



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

Performance Evaluation Report 2013–14

Torfaen County Borough Council
Social Services

October 2014

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

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2013 - 2014

Local Authority

Torfaen County Borough Council

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Summary

The council has made improvements in a number of areas this year, but has struggled to achieve progress against all targets it set itself. The transformation programme continues to deliver efficiency savings. This year social services managed to end the year with a balanced budget through close monitoring, financial guidance and making savings where possible. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) concluded that the council is good at managing its overall budget and continues to deliver essential services with less money, but it needs to strengthen how it evaluates the impact of savings to ensure services do not become unsustainable in the future.

The director's annual report provides an accurate account of the council's performance. It celebrates the achievements whilst acknowledging the challenges faced by the authority. It recognises the consequences of the impending introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which will bring changes at all levels.

In adult services, the council is planning to extend the collaborative arrangements with health partners and neighbouring local authorities in order to improve the integration of health and social care. The health board has identified resources to drive integration. Work has begun with stakeholders about models of service delivery that will provide a holistic response to vulnerable people's needs. Existing services, such as intermediate care and reablement that are successful will be a key feature for further development. Where there is a need for re configuration to enable more effective targeting, this will be pursued.

This year the council made a policy decision to increase the eligibility threshold for access to help from social services. The intention is to target those people most in need. The risk is that the more universal services available in the community will struggle to meet the demand from those with lower levels of need. This in turn may increase the stress on families and carers. It is important that the council and its partners monitor closely the impact of its decision, not just in terms of demand on social services, but also in respect of outcomes for people in need of advice or lower levels of care and support.

In children's services the evidence suggests that the council provides an effective response to incoming referrals and initial decision making. It also performs well in fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to assessments. Most indicators related to looked after children and children in need show performance that is comparable to other local authorities in Wales. It is of concern that there are still significant delays reported around initial child protection conferences; whilst this has improved significantly compared to last year it is still poor performance and well below the Welsh average. This is something the council will need to improve.

The council recognises the need to invest further in early intervention and preventative services and make best use of services such as Flying Start, and other support services for families. The Family Focus pilot is an example which is achieving good outcomes for children, but its long term future needs to be secured.

Response to last year's areas of improvement

Area for improvement identified last year	Progress in 2013 - 14
Implementation of more preventative and early intervention services for Children and Families	It continues to remain a challenge for social services to move forward at the pace necessary due to pressures on budgets. The head of service reports that families are supported via community universal services and signposted to them. The Family Focus initiative was a pilot which was due to be evaluated in 2013 -14. This review is still pending.
Evidence of Care planning at first placements for children in care	The council linked this poor performance to a reporting error in the systems and not one of poor practice. This years performance of 90.4% is comparable to the Welsh average of 90.9%.
Care planning and permanence planning	The inspection of fostering service this year indicates that improvements have been made. There are increased demands particularly in respect of assessments of kinship carers. In addition, meeting tight court deadlines has placed additional pressure on the service and the panel now meets twice monthly to meet this demand. One elected member now sits on Foster Care panel.
Improve marketing and uptake of direct payments	The council now has a market position statement and one of the priorities for 2014-15

	is to consult with providers, users and carers on the medium to long term commissioning strategies for both adult and children and then publish more widely. The success of this will be dependent on the resources that are available.
Continue to address high numbers of looked after children ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to take action to revoke court orders	The number of looked after children, at the end of March 2014, was 296. This is similar to the previous year's figure. Work has been completed by the head of service to understand the reasons behind the high levels in the borough.
Ensure appropriate skills and resources are available to deliver essential and specialist training to the workforce	There is evidence that there is access to appropriate training and development for staff, although mainly in house. Specialist training is available as needed.

Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

- National inspection of safeguarding and care planning for looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours, (looked after children inspection').
- Visit to Community Resource Team.
- Observation of Corporate Parenting Group.
- Observation of Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Site visit to Torfaen Young Carers Group.
- Engagement Meetings with the Senior Management Team and Heads of Service.
- Regulatory inspections undertaken in a number of service areas.

Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

- Progress in relation to timeliness of actions and anomalies in the reporting of performance indicator data.
- Continuing budget pressures and impact on services.
- The impact on carers of the decision to raise the eligibility threshold for help from social services.
- Outcomes achieved by the Family Focus and prevention services.
- Visit to the new supported tenancy accommodation for people with a learning disability.
- Timeliness of Disability Facilities Grants.
- 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

Adults

The council continues its journey towards integration with key partners. Collaborative arrangements are well established, both with health and the third sector. The Transformation Board for adult services is responsible for driving change that is sustainable. Its aim is to provide services that deliver value for money and which meet the needs of those who require the most support. Corporate funding for a post within social care to support service review and re-design helped to appropriately target resources and modernise service models to improve outcomes for people. Funding for this post ceased in March 2014.

Due to budgetary constraints the council had to make the difficult decision to change its eligibility criteria for services from April 2014. Although this will not affect the short term initial reablement cohort, only those who meet the requirements for substantial or critical needs will receive long term support from care management teams. It is the council's intention to place greater emphasis on prevention and minimal intervention when required, whilst maximising the wider use of community support. With some repositioning of resources (and better links with Neighbourhood Care Networks), senior managers within health and social care argue that they will be relatively well positioned to deliver and broker a wide range of support within local communities either through public, private or third sector services

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) has identified resources to lead work on the integration of care and support services across health and social care. Work has begun to consider the introduction of further pooled budgets (including the intermediate care fund) and proposals for joint training and organisational development are also under discussion. Independent consultants have been commissioned to review the effectiveness of existing collaborative arrangements. This work will help Torfaen in terms of preparedness for the forthcoming Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Plans to develop an integrated mental health service, as identified in last year's report, have made slow progress. Discussions continue with partners across health and social care in Gwent and south Powys on the potential for integration and support. The retirement of a manager in the mental health team has offered the

flexibility to recruit to the post temporarily whilst the planned collaboration is fully considered.

Children

The number of children who are looked after in Torfaen has remained at a similar level over the past three years at around 300. This feature has been identified by both CSSIW and the council as requiring further analysis. An initial analysis by the head of service suggests that understandable attempts to ensure that risk factors are reduced (to the extent that it is safe for the care orders to be revoked by the court) means that a significant number of children are being placed with parents (with additional support) or with members of the extended family who are registered as foster carers. CSSIW will be interested in receiving an update on the work undertaken to revoke the number of court orders during the course of the next year.

The long term ambition for the authority is to further develop preventative and early intervention services. There is a corporate transformation funding stream aimed at the development of early intervention. A new Family Focus pilot has been developed; its aim is to work with families to support them at an earlier stage so that it hastens or prevents statutory intervention at a later point. This is reported to have delivered some positive outcomes for families and effective cost containment through preventing the escalation of risk factors. It is planned to develop the service further across the borough. Whilst it is recognised that services such as this are key in order to move the preventative agenda forward, progress is hampered by the resource pressures that children and family services face.

Child minders in Torfaen make up 65% of day care provision in the borough, all of whom are registered with CSSIW. The Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action plan has a stated aim of focussing on poverty from a young age and the Flying Start programme is fundamental in helping to achieve this through identified child minders. Its 2014 report shows 1268 children benefited from this service which has increased since last year by 7%. All children who are newly eligible for childcare under this programme in Torfaen have been offered a place. This suggests that there is sufficient resource to meet local need and that children in need are benefiting. There is further scope for better connectivity with other preventative work ongoing in the borough.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- made progress with the integration of health and social care services; and
- increased Flying Start provision capacity in the borough.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- make more progress on the proposed integrated mental health service;
- consider why the levels of looked after children remains high;
- review and make a decision about the future of Family Focus; and
- improve connectivity of Flying Start with the preventative agenda.

Getting Help

Adults

The adult “duty pod” that was introduced in 2012 to manage demand and respond more effectively to referrals has been widened to include other client groups. Initial feedback suggests that this has been a positive development. It allows social workers and other professionals the time to concentrate on delivering a service to those who are assessed as being most in need of help and support.

