



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

# Performance Evaluation Report 2013–14

Monmouthshire County Council  
Social Services

October 2014

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Monmouthshire County Council Social Services for the year 2013–14

# **Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2013 - 2014**

**Local Authority: Monmouthshire County Council**

**This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Monmouthshire County Council Social Services for the year 2013- 14**

## **Summary**

Monmouthshire County Council continues to make strong progress and has performed well in many areas of its services to adults within the county. While there has been improvement in some aspects of children's services, more needs to be done to improve in key areas and to consolidate practice following the restructuring of services in April 2013. The council has continued to take forward its programme of remodelling services in order to enable people to maintain their independence through support, reablement and addressing barriers to social inclusion.

In adult services the council has made good progress in reshaping services which are person centred, focus on facilitating community based solutions and supporting people to remain independent for as long as possible. The council performs well against many of the key performance indicators for adult services and has improved performance in its reviews of care plans. The implementation of new ways of working has enabled the council to achieve savings within adult services. People receiving services, in the main, provide positive feedback about their experiences and the outcomes achieved.

In children's services, performance in relation to initial care planning and statutory visits for looked after children are weaker than other comparable local authorities and the Wales average. An inspection of safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour found that the council needed to make significant improvement in a number of areas including risk assessment and care planning practice. In contrast to this, there has been improved performance in the areas for improvement identified in CSSIW's 2012-13 annual review and evaluation of performance. In particular, performance around initial assessments and at the point of referral has strengthened. The council has put in place an action plan to address the issues identified during the looked after children inspection. CSSIW will monitor progress and will be undertaking a further inspection.

The director's report and supporting heads of service reports set out the vision for the shape of social services to meet future demand and to enable people to live their lives independently. There is an understanding of the areas where performance needs to improve and the need to put in place ways to measure the

impact of services so that any underlying performance gaps can be identified and addressed.

There is evidence that the council has listened to and understands what matters to the people of Monmouthshire in terms of their social care needs through its systems thinking work, surveys and consultations. These views have been considered alongside the challenging financial environment and predictions of future need to develop a vision for resilient communities and services that enable people to remain independent for longer. The direction of travel is aligned to the principles set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The council has been successful in developing collaborative arrangements which are having a positive impact, most notably through the work of the integrated health and social care teams in adult services. It recognises the importance of further collaboration and is active in the discussions and planning for the integration of services for older adults with complex needs and the mental health and learning disabilities integration agenda. However, progress on the implementation of five year strategies for the integration of learning disabilities and mental health services across the Gwent area has been slow.

The director reports that actions are being taken forward as part of the council's 'More than just words' strategy action plan to ensure Welsh speakers can receive services in their own language. These include identifying Welsh speaking staff and awareness sessions for social care staff.

### **Response to last year's areas of development**

<b>Area for improvement identified last year</b>	<b>Progress in 2013 - 14</b>
Understanding the profile of demand for disabled children with complex needs and develop appropriate support.	The authority has undertaken a systems review of its services for children and adults with disabilities with a view to developing a seamless service. It is not clear what specific actions have been agreed following this work. It will be important that the council monitor and report progress in this area over the coming year.
Work to measure outcomes needs to progress to ensure the council can assure itself that its services are achieving and improving outcomes for the people receiving services.	Work is underway to develop an outcome framework which will enable personal outcomes to be linked to overarching service level outcomes. The implementation of the ICT system in October 2014 should enable the council to aggregate and track

	outcomes more effectively.
Timeliness of initial child protection conferences and core group meetings, and child protection reviews.	The council's performance in these areas has improved significantly during 2013 -14.
Completion of adult care plan reviews.	Performance in this area has improved significantly during the year from 54.4% to 82.1%.
Completion of children in need reviews in accordance with the statutory timetable.	Performance in this area has improved significantly during the year from 19.5% to 57.5%. However, this remains well below the national average of 78.8%.
Completion of statutory visits to looked after children in accordance with regulations.	Performance in this area has further deteriorated from 66.9% to 65.3%.
Completion and implementation of the corporate parenting strategy.	A corporate parenting strategy has been developed.

