



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

Performance Evaluation Report 2014–15

Conwy County Borough Council
Social Services

October 2015

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

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2014 - 2015

Local Authority: Conwy County Borough Council

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

1. Summary

- 1.1. After an ambitious transformation and ongoing programme which commenced in 2013/14, the council social services department has made major changes to its structure, including realignment of teams in preparation for implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWB Act), as well as making significant savings to meet the council's budget. There has been some progress in relation to the areas identified in last year's performance evaluation report, but there is lack of progress in some key areas. The new Community Wellbeing section of the service has taken time to fully develop particularly in relation to commissioning, resulting in limited progress with both commissioning strategies and relationships with third sector.
- 1.2. There is evidence of progress in relation to services for older people and for adults with learning disabilities who have complex needs, particularly around accommodation, but also in integrated work with health partners that enables people to remain at home. However, there is little evidence of progress in the development of community services for people with dementia, despite recognition of the profile of an ageing population in Conwy. The infrequency of and quality of reviews, particularly of people in care homes, remains an issue and the current plans in place to address this will only partly rectify the matter.
- 1.3. In children's services there have been improvements in some of the areas identified in 2013/14, such as timeliness of child protection conferences, but a lack of progress in others. This evaluation identifies several other areas of performance that have declined markedly. It is positive to note that the council has further developed the established Buddies group which supports looked after children.
- 1.4. It is positive to note that both adults and children's services have progressed well with preventative and early intervention strategies, implementing various initiatives, the impact of which is too early to evaluate.

- 1.5. Overall, the comprehensive transformation programme has slowed some strategic development; some plans made last year are only recently implemented and impacts of changes will be clearer next year.

2. Response to last year's areas for improvement

Identified improvement last year	Progress in 2014-15
Strategic plans for developing community services for people with dementia	There has been little progress during 2014/15 and this remains an area for improvement.
More timely and/or comprehensive reviews of care arrangements	There has been little progress during 2014/15 and this remains an area for improvement. A shorter assessment framework recently developed may increase numbers of reviews completed in the future, but this does not resolve the quality issue and may indeed further adversely impact on the same.
Profile the needs of looked after children looking for accommodation and enable a shared understanding of the issues	There is now a needs analysis of future looked after children and systems in place for sharing information and strategic planning.
Timeliness of child protection conferences	There has been improvement in performance for this area from 78% in 2013/14 to 89% in 2014/15.
Improve links with housing department to improve outcomes for care leavers	These are improved with regular meetings being established. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this.
More timely intervention from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services team for young people	This remains an area for improvement and one that the council is monitoring.
Greater focus on outcomes for children who are looked after	This remains an area for improvement.
Analysis of commissioning activity and development of commissioning strategy	Further improvement required. Systems are in place to capture local commissioning activity. No clear market position statement is in place.
Ongoing progress in developing relationships with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)	Little change on a strategic level as BCUHB has been in a state of flux and key positions have only recently been filled. The council continues in its effort to build relationships with decision makers. Operationally there is evidence of effective collaborative work ensuring good outcomes for people.

Timescales in processing complaints in both adults and children's services	A review has taken place and recommendations made but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this.
Increase the number of in-house foster carers	This remains an area for improvement
Effectiveness of initial responses to enquiries from the duty and assessment team in children's services	This remains an area for evaluation.
Review of management information system to ensure accurate data.	Implementation of the improved system is planned for September 2015.
Review the way in which Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) process is followed to ensure all people are kept informed	A full review has taken place but it is too early to evaluate the impact of this.

3. Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

- 3.1. Site visits provide us 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:
- Llanrwst Family Centre
 - Hafan Gwydir Extra Care Housing
 - Canolfan Crwst multi agency office.
- 3.2. CSSIW also 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 us and readily facilitated site visits that took place.
- 3.3. During the year, CSSIW carried out a national thematic review of commissioning and also undertook inspections of regulated services run by the council and by independent operators. These included Llys Elian, Conwy domiciliary care provision, Tir Na Nog children's residential service, Glan-yr-Afon children's residential service and Conwy Fostering Services. Details of these are contained in published reports and available on CSSIW's website.

