



Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012/2013

Local Authority **City and County of Swansea**
Name:

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

Summary

In recent years, Swansea Social Services has made good progress in modernising its approach to adult services and strengthening delivery in children's services. Overall, given the varied nature and level of the demand the council faces it provides good levels of services. Workforce development has been, and remains, key to its success.

There has been a recent change of director and a recent change in the corporate structure within the council. A chief social services officer has been appointed who holds the responsibilities of the statutory director. This role is part of the corporate executive board, and whilst the chief social services officer will be line managed by the corporate director of people and places once appointed, they will report directly to the chief executive on all operational matters. The challenge will be ensuring the necessary corporate support is provided and that business planning for social services remains a key focus for the council within the new structure.

Adult services

Adult services have improved and there is sustained progress. There is clear evidence through project innovation to support the modernisation of adult services. There is recognition that services will need considerable remodelling to provide sustainable provision in the future. The council continues to engage well with providers and users of services.

Children's services

Child and family services are making steady progress in the face of increased demand. The head of service is seen to provide strong leadership. The workforce

remains stable as retention of staff has been a priority for the council. There has been a significant increase in the number of children looked after and this remains high when compared with similar councils. There has been a decrease this year in the number of children in need. The CSSIW review of outcomes for children in need and children looked after in the authority was very positive, particularly around the preventative work the authority is undertaking with families. Despite corporate commitment and investment in child and family services, the authority has continued to suffer from significant budgetary pressure, this in the context of increasing demand is a challenge the authority recognises. The challenges posed with the high volume and demand will remain significant.

The director's annual report integrates performance activity, identifies progress against key targets and outlines priorities. This provides clear information on public accountability and enables the citizens of Swansea to determine the quality and effectiveness of local services.

CSSIW has identified the following potential risks:

- Continuity of corporate and political support for the delivery of social services functions within the new structure and the associated scrutiny arrangements.
- The new structure does not fit the intended framework of the statutory guidance on the role of the director of social services and needs to demonstrate compliance with it.
- The absence of a local adult protection committee mechanism whilst transition is made to establishing the Western Bay arrangements.
- The level of demand on resources and complexity in children's services.

Response to last year's areas of development

The council continued to make progress in identified areas for improvement in adult services. It has engaged with stakeholders to review commissioning plans and it expects to deliver a strategic framework and a market position statement this year as a result of this work. The transforming adult social services project is remodelling services in order to sustain delivery and drive improvement in practice. Alongside this, the care homes quality team supports quality assurance with a focus on improving outcomes. Work is ongoing with partners to fully implement an action plan and develop commissioning plans to improve support to carers in order to address the requirements of the carers' strategy.

Progress has been made in most of the areas for improvement identified for children's services. The council reports that it has now established a multi-agency permanency panel as part of its preventative strategy for children on the cusp of being taken into care. As part of CSSIW's national review of outcomes for children in need and looked after, the council was commended for its work with children, families and partners. It intends to continue this work through the use of skills

models, such as signs of safety; solutions focused planning and restorative practice.

Good practice identified

CSSIW has identified the following areas of good practice:

- The reablement service at Bonymaen House.
- The council's engagement and support of ethnic minorities.
- Signs of safety work with families.

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

CSSIW have undertaken a site visit this year in adult services. This visit was to follow up on the progress of the transforming adult social services project and also to consider the implementation of the Mental Health Measure, and integration of older people's services with health. We also met with senior management of the council to follow up findings.

The authority participated in CSSIW's national review of outcomes for children in need and children looked after in 2012. Positive outcomes were noted in relation to a number of areas. Within children's services, CSSIW has been unable to carry out any site visits this year; however, meetings with the head of service have enabled some discussion and monitoring of progress to be made.

These visits are in addition to the annual programme of inspections carried out in the council's regulated settings and services for both adults and children. CSSIW also held regular engagement meetings with senior council officials.

Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

A number of specific areas for improvement have been identified in the body of this report. Progress in relation to these will be discussed with the council during regular engagement meetings in the coming year.

- Compliance with statutory guidance in relation to the role of director of social services.
- That there continues to be strong corporate and political support for social services and scrutiny arrangements for social services remain robust and effective.
- Support for carers and the response to the Carers Measure.
- Learning disability services including transition from children to adult services.
- Commissioning arrangements and progress with Western Bay consortium.
- Adult safeguarding – practice, quality, audit and governance.
- Permanency planning.

