



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

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012/2013

Local Authority Name: Bridgend County Borough Council

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

Summary

The council has continued to make reasonable progress despite significant and ongoing senior management changes and a long period of uncertainty.

Adults

The work being completed by the remodelling of the adult social care programme board has enabled the council to identify areas for development, assign tasks and monitor progress against a wide range of service developments. This process is ensuring service improvement across adult services.

Strong commissioning and contracting arrangements are in place combined with robust approach to safeguarding adults. The council continues to be a key driver in the Western Bay regional collaboration.

Children

Performance in children's services has continued improve despite a high and increasing number of looked after children. There are a number of projects in place to address the challenges that this increase creates including the reduction of the looked after child population and increasing the volume and range of local placements available. The success of these initiatives will be critical to the overall improvement of service quality for children and young people in Bridgend.

The director's report provides a realistic picture of the successes and challenges the council has and is facing. It highlights the work needed to improve services and provides evidence of activity being undertaken to achieve

this. It accurately reflects the challenges for both adult and children's social services.

CSSIW has identified the following potential risks:

- Changes in leadership and ongoing uncertainty.
- The level of resilience of the heads of service given that they are balancing a significant amount of delegated responsibility alongside the oversight of their specific service areas.
- None of the corporate directors in Bridgend had a professional background in social services.
- Increases in looked after children and the number of children on the register.

Response to last year's areas of development

The council has made good progress in addressing last year's areas for development and built them into its own improvement objectives.

Children's services have also responded positively to the inspection of its arrangements for looked after children and young people and has clear action plans in place.

Good practice identified

CSSIW has identified the following areas of good practice:

- Contracting and commissioning and the focus on quality measures.
- Adult safeguarding and its strong link to commissioning.
- Support for young people leaving care.

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

CSSIW undertook a number of site visits within adult social care, including the newly developed integrated intermediate care, early response and homecare services, the north integrated community hub, meetings with the remodelling social care programme board, commissioning and contracting and safeguarding.

These visits were in addition to the annual programme of inspections carried out on the council's regulated care settings and services for adults and children.

CSSIW conducted a national review of the statutory role of the director of social services in December 2012 which included Bridgend.

CSSIW was unable to carry out any site visits or inspections within children's services during the year, however, meetings with the head of service have enabled some monitoring of progress to be made.

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 regular engagement meetings in the coming year.

- Senior management capacity at heads of service level, clarity of governance and reporting arrangements between directorates.
- The development of care and extra care models to support people with dementia.
- The progress of the remodelling social care programme and progress with the development of integrated services.
- The progress made in addressing the recruitment and retention challenges in children's services in the face of increases in workload.
- National thematic inspection of looked after children.
- National thematic review of commissioning of social care for older people.

PERFORMANCE

Shaping services:

Adults

The council undertook an analysis of the current markets and future demands for services to inform its future commissioning and contracting arrangements. This analysis has been shared with providers in an attempt to shape and develop future care services and models of accommodation and support. The development of extra care schemes is considered pivotal, alongside the review of the council's in-house homecare and residential care provision. The aim is to move from a model of "caring" to a more preventative model of "assisting and supporting" adults to live independently within their own communities. The council has identified risks in its capacity to deliver the changes it is proposing.

Ongoing work with commissioned services and partners via provider forums has helped develop a range of quality standards in line with care fees. These standards are now in place across care homes and domiciliary care services. Greater emphasis on quality and performance has been achieved. This work has been instrumental in the development of a regional set of quality standards across Western Bay.

Contract monitoring is proving effective in identifying a number of commissioned and in-house services that are struggling to evidence person centred care. This is enabling targeted support and training to be provided.

Following the Alder Review of learning disability services, the council contracted with further consultants to carry out work with users and their families. This has led to the development of a learning disability strategy, together with priorities and outcomes required. The council's accommodation strategy sits alongside this.