4. Areas for follow up by CSSIW

- 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:

- Development and implementation of commissioning strategies
- Developments within mental health services
- The impact of the vulnerable people service
- The impact of the Edge of Care Panel
- Performance in dealing with complaints.

5. Inspection and review plan for 2015-16

- 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's priority this year has been to finalise and then embed changes in the structure of the organisation. These changes have involved reducing senior management posts and realigning teams in preparation for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (SSWB Act). A positive development within adult services is its greater focus on community services, re-ablement and promoting independence. The Single Point of Access and multi disciplinary locality hubs have helped ensure a swifter response to meeting needs.
- 6.2. The council recognises the ageing population profile in Conwy requires development of its dementia services but there has been little progress in this area over the last year. Conwy Social Services has some in-house service provision for people with dementia through its re-ablement team, but this has been restricted due to limited capacity. There are plans to phase out this in-house provision and commission services from the independent sector. Commissioning with the independent sector has already created a service in rural Llanrwst that provides carers with a break by supporting approximately 60 people with

a day service, but this is limited geographically and needs to be expanded.

- 6.3. Provision of respite for carers is recognised as a gap in dementia care services, particularly where nursing care is required for this support, and the council is working with their health colleagues to resolve the problem. The council is heavily reliant on informal caring arrangements and its own residential care facility for meeting the needs of people with dementia. Conwy dementia partnership (between health, the third sector and social services) has mapped the dementia journey taking into account the services each organisation has to offer and identifying the gaps. The public has been engaged with this process. The council now needs to complete its draft market position statement and commissioning strategy to include actions, with time scales, so that this work is progressed.
- 6.4. Mental health services have been in a state of flux following the dissolution of the partnership between the local authority and the health board, and a review of the service has taken place. Several service risks were identified within all aspects of operation and these were highlighted at the council's corporate risk register meeting. These include too great an emphasis on the medical model of care and insufficient focus on the social aspects of people's situation. It has been recognised that a cultural shift towards a social care model is needed and the council reports early signs of improvement. Sickness absence in the service is also problematic. Other areas identified for improvement centre on the interface between social care and NHS staff. It is encouraging that these areas have been identified and acknowledged by all parties as areas for improvement.
- 6.5. Last year Conwy supported 500 people with a learning disability, 188 of whom lived in the family home and 215 of whom were supported to live in their own homes. The number of people placed in out of county provision remains unchanged at around 31, with work ongoing to enable those who want to move back into Conwy to do so. There is a designated officer who holds monthly accommodation group meetings to discuss and prioritise allocation of available accommodation. The council is being proactive in securing more local accommodation in the form of purpose-built extra care housing similar to that currently occupied by older people in the area. One such development is Bod Alaw in Colwyn Bay which will support seven people to live independently in the community from September 2016, and a further two similar facilities are planned each of which will accommodate around six people. The council is scoping out the potential to develop existing but unused county owned properties for similar purposes, making full use of resources available. This is an example of strong

partnership working between the council, the health board and the local housing associations which will enable people with learning disabilities to remain housed in their local areas.

- 6.6. There is little change in the number of social services clients who are over 65 years old being supported in residential care or the community in Conwy. Of the county's whole population of older people, there are slightly fewer being supported both in the community and in residential care than last year. CSSIW will be interested to follow any correlation between reduced service provision and success of the council's preventative and re-abling strategies now being employed by Conwy.
- 6.7. Progress with improving timeliness and comprehensiveness of annual reviews is slow. The director acknowledges there were 143 outstanding reviews at the time of her report and attributes this to capacity issues. CSSIW inspectors attending safeguarding meetings continue to find on occasion that subsequent reviews of individual care plans by social workers identify increased needs that are not being met by the service. People using the service would have benefited if these changes had been identified sooner through more frequent and comprehensive reviews. The council has appointed an additional person to address the backlog of reviews and the introduction of a new integrated assessment framework is planned, which the council hopes will hasten the review process. While this may enhance timeliness of reviews, care should be taken that the quality of reviews is not compromised.
- 6.8. The safeguarding process is well managed by the council with consistency of approach. The council has been proactive in reviewing its safeguarding processes to ensure people are protected, including a review of the threshold for referral. It is not always clear that family, service users and alleged perpetrators are informed of the outcome. Of note is the council's provision of safeguarding training for other council departments, delivering a strong message that safeguarding is everyone's business.
- 6.9. The council has seen a significant increase in applications for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard authorisations last year. Conwy received just over 400 requests for authorisation assessments, around only a tenth of which were completed within timescales. The remaining requests are on a waiting list. The council acknowledges this is due to lack of capacity and limited resources to deal more efficiently with the assessments and subsequent reviews.