In addition, CSSIW will be undertaking a national thematic inspection of looked after children and a national review of commissioning of social care for older people.

PERFORMANCE

Shaping services:

Adults

The council continues to make progress with the transformation of its adult social services. The change programme is well managed and co-ordinated. There remains commitment to its implementation in order to reconfigure its own health and related services. During our site visits, CSSIW found structures and systems in place to support good planning and commissioning decisions with a staff group who were skilled and enthusiastic. They had ability to see connections across social care and they showed a good appreciation of the need to engage effectively with services users, providers and assessment and care management staff.

Joint planning and commissioning with the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMUHB) is an area for continued development although there have been initiatives which focus on specific communities and GP practices. These are targeted on improving early intervention and preventative services. The council acknowledges that to ensure services are sustainable they must manage demand more effectively by diverting people to preventative services and taking a proactive approach to managing risk.

There is also a proactive approach to service development. The council identified that, whilst 5% of the local population are from ethnic minority groups, there was low access to services from these communities. The focus has been on emerging groups with the most obvious unmet need, such as the Bangladeshi or the growing African refugee populations. This has led to a number of initiatives which include the creation of a Bangladeshi carers support worker post and work with Swansea University to conduct research into the needs of the local black and ethnic minority groups. The objective is to support these communities to find their own solutions as well as supporting access to current services. Social services sit on the corporate customer care group and promote the values of inclusivity, diversity and social inclusion. Group members recognised the challenge of engaging with the Chinese community which has been part of Swansea's heritage for longer than most other ethnic groups.

The transformation of the adult social services project was developed to address increased demands within a context of decreasing resources and a challenging improvement agenda. To support this, the council sees increasing direct payments, training personal assistants within the appropriate cultures and increasing awareness of diversity in the carers' action group as one way of reaching hard to reach groups. In order to ensure that people living outside of the

city centre receive care and support, the council has promoted direct payments and is to consider tailoring its own in-house service in order to more effectively support those people.

There is a dedicated commissioning team within social services, which encompasses strategic service planning and development as well as procurement and contracting. The team links to corporate commissioning, and works in partnership with colleagues in planning and policy in the ABMUHB where it adds value. Team members engage services users, members of the assessment and care management teams, service providers (including in-house and the third sector) to support and stimulate service development. The council is engaging with stakeholders in order to promote planned rather than emergency placements. Inspectors report that commissioners continue to be very effective in driving improvements in both the residential and domiciliary care sector.

Children

The council is developing a range of early intervention and preventative services to promote well being and reduce escalating need and, as a consequence, lessen the demand on formal social services. A strategic framework for integrated working has resulted in the further development of the “team around the family” service and the permanence panel. A pilot project on promoting inclusion has commenced, initially involving two comprehensive schools and their feeder primary schools. It is clear the council is developing services in line with the Welsh Government Families First and Flying Start programmes. There is a clear strategy, its emphasis is on prevention and early intervention for families, targeting vulnerable groups and addressing child poverty in the areas of highest deprivation.

The council has begun to consider how best to provide services to disabled children and their families, particularly around transition into adult care. The council has engaged with families, and the children with disabilities strategy group are developing a single multi-agency transition policy. The priority will be to ensure that the number of children with complex needs having to live outside of the county is reduced.

The regional intensive family support service which was launched in October 2012 and went live in February 2013 and, whilst it is too early to evaluate, evidence from other areas of Wales indicates that this intensive model of intervention is effective.

Foster Swansea has increased the number of carers by 31 this year and has significantly increased placements by 73 as a direct result of the work by the agency. The fostering service was nominated for a social care accolade this year as a result of good practice in the team.

The council has reconfigured its residential and respite provision and engaged with local independent providers to facilitate the return of Swansea children to the area

when safe and appropriate to do so. It is hoped that this engagement will also result in children not having to leave the area in order to receive care. This has already had a significant benefit with the number of children looked after outside of the South Wales region reducing to 3%. This has significant cost saving benefits as well as promoting better outcomes for children.

