



Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012/2013

Local Authority Carmarthenshire County Council

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

Summary

Carmarthenshire County Council continues to make strong progress and performs well.

The director provides effective leadership, setting out a clear vision and guidance across adult and children's social care. The council has effective governance arrangements with clear strategic aims.

The leader of the council's annual report and improvement plan provides the council's commitment to the delivery of best quality social care services, whilst ensuring efficiency and good value services. The council is aware of the financial challenges, and the director has set out its departmental budget strategy to deliver greater efficiency and sustainable services.

The director's annual report provides a comprehensive and accurate account of the council's performance and sets out its strategic priorities for the next twelve months. The report provides good evidence to support how outcomes are being achieved and reflects the views of service users. It integrates performance activity, identifying progress against key targets and outlining forthcoming priorities. This provides clear information on their public accountability and enables the citizens of Carmarthenshire to determine the quality and effectiveness of local services.

Adults

The council continues to make good progress in implementing a programme of change across adult services, with the focus on developing more effective community based resources to support people to live in their own homes for longer. The aim of supporting older people to maintain their independence is

being progressed through the provision of re-enablement with development of preventative and early intervention services. The Section 33 agreement between Hywel Dda Health Board and Adult Social Care services to provide an integrated model of care is working well.

Children

Children's services benefits from strong strategic and operational leadership, supported by a stable workforce, there is a clear vision for developing services that target prevention and early intervention providing support to the whole family. A key strength is that children's services are sited in the same directorate, with a corporate director for children giving a clear alignment, between the statutory and preventative services. The new head of service has a sound vision for the service, is developing new management and service structures, aiming to make services more responsive to meet the demands and financial challenges. A key development is looking at reshaping the professional task, supporting social workers in their practice, aiming to provide a more responsive and effective service to children and their families.

Some performance indicators in children's services indicate that there are a number of areas where Carmarthenshire County Council should make improvements. The percentage of children's assessments where children are seen by a social worker is lower than most councils, as is the percentage where children who are seen alone. The timeliness of initial child protection case conferences, placement stability and the rate of reviews for looked after children and the number of looked after children who have an education plan in place within twenty days are others areas where improvement could be made.

CSSIW has identified the following potential risks:

- The development of regional adult and children's safeguarding boards presents a challenge to ensure that local safeguarding issues and priorities are addressed through the regional group.
- The financial constraints of the council present a challenge, to ensure that they can continue to provide effective social care services for its citizens.

Response to last year's areas of development

The council continues to demonstrate positive improvements across all service areas, children and adults; they are clear as to their priorities and how they see services shaping in the future. The council has responded well to last year's identified areas for development and has delivered effectively within its core business.

The performance monitoring arrangements are effectively monitoring and evaluating performance against key objectives and outcomes. The council's annual improvement plan demonstrates improved outcomes in most areas.

Good practice identified

CSSIW has identified the following areas of good practice:

- Children's services are demonstrating that their preventative strategies are working effectively, with fewer children needing care and those that require protection benefit from a more proactive and responsive intervention.
- Continued improvements in the reduction of delayed hospital transfers.
- Increased number of older people remaining in their own home for longer, through the integrated approach and realignment of service delivery.

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

- National review of the statutory role of the director of social services.
- Adult learning disabilities services.
- Older people's services, including community resource team, reablement team, Llys y Bryn convalescence beds service and domiciliary care services.
- Adult mental health services.
- Children's services the intake and assessment team.
- The programme of regulatory inspection of adult and children's services.

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.

- The implementation of the adults and children's regional safeguarding boards.
- Development of the reclaiming social work model in children's services.
- The transforming adult social care project.
- The development of dementia services and progress on the work of the dementia action board.
- Transitional planning for disabled young people into adulthood.
- Carers support services and the implementation of the Carers (Strategies) Measure 2010.
- The implementation of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.
- National thematic inspection of looked after children.
- National thematic review of commissioning of social care for older people.
- National overview of DoLS.

