



Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012/2013

Local Authority **Isle of Anglesey County Council**
Name:

This report sets out the key areas of progress and in the Isle of Anglesey County Council Social Services Department for the year 2012/13 and areas for future improvement

Summary

The permanent appointment of the statutory director was made in September 2012. This has brought stability. There has been continued corporate determination to improve social services and particularly in relation to children.

Adults

There have been efforts to transform adult services and put in place a plan for modernisation, especially in relation to outsourcing the council's residential provision. This faced public opposition and the council has had to take care to explain its plans and consult local people. The council has learnt the need to manage the risks associated with change and to take people with it in order to implement transformation.

Children

Children's services have produced sustained and significant improvement, and this is evidenced in the performance indicators. These are now generally in line with or exceed those of other councils.

There is a need to further develop and modernise children's services especially in relation to disabled children.

The director's report provides an accessible overview of performance within a well presented and a structured document. It does not fully reflect what has been achieved against last year's plans and identifying future risks. The director's report

was considered by the improvement and sustainability board 27 June 2013 and by the council in an extraordinary meeting on the 15 July 2013.

CSSIW has identified the following potential risks:

- Timely, safe implementation of improvement programmes in the face of services becoming destabilised.
- Maintaining an effective workforce in children's services.
- Continuing ability to influence locality-focused strategic planning with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.
- Increasing financial pressure across both health and social care. Projected savings which do not appear to have a foundation and a lack of appreciation of associated risks.

Response to last year's areas of development

The council has made excellent progress in many of the areas of improvement in children's services. The services for disabled children and their families, and the range of services available remain areas for development.

There has been a delay in the modernisation of adult services and this remains an area for development. The council has now improved its plans and has invested in more capacity to deliver modernisation.

Limited progress has been made in developing the council website to inform citizens about social services in Anglesey.

A quality assurance framework has developed corporately and this now needs to be embedded within social services.

There has been an improvement in the stability of the workforce in children's services, however, some issues such as social work pay have not been completed.

Good practice identified:

- There is continued development of multi-disciplinary community based health and social care services.
- The Age Well service run by older people has recently achieved charitable status.

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

CSSIW completed its programme of inspections of regulated services in Anglesey and there were routine engagement meetings with senior officers of the council. There was no other specific inspection activity in 2012/13.

Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

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 the regular engagement meetings during the coming year.

- Partnership with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.
- The management and progress of the modernisation of older people's services.
- The review and development of learning disability services.
- Workforce planning, wellbeing and support.
- The range of children's services including services for disabled children.
- Financial planning and risk management.
- Effectiveness of scrutiny.
- National thematic inspection of looked after children.
- National thematic review of commissioning of social care for older people.

PERFORMANCE

Shaping services:

Adults

Last year it was noted that the council had plans for adult services and urgently needed to move forward with implementation and service delivery. It was expected that the whole planning process should be completed by April 2013. The ability of the council to achieve progress has been limited by the public response to the plans and the need for the council to engage with local people to explain the reasons behind its plans and secure their involvement.

The council has advanced its strategy for modernising adult services based on the need to be prudent and have services which are cost effective, sustainable, and fit for purpose. The council anticipates that the shift it is hoping to make from dependence on residential care to the use of community based provision will take place over the next five years. It plans to establish further extra care housing facilities, and specialist dementia services which will provide a base for 24 hour community support services.

In modernising services the council is planning to embrace equality and diversity issues undertaking an equality analysis and impact assessments.

The council has learnt from its experiences in 2012/13 when it faced public opposition to the closure of a local care home and plans to consult widely and secure political support for each work stream of its programme by March 2014.

Current resources are committed to sustaining residential care homes and so the council is unable to develop the range of community services which are, and will

be, needed until it has achieved political agreement. This process is clearly delaying the modernisation of adult services. It is also difficult to negotiate with external providers and begin to develop appropriate contracting and commissioning systems.

