extra care services.

- 7.11. The COASTAL project was successful in supporting over 446 people in employment and exceeding the targets required for employment, training and positive outcomes. Over 67 people with a range of disabilities were supported into employment and 215 qualifications achieved. The funding ended in December 2014 but the council identified a small budget to retain a manager and three support staff for a further six months.
- 7.12 The council has made considerable progress in implementing “More than Just Words” (“Mwy Na Geiriau”) the Welsh Government’s strategy to improve services for people who need, or choose to receive their care in Welsh. There was 48% of staff in post on 31 March 2015 who were Welsh speakers, 35% of which were social workers and senior practitioners. Non-Welsh speakers are required to learn Welsh to the level outlined for each post.
- 7.13. Overall, the council is generally able to recruit new staff to vacancies, although recruitment in some areas, such as social work posts, remains a challenge. However, this did not result in the need to use agency social workers during this financial year. The social work succession planning is effective with the use of secondment schemes, providing practice learning opportunities and its partnership arrangement with Swansea University. Sickness absence levels have increased slightly. It remains a challenge to try and ensure that sickness levels reduce.
- 7.14. The council is in a good position to implement the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Already it has commenced its transformation of older people’s services, the integration with health, remodelling of safeguarding services, and together with the success of its early intervention and prevention services these are built into internal action plans and work streams.

Areas of progress

- Preparedness for implementation the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.
- Recruitment to key posts.

- Engagement with the social care market.
- Improved quality within directly provided services.

Areas for improvement

- To monitor the impact of senior management changes and portfolio realignment on service delivery and management capacity.