There has been a significant increase this year in the number of looked after children which rose from 554 to 588 at the end of last year. The number of children whose names were on the child protection register also rose from 223 to 236 in the same period. The council will want to consider the impact of this as it places considerable work load pressures on teams

Areas of progress

- The ongoing development of the transformation of adult social services programme.
- The implementation of the intensive family support service.
- Reduction in the number of children looked after placed outside of South Wales.

Areas for improvement

- To continue to monitor the balance between supporting older people in their own homes and admission to residential care beds.
- To reduce the number of children becoming looked after through preventative and supportive strategies.

Getting help:

Adults

People are able to access services and seek support in a timely and effective way. The intake process is robust and people are signposted appropriately. The adult services website has been improved. This enables people to find the right information at the right time and supports self referral. Clearer pathways have been developed to ensure people get a quick response when they need it.

The council reports that they have implemented a new target operating model which sets out clear expectations for teams and frontline staff giving them more time to spend with people rather than following processes. The unified assessment process has been revised and people are finding this easier to work with. Reviews are taking place more regularly with an improved performance at 83% as opposed to 76% last year.

The development of the service at Bonymaen House is reported to be very effective in both preventing admission and facilitating early discharge from hospital.

As a result, the council has reduced the rate of delayed discharge from hospital for social care reasons from 7.18% last year to 2.2 % this year, this compares favourably against similar councils.

The ongoing revision of care management and assessment has been a strategic project within the overall transforming adult social services programme. The council has reviewed how it can improve outcomes for older people and has made changes, particularly to its in-house services in residential care, domiciliary care and assistive technology, most notably by transferring resources from traditional services into services that are focused on reablement.

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.

Children

This year the council has embedded new arrangements so that people are able to access staff in response to concerns about the safety and protection of children raised by professionals and members of the public.

The development of an overarching five year looked after children reduction strategy aims to continue improvement in permanency planning for looked after children and young people, and to safely reduce the recourse to looked after children services. This work also aims to improve outcomes for children who receive looked after services. All staff are clear about the significance of permanence planning in achieving best outcomes for children. Perhaps an indication of the early signs of success of the preventative work being undertaken with families is the fact that referrals to social services have reduced from the previous year from 3,538 to 2,634 which is a 25% reduction. A similar reduction in re-referrals is noted. However, there has been a net increase in the number of looked after children this year by 34.

The council reports a slight increase in performance on the completion of both initial and core assessments being held within timescales. Performance around statutory visits made to looked after children, children in need and those whose names are on the child protection register within timescale, is reported to be at 74%, which is low performance when compared to similar authorities.

Areas of progress

- The reduction in the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons.
- The reduction in the number of referrals to child and family services.

Areas for improvement

- Increased performance in statutory visits to children looked after, those on the child protection register and children in need.

The services provided:

Adults

People continue to have access to an increasing level of support in their communities. Following last years pilot of social opportunity clubs in local communities, the council now facilitates more than a dozen weekly social groups for older people. These link them with people and activities in their local community enabling signposting to services and help in the preventative work in supporting carers. There are now five community health networks and further joint work is ongoing across social services and its partners in health and the third sector, along with community regeneration leisure and recreation to further develop this service city wide.

This year the council reviewed the service provided at Bonymaen House, one of its residential homes for older people. An integrated reablement service has been set up to provide short-term residential care to older people who are either medically fit for discharge from hospital or those who are living at home who require a period of short-term intensive support. The results of the pilot were very encouraging and 50% of people using the service were supported to return home enabling them to have real choices about how they live their life. The role of health through the community resource teams and the commitment of staff have been integral to its success.

Integration with health has continued to make progress with the development of the integrated community equipment store, which allows easier access to equipment and adaptations for people receiving support at home. The co-located teams, occupational therapy and rapid response service, all integrated services, are reported to be providing good outcomes for people.

The service provided at Ty Wuanarlwyd continues to provide positive outcomes for people with dementia, and mental health services are becoming more flexible and focused on recovery. The council reports that many of its activities are now run by service user groups. Accommodation projects are supported by the council, most notably Robense House, which won a Welsh Government award for excellence, and also Llanfair House, which supports service users who have very complex and sometimes challenging support needs.