Key National Priorities (adults)

Preventative and early intervention services

- 6.10. The development of a vulnerable people service has been a key milestone for the council, one fundamental component of a new way of working within the principles of the SSWB Act. This new team provides a preventative and re-abling service to those who don't meet the criteria for statutory care services, helping to prevent further deterioration and supporting people towards improved wellbeing. Occupational therapists are aligned to the service so that aids, adaptations and advice can be provided more promptly and reduce the need for intervention. This team is in its infancy and is not well publicised in the council's public information, including its website. The performance of the team is an area for follow up by CSSIW.
- 6.11. The Single Point of Access, otherwise known as the Conwy Access Team, aims to provide a clear and direct route by which people can access information and advice. The co-located team, including health, social care and third sector professionals, is the first point of access for adults seeking to access care. Between January 2014 and January 2015 the service had supported 2,386 people compared with 2,353 people the previous year. The council is in negotiation with its health partner to establish their contribution to the long term funding of the Single Point of Access and aims to continue and develop the service.
- 6.12. The council's website requires improvement. For example, it signposts the reader to the 'attached "Getting Help from Adult Social Services" leaflet' but there is no leaflet with this name to access. It also signposts the reader to a list of voluntary services via a web link that, when accessed, does not provide that information. With the council's increased focus on enabling and independence this is an area for improvement.
- 6.13. The re-ablement team supports people to maintain their independence and prevent the need for hospital admission and other more intensive care. More support workers have been recruited this year to this team as demand grows. 634 people completed re-ablement intervention this year, after which more than 80% required no further support or a much reduced level of support. This indicates considerable success in the council's strategies for supporting people to maintain their independence.
- 6.14. There are currently four extra care facilities in Conwy that allow people to live in their own homes for as long as possible, retaining independence while benefiting from the availability of support should

this be required. These are in Abergele, Llanfairfechan, Llanrwst and Llandudno. CSSIW met with one person living in one of the facilities who spoke positively about the life-changing benefits and that it had delayed and perhaps prevented a move into residential care.

- 6.15. Conwy's 'let's get working' programme brought together a number of established initiatives that aim to get various groups of people back into training or work. A benefits and cost saving analysis concluded this remains a much needed service and drawing them together in a 'one stop shop' would result in a more effective and efficient provision. The council report that in its first seven months of operation, 81% of the people receiving support from the team achieved positive outcomes, although it is not clear how many of these people found work as a result.
- 6.16. The percentage of carers of adults who were offered an assessment or review of their need in their own right was similar to last year at 86% and remains just below the Wales average of 88%. However, the percentage of these carers who accepted an assessment is slightly higher than the Wales average at 40%. The council is not confident all information is being captured correctly, for example the system does not capture carers signposted to the Alzheimer's Society for support and advice. The current information system 'PARIS' is to be improved later this year but it is unclear whether this will facilitate collation of such information.

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

- 6.17. The council has made considerable progress in the integration of services for older people with complex needs. The local health board and Conwy social services, in accordance with "Together for Health – End of Life Delivery Plan (2013)", have worked together to develop an end of life service. Since the introduction of the initial pilot in 2011 a growing number of people, in Conwy (from 69 people in 2012-2013, to 128 people in 2014-2015) have been supported with end of life care in their own homes.
- 6.18. There are multi-disciplinary teams operational in Llanrwst and Llandudno, with a further team to be established in Colwyn Bay in September 2015. Teams working in Llanfairfechan and Abergele are also co-located health and social services teams. The teams include community nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and physiotherapists who meet weekly to discuss and prioritise referrals, with more integrated working leading enhanced response times, and a more effective and efficient service for people in the community.

