

Fôn Roberts
Interim Director of Social Services
Isle of Anglesey County Council
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Date: 03 August 2020

Dear Fôn Roberts,

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Local Authority Performance Review April 2019 - March 2020

The code of practice for review of local authority social services in April 2019 outlines our intention to write and publish an annual letter for local authorities, which will:

- provide feedback on inspection and performance evaluation activity completed by us during the year
- report on progress the local authority has made in implementing recommendations from inspections and/or child and adult practice reviews
- outline our forward work programme.

This letter summarises our review of Isle of Anglesey County Council's performance in carrying out its statutory social services functions from April 2019 - March 2020.

We acknowledge, due to the unprecedented circumstances relating to COVID-19, we were unable to complete the annual performance review meeting.

However, we believe there remains significant benefits in identifying and drawing the attention of the local authority and its partners, to the areas of both strengths and improvements required. The letter is intended to assist the local authority and its partners to continually improve.

It follows the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and our increasingly collaborative and strengths based approach to supporting improvement.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The content of this letter is informed by the performance evaluation activity undertaken by the inspectorate during the course of the year. This activity included:

- inspection of older adults services – July 2019
- meetings with senior managers
- focused activity in children's services
- engagement activity with older adults
- assurance and risk Meeting
- feedback/intelligence received
- review of performance information

Our annual performance letter content is an accurate reflection of our ongoing findings that we have consistently shared with the local authority.

Summary of strengths and areas for improvement in line with principles of the 2014 Act

Well-being

Isle of Anglesey County Council's social services benefits from an experienced and enthusiastic senior management team and strong corporate and political support. The local authority has taken practical steps during the year to enable elected members to increase their knowledge and understanding of processes and challenges within adult services. This builds on work successfully undertaken in previous years to prepare and more robustly engage members in the planning and delivery of children's services. Elected members on the Social Services Improvement Panel (SSIP) are now, well placed to monitor progress in delivering positive outcomes for people in both children and adult services.

One of the significant challenges and duties of the local authority is finding suitable accommodation for children with complex needs; it is a concern that during the year a child had to be placed in an unregistered service due to the lack of available registered services. Providing local services for children on the Isle of Anglesey can help promote and maintain their well-being, contribute to a reduction in changes of social workers and reduce the number of high cost out of county placements. The local authority is making progress in increasing accommodation offers for children and young people within their own communities and will want to continue to prioritise this work.

People

During 2019-2020, Isle of Anglesey County Council sought to engage people in planning services at a structural and individual level. A new strategy for learning disability day service has been co-produced with people with a learning disability, their families and carers. The local authority reports further engagement aimed to ensure the strategy made sense to people directly affected by the proposals was also undertaken and well received. CIW will follow the progress of this work.

In children's services a project group has been established with Voices from Care to ensure children's voices are heard in the planning and development of services. The local authority also told us of an 'app' they use to creatively support children in having their voices heard

and reflect upon their progress. We welcome an opportunity to hear more about this work as it develops.

There is clear improvement in the quality and consistency of management oversight, case analysis, and closure summaries in children's services. The direction of travel for the service is clear and guidance for staff making a positive difference. The introduction of the supervision policy is encouraging reflective practice, improved analysis and recording of decision-making.

Adults services maintain a clear focus on people and delivering positive outcomes. However, there is room to improve upon timely and accessible practitioner recording in line with professional expectations.

The mental capacity assessments seen by inspectors on Isle of Anglesey generally did not meet required standards. To ensure voices of vulnerable people are heard the local authority must improve the quality of these assessments in line with the requirement of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The local authority will also want to ensure practitioners understanding of mental capacity act legislation is sufficiently up to date to prepare them for forthcoming changes in legislation.

The number of people in receipt of direct payments on the Isle of Anglesey is low. Managers will want to ensure social workers are confident in offering direct payments and supporting people to choose how they receive care and support. Who people receive their care and support from, should not be unnecessarily limited by the local authority's commissioning intentions and social work practice.

We continue to monitor the implementation of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which has identified the local authority, in common with many others in Wales, is unable to assure itself people's human rights are not being breached by being deprived of their liberty unlawfully. Our joint national report on DoLS will be issued in due course.