### **Visits and inspections undertaken during the year**

- Safeguarding and quality assurance unit within children's services.
- Integrated health and social care teams in Monmouthshire.
- Observation of the corporate parenting group.
- Inspection of safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour, within Monmouthshire County Council, 'looked after children inspection'.
- CSSIW met with senior officers via quarterly engagement meetings to review performance and progress against areas identified in the 2012-13 ACRF evaluation.

### **Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year**

- The effectiveness and outcomes of the 'my day my life' initiative in services for people with disabilities.
- Impact of changes made to services for children with disabilities.
- Progress with actions to address the deficits highlighted in the looked after children inspection.
- CSSIW will contribute to a WAO led review to examine whether councils are effectively supporting older people to live independently, including through joined up working across health and social care.

## **Performance**

### **Shaping services**

Monmouthshire's Single Integrated Plan sets out its vision for services. The council wants to develop care and support that is coordinated to meet increasing demand and needs, focused on prevention and early intervention, and delivers person centred outcomes. The plan is informed by data analysis and engagement and consultation with stakeholders, including with members of the community. It includes objectives for families to be supported and for older people to, 'live their good lives'. These objectives are also reflected in the council's corporate improvement plan.

### **Adults**

The redesign of adult services has been an important factor in helping the council achieve its objectives, in particular the development of integrated health and social care teams supporting people who need short term interventions to regain or maintain independence. Work to further integrate these services has been taken forward during 2013-14, with integrated health and social care teams delivering more joined up assessment and care planning and coordinated service delivery. Performance indicators suggest that this way of working is having a positive impact with delayed transfers of care (DTC) rates under control, less people requiring support in the community and residential placements reducing.

The council continues to develop community coordination which seeks to support vulnerable people to connect with local networks and support mechanisms. Two posts have been filled with a further two planned for 2014-15. It is important that the council takes this work forward at pace in order to support its efforts to prevent or delay people needing statutory services.

The Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and the five local authorities in the Gwent area have set out in a statement of intent their proposals to further integrate services for older people with complex needs. Their vision is to help older people with complex needs to maintain their independence. This work will compliment and build upon work that is already underway in Monmouthshire via initiatives such as the integrated health and social care teams and community coordination projects..

Within its three year commissioning strategy, the council sets out its ambition to commission services that are person centred, build on people's strengths and maximises independence and connections to communities. The strategy also outlines the council's intention to explore opportunities for collaborative commissioning with the health board to meet the needs of people with complex needs.

Progress with the Gwent wide five year (2012 -2017) strategies for the integration of learning disabilities and mental health services has been slow. However, a joint systems review of mental health services across the Gwent area was undertaken to explore how this agenda can be taken forward. There is on going discussion with partners across health and social care in Gwent on the potential for integration and a pilot initiative is being tested in Caerphilly.

The council is taking forward work to develop an outcome framework which will enable personal outcomes to be linked to overarching service level outcomes. A new ICT system is currently being developed and senior officers anticipate this will enable outcomes to be more clearly tracked. The council reports that this system will be in place by October 2014. It is important that the council can evidence and assure itself of the impact of the services delivered.

## **Children**

In children's services, a key element of prevention and early intervention is delivered via the Joint Assessment Families Framework (JAFF) and Team around the Families (TAF) initiatives. These services are coordinated via five hubs; the four comprehensive schools in the county and the Acorns Centre in Abergavenny for 0 – 4 year olds and seeks to support families earlier to prevent them becoming more vulnerable. CSSIW observed a JAFF meeting in Chepstow School where a multi agency group considered a small number of young people who required additional support. We heard evidence of good outcomes for the particular young people discussed including significant improvements in attendance and behaviour at school. However, systems to measure outcomes of this work were not in place. We noted there was no health representative present and members of the group reported difficulties is obtaining and maintaining engagement from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The head of children's services reports that there have been reduced and inconsistent services to children and young people who need therapeutic services from Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABHB). More needs to be done to ensure that children and young people with mental health needs receive appropriate CAMHS services to meet their needs.