The council has, with its partners, built upon the existing escalating concerns protocol, clarifying agency involvement and processes. This enables a more timely and targeted response to services that are of concern

A risk management system is now in place in contracting and commissioning teams and its value will be assessed throughout this year via quality feedback from staff using the system. This is linked to quality standards and ongoing risk assessment. This system is providing a good monitoring and alert process which will enable the council to more effectively address services of concern via effective targeting of the escalating concerns process.

The development of services for people with dementia remains a priority for the council.

The scale of developments in progress will stretch the council's capacity for development. These include the development of residential and extra care provision, integration with health, the Western Bay programme, the telecare strategy, the development of residential enablement services and the remodelling of homecare. The council has highlighted the potential risk and benefits for its projects and recognised the work needed to achieve these changes in the current financial climate. It is also aware of the importance of both corporate and political support for these changes.

Children

The council is developing a strategic framework for integrated working and hopes to establish services in localities in order to develop the Team around the Family service. This is to be linked to the connecting families project and the development of multi-agency teams within community hubs.

The connecting families service, together with the integrated family support service and family support team is providing a good range of intensive support services, reducing the need to re-refer families. A single point of access and a single referral form are in development.

This service was to be in place during 2012/13 but delays have put this back to summer 2013.

Bridgend Foster Care is actively involved with the Children's Commissioning Consortia Cymru which has developed a framework that utilises web based technology to improve the quality of placement matching and contract monitoring. There is evidence of achieving good outcomes and financial savings.

The council is also part of the South Wales improvement collaboration, with the council being instrumental in the development of a number of recruitment processes and the move to establishing uniformity in delivering foster services.

The number of looked after children rose by 12% from 345 at the end of last year to 387 on 31 March 2013. The number of children on the child protection

register also rose from 131 to 161 in the same period, a 23% increase. These increases have placed considerable work load pressures on teams.

Areas of progress

- The continued developments within contracting and commissioning.
- The modernisation of its learning disability services.
- The connecting families initiative.

Areas for improvement

- The council needs to ensure that the future models of care and extra care models are able to respond to the needs of people with dementia.
- A clear consultation strategy and workforce plan is required to support the remodelling of the council's in-house services.
- Further scoping of the social care market will need to be established in order to respond to the expected changes in demographics, future demand and levels of expectations for services.
- Ensure that the head of adult services has the corporate support to deliver the extensive transformation agenda. This is significant in light of the findings of the review of the statutory role of the director of social services.

Getting help:

Adults

People are now able to access community reablement services and adult social care via the new integrated referral management centre. The intention is to link callers with a skilled and professional response to their enquiries. This access point and the revised information systems has reduced the number of people who would have previously been subject to being referred on from adult social care to reablement and vice versa.

Having commissioned a brokerage service from a third sector organisation, the council has provided people with an information, advice and signposting service that introduces them to a range of community based services designed to meet the needs of people who do not meet the council's eligibility criteria

For people with a learning disability and their carers, an advice and support service is offered at specific times during the week. This has been developed in line with the improvement of public information across adult social care. The carers forum was involved in the development of some of this information.

Regulatory inspectors report that the council's existing homecare service provides a good level of service and is responsive to users' needs. The service also makes a significant contribution to supporting people when discharged from hospital. This, together with the reablement service, the development of a six bed community reablement unit and the council's early response service, is supporting people to either remain at home, receive a period of assessment

prior to a decision as to future accommodation needs or respond to an emergency. Good links have been established with the ambulance service to further support this work and avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital.

Additional support is provided by the telecare service and good links with partner agencies have been established at the site. The site based at Trem y Mor is providing an important council resource and hopes to increase its accessibility through evening and weekend opening.

Children

The county-wide assessment team, open during normal office hours, receives contacts and referrals from members of the public and professionals in respect of safeguarding and child welfare matters.

