

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

11<sup>th</sup> JULY 2018

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

#### CARE INSPECTORATE WALES INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES – ACTION PLAN

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Committee with an update on the action plan relating to the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of children's services (June 2017).
- 1.2 To update the Committee on the progress made in addressing the recommendations and arrangements for monitoring any outstanding actions. This follows a report that the Committee received on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 regarding the Inspection findings and the action plan that had been developed in response.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:-
  1. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
  2. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 In 2016, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW (previously CSSIW)) worked together with key stakeholders to develop a new framework for local authority inspection, engagement and performance review.
- 3.2 The overarching approach to inspection, engagement and performance review is engagement with people, staff and Elected Members. The aim is to support rigorous evidence and information gathering which both contributes to the assurance process and enhances the accountability of senior officers and Elected Members for the sufficiency and quality of social services. Central to this approach was the introduction of a core inspection programme of children's and adults' social services.
- 3.3 The approach to all inspection, engagement and performance review activities reflects the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 national well-being outcomes and the quality standards for local authorities issued in the relevant code of practice by Welsh Government. The inspection methodology emphasises engagement with people, including a clear focus on the extent to which service

delivery is respectful of people's dignity, promotes independence and is provided to Welsh-speaking people in their language of choice.

- 3.4 The core inspection programme implemented from June 2016 included inspections of adult and children's social services across all local authorities in Wales. The first year of roll-out was to be used as a learning and review phase; testing the efficacy of the local authority inspection, engagement and performance review framework as a whole. This included working closely with inspected local authorities to listen and learn from their experience.
- 3.5 The inspection undertaken of children's services in Bridgend in 2017 focused on how children and families are empowered to access help and care and support services and on the quality of outcomes achieved for children in need of help, care and support and/or protection, including children who have recently become looked after by the local authority.
- 3.6 The inspection also evaluated the quality of leadership, management and governance arrangements in place to develop and support service delivery.
- 3.7 The dates of the inspection were as follows:

Week 1 – week commencing: 30/01/2017

Week 2 – week commencing: 13/02/2017

In advance of the fieldwork, the Service was required to submit a self-assessment and a range of advance information/documentation in the following areas:-

- Strategy and Structures
- Key Documents and Operational Protocols
- Blank Templates
- Cabinet/Committee Reports
- Development Work
- Families First and IFST
- Performance Data and Quality Assurance
- Workforce

This required co-ordinating the provision of 212 documents/items in total.

- 3.9 In Fieldwork Week 1, CIW inspected the work by assessing a sample of 20 from 65 cases. In some instances this included interviewing the allocated case worker and their manager. In addition, CSSIW also sought the views of service users through interviews with children and young people and parents/carers.
- 3.10 In Fieldwork Week 2, CIW explored themes arising from week 1. They conducted a number of individual and group interviews with Elected Members, managers, partners and service providers. Where possible they observed practice linked to the cases reviewed during week 1.
- 3.11 CIW published a report of the findings on their website in June 2017. They also presented their findings to Bridgend County Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2017.

## **4 Current Situation/Proposal**

4.1 The CIW inspection report is attached at **Appendix 1**.

### **Summary of findings**

- 4.2 Inspectors found that the Authority had worked hard in the context of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014, to reshape its services. The Authority's Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) function was delivered through the Assessment team which provided a single point of contact for both social work and preventative (Early Help) interventions.
- 4.3 Access arrangements were respectful of people's rights and individuality and were available bilingually but there was a lack of accessible quality information for children, young people and their families and the model was yet to mature into an integrated service fully understood and delivered with partner agencies.
- 4.4 Screening decisions were timely and Inspectors saw some positive evidence of management oversight. When contacts were received by children's services and there was an obvious indication of significant harm, prompt and proportionate initial action was taken to protect children. However, whilst no widespread or serious failures that left children being harmed or at risk of harm were identified by inspectors, the quality of threshold screening, assessments, care and support planning was found to be inconsistent.
- 4.5 It was acknowledged by the Service that the changes introduced to operationalise Information, Advice and Assistance had brought additional expectations that put pressure on the capacity of the managers and the workload of the assessment team. The impending transition to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) provided a timely opportunity to refresh service expectations resulting from the SSWBA, including learning from practice.
- 4.6 Good social work practice to elicit the child's wishes and feelings was not consistently well reflected in the content of assessments. Assessments/plans needed to be better shared with children and families in addition to proposed changes about service developments.
- 4.7 Inspectors noted that senior managers were already taking steps to look at the impact services are having on reducing need and risk and the Authority was working hard to transform children's social services at a time when they had to deliver medium term financial savings.
- 4.8 They noted that the ambition of the Authority's plans signalled their commitment to improving both early intervention and statutory services for children, young people and their families, recognising this was significantly dependent upon the ability of all council directorates to work together in order to deliver against the council's vision and contribute and co-ordinate an effective range of services. The council will need to ensure there is an ongoing analysis of the underlying complexities and risks associated with statutory children's services.

- 4.9 It was positive that the council had recently begun work to develop a more comprehensive evidenced based commissioning plan that will be key to the delivery of its early help and permanence strategy.
- 4.10 Staff were committed to achieving good outcomes for children and families but staff morale was variable across the service and needed to be nurtured at a time of significant change. Like other local authorities across Wales, Bridgend should continue to focus on how they can retain staff for longer and more timely recruitment of experienced staff.

### **Recommendations and Actions Taken**

- 4.11 An action plan was developed in response to the recommendations made by CIW and can be found at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.12 The Action Plan is monitored by the Early Help and Safeguarding Board which is chaired jointly by the Corporate Directors for Social Services and Wellbeing and Education and Family Support. It also forms part of CIW's routine programme of engagement with the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate.
- 4.13 **Appendix 2** provides detailed updates against each recommendation and demonstrates the progress achieved since the Inspection report was published.

### **5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 There is no impact on the Policy framework and Procedure rules.

### **6 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

### **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications**

- 7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) (SSWBA) 2014, in turn, supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their circumstances, the wellbeing goals of a Healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.
- 7.2 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:
- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the SSWBA focusses on sustainable prevention and wellbeing outcomes for the future. There is a requirement to meet the needs of people in the longer term and, because of rising demographics and increasing complexity, the remodelling and transformation of services continues to be a priority.

- Prevention – the report reflects the new approaches adopted by the Directorate in line with the SSWBA, for example, the provision of information, advice and assistance to enable people to remain independent for as long as possible. This will ensure that need is anticipated and resources can be more effectively directed to better manage demand.
- Integration – the implementation of the SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners, particularly the NHS and the Police, to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. The report evidences work with partners to enable people to remain living within their communities, and where necessary, responding to safeguarding concerns in a timely, efficient manner.
- Collaboration – The collaborative approaches described in the report, are managed and monitored through various remodelling and collaborative boards, for example, the Early Help and Safeguarding Board where there is cross Directorate and sector stakeholder representation.
- Involvement – the key stakeholders are the people who use social care. There is considerable engagement including surveys, stakeholder meetings, feedback forms and the complaints process. The provision of accessible information and advice helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications, the report highlights that the authority is working hard to transform services at a time when there are medium term financial savings to be delivered.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the CIW report on the inspection of Bridgend's Children's Social Care and comments on the associated Action Plan.

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**June 2018**

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## **11. Background Documents**

None