A new structure for children's services was made operational from April 2013. The council reports that this has enabled clearer decision making and stabilised caseloads. However, during the looked after children inspection, CSSIW found that the workforce had been restructured without good preparation or change management plans in place. This had had a negative impact on the confidence and morale of workers. The lack of planning had resulted in looked after children and young people experiencing a loss of continuity and inconsistency in relation to social work support they received. Issues were raised about the lack of management oversight at this time which had adversely impacted on the continuity of care planning. A review of the restructure, culture and working practices within the service has been undertaken and plans are being implemented to address the

deficits highlighted. CSSIW will monitor progress and will be undertaking a further inspection in 2014

The council worked with neighbouring authorities to continue the development of a joint adoption service which will link with the planned National Adoption Service. The South East Wales Adoption service began work in April 2014.

Services for children with disabilities were identified as an area for improvement in CSSIW's 2012-13 annual review and evaluation of performance. Management arrangements for this team have been stabilised with the appointment of a permanent manager who has been taking forward work to strengthen safeguarding procedures, review processes and social care practice within this team.. The council undertook a systems review of its services for children and adults with disability in November 2013 with a view to developing an integrated children and adult service. The council reports that plans to develop upon this work will be taken forward over the next year.

### **Areas of progress**

- Services delivered by integrated health and social care teams continue to support people to remain independent.
- A three year commissioning strategy has been developed.

### **Areas for improvement**

The council should:

- work with health colleagues to ensure that children and young people with mental health needs receive appropriate CAMHS services to meet their needs.
- Take action in response to the areas for improvement highlighted in the looked after children inspection.

### **Getting help**

#### **Adults**

People are able to access advice and support from integrated health and social care services via the 'Finding Individual Solutions Here' (FISH) hubs located in Abergavenny, Monmouth and Chepstow. Contact details for the three FISH duty teams are available on the local authority's website and are advertised in the local media and doctor's surgeries. In a recent survey by the council of people who had contacted FISH, 83% people reported that they found it easy to get through and were able to speak to the person they needed to. Most people spoken to in this survey reported that their issue was resolved.



The council is taking forward an action plan which underpins the carer's strategy and recognises the essential role carers have in achieving its vision of empowering people to remain independent and find solutions within the communities in which they live. An information guide for carers provides comprehensive practical advice and information for carers in the county. It is positive that more carers have been identified and offered an assessment. The number of identified carers has increased from 434 to 694 and 97.3 % of these were offered an assessment. However, only 17% of carers have an assessment which represents deterioration in performance and the percentage of carers who were provided with a service remains relatively static. Services for carers have been restructured to align with the integrated health and social care teams. The head of adult services reports that further work is being undertaken to develop an integrated assessment process for carers. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes.

The council has improved its performance on the rate of annual reviews for older people from 54.4% to 82.1%. This work is important as it enables the council to assure itself that the care being delivered remains appropriate to meet the people's needs.

## **Children**

As part of the restructure of children's service in 2012-13, initial contacts are now received by qualified social care staff who can provide advice, signpost and make professional decisions regarding referral for further assessment. The head of children's services reports that these changes have improved decision making and stabilised caseloads. In addition the JAFF and TAF framework has been rolled out to provide early support to children and families thereby preventing the need for more intensive statutory services. Performance data suggests that the timeliness of decision making at the 'front door' in children's services has improved and the re-referral rate reduced from 16.2% to 13.3% in 2013-14. In addition the number of referrals to children's services has reduced for the last two years. It is too early to determine if these improvements can be attributed to early intervention and prevention initiatives such as JAFF and TAF.

During CSSIW's site visit to the Safeguarding and Quality assurance Unit in February 2014, social workers in the Family Support Team (FST) reported that, following the restructure and redesign of ways of working, they sometimes have difficulties in managing short and long term work priorities. As a result following up on initial contacts where further information is required e.g. from other agencies, can get pushed down in priorities. Staff in the family support team reported that this can result in a social worker having five or six such contacts which have not been followed up in a timely manner. This may mean that cases requiring a more timely response that could include a risk to children might not be picked up and identified at the earliest opportunity. The council will need to assure itself that the

current structure and practices enable concerns to be picked up and addressed in a timely manner.

