

National Review of Commissioning for **Adult** Social Care in Wales 2013-2014

Local Authority Feedback City and County of Swansea



Introduction

This report provides an overview of the effectiveness of commissioning for adult social care in this local authority. The focus of the inspection was on the commissioning of care and support for people with dementia and their carers.

Commissioning Infrastructure for Dementia Services

The authority conducts a very detailed needs analysis, informed by robust data and engagement with stakeholders, service users and carers. There is a major change programme in place which is seeking to transform the service model for adult social care, including dementia care. The transformation will involve increasing community and preventative care, reinvesting in reablement services and reclaiming social work to improve the quality of assessment and support for service users. This ambitious programme is designed to deliver more sustainable social services in the future. Partnership arrangements between the local authority and the health board are good. At a strategic level, the local authority and the health board have embarked upon a major integration programme that is part of the overall change in the delivery of services. All health and social care services are planned to be delivered in community networks across five coterminous health and local authority services.

Relationships with the third sector are good. There is evidence of innovative work done to stimulate capacity in the third sector, for example with a carer's organisation. The authority has further plans to stimulate growth of domiciliary care and targeted services for carers within the not for profit sector. Stakeholders in the third sector reported the good relationships and positive partnership working with the local authority in developing preventative services for people with dementia and services for carers.

The intent of the local authority is to increase the capacity and variety in dementia care services to meet the growing need by promoting independence and supporting people to remain in their own homes. The governance for these arrangements is both across health and the local authority, and there is a regional governance arrangement across the Western Bay. Both the governance structures are still in the early stages of implementation. The Western Bay partnership has produced a report highlighting the key areas for improving sustainable services for people with dementia and their carers. There is sound project and programme management in place for the Western Bay initiatives and a clear plan for delivery.

The overall responsibility for commissioning in the local authority lies with the joint partnership of the local authority and the health service. The local authority benefits from strong political leadership and a strong corporate focus on social care. The strategy for transforming commissioned services has been presented to full council, and the leaders for the council have engaged with the press and with members to ensure that the implementation is clearly understood. There is a clear understanding about the challenges that will be faced by the local authority in the near future and a suitable sense of urgency

about the implementation of measures to meet that challenge. The leadership of the council, both officers and members, are clear that the solutions will be based on what provides best outcomes for citizens and not on ideological adherence to particular service models:

“Its not about integration it’s about improvement. Where integration leads to improved outcomes we will do it, where it doesn’t we will not” – council member.

Prevention and early intervention

The balance between prevention and intensive support services is good. Prevention and early diagnosis are key elements of the local authority’s commission strategy. The local authority has a track record of encouraging innovation, especially in the voluntary sector. The range and availability of preventative services is good. Preventative services are being developed around the Alzheimer’s Society; the carers centre and the community connectors who work alongside the dementia co-ordinators. The health service appoints dementia co-ordinators for all people with a diagnosis of dementia. These make sure that service users are appropriately sign posted to prevention and early intervention services.

Good Practice example

In the City and County of Swansea the Community Connectors project was introduced as a two year pilot in September 2012 against a backdrop of developing early intervention strategies, financial sustainability and the objective to ensure people’s increased sense of well-being. Five “Connector” posts were created primarily to support people to stay independent, reduce social isolation, put people in touch with community resources and support people to move through services. The community connectors are based in local community networks of services provided by health and social services. They develop local community resources and engage people in the early stages of dementia with suitable activities. The local authority has published an evaluation of the first year of the initiative, with many positive results.

Supporting people in the community

The local authority currently commissions separately from the health service, but in the strategy for the next three years, the local authority and the health board have plans for joint commissioning and pooling of resources. The local authority has proposals currently being debated before the full council to reshape services, including residential services, and reinvest any savings in preventative and re-ablement services. The range and availability of residential services for dementia care are good.

Domiciliary care services are developed for short-term re-ablement and for longer term sustaining people at home. The range and availability is satisfactory, although there is an issue of fragility in the independent sector. The services that have developed historically are currently under review. To date, the domiciliary care sector has largely been given over to the “for profit” sector; service providers being large organisations and few in number. Issues

of concern have arisen regarding the ability of these organisations to retain staff and poor rates of pay. The local authority stated that they intend to deal with this by stimulating the third sector market. They demonstrated that they have begun to do this on a small scale, by developing service level agreements with small voluntary agencies, and providing the support to those agencies to develop their services.

Supporting people with complex needs

There is a good working partnership between the local authority and the health service with regard to services for people with complex needs arising from dementia. The commissioning plan for older people has, as one of its priorities, “to increase capacity and variety in dementia care services”, and this has included specialist services for more complex needs.

The authority is in the process of developing comprehensive re-ablement services. This is currently the subject of a pilot scheme in collaboration with the health board and the Gower integrated team. Evaluation to date has highlighted positive outcomes for people with dementia who are living in their own homes. Such is the success of the integrated team, there are now plans to replicate the service across the Swansea locality. Longer term plans include the aim to ensure that all individuals access integrated re-ablement services as a means of assisting them to live out their lives in their own home.

Engaging service users and carers

The local authority has developed a set of defined outcomes for people with dementia, and has consulted on an outcomes focused commissioning model. The local authority plans to improve its reviewing and monitoring process to move towards outcomes focused practice over the next few years. The authority currently has robust review and evaluation procedures for its commissioning strategy, to ensure that commissioned services are meeting outcomes for people. However, the review mechanisms need to have more focus on the quality of care that people receive.

The involvement of service users and carers in the commissioning process is good. The voice of the service user and carer is well heard within the process of reviewing services for individuals. However, there is a slight concern that at times that service user whose carers are good advocates may have a better service. Thus it is important that the reviewing procedures and the contract monitoring procedures focus on measuring the quality of care that is provided.

Good Practice example: Swansea Carers Centre

The Swansea Carers Centre has been an independent charity since 2005. This centre has a service level agreement with the local authority and is supported by the local authority to deliver services for carers. The centre provides benefits advice; advocacy; respite; carers support groups newsletter; events; volunteering; life skills; training and development; and support for former carers. The centre also runs a carers break service to enable carers to have a break from caring responsibilities. This is a good example of a service

that is focused on the needs of carers, and a good example of The City and County of Swansea's ability, as a commissioner, to encourage innovation.