PERFORMANCE

Shaping services:

Adults

The council is making good progress in the realignment of their services, focusing on independence and improving the quality of life for service users.

The council has effectively assessed the demographics and local needs. Plans reflect that collaboration with partner agencies is critical in the continued delivery of effective social care services. Effective arrangements are in place between the council and Hywel Dda Health Board and there is evidence of improvements in service delivery during the past twelve months. An example of this is the development of supportive services, such as the immediate response night care and the convalescent beds. These services are reducing the use of residential care services and maintaining people in their own home for longer. The council was recognised for their innovative development of the convalescent beds in the Social Care Accolades as providing excellent outcomes in care for older people.

The council's integrated community strategy sets out the council's commitment to working with its partner agencies and they are delivering on its key objectives. The local Health and Social Care Board has sets out its priorities for adults and children's social care, however, the development of services for people with physical disabilities is unclear in these priorities.

The council has in place effective contracting and commissioning arrangements, and there are clear links between this service and the safeguarding team, offering an integrated approach to ensure that commissioned services can be monitored effectively. Multi-agency monitoring meetings are held regularly and a proactive approach is used in managing performance and safeguarding issues in commissioned services. The contracting team undertake themed audits, identifying key areas for service improvements, across in-house and commissioned services. Inspections of the council's residential settings concluded that services are well run and, in the main, are providing residents with positive outcomes. A review of the domiciliary care services has been undertaken culminating in the issuing of new contracts, aiming to deliver a more responsive service.

Children

The council is developing services in line with the Welsh Government Families First and Flying Start programmes. The family support action plan provides a clear preventative strategy, its emphasis is on prevention and early intervention for families, targeting vulnerable groups and addressing child poverty. Services are being developed and remodelled to maximise efficiency and to increase opportunities for working within an integrated multi-agency approach. An innovative project is the partnership arrangement between the council and Action for Children, working with families whose child is at risk of becoming looked after.

Performance data information supports that the council is performing well in some areas with its strategic agenda with a number of indicators and outcomes for children evidencing improvement. The realignment to preventative services is demonstrated through the increase in the number of children categorised as children in need, together with the reduction of looked after children and those placed on the child protection register.

A review of the commissioning arrangements has taken place as part of the council's efficiency planning, with the council identifying more effective ways of delivering services. This review has resulted in the council bringing the family link scheme to disabled children back in-house. The council is offering a good range of family support services to disabled children and their families, and the council has been recognised by the Welsh Government for its commissioning of services to children and young people with Autism. CSSIW's annual regulatory inspections of residential services to disabled children identified that they benefit from well run services and are experiencing life enhancing opportunities.

The council has developed effective stakeholder consultation in disabled services and parents have had a key role in developing and shaping services, this model of stakeholder involvement should be considered further across children's services.

The support service through Action for Children providing direct support to parents, who have had more than one child removed for adoption, continues to have a positive impact with a further reduction of children being removed.

Areas of progress

- Effective delivery of joint packages of care in adult services is resulting in people living at home for longer periods.
- In children's services the preventative agenda is embedded in practice and demonstrating improved outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement

- To continue the work on the development of an integrated service for adults with learning disabilities.
- The further engagement, participation and involvement of children and families in shaping services.

Getting help:

Adults

The council is providing a range of information in different mediums to local communities; these are accessible and are available bilingually. Careline Plus provides effective 24 hour, seven days a week first response for health and social care services. The service has been recognised as best practice in meeting the Welsh Government's "*Mwy na Geiriau*" "*More than just Words*" for its delivery of a bilingual service. The multi-agency assessments and care planning process continues to work well with a co-ordinated response between social care services and local GP practices. The council is currently working to improve the unified assessment process, aiming to demonstrate a better link to outcomes for people.