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit has been in operation since April 2013. CSSIW undertook a joint visit with Estyn in February 2014 to review the effectiveness of the unit. The unit has taken forward a programme of work to strengthen safeguarding arrangements in education including implementing a training plan and introducing an audit framework. The safeguarding in education officer provides group supervision for designated safeguarding officers in schools and the Flying Start coordinator on a termly basis. An audit framework has been introduced across all schools, youth service, early years and community and leisure. This is a two year rolling programme whereby schools/services undertake an audit which is reviewed and rated by the safeguarding and quality assurance unit and aims to encourage continuous improvement. We saw some evidence of monitoring and reporting on the progress of improvement plans e.g. data sets on safeguarding training and a report to Adult Select Committee including number of staff trained, audits undertaken etc. There was recognition from senior officers that the council needs to take forward work to put in place systems to evaluate the impact of these measures so that the council can assure itself that they are having the desired outcomes.

### **Areas of progress**

- Integrated health and social care services continue to facilitate good outcomes, supporting people to be independent.
- More carers have been identified and offered an assessment.
- There has been an improvement in the proportion of adult care plan reviews undertaken in the year.
- The timelines of decision making on referrals to children's services has improved.
- The re-referral rate to children's services has improved.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Put in place systems to evaluate the impact of work undertaken by the safeguarding and quality assurance unit to improve safeguarding arrangements in education.
- Review structure and practice in the FST to ensure concerns are picked up and addressed in a timely manner.

## **The services provided**

### **Adults**

Three integrated health and social care services teams, two in the North and one in the South, provide integrated services, including the Gwent Frailty model, focused on early intervention and helping people to remain independent. People spoken to during CSSIW's site visit spoke positively about services and reported they had been significantly helped. The Director of Social Services initiated an evaluation of integrated health and social care services in Monmouthshire in October 2013. The key findings of this evaluation indicate that people have improved experiences as a result of integrated services. Quantitative data, such as numbers of people who experience delays in the transfer of their care from hospital and numbers of people supported in the community, indicate that the integrated service is having a positive impact on outcomes for people.

The council commissions a range of care services from independent providers for younger and older adults. CSSIW inspected these services during 2013-14. Where issues were identified, in relation to one service in particular, the council's contract and commissioning team worked positively with the inspectorate and the provider via its provider performance process to facilitate improvement in the quality of care delivered. The council itself is a registered provider of individual support, domiciliary care and adult residential services. CSSIW's inspections of these services found that while some areas for improvement were identified, people were receiving good quality care and service user's feedback was positive.

The council has been undertaking the 'my day my life' initiative as an experiment in the Abergavenny area. The purpose of this work is to enable people with learning disabilities to have opportunities to participate in the community and live fulfilled lives. There are examples of positive outcomes for individuals who have benefited from the project. The council plans to extend this way of working throughout services for people with disabilities using the lessons learned from this pilot. A systems review has been undertaken of services for children and people with learning, physical and sensory disabilities with a view to the development of a children and adult disability service. This work is at an early stage and CSSIW will be interested to explore the effectiveness and outcomes of this approach in the coming year.

An innovative approach in domiciliary care services called the 'Raglan Project' was piloted. This involved delivering domiciliary care in a more person centred way. Staff were empowered to deliver care plans in a more flexible way and centred on service user's choices as opposed to a defined list of tasks. Whilst minimum service needs were met, people could use time more flexibly to meet their needs and take part in more fulfilling activities. Service users and staff spoke very positively about this initiative and we saw some significant positive outcomes for

people using the service. The council is planning to extend this way of working initially to its own domiciliary care services.

## **Children**

The inspection of the council's fostering service found there has been further improvement since the previous inspection including increased training opportunities for foster carers, improvements in initial assessments and an increase in young people's involvement in training for foster carers. The council reports that progress of its foster carer's payment for skills and allowances policy has been slower than expected.