The council is aware of the risks associated with the modernisation of adult services and the increasing budget pressures which will result. Adult services already face financial pressures in the provision of long-term nursing care and an overspend in mental health services. Delay in transforming services is causing instability in services which currently exist, with staff leaving and difficulties in engaging replacement staff.

The council is also planning a comprehensive review of Learning Disability Services in 2013/14 and has established a team to undertake this work.

The council has, however, made improvements within the existing services. In 2012/13 the council modernised its services by reducing its use of traditional day centres and provision of meals for adults in their homes. The council has supported the development of the Age Well service and the growth in independently provided domiciliary care services.

The council has a range of engagement activities. Mental health service users are trained and mentored to participate in meetings and recruitment processes. People with learning difficulties are consulted through national organisations, self-advocacy groups and a forum. The council is working with stakeholders and with the health and wellbeing board in planning future services.

Children

Children's services have improved and sustained their performance, and now need to improve the quality and range of their services which are available. In 2013/14 the council says it will review and modernise the service, and its management and operation of the front line and back office functions.

The council has started to review the service provision, and is focusing on improving the journey of a child through the service from initial referral, through assessment and consequent action. The approach aims to give the council a clear understanding of the quality of the service from the child's perspective. The council anticipates that there will be significant redesign required to achieve efficiencies and better outcomes for children and families.

The council is facing fewer placement choices for looked after children and the limited choice affects the quality of care being provided. There have been increased costs in placements for looked after children following the reduction in numbers of foster carers, closure of the residential services, and increases in cost of private fostering agencies. Specialised placements including those for disabled

children are particularly costly. In an attempt to reduce these costs, the council is investing to save money and improve the quality of care employing a recruiting officer to increase the number of new foster carers. However, the fostering service failed to deliver increased number of foster carers in 2012/13.

The council has assessed the housing need for young people and will take steps to increase the range of accommodation and tenancy support options for vulnerable young people in 2013/14.

The council says it has led the development of the integrated family support service for Gwynedd and Anglesey, and in 2013/14 the service will improve the quality of life and life chances of vulnerable families through an integrated multi-agency approach.

Children's services have been working closely with the team around the family service and this now provides a step down service for families who have received support from social services.

Areas of progress

- Clearer vision and plans for adult's services.

Areas for improvement

- Taking forward the plan to modernise adult services, managing and mitigating the associated risks.
- The council needs implement its review and then begin to remodel children's services.
- Increase the number and range of foster carers available.

Getting help:

Adults

The council provides effective support to people discharged from hospital and reports good performance in managing the discharge of patients from hospital despite difficulties faced by the hospital social work service in 2012/13. The council's performance, however, was not as good as it was last year but is still much better than the average performance in Wales. In 2013/14 the council is planning to review the hospital social work arrangements with Gwynedd Council and the health board. Conwy social services pulled out of the joint service earlier in the year. The council reports that the financial pressures in the health board are putting additional pressures on the discharge processes.

The council has accessible, integrated care pathways. The council and health services have joint points of access, one for mental health services and one for the

other adult services. The timely allocation of referrals to social workers has further improved in 2012-13.

The council has a prevention strategy and provides information to enable people to access community resources, information and support without needing to formally access the service unless they have severe needs or there are safeguarding issues. The council's upgraded website became operational in July 2012 and a project has been begun within adult services to decide how best to use the new facility. The council is reviewing its publicly available leaflets and has a wide selection of leaflets describing its services.

The council is providing help to promote independence through shorter more focused interventions. At the end of the year, the number of adults over 65 years of age supported in the community was considerably less than last year although more people were supported in the community *during* the year. This indicates people not developing long-term dependency on services. There was increased use of reablement and the service reported positive feedback from those who used the service. The council's use of its reablement service resulted in people having lower level homecare packages and being supported for a shorter periods before living independently.

The council identified fewer people who required a formal care plan during the year and reviewed fewer care plans. This is an area that CSSIW will follow up with the council to consider thresholds and to ensure people who need help are able to access it.

Indeed, there are indications that the council is reducing its support to adults and the council is reporting that the use of tighter eligibility criteria resulted in less community care packages and increased signposting to the independent/voluntary sector.