The reablement service is providing people with a responsive service, focusing on an intensive support care plan, aiming to develop and promote their

independence within their home. This is a real cultural shift for families from the use of more traditional residential support services. However; the convalescent beds are complimenting this service and offering a choice for those who require initially a more intensive support package of care within a residential setting. Statistical data informs that 57% of people who finish the programme do not need further services.

The future challenge for the council will be the development of the community resources to support the council's vision on the reshaping of adult social care, from a model of dependence to the move to promote independence and decrease the dependence on residential care. The council needs to continue to monitor the balance of care between supporting older people in their own homes and admission to residential care beds, alongside ensuring that effective performance systems are developed to demonstrate improved outcomes.

Children

Children's services continue to provide an effective response to referrals. The Dyfed Powys Police central referral system continues to work effectively and a social worker is to be placed directly in the team to make this service more responsive.

The intake team provides a responsive service, although the proportion of assessments where the child is seen by a social worker and the proportion where the child is seen alone is much lower than most other councils. The management oversight in decision making is good and staff, are well supported in their role. Effective quality assurance systems are in place, ensuring consistency in decision making which is having a positive impact on the number of repeat referrals.

The review of the assessment tool seems to be working well and social workers report that it has reduced the time spent on recording data. Assessments are well structured, with good analysis, demonstrating a good understanding of the child and families needs in order to develop an intervention plan. The council should consider how children's individual plans demonstrate clearer the desired outcomes for the child.

Areas of progress

- Better support to adults to remain living in their home and community longer.
- Support to adult carers has improved.
- Improved performance on reviews in adult services.
- Improvement in child in need reviews.
- In children's services there has been an increase in the number of initial assessments being completed, together with a reduction of repeat referrals.

Areas for improvement

- The development of a more effective assessment tool in adult services.

- Children's individual plans to provide clearer objectives and these should be linked to improving outcomes for children.
- Increase the proportion of assessments where the child is seen by a social worker and the proportion where children are seen alone.

The services provided:

Adults

The council provides a progressively broad range of services that increasingly meets people's needs for independent living. More people are helped to live at home, including those with complex needs. The implementation of the Section 33 agreement is working well. The council is developing more effective multi-agency working through pooled resources avoiding duplication of services.

The integrated community resource teams continue to deliver a co-ordinated service and they are making positive progress on delivering a service that focuses on people's independence. The council is developing performance date targets to monitor the effectiveness of this service.

The establishment of an adult and children's transitional team working with young people and their families as they transfer from children to adult's services is reported to be having a positive impact. The next stage will be ensuring that there is closer alignment between funding bodies to ensure a more integrated transition of service.

Mental health services are providing an integrated multi agency approach; staff, are well supported and receive appropriate training. The council is working well on the implementation of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 with the move to a care and treatment planning model well advanced.

The council has conducted a review of dementia services which identified priorities for service developments and have established a dementia action board, aiming to provide strategic development of services within the council. The council is also one of three demonstrator sites for the Social Services Improvement Agency project '*Transforming Services for Older People who have dementia*'. We will monitor progress of this work alongside the development of dementia services within the council.

Children

The Families First action plan is well embedded and demonstrating how families will be supported through Flying Start and an integrated family service. The council has set out its development plans over the next three years, identifying how it will target families in the most deprived areas of the county to address poverty and improve outcomes for children. The children's partnership is working well, with a clear vision on giving all children the best possible start in life. The childcare sufficiency assessment sets out the priorities in delivering effective child care provisions and early years inspectors are finding that generally good quality child care provision are offered in the county.

Preventative services remain a priority with the council offering a good range of services. There is strong evidence to support that this is beginning to be effective with a reduction in the number of children on the child protection register and those looked after. The intensive family support team is working well, offering services through a multi-disciplinary team including, supporting families with substance misuse and complex issues.