There are plans to develop more community wellbeing hubs across Conwy. The Llandudno hub offers a varied activity programme and there are plans to replicate this in Colwyn Bay this year. Council members at the scrutiny committee representing their constituents advocated the need for hubs in the Abergele area of Conwy. It is too soon to judge the extent to which developments are improving outcomes for older people. The council and the health board should look at ways of measuring the success of these services, focusing on outcomes in relation to the improved wellbeing of older people. This is an area CSSIW will be interested to follow in the coming months.

Areas of progress

- A greater focus on community services, reablement and promoting independence
- Identifying opportunities and developing local housing options for vulnerable people
- Development of a vulnerable people service
- Integration of services for older people with complex needs.

Areas for improvement

- Community services for people with dementia
- Mental health services
- Timeliness and comprehensiveness of reviews
- Management of applications for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard authorisations within time scales
- Further development of the website.

Children and young people

Overview

6.19. The council's performance in relation to children's services has deteriorated in some areas and there has been no surge in demand to account for this. Timeliness of core assessments has declined considerably: while almost 90% were completed within the 35 day timescale last year, performance deteriorated during 2014/15 to 74% at

end of year. Timeliness of initial assessments has also fallen from 82% being carried out within seven working days, to 76% in 2014/15. There has been an increase in numbers on the child protection register from 80 in 2014 to 98. The council is exploring reasons for the difference in performance this year and this is an area we will further explore. The council's improvement plan resulted in a positive outturn on percentage of initial child protection conferences held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion from 78% in 2013-2014 to 89.6% in 2014/15, close to the Wales average, and it is encouraging the council has an action plan in place to further improve this. Performance in timeliness of reviews of children in need plans continues to see year on year improvement.

- 6.20. In 2014/15 the number of referrals made to children's services fell by 145 to 723 in total, although the rate of those that were re-referrals increased by almost 2%, from 18.20% to 20.19%. While this is in line with the Wales average, this is an area the council should examine further to prevent continued year on year decline. There has also been a dip in performance of percentage of referrals receiving a decision within 1 working day from 95.8% in 2012-2013 to 92.4% this year. The council explains that this decline in performance correlates with peaks of demand and confirms additional support is now available. This is an area the council will need to keep a focus on to ensure there is no further decline. While the council's children's service is fully staffed, it has a cohort of newly qualified social workers and this may be having a short term impact which the council are advised to monitor.
- 6.21. In 2014 CSSIW identified the need for more timely intervention from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service teams and this remains an area for improvement. While the extent to which the council can influence this area remains limited, it is able to monitor BCUHB's action plans through the Conwy Peoples Partnership Team and continues to do so. It is important the council remains knowledgeable about the extent of this deficit and considers how it might employ its own resources to improve outcomes for children.
- 6.22. The council has mechanisms in place for listening to and consulting with children and young people, particularly those who are looked after. The Loud Voices group is well established and meets throughout the year to share experiences of care and educate others. They have input into the Corporate Parenting team and linked up with the Buddies group which advises looked after children and professionals about risks and keeping safe. The council has invested resources in providing training to this group which has now developed into a provision available to children's services, police and Barnardos. To date this work has been intentionally reactive so as to lend support to someone who has gone missing and

wants advice. It is positive the council is also looking to developing a preventative approach with the group.

Key national priorities

Preventative and early intervention services

- 6.23. Improvements have been made to the Family Information Service database with a range of useful advice and signposting provided. It is not clear how people are informed about the service and how many have accessed this. The council need to monitor use of the website to evaluate its success and gain an understanding of where this may need to be publicised more effectively.
- 6.24. There is evidence that families are being supported to access a greater range of universal community services. There has been an increasing demand for services provided by the Families First Programme; since March 2013 the Team Around the Family has seen increasing demands for preventative work having received 644 referrals. Three month call-backs to families 'closed to the team' indicate a high level of success with only 3% going on to need a statutory service.
- 6.25. The Families First Annual Report 2014/2015 confirms parenting programmes have been delivered to 190 parents, with 320 sessions delivered to parents in the rural area of Llanrwst where demand for services from the Llanrwst family centre have increased. The centre has registered 500 new children and young people and 290 new parents in 2014-2015. Services include sessions such as supporting parents to learn sign language alongside ante natal nurturing classes, offering preventative support for new parents to be and advice on benefits, nutrition and play, which have been successful. A survey completed after sessions indicted a high level of positive feedback. Given the success of this project the council should consider similar developments in other areas of Conwy.
- 6.26. The council is using its grant funding in innovative ways to ensure more people enjoy the benefits of initiatives such as parenting courses provided through Flying Start. Representatives of Families First, Flying Start and Communities First sit on the Tackling Poverty Funding Group to ensure resources are appropriately targeted where they are needed and so that more people can benefit.
- 6.27. The Edge of Care Panel is another example of preventative work. Since October 2014 a group of four officers, from fostering services, the Family Intervention Team and social work, meet once monthly to consider children in need who are at risk of becoming looked after and