The council aims to assist carers to manage their caring role and help them to have a meaningful life outside of caring. Figures indicate though that the council identified fewer carers, offered fewer assessments and provided fewer carers with a service in 2012/13 than they did the previous year.

The adult risk register does not include the risks in failing to care for those who do not meet the council's tighter eligibility. These appear not to have been identified and evaluated, and this is an area CSSIW will follow up during the year.

There is progress in operational work with the health board in developing the joint mental health service. However, there are practice issues, financial arrangements and issues with information technology that will need resolving and agreement. Confirming these arrangements and establishing a management structure are priorities for the service in 2013/14. The service has also been reviewing its

arrangements to assess the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and mental capacity and this will remain a priority across adult services.

Children

The council provides a range of leaflets relating to children's services and last year identified the need to improve these, and update the information on the council website. The service recognises the need to develop the website further and is planning work in 2013/14 in this area.

In 2011 the council commissioned an Independent Support Team (IST) to support the improvement in children's services. In October 2012 the IST found that the quality of assessments had improved, although this improvement was inconsistent and reflected the skills and experience of individual social workers rather than a comprehensive and managed improvement across the service.

The council's performance shows a year-on-year improvement in the indicators in relation to assessment in children's services. The council says that this is the result of increased management attention, social work training and resources including increasing the number of staff within the front line team. Improved processes have resulted in reduced bureaucracy and better use of electronic recording systems.

The number of looked after children is in line with similar councils. The council has significantly improved its performance in completing the assessment and review documentation. All looked after children have a personal education plan and there is continuing improvement in conducting reviews within timescales. All eligible former looked after children have an allocated personal advisor and all those young people aged 19 are in contact with the council and have suitable accommodation arrangements.

The council has made improvements in its arrangements for safeguarding children and reviews almost all child protection plans within the necessary time-scale. It has also made significant progress with the timeliness of initial child protection conferences. The council identified that it needed to improve its arrangements to convene core groups within timescales.

The council has, however, identified that it could and should increase user engagement and improve the participation of children and young people in the safeguarding process.

Areas of progress

- Timely assessment and care management in children's services.

Areas for improvement

- Developing the use of the website.
- Establishing a good range of community based children and family support services.
- Evaluating the impact of signposting people to community based services.

The services provided:

Adults

The council has an effective multi-agency structure to support older people. There is a strong multi-disciplinary community based delivery model for health and social care assessment and care management. The intermediate care services delivered in partnership with the local health board continues to develop. Enhanced care services have been jointly developed with the health board for episodes of acute medical crisis and this service aims to reduce hospital admissions, lengths of hospital stay, and help people to stay at home. The service started in May 2012 and has worked with approximately 250 people to date.

The council's adult care homes have introduced dignity in care champions and self-assessments for staff to complete. The council reports that management has been improved through the introduction of an electronic monitoring system. The adult residential care services are in a vulnerable position due to the delay in the council making decisions regarding the future of its care homes. It is now experiencing difficulty in recruiting staff and managers, and there is a lack of investment in the environment. It is of significant concern that the quality of life of the residents is likely to deteriorate if this situation continues.

There are a range of established services providing good quality care including reablement and Age Well services. The Age Well services provide good preventative support for over 500 people on the island, and the service is being extended to Menai Bridge. The service has won a Care Council accolade for being a citizen led service and is run by older people. It has recently achieved charitable status.

There has been a continued increase in the use of direct payments albeit from a low base level.

The council has promoted independence for many years by supporting individuals with learning difficulties to live in their own tenancies supported by user assistive technologies. The number of people living in care homes has therefore fallen with a corresponding rise in the number living independently and using assistive technology.

In October 2012 Tai Eryri opened its first extra care housing facility in Holyhead and this service provides accommodation for 59 service users. Specialist dementia services are based in one of the council's care homes and this service provides specialist day facilities supported by community psychiatric nurses and a 24 hour outreach crisis support service for informal carers.