The social care information area on the council’s website has been updated to improve its usability and provide stronger links to other websites and information sources. People with a learning disability and/or their carers are provided with information in a number of formats, with a pilot scheme in place using alternative formats, such as symbols and easy read materials.

Last year the council had additional funding and undertook significant work with and for carers to improve information and advice about their caring role as well as how to support them. Other priorities have meant that this level of input cannot now be sustained. This year, questionnaires were sent out to 800 people to ask their views about the support and services they receive but the outcome of this survey is not yet known. Unfortunately the department is no longer in a position to produce its own newsletter for carers, information is now provided by the Alzheimer’s Society and through the Carers Centre based in Pontypool.

The head of adult services reports that this year demand has increased both in terms of numbers and complexity of referrals received. Performance indicators suggest that although there are fewer people who are over 65 supported in the community than last year the level remains high in comparison to other similar authorities and is well above the Welsh average. The new criteria for accessing services should continue the downward trend in the next year. There are also fewer people living in care homes than in the previous year, although this number too is higher than other similar sized authorities. This may be due to the complex needs and higher levels of specialist support that older people are presenting.

The authority has worked hard to ensure care plans are reviewed. Performance in 2013-14 improved and exceeded the Wales average.

Children

There is evidence of timely decision making about referrals. The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days increased from 68% to 70.5%. This is slightly lower than the Wales average of 71.9% but comparable councils do better in this area. Core assessments completed within 35 days is 77.9% and this is below the Wales average of 81.2 and comparable councils.

For those assessments that were undertaken outside of the expected timescales, the length of delay for initial assessments has improved but deteriorated for core assessments. The percentage of referrals that did not proceed to allocation is 27.6%, considerably higher than the average throughout Wales and other similar sized authorities. The head of service reports that this may be due to inappropriate referrals and a risk averse response from the new Family's First service. The council will want to monitor this closely to confirm what lies behind the figures.

This is the first year of the established South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB). The head of services reports that the first year has gone well and a comprehensive strategic plan has been developed. Much remains to be done with a challenging agenda that seeks to improve multi agency practice and improved processes for quality assuring practice through training, professional development and guidance.

The Torfaen Young People's Support Service (TYPSS), produces a bi-monthly news letter. Social care media via Facebook and Twitter are the main mechanisms for communicating with children and young people in the borough. Social services are working alongside education colleagues to improve and coordinate the links with this group of people. The authority has well developed formal advocacy arrangements with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). All children receive NYAS information packs. The service is well used, with imaginative developments in place such as peer mentoring. Young people who use the service find it valuable and feedback from the organisation positively describes the partnership work with the authority. There are plans to make this a Gwent wide service to deliver further efficiencies.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- appropriate targeting of resources in adult services;
- improved reviews in adult services;
- developed the work of the Family Focus team; and

- established good partnership working with NYAS.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- review the level of referrals in children's services that did not proceed to initial assessment; and
- review the level of support and information to carers and consider the impact of reduction in service.

The services provided

Adults

Adult social care has received some protection against the financial challenges faced by the authority. An increase in the level of complex packages of care has led to work with the independent sector in remodelling some of its services from general to elderly mentally infirm (EMI) provision. This will help meet demand from the increasing numbers of older people with dementia who have complex needs. The authority is confident that the changes in the pattern of services it commissions will help it to meet new and changing demands for care and support. It recognises, however, that more work will be needed to meet the needs of people with dementia.

The authority commissions all of its care home services from the independent sector and overall the quality of provision is good. Where this is not the case the authority has robust contract and performance management tools and works well with CSSIW to tackle poor performance with the independent sector. Over the past year there were two home closures in the borough which affected the market and reduced choice.

Services for people with a learning disability have progressed well. A partnership with housing and the independent sector has delivered a supported housing scheme for eight people. It is anticipated that work will continue with housing providers to expand the range and location of similar facilities.

The families and carers of service users, along with partner organisations, have worked closely with the authority to develop day activities that are person centred and based on individual need and choice. One example has been the establishment of a pilot "The Wednesday Warriors" which provides day opportunities for young men with learning disabilities who predominantly have a diagnosis of autism. Early indications are that this is a highly valued service by those who use it. It is anticipated that this project will continue and will be evaluated in 2014-15.