channel support and resources accordingly. It is too early to assess the impact of this team and this is an area CSSIW will follow up.

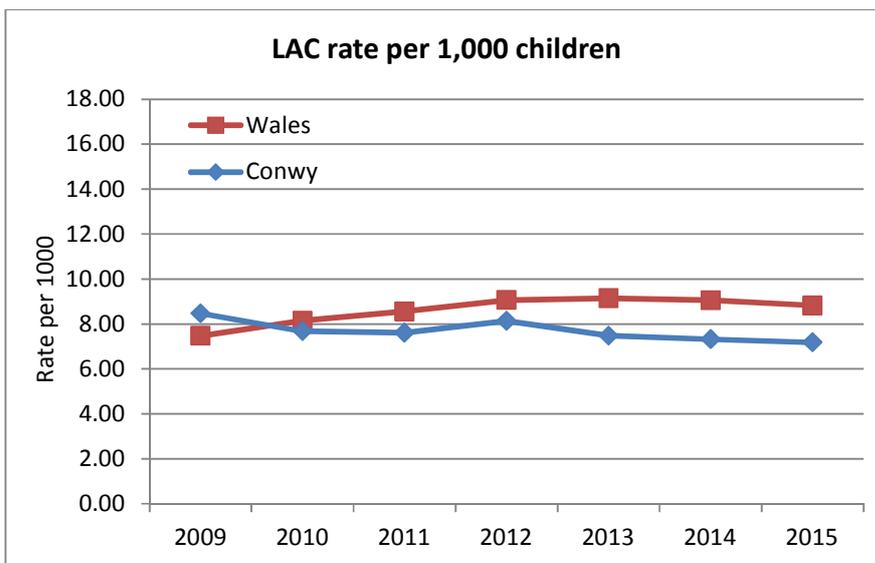
Looked after children

- 6.28. Overall, the number of children and young people looked after by the council fell slightly during 2014/15 (by three children from 159 to 156) thus the rate of children looked after is 7.2 per 1,000 population. This is below the all-Wales average.
- 6.29. Although further work is still needed to meet the recommendations arising from the national review of looked after children with complex and risky behaviours, there are several areas in which progress has been made. Developments include the Corporate Parenting group's commissioning of officers to undertake a needs analysis of accommodation for care leavers, and also the youth council and Loud Voices group to develop children-friendly versions of the Corporate Parenting plan.
- 6.30. Recruitment of foster carers remains a challenge for the council. The council has commissioned an independent consultant to assist with procurement of additional foster carers as part of its action plan to recruit more foster carers over the next two years. On 1/12/2014 there were 69 children placed with foster carers (including 18 children with independent foster agencies) and 23 with friends or family (kinship) carers.
- 6.31. Another key development for looked after children is the collaboration of the Vulnerable People's service with the housing department to form the Complex Needs Housing Panel. This panel meets every month to consider how people with more complex needs can be accommodated and the council is able to evidence good outcomes.
- 6.32. Timeliness of looked after children (LAC) reviews improved last year and has remained stable in 2015 with 97.6% carried out within statutory timescales. A positive outturn was seen in the percentage of first placements of LAC beginning with a care plan, in place from 91% in 2014 to 98.3% in 2015. Fewer LAC experienced one or more changes of school from 8.7% last year to 3.3% in 2015.
- 6.33. The council was in touch with 87.5 % (14 of 16) of its young people who were formerly LAC after the age of 19, an increase of 7.5%. However, it is disappointing to note that of those young people, only 64.3% were known to be engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19 which is a decline in performance.