The council's transformation programme is evidencing the need for further service development in improving access to specialist day services and community activities to reduce social isolation, and provide advice and signposting at an early

stage. The council has recognised the need to strengthen its direct payments programme. The carer's strategy is well established. There are a number of innovative third sector services which support this work.

Children

The evidence seen as part of the children in need inspection suggests that the good outcomes achieved for the families are sustainable in the long-term. This is, in part, due to the skill of the social workers in building relationships with the families to achieve lasting change. It was felt that this had the potential for fewer children becoming looked after which is not only a more positive outcome for children and young people, but also could help relieve the significant financial pressure placed on the authority.

Foster Swansea has received a positive report from a recent inspection. Recruitment and engagement has been strong and, as a result, there has been an increase of 31 carers this year. The council has further developed an in-house family therapy service and maintains links to the child and adolescent mental health service in order to support children with complex needs. The council intends to develop further specialist provision for children with the most complex needs through the regional Western Bay programme.

The council reports that it has improved the percentage of young people formerly looked after with whom they are in contact from 89% to 94%, which is above the national average and also slightly increased the percentage of young people in suitable accommodation to 93%, again above the national average. An external independent review by the Institute of Public Care commended the authority for the work that it does which enables young people to remain looked after, acknowledging the evidence that leaving care later is strongly associated with better outcomes for young people.

The council's residential childcare unit had changed to become an emergency bed provision with an assessment facility for placements up to 12 weeks. It was seen at its recent inspection to be providing a good standard of care.

Areas of progress

- The reablement service at Bonymaen House.
- Increase in the number of foster carers.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to progress outcome/recovery focused care planning in mental health services.

Effect on people's lives:

Adults

Vulnerable adults have always benefited from an established and robust safeguarding process in the council. This year the council has undertaken a comprehensive review of safeguarding which includes both processes and structures. As a result of this review, the council is disbanding its dedicated safeguarding team to make safeguarding "everyone's business" and therefore the functions have been delegated to all teams. The council will want to assure itself of effective arrangements to ensure that its safeguarding practice remains robust. It will wish to ensure that functions are well governed and audited in order to continue to provide vulnerable people with an effective and timely response to safeguarding alerts.

Inspectors report that contract monitoring teams respond positively and effectively following any safeguarding concerns. The council is effective in its escalating concerns work and works well with partner agencies. A regional safeguarding board has been established this year through the Western Bay collaboration and the council is working with its partner authorities to establish fully the functions of this.

Guidance now states that direct payments are to be offered as a first choice to people requiring support. The council recognises the importance of making direct payments accessible for all service users to build in flexibility and individual choice. This is done through ensuring that assessment and care management staff understand direct payments and develop clear information. A revised information booklet about direct payments has been published and made available to the public.

The council has established strong links with carer's organisations in both the statutory and third sector. However, although improved from last year, the number of carer's assessments undertaken remains low. This is an area on which the council might want to focus as part of its preventative agenda.

Children

During the last year, Swansea participated in the CSSIW review of outcomes for children in need and children looked after. Inspectors commended the quality of the work and skill of the social workers, and the high quality of outcomes achieved on all the cases seen.

Inspectors noted corporate and political commitment to realising good outcomes for children and their families with a good range of services available, particularly for prevention and early intervention. Multi-agency co-operation has facilitated good early decisions and enabling of high quality work with families. The quality of

assessments seen was good and, in some cases, outstanding. This was, in part, due to social workers using a narrative, rather than questionnaire format, to record their assessments. The use of skills models, such as signs of safety, restorative practice and solution focused practice, has contributed to the good quality of assessments and decision making.

Inspectors found that the policy of some teams to frontload the work so that very detailed assessment and engagement with families is done at an early stage, has led to good quality early decisions. Confident and effective practice in child protection cases, by both social workers and partners, was evident. The quality of care planning seen for children in need and on the register was good, and, in some cases, examples of particularly good practice was seen. Inspectors felt that risk was assessed and managed well, due to the use of specific skills models such as signs of safety. Of particular note was the skill of the social workers in working with unco-operative or resistant families. Parents reported that they felt respected, listened to, and they valued their relationship with the social worker. Families indicated that they felt they were part of the assessment process and that the social workers worked with them rather than imposing their views upon them.