Support services at home are provided by in-house and commissioned personal care, as well as the council's emergency care at home service. Reablement services were overall found by regulatory inspectors to be good, providing a flexible and responsive approach to the needs and preferences of people. Feedback indicated high levels of satisfaction from stakeholders and people using the service. People spoken with felt consulted and involved in their care planning and were confident that staff understood their needs and preferences.

While the council has got better in delivering Disabled Facilities Grants, its performance remains amongst the lowest in Wales. The head of service is confident that the figures for 2014-15 will reflect a significant improvement.

The Carers Measure is being implemented through formal and informal carers support networks. The authority was successful in obtaining a significant level of funding to provide information in a variety of formats to help carers. In 2013-14 the council recruited an additional social worker to improve the range of support options for carers, as well as undertake assessments. Almost all carers known to social services were offered an assessment in their own right over the past two years. A significant number of carers (86.2%) were provided with a service in 2013-14. Financial pressures mean that this work will now revert to operational teams who are already stretched. The council needs to monitor closely how care and support for carers is affected by this decision and by the implementation of the revised eligibility criteria. Over the coming year CSSIW will discuss outcomes for carers with the council.

Children

CSSIW's inspection of the fostering service found it to be satisfactory and fully compliant and reported that the service had become increasingly efficient and effective in the way in which it delivers the service. There is an elected member on the foster care panel which now meets twice monthly to deal with the increase in workload. During the looked after children inspection in early 2014 it was acknowledged by managers that it could be difficult to find the appropriate placements for children leading to disruption, particularly in respect of those with difficult or risky behaviours. The inspection found a strong focus on improving placement stability, through extensive and on-going multi-agency investment in the Multi Disciplinary Intervention Support Team (MIST). The focus of MIST is provision of an intensive therapeutic support and intervention service, whether through direct work with the child or young person, family members or foster carers, in support of placement stability. This approach has not stopped the use of either residential or out of county provision where there was a clear assessed need for such a placement. Discussions are ongoing about the development of a small support care project to provide creative wrap around accommodation to prevent

the use of foster carers. Currently there is no budget to take this important work forward and it also requires more sign up from key stakeholders.

There is a permanency policy in place which recognises the importance of helping looked after children and care leavers to maintain secure attachments. There is evidence from case files of commitment to arranging and sustaining contact between families, sometimes in the face of significant obstacles. However, the authority's commissioning and contracting arrangements for children is embryonic with little evidence of systems to evaluate its effectiveness. Whilst the size of the authority lends itself to close working and long standing relationships with stakeholders, more formal arrangements would offer clarity on outcomes. The Cymraig Children's Commissioning Collaborative (4C's) continues to work well, although the usage locally does not necessarily reflect the contribution made by the council.

The council's adoption service is operated via the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS), which is a joint service with neighbouring local authorities and is hosted by Blaenau Gwent. It is anticipated that the council's adoption services will be reconfigured in 2014-15 to accommodate the changes to primary and secondary legislation to underpin the new national framework.

Arrangements in place for the transfer of looked after children and young people to the 16 plus team include early introduction to personal advisors who engaged them in "My Plan" work. This helps to prepare young people to proactively contribute to pathway planning. The authority has also expanded the multi-agency nature of its specialist post 16 years support. TYPSS provides access to mental health, employment and housing support and advice. This service compliments the work of the 16 plus team and is highly valued by staff and young people who access it.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- worked well with the independent sector to remodel residential services to meet local need;
- worked positively in partnership to create person centred services for people with a learning disability; and
- TYPSS is providing support to assist with pathway planning for young people leaving care.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- progress work in relation to strategic commissioning in children's services based on identification of unmet need;

- ensure appropriate information, advice and support is available for carers in the light of changes to eligibility criteria; and
- improve performance around Disabled Facilities Grants.