Children

The council has been slow to deliver improvements in the services provided to looked after and disabled children.

Last year the council identified concerns regarding the assessment, care management and safeguarding within the children with disabilities service. The council has undertaken a review and identified a plan to improve the service. This has been the focus of management attention within the service and in October 2012 the IST identified that that progress had been slower in this part of the service. In January, the council identified this as the most vulnerable part of the service and the council has subsequently revised its plan for the service, and have now appointed a service manager specifically for this service. This service needs continued support and management attention.

The council has some local initiatives to support children and families but these are limited. Providing specialised services is a challenge for children's services.

The council has identified that it must increase the number of foster carers it recruits. The CSSIW fostering inspection found that the service needs to demonstrate that it consults with children and listens to and acts on their views. Foster carers unanimously cited staff absences within the fostering team as having a negative impact on the service; they also confirmed that the quality of care would be improved if they had better information regarding the children they cared for.

Areas of progress

- There is continued incremental development of multi-disciplinary community based health and social care services.
- The Age Well service run by older people has recently achieved charitable status.

Areas for improvement

- Improvement in the range of services for children with disabilities and placement choice for looked after children.
- The performance of the fostering service in recruiting and supporting carers.

Effect on people's lives:

Adults

CSSIW found that the council has very effective arrangements in place for the protection of vulnerable adults. There is good, consistent chairing of conferences and effective arrangements for the protection of vulnerable adults meetings, good working relationships with partners and that good action plans follow. The escalating concerns processes are managed through the same officer and this provides the benefit of effective sharing information between the processes. The council commissioned an independent audit by the social services improvement agency of local adult protection arrangements. It found that the service has successfully embedded a positive culture of safeguarding adults and has created a co-operative positive approach to responding to alerts and referrals.

The council has worked with Gwynedd Council in reviewing its arrangements regarding POVA and is developing a joint North West adult safeguarding board. This board has been systematically establishing its role whilst responding to strategic safeguarding issues that require attention. The performance information shows that the risk in adult protection cases was managed in all but one case.

In 2012/13 five assessments were undertaken with regard to DoLS and one authorisation was issued. The numbers are low and this causes concern that the appropriate assessments are not being made and that the safeguards are potentially not being implemented.

The council was proactive in seeking to learn the lessons following the closure of an independently operated care home on the island. The council commissioned an independent review and multi-agency dissemination of the learning from this, and the process refreshed relationships and clarified the understanding of roles and responsibilities and identified improvements for future joint working.

Children

Estyn undertook an inspection regarding the quality of the council education services for children and young people which was published in May 2012. The inspection found that the council had appropriate safeguarding policies, which appropriately reflected the relevant procedures and confirmed the council had taken steps to monitor the safe recruitment of staff and governors. In addition, the inspection identified the council was working on a corporate safeguarding policy and formalising wider arrangements for safeguarding within the lifelong learning department. The council had plans to put a new system in place to collect and analyse safeguarding information from schools.

The education department identified that more needs to be done with social services to improve attendance of children at school.

There has been an increase in the numbers of children on the child protection register in Anglesey. The council has noted this change and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board commissioned an independent evaluation of the registrations. This will allow the council to take any action that is needed regarding its thresholds and any other emerging issues.

The council says that there has been a higher demand on the looked after service with a large proportion now going through to care proceedings. There has been an improvement in the stability of placements for looked after children over the year.

Areas of progress

- Effective adult safeguarding arrangements.

Areas for development

- Review the application of DoLS thresholds.

CAPACTIY

Delivering Social Services:

The council needs to embed its quality assurance system in day-to-day practice and work has been undertaken corporately, and also within the services, to embed a quality assurance framework. In October 2012 the IST identified that a quality assurance framework setting out the components of a comprehensive system has been developed for children's services. The framework needed to be implemented ensuring this becomes a part of normal business making best use of the independent reviewing officer, child protection co-ordinator and corporate parenting panel. The adult services plan will publish the final version of its quality assurance and performance management framework in 2013/14.