During 2012/13, almost 82% of initial child protection case conferences were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion. The percentage of initial core group meetings due in the year which were held within 10 working days of the initial child protection conference was 76%. Although this was an improvement from the previous year, it remains significantly lower than other comparable authorities. Similarly, the percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year was 83% which is significantly lower than comparable authorities.

Areas of progress

- Positive progress by social work teams in relation to children in need and the establishment of good practice in working with families.

Areas for improvement

- The council should consider, as part of the preventative agenda, how they can improve the uptake of carers' assessments,
- Improvement in the rate of reviews for look after children.
- Timeliness of core group meetings.

CAPACITY

Delivering Social Services:

The council has stated that a key element of the transformation programme is to deliver a more citizen centred support model, the importance of a valued, supported and experienced staff group to this is vital. This year it has introduced a coaching skills programme in order to support and develop staff for the scale of changes that the organisation is going through.

Child and family services are now fully staffed albeit the majority of the social workers are not as experienced as the authority would have wished. The challenge is to deliver high quality services to families, whilst continuing to support and develop its workforce, at the same time as improving some areas of performance. The investment last year in a programme of additional training such as restorative practice and signs of safety is now beginning to embed and is provided to all existing and new staff members. A first year in practice programme is in place and the workforce development programme extends to continuing professional development for all staff.

The council reports a relatively low turnover of staff this year, having reduced from 13% the previous year to just over 8%. The council recognises that staff sickness remains a concern. Whilst there has been a small decrease in sickness across the authority, there has, however, been an increase in sickness rates in child and family services.

The council continues to ensure and support social workers to maintain their registration with the Care Council for Wales and also supports their continued professional development.

The financial position continues to pose a challenge with a high demand in both adults and children's services. Child and family services face a continued budget overspend. There are robust monitoring arrangements in place with the aim of achieving sustainability. However, the increase in the number of children looked after, and the resulting financial demands this makes, will pose a challenge for the authority.

Areas of progress

- Increased stability overall in the workforce.

Areas for improvement

- Reduction of sickness rates across children's services.

- Continued monitoring of the level of training and knowledge acquired by staff at the completion of their induction period to identify and ensure that further learning and development needs are met.

Providing direction:

There has been good corporate support for social services with clear vision and direction, evidenced by sound strategies, and a corporate improvement plan. The appointment of a chief officer for social services has recently taken place. Although the role is not at corporate director level, the council has given a commitment that this will not alter or diminish the level of support for social services previously seen. The chief social services officer is a member of the executive board and will report directly to the chief executive on all operational matters, whilst managerially the post sits within the corporate directorate of people and places. The new corporate director posts are currently being recruited to and all appointments now having been made are external to the authority. Individuals will be taking up post in the near future. The challenge will be for the council through the new structure to continue and further build on the continued improvement in social services. In the context of significant organisational change, CSSIW will follow up whether there continues to be strong corporate and political support for social services and whether in relation to the role of director of social services there is compliance with statutory guidance.

In recent years Swansea has been recognised for the quality and rigor of its scrutiny arrangements and has revised those arrangements this year. The focus has changed from health and wellbeing adult services scrutiny to strategic scrutiny programme committee, which encompasses all council business. There is a specific sub-committee for all social services which receives regular reports from both children and families and adult's services. It is not clear yet what impact the new arrangements will have on the attention paid or support to social services. However, officers spoken to on the site visit to adult's services reported that the first meeting was constructive, with an appropriate level of questioning and an orientation to the future. CSSIW will follow up that the new scrutiny arrangements remain robust and effective especially as social services become absorbed into a broader corporate directorate.

The financial position remains a significant pressure with increasing demands on children and adult services, these increasing demands will continue to pose both a financial and service delivery challenge.

The Wales Audit Office annual improvement report for 2012/13 concludes that the council is improving performance whilst taking steps to improve the culture of self-evaluation. It recognises that it is going through a period of change in senior management and scrutiny arrangements. The council is making steady progress in delivering improvements in many of its priority areas but significant challenges remain, notably to improve and maintain the quality of care for both children's and

adult services. The council's approach to self-evaluation is taking positive steps to report an accurate picture of performance to citizens. The council's arrangements for planning and supporting improvement are generally sound and it is managing a period of change in senior management and scrutiny arrangements.