Performance in relation to looked after children has been mixed. While looked after children reviews are carried out in almost all cases, the proportion of looked after children who had a care plan in place at the time of their first placement was below the Wales average and is the third lowest in Wales. The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year was 65.3%, considerably lower than the Wales average of 85.3%. These visits are essential to ensure that looked after children are safeguarded. During the looked after children inspection, CSSIW found deficits in a number of areas including risk assessment and care planning practice. The council has put in place an action plan to address the issues identified. CSSIW will monitor progress and will be undertaking a further inspection.

Care leavers spoken to during the inspection were positive about the support they received especially from their personal advisors, and social workers. Some young people had good experiences of foster care and support for further education. Performance figures show that while less care leavers had a personal advisor, a greater proportion had pathway plans in place and 91.7% of care leavers were in suitable, non emergency accommodation. Fifty eight percent of care leavers were in full time education, training or employment which compares well with the Wales average. The authority has plans in place to support care leavers by developing initiatives such as work experience placements, apprenticeships and a post to support a 'Children in Care Council'.

CSSIW had identified in its previous two annual evaluation reports an area for further improvement around understanding the profile of demand for disabled children with complex needs and developing appropriate support. Progress has been slow. There have been issues of unstable management of this aspect of children's services. During 2013-14, a permanent manager has been appointed who is taking forward development of this service. A systems review of services for children and adults with disabilities was undertaken with a view to developing seamless services. This work is at an early stage of development and the council reports it will be taking forward actions that arose from this review.

## **Areas of progress**

- A Gwent wide adoption service has been developed.
- The Raglan project initiative has delivered good outcomes for the people receiving services.

## **Areas for improvement**

- The council should improve performance in relation to looked after children statutory visits.

## **Effect on people's lives**

### **Adults**

The council's focus on reablement and promoting independence seems to be having an impact with more people being enabled to remain independent. Fewer people are experiencing delays in the transfer of their care from hospital and the council reports that over 50% of people are fully independent following help from reablement services. This, in addition to an under spend in adult services of £182,000 in 2013-14, suggests that new working practices to manage demand and promote independence are having an impact. During CSSIW's site visit to review the work of these teams, people receiving services were positive about the support they received and spoke about how they have been supported to regain independence.

Protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) is a key priority for the council. The head of adult's services is a member of the Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GWASB) and the POVA coordinator sits on two of the sub groups reporting to the board. The current sub groups of the board have provided a drive for training staff across five local authority's as well as independent sector providers. The board has undertaken a review of its terms of reference, structures and membership. The progression of the actions arising from this review should be prioritised to provide a firm foundation to support new safeguarding legislation from Welsh government and drive forward the development of new opportunities for shared learning between partners and promote consistency.

There has been an increase in the number of adult safeguarding referrals to Monmouthshire social services during 2013-14 and the council has responded to the increased pressures with the appointment of an additional Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) coordinator and part time POVA administrator. Further protection of vulnerable adults training has been provided to designated lead managers within the local authority and health services. The percentage of adult protection referrals where the risk has been managed has shown a small improvement.

## **Children**

The Director of Monmouthshire Social Services is the chair of the regional South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (SCB) which has been in place since April 2013. A comprehensive strategic plan has been developed and priorities have been agreed. 'Adolescents who exhibit harmful behaviours' has been planned as a focus for 2014-15, this development includes significant key actions which could be expanded to include risky behaviours in addition to those of child exploitation and missing young people.

Timeliness of initial child protection conferences and core group meetings was identified in CSSIW's 2012-13 annual review and evaluation of performance as an area in need of improvement. The council's performance in these areas has improved during 2013-14 with the timeliness of child protection conferences improving from 84.8% to 93.4% and the timeliness of initial core group meetings improving from 34% to 96.2%.

The percentage of reviews of child in need plans carried out in accordance with the statutory timetable has increased significantly from 19.5% to 57.5%. However, this remains well below the national average of 78.8%.

There are arrangements with schools in the authority to support looked after young people which are focussed on their well being in addition to education. Attendance statistics for looked after children demonstrate that this is having a positive impact with the percentage attendance of looked after pupils whilst in care in primary and secondary schools at 95.9% and 93.3% respectively. However education outcomes for 16 year old looked after children have deteriorated although it is recognised that poorer performance for one or two children can affect these statistics. It is notable that less looked after children had a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place than last year. It is important that good quality PEPs are in place for all relevant looked after children to establish clear targets and actions to respond to each child's needs and provide a continuous record of their achievements.