Most social services staff are able to converse in both Welsh and English. Practitioners are confident in working bilingually and particularly sensitive to the needs of people who switch between languages to express themselves effectively. Dignity and respect are embedded in the delivery of these conversations as practitioners place the needs of people who use services in the forefront of the assessment process. This is notable good practice.

Prevention

Isle of Anglesey County Council is committed to the provision of early help and preventive services, recognising the impact in terms of improving outcomes for people, as well as alleviating pressure on the statutory sector. The local authority contributes resources to encourage communities to build resilience and reduce reliance on statutory services.

There are many positive examples of practitioners supporting people and providing care and support in their communities to prevent them reaching a crisis. However, it was not always clear that the assessment and determination of eligibility for care and support was consistently driving the response offered. Sometimes this is because documentation was not completed and reliably available. Further work is required to ensure practitioners always

uphold people's unambiguous rights to assessments and determination of eligibility in accordance with statutory guidance.

Teulu Môn aims to ensure children and their families are offered information, advice, and assistance at the right time to meet their needs. Internal audit processes continue to take place to ensure appropriate social work intervention is also available 'at the right time' in order to enhance family life and support families. Ensuring children and families receive the right support at the right time from the most suitably qualified practitioner will improve outcomes for people and ensure the local authority makes best use of resources. The local authority will want to continue this work and may choose to carry this learning into adult services.

During 2018 our programme of work focused on care experienced children and young people. The [report](#) is published on our website. Key findings highlight areas for improvement in respect of profile, sufficiency, practice, partnerships, stability, governance, and corporate parenting. Many of the areas we have identified for improvement continue to be considered by Welsh Government's Ministerial Advisory Group on improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people, we expect local authorities will consider their own contribution to addressing these findings.

In December 2019 we wrote to all local authorities asking for information about The Public Accounts Committee report following their enquiry into care experienced children, specifically recommendation 5 concerning the effectiveness and frequency of end of placement reviews. We did receive a formal response from Isle of Anglesey County Council who believe their practice in this area to be good.

Partnerships

There are many positive examples of partnership working in Isle of Anglesey County Council. In adults services we found operational services mostly working well together to enable people to remain living at home for as long as possible. The Môn planning group has been in existence for many years; many relationships within the group are clearly well developed and effective. Some fine-tuning is required to ensure this group fits with the wider planning agenda for health and social care that has developed considerably in recent years.

Most practitioners from health and social care are positive about the forthcoming move to community resource teams. Key strategic partners need to keep the focus of service delivery on people and communities to ensure care closer to home becomes a reality. At the time of the inspection, firmer plans and quality improvements were required to support the move to community resource teams.

CIW Performance Review Plan for 2020-2021

Our scheduled thematic inspection programme for 2020-2021 focused on prevention and promoting independence for older people, and for the current children's services thematic inspection, the focus is on prevention, partnerships and experiences of disabled children. Due to the current emergency situation relating to COVID-19 we have paused the publication of our older people's report and paused all activity relating to the disabled children's review. We will advise you in due course when we envisage recommencing our inspections.

We hope to publish the older people's national report in due course and want to take this opportunity to thank you for your local authority's contribution to this.

Due to the unforeseen circumstances we find ourselves in, we are currently reviewing and considering our work plan for the remainder of 2020-2021.

CIW worked together with HMI Constabulary (HMICFRS), HMI Probation, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Estyn to develop a model of joint inspection of child protection arrangements in Wales (JICPA). This approach was piloted during the autumn of 2019. This was a fantastic example of new ways of working across Wales and a real drive towards collaboration and integration in public services.

We continue to work closely with Social Care Wales to support improvement in social care services.

You will note that this letter has been copied to colleagues in Audit Wales, Estyn and HIW. CIW works closely with partner inspectorates to consider the wider corporate perspective in which social services operate, as well as local context for social services performance.

We will publish the final version of this letter on our website.

Yours sincerely



Lou Bushell-Bauers
Head of Local Authority Inspection

Cc.
Audit Wales
HIW
Estyn