Effect on people's lives

Adults

A temporary joint commissioning and brokerage team has been set up in partnership with Newport City Council; it aims to share expertise and improve overall commissioning. Other joint work with Newport and the independent sector is focussed on both driving up the quality of existing services as well as effectively planning for the pattern of care and support for the future. So far, there have been a number of successes including improved nutrition in care homes working alongside Trading Standards. Feedback from regulatory inspectors who attended the open day was very positive. Work around re modelling the distribution of residential beds has gone some way to meeting identified need for dementia services. The Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) commended the programme. More work is planned to share a newly developed provider performance risk register more widely with neighbouring authorities.

One of the priorities for 2014-15 is to consult with providers, users and carers on the market position statements and medium to long term commissioning strategies for both adult and children and then publish them more widely. The success of this will partly rest on the resources that are available. It is an area that CSSIW will want to monitor.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults remains a priority for the authority. Initial referrals are assessed at the Safeguarding Unit. Customer care staff are trained to recognise triggers. Wider awareness raising about safeguarding is achieved through leaflets which are given to all employees highlighting the fact that safeguarding is everyone's business. Performance information indicates a rise in the number of Protection of Vulnerable Adult (POVA) referrals and that, for the second year, the number of incidents that have been reported where the risk has been managed has gone down. The council have undertaken an audit and are confident that the figures reflect the decisions of some people with capacity to manage without the involvement of social services.

The use of direct payments has made very slow progress this year. Currently 127 people, an increase of 4% on last year, use this service. The authority reports that it is committed to maximising the choice for individuals in decisions about how and where they receive support. CSSIW will monitor progress in this area.

The level of Delayed Transfers of Care for social care reasons (DTCOC) has improved for the second consecutive year and is managed well. Like other local

authorities throughout Wales waiting times for nursing beds still remains a challenge, but managers continue to work with service providers and partners in health to increase capacity.

Children

Supporting young carers is a priority for the department. There is a young carers support worker in post with responsibility for developing additional support mechanisms. The council have been successful in securing significant funding through Big Lottery which will help improve support for young people over the next three years. Young people that we spoke with during a visit were positive about the work of the group.

Safeguarding arrangements are in the main satisfactory. All children on the child protection register and all looked after children in the system, are allocated to a professionally qualified social worker. The total number of children on the child protection register this year has risen significantly from 94 last year to 135 in 2013-14. National indicators suggest that most child protection reviews are carried out on time. The timeliness in relation to initial child protection case conferences has improved, but it remains the poorest performance in Wales. Although the head of service remains confident that children are properly protected, formal processes need to be followed to confirm real performance accurately. This is an area that requires urgent and continued attention and may need further review.

Overall, performance monitoring arrangements are well established within the council. There are reporting pathways to the senior management team in respect of key performance indicators relating to looked after children and those who are leaving care. Quality assurance is strong, with quarterly case file and supervision audits that are carried out by managers. These help to maintain an effective oversight of practice. The chief executive officer meets at regular intervals with heads of service to provide oversight on performance.

Transition planning for disabled children is well established with involvement from adult services from year nine onwards. There is a designated transition post within the adult learning disability team to identify children who may require multi agency support. The vulnerable children and complex case multi agency panel is the forum where sharing information across partner agencies takes place and agreements reached to commission specific services where needed. MIST and legal services are key members of this group to ensure timely advice is received and best outcomes are considered.

The work of the Looked After Children and Education Support Service (LACES) is valued and educational attainment promoted within the council although work needs to continue around key stages 2 and 3 to improve performance. Arrangements are in place to ensure that looked after children have access to

primary health services as well as use more specialist therapeutic provision through the MIST arrangements. Performance in relation to health assessments and registration with health services is very good. As part of our inspection of looked after children we noted that intervention from MIST was in some cases able to compensate for lack of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision. All looked after children are still in touch with the council at 19 years old.

The disabled children's team remains co located with Newport but a decision has been made not to further integrate the teams.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- good partnership working arrangements with Newport Council around commissioning;
- developed a project around nutrition in care homes which has positive outcomes for service users;
- developed a provider performance risk register ;
- accessed funding for work with young carers; and
- continued its positive work with young people around transitions.