## **Areas of progress**

- There have been improvements in the completion of children in need reviews in accordance with the statutory timetable from 19.5% to 57.5%. However, this remains well below the national average of 78.8%.
- The integrated health and social care model in adult services is having a positive impact of on outcomes for people.

## **Areas for improvement**

The council should:

- review practice in and performance in relation to looked after children and take appropriate action to improve in this area;
- ensure a PEP is in place for all looked after children who require one; and
- further improve on the completion of children in need reviews in accordance with the statutory timetable.

## **Capacity**

### **Delivering Social Services**

The Wales Audit Office annual improvement report for 2013-14 concluded that the Council continues to set and manage its budget well but now faces further significant challenges following fundamental changes in the financial climate. Despite a very challenging grant settlement from the Welsh Government, the Council has set a balanced budget for 2014-15 and plans for how efficiency savings will be made have been developed. However, the report also highlights that it was uncertain whether the Council was likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in 2013-14.

Whilst the number of children on the child protection register has further reduced during 2013-14, the number of children who are looked after remains high. This alongside the new Public Law Outline (PLO) processes has created increased workload pressures in looked after children services. This also placed additional financial burden on children's services which ended 2013-14 with an over spend of £832,000 and the council has responded by making additional funding available in 2013-14 and 2014-15. Within adult services, new ways of working has assisted the department to manage demand which enabled it to achieve an under spend in 2013-14. Adult services will need to continue to find savings in 2014-15.

The council had a social care workforce development partnership plan in place for 2013-14 which set out its training and development priorities and opportunities. The authority has worked to stabilise the workforce, increase capacity and has recognised the need to invest in staff training and development. For example a consolidation programme has been put in place to support and develop newly qualified social workers. Sickness levels are reported to have reduced from 6.9% to 3.9 %. Senior managers in social services report difficulties in attracting applications at team manager level due to the breadth of responsibility in these roles which increasingly involve the management of integrated teams. The recruitment and selection process has been changed so staff are selected based on behaviours and values.

## **Areas of progress**

- The council has managed its budget in adult services well.

## **Providing direction**

Social services continue to have a strong corporate profile with support from elected members. Scrutiny arrangements have been developed to reflect the children and young people and the adult's agenda.

The council's corporate improvement plan sets out objectives for social care to enable it to achieve its vision as set out in the Single integrated Plan. These identify key areas which focus on prevention, early intervention and integrated service delivery.

The director of social services provides strong leadership taking forward the transformation programme and consolidating service redesign which has already been implemented. The head of adult services has demonstrated a commitment to reshaping adult social care services to meet demand and need. Leadership within children's services has been less stable with three different heads of services in the last three years. The most recent appointment had been made in April 2014, and corporate officers are committed to providing stability for this crucial role.

In our 2012-13 annual evaluation report, CSSIW highlighted a risk for the council in relation to the development of a quality assurance and performance management framework that would enable the council to assure itself that the service structures and new ways of working are delivering the desired outcomes. The director's report recognises the need to find ways of measuring the impact services are having on people's lives. There is evidence that work has begun on developing a performance framework based on personal outcomes and the implementation of a new ICT system in October 2014 should enable the council to demonstrate outcomes achieved more clearly.

During the inspection of looked after children, CSSIW found that the council has recently adopted a corporate parenting strategy which outlines its priorities for looked after children and young people. Elected members supported improvements in services for looked after young people and had approved plans to improve opportunities for care leavers to maximise their economic independence. However, the authority has identified that corporate parenting is not embedded across the council, and arrangements were still at an early stage of development. Elected members are committed to supporting better educational outcomes but do not appear to have a good understanding of the level of needs of vulnerable and at risk looked after young people.



### **Areas of progress**

- A corporate parenting strategy has been developed.

### **Areas for improvement:**

The council should:

- ensure the council has good understanding of the level of needs of vulnerable and at risk looked after young people and its corporate parenting responsibilities; and
- implement the corporate parenting strategy.