The integrated family support team (IFST) has been operational for twelve months, providing a multi-agency response to families where there are compromised parenting concerns due to complex issues and substance misuse concerns. The IFSS teams are providing targeted intensive support, focusing on a shared responsibility between families and agencies. The service has been established collaboratively with other authorities and the Hywel Dda Health Board in Mid and West Wales. It is reported that this model is working well and achieving positive results with families and improving outcomes for children.

The team around the family model is working effectively with plans to expand this preventative support service. The education welfare service is being remodelled as part of the council's commitment to working collaboratively across agencies and to further strengthen their preventative strategy.

A new initiative is to develop a more systematic approach to working with families based on the *Hackney Model* looking at reclaiming the social work role. This aims to provide a more intensive and focused package of support to the family and to reduce the need for social services intervention through statutory services. CSSIW will monitor its implementation during the next twelve months.

The annual inspection of the fostering service concluded that the council was committed to giving children positive and safe family based care. Children and young people's views are actively sought and the council promotes children's achievements well through an annual award ceremony. Foster carers reported that they are well supported, there is a clear commitment to ensuring children have stable and supportive placements, with children's emotional needs well supported. Improvements were noted in the number of annual foster carer reviews. The council continues to meet the requirements of Stable Lives Brighter Future well with a high number of looked after children remaining in the county.

Areas of progress

- The integration of health and social care services in adults.
- Improved commissioning arrangements in adults and children.

Areas for improvement

- The development of performance indicators in adults services to demonstrate improved outcomes for service users.

- The children and adult transition team for disabled services needs to develop a closer alignment between funding bodies to ensure a more integrated transition of service.
- Further development of dementia care services.

Effect on people's lives:

Adults

Adult services are continuing to demonstrate improved outcomes with more people able to lead independent lives, more people having choice and control in the way in which services are provided, with a commitment to offering packages of care to support people living in their communities for longer. The council has improved its performance on the delayed transfer of care from hospital, through its collaborative working between the discharge liaison nurses and the reablement team.

The consultation within learning disabilities service has led to a realignment of day services, moving away from the traditional day centre model. The new service offers improved community opportunities, addresses social isolation and is supporting people in employment and meaningful activity. A review of the joint commissioning strategy is being undertaken. The council recognises that accommodation services are unsustainable with 68% of the total learning disability budget spent on commissioned accommodation services. The council is demonstrating a real commitment to ensuring that the commissioned services meet people's needs and improve their outcomes.

The multi-agency carers commissioning strategy is currently being reviewed and updated, to address the future priorities. The Investors in Carers is well established, with 90% of GP practices having in place processes to recognise and support unpaid carers. The development of a regional team is identified as making a difference to the support available to carers. We will be monitoring the progress on the development of services to carers across children and adults.

The council's process for the protection of vulnerable adults is in line with national procedures and there are effective multi-agency links. Careline Plus acts as the point of contact for referrals and regulatory inspectors report this to be working effectively. The integration of the contracting and commissioning and safeguarding team is leading to better protection for vulnerable adults, with a clear connection between safeguarding and the implementation of the escalating concerns protocol. Whilst systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding work, there have been a number of safeguarding investigations that have taken a number of months to conclude. The council needs to consider the timeliness of investigations from referral to conclusion in their proposed development of a set of standards to monitor the performance of the safeguarding service.

The council is moving towards the development of a regional adult safeguarding board and meetings have taken place with partner agencies to identify the

structure and priorities. The council, in consultation with partner agencies, needs to ensure that local safeguarding issues remain a priority for the regional board.

Children

The number of children on the child protection register at the end of March 2013 has decreased by 26%, with the preventative strategies being sighted as a key factor. However, performance indicators for this area remain reasonable but the timeliness of initial case conferences is not as good as most other councils. The council has introduced a more inclusive process of engaging families in the case conference process based on the Signs of Safety model and indicators are that parents are more engaged. The council needs to consider evaluating this new process to demonstrate the link between the families better management of risk to improved outcomes for children.