The council is reviewing how to develop a range of information for children and young people becoming looked after and how it can promote its accessibility through the looked after child “workwise” project. A “web based” approach is the future goal. This project is also tasked to ensure that decision making is clearly recorded and information from statutory visits is evidenced on children and young people’s files.

Work also continues on improving the permanency planning for looked after children and young people, ensuring that the consideration of their views is included in care planning: The council hopes to include permanency planning in the social worker and team manager reports prior to reviews. All staff are clear about the significance of permanence planning in achieving best outcomes for children and the importance of reviews being well planned and on time.

The council reports a drop in performance on the completion of initial assessments, this is attributed to an increased workload due to a rise in the looked after children population and child protection cases.

Last year the council reported significant improvements in performance in relation to the completion of core assessments within prescribed timescales with a good proportion of core groups being held within timescales. However, this year there has been a drop in performance.

Whilst significant improvement had been made in relation to performance in relation to the statutory visits made to looked after children, it is acknowledged that further improvement is required. Whilst the council is confident that the majority of visits are being undertaken regularly and that children are being seen, prompt writing up of visits remains a problem. The council reports that less than three quarters of statutory visits required to looked after children were completed in accordance with statutory requirements.

Areas of progress

- The service developed at Trem y Mor is providing an important council resource and increased access to a range of services.

Areas for improvement

- Development of online self-referrals via the council website should be considered.
- The council should consider how best to create one integrated electronic record to capture access and care and support details for users.
- Improving the performance and recording of statutory visits to looked after children.
- Mitigating the impact of an increase in looked after children and child protection on workers caseloads.

The services provided:

Adults

The council made progress with the development of an in-house specialist dementia service. Regulatory inspectors report that this service is in need of further development to be more effective. The residential reablement service continues to develop and build, and has proved successful in assisting people to return home.

During 2012 the council commissioned an independent review of learning disability services. Whilst the council was commended for the quality of practice and the improvement being made to the quality of life of people, it was established that inflexible service models were, in some cases, restricting people's independence and were over supporting need. There is a clear need to introduce more flexible working models within the sector. The recommendations from the report have been included into a learning disability development plan and a specific project is concentrating on taking these forward.

The challenges of integrated working with health is recognised. Co-location within the community support team is now established, however, progress toward joint working continues to be slow.

The council has made significant progress in developing day opportunities for older people. There are now nine community cafes in place based in local communities. The cafes are supported by a befriending service which has been operational since June 2012.

The council continues to progress the remodelling of its in-house care services, the intention being to work with an independent social care provider to remodel residential and domiciliary care services. The project has been revised and is now focusing on the development of the in-house homecare service. The council has focused its efforts into managing the delivery of care within its

existing resources. The council recognises that ongoing budget pressures are a concern as the projected overspend on the homecare budget places the service at risk.

Furthermore, expenditure with respect to the independent sector budget has increased and has also resulted in an overspend. The council has concluded that the overall situation requires radical remedial attention as it is not sustainable in the current economic climate.

The council, with its health partner, has made good progress in the implementation of the Mental Health Measure.

Regulatory inspectors report that improvement is required in the council's in-house residential services for older people. This includes the provision of appropriate supervision for care staff, an improvement in the range of risk assessments, care plan audits, appropriate levels of activity within dementia units and more effective oversight into the monitoring of the quality of care being provided.

Children

Bridgend Foster Care has received a positive inspection report from CSSIW. Recruitment has been strong and the agency continues to attract carers from independent fostering agencies.

The council has developed a good range of both leaving care and youth services. The drop-in centre Just @sk Plus is proving very effective in supporting young people with a range of employment, health and counselling advice.

There are a range of additional targeted services including the council's leaving care service, a homelessness service for 16 and 17 year olds, and case management services for young people who are aged 16.

The council continues to engage well with young people. There have been three consultation meetings with young people during the past year. In addition to this, the Have your Say day was held in March 2013.