6.34. Performance deteriorated during 2014/15 in relation to placement stability from 6.1% having experienced three or more placements to 11.4% (of 158 looked after children). This performance is now in the lower quartile of Wales where the average is 9%. While this includes moves that have resulted in good outcomes for children, such as babies facilitated to move back from foster home to parental home and moves back into the county for those just under 18 years, it is an area the council needs to explore further.

6.35. Following a notable improvement of 7% last year in percentage of LAC with a personal education plan in place within timescales, it is disappointing that this has not been sustained. There was a downturn in performance from 92% in 2013/14 to 85.2% in 2014/15 although this still compares well to the all-Wales average of 69%.

6.36. The educational achievement of looked after children declined during the year with the average external qualifications point score dipping from 302.11 to 175.47. The council attributes this to various factors specific to individual children.



Numbers of LAC as at 31 March

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Conwy	188	169	167	178	163	159	156

Areas of progress

- Child protection conferences held within 15 days

- Investment in the further development of current arrangements for engagement with LAC and care leavers
- Investment and development in community family services
- Development of Edge of Care Panel
- The arrangements for exploring accommodation options for young people with complex needs.

Areas for improvement

- Timeliness of initial and core assessments
- Recruitment of foster carers
- Percentage of young people who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19
- Stability of placements.

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. The director provides clear direction to staff and, through her relationship with the corporate management team and members, ensures a shared understanding and ownership of the wellbeing agenda set out in the SSWB Act. This includes a shared council-wide accountability for safeguarding vulnerable people.
- 7.2 . The council has reviewed its senior management capacity within social services in line with its transformation programme, and has reduced the number of officers at tier 2/3 by 35%, making considerable savings. This has broadened the portfolio of heads of service and service managers although there is no evidence of adverse impact of this increase in work load at present. Realignment of the service has enabled a streamlining of responsibilities which should in turn facilitate a more comprehensive overview of particular areas of practice, such as safeguarding.
- 7.3. Safeguarding of children and adults has now been aligned under a single manager with the aim of bringing about greater consistency and

quality assurance. This is in its infancy and the impact will be better understood next year.

- 7.4. The council has taken time to appoint appropriately to all key posts crucial to drive the changes necessary for the SSWB Act agenda. Transformation plans should now make speedier progress particularly in the area of community wellbeing, to which a new service area and management capacity is dedicated. A greater focus on the development of a commissioning strategy and independent and third sector relationships should ensue.
- 7.5. The council has good arrangements in place for quality assurance. There is a service section devoted to Quality Standards under which several reviews have taken place throughout the year. An internal audit of the social services compliments, complaints and representations identified risks but was not comprehensive. It did not take into account our recommendations made in 2013-2014. The council's report acknowledges there is considerable work to be done to improve its performance in dealing with complaints. This is an area CSSIW will follow up in 2015/16.
- 7.6. Market position statements are incomplete, and progress with the council's commissioning strategies had been hampered by the time taken to recruit to the post of commissioning manager. Commissioning remains an area for development moving from strategies to action.
- 7.7. There are examples of good engagement with people using services for looked after children, older people and learning disability services in shaping the future direction. There are opportunities to further develop engagement with others as the commissioning strategy progresses.
- 7.8. The council has continued to monitor the quality of the services it commissions through its safeguarding and escalating concerns procedures. The council engages with providers of services early on in the process to effect change quickly. We have seen how the reviewed arrangements place greater onus on providers of services to account for their provision, counter risks and evidence improved quality and this is in line with the regulator's approach.
- 7.9. During 2014/15 CSSIW observed two scrutiny committee meetings. The scrutiny members were well sighted on the issues being discussed and provided a good level of constructive challenge particularly to the director's report on the issue of community services in less well-served areas. Where assurances of future plans were provided scrutiny members will want to monitor progress to ensure matters are not left to drift.

- 7.10. In the past, the council has had a difficult relationship with the health board. Following some promising engagement with health partners early in the year, changing priorities within BCUHB now threaten progress. The council will need to drive momentum with some authority to reduce this risk.

Areas of progress

- Council wide understanding and accountability for safeguarding
- Developments with transformation and realignment of service
- Committed resources to quality standards.

Areas for improvement

- Completion of Market Position Statements and commissioning strategies.