Safeguarding in education has remained a focus with the LSCB continuing to monitor progress on the implementation on new safeguarding procedures. A multi-agency team has been developed to conduct safeguarding audits within education, which are leading to improved safeguarding arrangements within the council's schools. Consultation has taken place with young people on their views of what matters to them in safeguarding and a junior LSCB is in the process of being established, giving children and young people a better voice in safeguarding.

Arrangements are in place for the development of regional LSCBs and the council is taking a lead on these developments. It is evident that the council is well placed to take the collaborative safeguarding agenda forward with clear transitional arrangements in place. The council needs to ensure that as the shadowing process is implemented that they do not lose sight of the local safeguarding issues.

The council has improved the arrangements for the management of vulnerable young people, with monthly multi-agency meetings taking place. The council reports better engagement with young people, with risk factors reportedly reduced and young people experiencing better outcomes.

Outcomes for looked after children are generally reasonable and the council has a good record of maintaining children within the county, with out of county placements amongst the lowest in Wales. Placement stability, however, could be better. Effective arrangements are in place to monitor and review placement and care planning, although the council should ensure timely completion of statutory reviews where performance is not as good as other councils. The council has a quality assurance framework which extends to monitoring the quality of court care plans. The council maintains good links with care leavers with an increase of young people actively engaged in education training and employment.

Whilst educational outcomes for looked after children are generally good, outcomes and attendance for Key Stage 3 pupils are below the national

average. This suggests a correlation between poor school attendance levels to children's attainment and the council needs to scrutinise these poor outcomes for this group of children. Whilst there is progress on the development of personal education plans within twenty school days, the council remains well below the national average. Further attention is required in this area to ensure that children are supported by a relevant education plan.

Areas of progress

- Improvement in the performance on the delayed transfer of care from hospital.
- Improvement in the telecare service.
- Improved opportunities for employment and community opportunities through the development of better day services for adult learning disabilities services.
- The development of a regional adoption service in line with the Welsh Government plan.
- Better identification and an increase in support services for carers.

Areas for improvement

- Reduce the delay of safeguarding investigation in adult's services.
- Improved timeliness of initial child protection conferences.
- Further develop the work on engagement with families whose child is on the child protection register.
- Improve performance in the development of personal education plans for looked after children and improved attainment for looked after children at Key Stage 3.
- Improved performance in timely completions of statutory reviews for looked after children.
- Improve placement stability for looked after children.

CAPACITY

Delivering Social Services:

Adults

Senior managers in adult social care provide strong direction and leadership, and there are effective communication systems with the workforce that engages and secures commitment to change at all levels. Adult services have undertaken a review against the Department of Health's assessment framework (Use of Resources in Adult Social Care) to measure the efficient use of resources and are satisfied that they are either meeting or working towards achieving the standards set. The council gives high priority to social care services and has increased the budget for 2013/14 by £4m to meet increasing demands. A real challenge for the council will be how services can continue to be provided effectively alongside the increasing population and the demands placed on social care services.

The council has well established links with partner agencies and they are a delivering a number of services through a collaborate approach. The newly formed Mid and West Wales Collaborative Board and the Local Service Board have identified their commitment to deliver services through a co-ordinated approach. The priorities are to provide more cost effective services through pooled resources, aiming to improve outcomes for citizens.

In support of collaborative working, the council has set up a communication and IT integration group to explore the development of an integrated social care system. The development of an electronic system will be a real benefit to the workforce, as this is currently a real barrier to effective multi-agency working.

The social care workforce development programme is well established and there are good training opportunities, with the number of staff attaining accredited courses increasing, achieving a range of professional qualifications. The council, with partner authorities and in collaboration with The University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, have developed a post qualifying award for social workers. Improved arrangements are in place for HR systems, with managers and staff being better supported through the council's occupational health process.