Areas for improvement

The council should:

- ensure the accuracy of management information in relation to children's safeguarding matters; and
- take action to ensure the uptake of direct payments moves at a faster pace.

Capacity

Delivering Social Services

The council continues to manage well despite the pressure on finances that it faces. There are good processes to support its four year fundamental review of service provision and spending to support the delivery of its corporate priorities. Early on it was recognised that a generic cutting approach to delivering a balanced budget would not work and that priority areas needed to be identified. The council acknowledges the crucial part played by social services in keeping people safe as well as in improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable citizens. However, despite social services having relative protection against cuts, savings across the joint social care and housing directorate of £2.6 million had to be found in 2013 - 14. Close budget monitoring within each division, alongside scrutiny at leadership

and senior management monthly meetings, have resulted in an end of year underspend of £293k. The budget for next year requires £3.3 million to be saved.

In the Wales Audit Office (WAO), Annual Improvement Report for 2013-14 it concludes that the council is good at managing its overall budget but it needs to strengthen how it evaluates the impact of savings to ensure services do not become unsustainable in the future.

The council has well established links with partner agencies and is delivering a number of services through a collaborative approach and this will continue where there are opportunities to deliver good services more effectively and efficiently. There is clear support for a future which provides more partnership working on a regional as well as local basis. As part of a joint directorate with housing there are early opportunities for social services in Torfaen to make further progress with the integration of health and social services for older people with complex needs as housing will be a key partner in establishing outcomes for this vulnerable group. To this end, preliminary work has begun in setting up a regional planning group that will consider partnership arrangements and developments between health, social care and housing to meet local need.

Senior managers within both adult and children's services provide strong direction and leadership and there is effective communication with the workforce that engages and secures commitment at all levels. The use of social media has increased alongside regular face to face team and divisional meetings across the borough. Managers are said to be visible and accessible for informal discussion and decision making regarding practice issues.

Managers have their own support systems via a managers network forum where there are opportunities to discuss topics of interest as well as gain a wider understanding of pertinent corporate issues. There are opportunities for shadowing the work of colleagues as well as a strong commitment to training to support practice. Supervision is reported to be regular, with formal supervision that has a good balance between reflective practice and personal/professional development.

Areas of progress

The council has:

- continued positive leadership and engagement by senior managers in the council; and
- provided good support systems for staff at all levels.

Providing direction

The council has a structure in place which promotes clear leadership and direction through the senior management team, divisional meetings and team meetings. The senior management team is a small cohesive group that works well together. Each senior manager carries a wide range of responsibilities. This means that individual service managers carry significant responsibility for the delivery of the council's priorities.

The council has thought through the strategic direction for the future of social care in a statement of intent. It intends to expand and promote wider ownership of care and support services supported by partnership working. In the future the role of the third sector will be increasingly important to smaller councils such as Torfaen, as the sector is more able to secure additional funding for new options for care and support.

The council is actively involved in the regional collaborative initiatives across Gwent and the development of integrated operational services with partner agencies such as the Gwent Frailty Project and SEWAS. This has supported (and will continue to support), better services to people and families within their own community on a wider scale in the future. This needs to continue to be a priority within the borough if the council are going to meet the expectations of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Whilst there is evidence of a drive to focus more on prevention, early intervention, empowerment and collaborative working, this is constrained by the pressure to make savings.

Elected members and officers took part in a scrutiny learning exchange project facilitated by the WAO which involved officers and members from other authorities attending scrutiny meetings and providing feedback to each other. This participation has provided an opportunity to reflect on and develop the council's own practices. Members are well informed. All received corporate parent training which was said to be well regarded. Regular briefings are provided to the lead member on issues of policy and he is kept informed of all high profile cases.

CSSIW has attended scrutiny committees as well as the Corporate Parenting Group, both to present information by invitation and to observe the committee in operation. On these occasions there has been effective challenge and good oversight on social service policies.

Areas of progress

- Elected members have taken part in learning exchange programme undertaken to continue to improve scrutiny practice.

Areas for improvement

- The council should closely monitor the financial pressures which it faces and the affect on its ambition to drive forward the integration of health and social care services.