The management of personal information is an area that the council has identified as a risk and a priority for action. The service has been proactive in raising issues with the inspectorate of incidents of data loss and the council has improved its processes of managing historical files, e-mails, policy and corporate ownership.

The service has undertaken work in improving its workforce. However, it is uncertain whether there is sufficient support and capacity to deliver an adequate and effective workforce.

The council considers it has secured adequate capacity and skills to implement its transformation. This was an area for improvement in last year's report and the council have now appointed an officer to manage this work.

Adult services have been seeking to recruit a manager for quality assurance but, to date, has been unable to recruit to the post. The council also needs to increase capacity to undertake its contract compliance work as it is unable to assure that the care provided meets the required quality.

There are relatively low numbers of social workers delivering adult social services in the council compared to similar authorities. Adult services report that they have an experienced, stable workforce with good multi-disciplinary working.

Within children's services the council recruited 12 new social workers in the autumn of 2012 and has appointed two senior practitioners to mentor and coach the new staff. This has halved the use of agency staff. The new staff received a well planned induction programme and the council aims to protect and support the development of the new staff to achieve a stable long-term workforce. The two senior practitioners will assist in this work.

Staffing was identified as an area for improvement in last year's report. In October 2012 the IST identified that a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy for social services needed to be finalised and implemented as a matter of urgency. The IST provided the council with the main elements that needed to be included in such a strategy. The council has not made progress on some of the components, such as competitive package of terms and conditions. The council has been undertaking a corporate restructure at the head of service level and initiatives such as ongoing training and professional development opportunities have been developed.

There remains, however, problems with recruiting to key posts, staff retention and the resulting financial pressures from the use of agency staff. The council is aware that failure to address these issues is likely to cause failures in performance, a reduction in quality and result in staff leaving. This is a cycle seen in the past, and elsewhere, and represents a significant risk for the council.

The council is planning to spend less each year on children's services. This is in the context of an upward trend in the looked after population over the past few years and increased rates of children on the child protection register. How it will reconcile this is not determined.

The financial data shows that the council spends less on older people's services than all but one council in Wales and adult services continued to deliver a reduction in adult expenditure savings of £994,000 in 2012/13. The council's target is for a further £640,000 in 2013/14.

Areas of progress

- Adult services capacity to modernise.

Areas for improvement

- Embed the quality assurance system.
- Capacity for contract monitoring.
- Putting in place a clear strategy of sustaining the children's workforce.
- Clear financial planning which identifies how savings will be achieved and how risks will be mitigated.

Providing direction:

The council has a newly formed corporate executive team and the statutory director of social services joined the team as the director of community in September 2012. The council is restructuring at the head of service level and there will be a head of adult services and a head of children's services.

During 2012/13 the council established effective processes ensuring corporate oversight of the services.

The council had previously identified the need to ensure corporate oversight of performance in all aspects of children's services. During 2012/13 children's services made monthly reports to the improvement and sustainability board that consisted of the commissioners, executive members and councillors. The election of council members was held in May 2013. The new scrutiny committee needs to continue and develop the oversight of social services.

There is evidence that the corporate improvement agenda is working in parallel with the service improvement agenda - the risk log, performance management, quality assurance processes, and corporate safeguarding policy. These developments should assist in improving performance.

The council has made suitable arrangements to manage the change programme and the council has established the older people's transformation programme board chaired by the corporate director of community. The board includes partners and is responsible for the safe delivery of the change programme. It will be a priority to ensure appropriate consultation and involvement of stakeholders.

There remain significant risks associated with the planned transformation of services and the financial targets. The council has been developing its corporate risk management processes which may assist in the management of these issues. The transformation of service, financial savings, reduction in service and tighter eligibility criteria present risks to the quality of care. The risk that there may be failures in care resulting from these changes does not feature as an explicit registered risk.

Areas of progress

- Corporate oversight arrangements.

Areas for improvement

- Safely implementing change programmes.
- Development of effective scrutiny with new members.