Children

The director of education has overall responsibility for children's services, and there are effective links between this post, the director of social services and the head of children's service. The head of children's services was appointed permanently to the post in April, having been acting in the post for six months, and they are providing good leadership and direction for the service. The Welsh Audit Office annual improvement report in 2012 noted that children's services have continued to perform well against most areas and there is strong and effective leadership.

The council's preventative strategy and the alignment with the education department continue to ensure that the council can deliver effective services to children and their families.

The retention in children's services workforce has improved, with the council sustaining a high level of permanent posts. The council has been successful in recruiting and have maintained the vacancy rate at 5% within children's services. The first year in practice, and ongoing training and support to social workers, is well embedded and there is a real commitment to support staff in the delivery of effective high quality services. The improvement in the electronic recording process, through initiatives such as the review of the assessment process, is reducing the time staff spend on recording and increasing the time spent with children and young people.

Robust quality assurance processes are in place within the department and there is a real commitment from senior managers to ensure these are conducted systematically. Performance date reporting is well embedded, the

independent review service is working effectively and the additional overview of court reports is contributing to the improved outcomes for children.

Areas of progress

- Improved financial planning, better targeting of resources through collaborative working.
- Continued sustaining of a well trained and committed workforce.
- Improved HR support services for staff.
- A strong corporate parenting commitment from the council.

Providing direction:

The Council has identified its strategic priorities for 2013/14 with a focus on *Better Outcomes, Improved Efficiency*. These identify key areas across adult and children's services, focusing on delivery and development of services using a collaborative approach.

The council has effective corporate arrangements and these are providing a coherent direction for both adult and children's services, and there is a strong political commitment to improving social care services. This is evidenced through the work of the health and social care scrutiny committee, who conduct service audits. A review of services to people with dementia has taken place this year and, in the coming months, a review of mental health services which will include the implementation of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.

The corporate parenting strategic group is operating effectively. They are actively engaging with stakeholders and social work teams across the council. There are good links in the corporate parenting panel between strategic and operational managers, and evidence that the group has made a difference to the outcomes for care leavers. The corporate team has been proactive in securing apprenticeship places for looked after children within the council. It is evident there is a real commitment from the council to providing good life opportunities for this group of young people.

In the Wales Audit Office annual improvement report for 2012/13, it concludes that the council is managing its improvement programme well and continues to develop public reporting which provides a fair and balanced assessment of progress, as well as the impact this is having upon citizens and service users.

The council is making good progress in delivering improvement in all of its priority areas. The council's governance and management arrangements have delivered a mature and embedded approach to self-evaluation. The council's planning for improvement and its arrangements to support improvement are sound.

The national review of the statutory role of the director of social services by CSSIW in December 2012 found that there was "*A strong sense of direction has been set for social services, although cognisant of the statutory guidance, the head of paid service, officers, members and partners viewed this as*

resulting from the significant corporate profile afforded to the social services agenda supported by a positive collaborative ethos.” The evaluation also found that there was confidence within the council of the director “*There is a high level of confidence and belief in the ability and professional leadership of the director of social services.*” Whilst adults and children’s services are in separate directorates with children’s services located in the education and children’s services directorate. The evaluation concluded that the director of social services has good oversight of social services through his direct involvement through the formal process in place within the authority. The future challenge will be as there is more emphasis is placed on regional collaboration, such as the children safeguarding boards, that their direct involvement is maintained.

It is evident that the council is committed to implementing The Welsh Government’s White Paper *Sustainable Social Services: A framework for Action* and the principles that people accessing services are given a strong voice, as the council has developed an engagement strategy for staff. This strategy outlines clearly the principles of the legislation, the council’s commitment to the White Paper and staff responsibility in delivering these principles. In conjunction with the strategy, staff, have been provided with training and support on effective communication with stakeholders.

Areas of progress

- Scrutiny committee’s oversight of the work of social services.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring the director maintains the involvement and oversight of the regional adult and children’s safeguarding boards.