The connecting families service is a local initiative that has further refined different ways to work more effectively with families that have the most chronic and complex difficulties, and who draw on a wide range of multi-agency services. It provides intensive multi-agency, evidenced based interventions similar to the Integrated Family Support Services model. The council has been able to evidence the positive impact this service development has had on work with some families.

The council's three residential childcare units, all received positive CSSIW inspections during 2012/13.

Areas of progress

- Reablement services.
- Integrated working with health.
- Intensive work with families.

Areas for improvement

- Continuing the progress made in the development of integrated services.
- Addressing the financial challenges within the homecare market.
- Addressing the regulatory shortfalls identified within in-house residential services.

Effect on people's lives:

Adults

Regulatory inspectors confirm that adult safeguarding arrangements within the council are strong, well-established and continue to seek and achieve improved performance. The move to more actively involve the vulnerable adult in all aspects of the referral, investigation and outcome is evidence of the safeguarding team's determination to continually develop and improve outcomes for people.

The council recognises the value of collaborative working with partners and stakeholders in order to drive a common understanding and consistent approach to safeguarding across adult social care and health settings. Vulnerable adults benefit from this continuity and receive proportionate, transparent and equitable support.

Opportunities have been offered to carers to attend drop-in sessions where they can have a carer's assessment and these have been held in the carers centre and at the resource centre for people with complex needs. As a result, the numbers of carers being offered an assessment and the numbers of carers assessments completed have both increased.

The direct payments monitoring group has revised its terms and conditions in order to more effectively reflect the move towards more citizen directed support approaches and in light of the new Social Services and Wellbeing Bill. The group is overseeing a review of policy, procedure and financial arrangements for direct payments and is also co-ordinating a more systematic approach to the development of citizen directed support. The number of direct payments continues to rise.

A programme of member visits is now taking place to all care homes in the council area specifically to seek users views. This will be on top of the regular contract monitoring of commissioned services that take place. The current contract monitoring team is not able to carry out themed work with services because of capacity. The council has recently agreed to increase the team by one full-time post.

Children

Improvements in performance have been sustained in terms of the timeliness of child protection conferences. The council considers the main factor in this has been efforts made by all agencies to improve attendance.

In order to support carers, the council has revised the structure of the family support team and social workers' awareness of the services available for service users has been heightened. Weekend services continue to be provided. Weekend referral forms and a cover system have enabled the safe operation of weekend visits.

An increase in open cases across safeguarding teams has resulted in higher caseloads for many social workers.

During 2012/13, a high proportion initial child protection case conferences were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion and most initial core groups were held within 10 working days of the initial child protection case conference in line with agency and Welsh Government expectations. Child protection reviews were conducted within statutory timescales. This is felt by the council to be a significant achievement in the context of increasing workloads and the associated pressures and demands placed on the service. This represents good performance.

The publication of a number of serious case reviews this year has highlighted a number of areas for development and improved multi-agency working.

Areas of progress

- Ongoing development of its safeguarding functions.
- Member visits to commissioned services.
- Timelines of child protection conferences.
- Child protection reviews.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of the impact of the increase in children's social worker caseloads.

CAPACITY

Delivering Social Services:

Adults

The council has developed an e-practice guide for social workers. This guide equips social workers with information on practice standards, processes, procedures and legal frameworks.

The “workwise” programme is in its implementation phase, with some piloting of new practice and process in line with the findings of the programme. The development of proportionate reviews which was a direct recommendation has created some capacity for staff.

A whole service audit has been undertaken of care management practice across adult social care teams. This audit enabled a group of managers to review current care management practice against a set of standards. The outcome of the audit was favourable with a marked improvement in more person centred and outcome focused ways of working. This piece of work provides the council with a benchmark in which to develop more social work focused practice and from which to develop a more robust quality audit system and culture.

There is recognition that the social work role will become increasingly important as more social workers become part of multi-disciplinary teams

The management of sickness absence continues to be a challenge across the service and the council are reviewing how this is managed corporately.

Children

Throughout 2012/13, the children’s workforce remained generally stable, however, during the final quarter of the year the service did experience a number of social workers and managers leaving.

The council continues to promote training and development opportunities to its workforce. Staff and foster carers across the service have had access to training at an appropriate level to their needs. The council’s training plan is based on a training needs analysis.

Staff are required to access core training programmes and any training that is put on in response to the learning from serious case reviews, and local and national changes in policy, procedures and legislation. Core areas of training are delivered on a rolling programme. Seven mandatory training events for foster carers are delivered every three years and new areas are being considered. Staff are also supported to access other specialised training to enhance their knowledge and skills within their role and function.

Case file audits have routinely been carried out. These audits have highlighted issues about practice in relation to individual cases for which remedial action has been taken. Multi-agency audits have also highlighted cases where lessons can be learned and to improve future service delivery. The council has acknowledged the need to improve systems and processes for disseminating the learning arising out of audit activity to managers and front line staff. This will be a priority for the coming year.

Informal and formal staff supervision continues to take place. Staff are required to complete core assessments ahead of time to allow time for managers to check, give feedback and sign off assessments and allow the social worker time to share the assessment with the family. Work to strengthen the senior practitioner role is in place to provide capacity for mentoring, co-working and support to the team.

Areas of progress

- The e-practice guide for social workers.

Areas for improvement

- Devising a robust system to inform staff of the outcome of audits in children's services and monitor the changes required.
- Addressing the recruitment and retention challenges in children's services in the face of increases in workload.
- Addressing staff sickness absence.

Providing direction:

Adults

Significant changes in senior management have taken place with an interim corporate director of wellbeing taking up post in May 2012 and a new chief executive arriving in September 2012. The new joint locality director of the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board continues to work closely with adult social care in the development and delivery of integrated services. The statutory director of social services role was passed to the corporate director of children's services who also holds the statutory director of education function. The chief executive is currently consulting on a management review and a new structure will be announced during the year.

The Western Bay Regional Collaboration continues to develop, and significant progress in joint approaches in learning disability, mental health and older people's services has been achieved. There are also projects overseeing commissioning and contract monitoring and developments in children's services.

CSSIW conducted a national review of the statutory role of the director of social services in December 2012. This review noted that that none of the corporate directors in Bridgend had a professional background in social services and, as such, the level of resilience in the structural arrangements therefore depends on the heads of service providing professional expertise. This is in addition to assuming significant delegated responsibility for the operational and strategic agenda in their service area.

Uncertainty was also expressed by senior officers regarding the reporting arrangements between the directorates, the clarity of accountabilities, the

connectivity between the strategic and service leadership and the director of social services authority and oversight of delegated areas. Clearly this will need to be addressed.

It was recognised that the authority has well-established strong and mature corporate systems that provide oversight of social service functions. These support the service improvement agenda. Scrutiny arrangements have been developed to reflect the children and young people and the health and wellbeing agenda. Strong systems have been developed that support the director of social services to receive and provide relevant information, assistance and challenge from and to other parts of the organisation in relation to performance and workforce issues.

The Wales Audit Office annual improvement report for 2012/13 concluded that the council continues to enhance its arrangements to deliver improvement, developing a more robust and balanced approach to evaluate and report its performance. During 2011/12, the council made good progress in delivering its improvement objectives .

The council is improving the way in which it evaluates performance and aligns service improvement with financial planning. The council's arrangements to support improvement are sound, although it faces a period of further change within its senior management

Areas of progress

- Adult social care remodelling is achieving good outcomes for people requiring care and support.

Areas for improvement

- The reporting arrangements between the directorates, the clarity of accountabilities, the connectivity between the strategic and service leadership and the director of social services authority, and oversight of delegated areas, all need to be addressed.
- Reviewing the capacity and demands on the heads of service and the support available to them.