

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE**

**16 JANUARY 2013**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN**

**INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE (WESTERN BAY)**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet Committee of the progress made in establishing an Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) across the Western Bay region.
- 1.2 The report and accompanying appendices inform members of the on-going development of the service, and its intended operational functions.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority**

- 2.1 This initiative supports the vision set out in the Community Strategy, impacting specifically on the themes of Strong Communities, Young Voices, Healthy Living and New Opportunities.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 IFSS focuses on families where parents have substance misuse problems that affect the welfare of their children. IFSS is a Welsh Government programme unique to Wales and its work is described in detail in the Children and Family (Wales) Measure 2010 and associated regulations. Local authorities and their health board partners are required to work together to establish the service and provide support/services to families. The first IFSS team in Wales was established on the 1 September 2010.
- 3.2 In families with complex problems, there is an increased likelihood that the child's physical, social and emotional development will be impaired. For some children, there will be repeated or long term episodes of being supported or looked after by the local authority. Consequently, the Western Bay IFSS will aim to support families to stay together and enjoy well-being by empowering them to take positive steps to improve their lives. The IFSS will provide targeted support and help connect children and adult services, focusing on the family as a unit. The service will initially concentrate on families where there is parental

substance misuse, and concerns about child welfare. This approach will ensure greater accountability and shared responsibility across both child and adult social services.

- 3.3 The IFSS will deliver family focused services to enable parents to achieve the necessary behavioural changes that will improve their parenting capacity, and will engage with the extended family in the process of that change. It will also seek to address the social, cultural and organisational factors which have a negative impact on the well-being and safe care of the child or young person and their parents. In order to achieve the best outcome for both children and adults, and ensure that children are safeguarded, IFSS will seek to meet the needs of all family members. This approach requires a holistic approach to working with children and families. At the heart of the IFSS will be an integrated family support team (IFST). In order to address and meet the needs of families with complex problems, IFSS teams will be multi-agency and multi-disciplinary, consisting of professionals with the skills and experience in working directly with children in need, their parents and adults with complex health and social care needs. The culture of the team will be one of reflective practice, peer support and mentoring in order to deliver effective evidence based interventions which are relevant to the families' needs.
- 3.3 In January 2012, the Chief Executives of Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot and Bridgend met with colleagues in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board and established some principles around joint working and agreed some specific work streams for new collaborative initiatives. This became known as the Western Bay Health and Social Care Board.
- 3.4 One of the identified work streams agreed for collaboration by that Board was the Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS). An IFSS delivery group was established which developed a proposal that was sent to Welsh Government in April 2012. This detailed how the service would be developed, and subsequently managed, across the ABMU Health Board regional footprint. (The proposal can be found at Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The proposal was subsequently accepted by the Welsh Government and arrangements were made for the transfer of the funds associated with the establishment of the new IFSS within the Western Bay region, this being £850,000.

#### **4. Current Situation / Proposal**

- 4.1 The IFSS delivery team consisting of officers from each local authority and the deputy head of nursing (ABMU) worked together to reach an agreement on the operational activity of the service.

- 4.2 Initially the delivery team reported to the Western Bay Board but now reports directly to the newly formed statutory IFSS Board, chaired by the Director of Social Services for Neath/Port Talbot. This board has representation from the four partner statutory agencies and from the voluntary sector.
- 4.3 Significant progress has been made in the recruitment of the full range of IFSS staff who began to come into post from 1 October 2012 (Appendix 2 details the team structure.) By the end of December 2012, seven consultant social workers, one intervention specialist and four business support officers had been appointed and have taken up their posts. Other staff will be joining the team in January 2013 including four intervention specialists from the Health Service. IFSS Regulations make requirements about the professional categories from which the workers who are members of an integrated family support team must be drawn, including a core of five professionals drawn from three professions: social work, nursing and health visiting.
- 4.4 Staff currently in post have moved into allocated bases across the region where they have been actively engaged in mapping services in each local authority area and developing professional networks with key stakeholders. This has included linking in with social services case management teams, where consultant social workers have begun mentoring newly qualified social workers.
- 4.5 All staff appointed to the IFSS have recently participated in a four day IFSS core training course as central to the delivery of IFSS is the use of evidence based interventions (EBIs). These are defined as ways of working with people that have been rigorously evaluated, using experimental research designs. Evidence shows that motivational interviewing (MI) is an effective intervention in assisting people to effect change where they have problematic substance misuse. Furthermore, MI seems ideally suited for work with families who are experiencing a wide range of difficulties, particularly for those in which parents have drug or alcohol problems. IFSS practitioners will be further trained in the use MI and using their professional judgement will deliver this or other EBIs such as brief solution focused therapy (BSFT) and cognitive behavioural therapy in order to assist in gaining positive outcomes for families.
- 4.6 Work to develop IFSS documentation and information for professionals and families has been completed and the development of the outcomes framework for the service is nearing completion. (See draft appendix 3).
- 4.7 The managers of the Western Bay IFSS have developed links with other IFSS teams across Wales and now attend regular IFSS managers' meetings to ensure that on-going developments/knowledge and experience is shared.

- 4.8 An ICT working group is developing solutions for the ICT and data sharing issues across the region and systems for the recording and monitoring of case work.
- 4.9 Since the establishment of the IFSS Phase I areas in 2010, the Welsh Government has funded a dedicated Central Resource Team, via Cardiff Council, to deliver the IFSS training and accreditation programme. This arrangement which will be in place until 31 March 2013, has supported the development of skills and training which has been vital in the establishment and delivery of this important service in Wales.
- 4.10 For the foreseeable future it has been agreed to establish a Lead Trainer resource, which will be hosted within the Western Bay IFSS area on behalf of all IFSS areas in Wales. To support this, the Welsh Government has agreed to provide additional funding of £77,000 in 2013/14 to the Western Bay IFSS to support the implementation and delivery of this resource. This is expected to be in place by February 2013 to enable sufficient handover of skill/expertise with the existing Central Resource Team. This is welcomed as it will provide on-going dedicated accredited training support on a co-ordinated national level for IFSTs, continue the training and accreditation programme for the teams and the wider workforce, and support the on-going roll-out of IFSS across Wales.
- 4.11 A date for the IFSS to become fully operational has been set for 1 February 2013 when direct work with families is expected to commence. The service is predicted to work with 100 families per year across the region this will equate to approximately 30 families within BCBC.
- 4.12 An event to launch the IFSS will take place on 22 February 2013, to which Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee members will be invited.

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

- 5.1 There is a statutory requirement for each local authority in Wales to be convened by an IFSS.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There is no detrimental affect on any priority group.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 Grant funding has been received from the Welsh Government of £850,000 to meet the delivery of this integrated service for 2012/13, with the same allocation for 2013/14. It is expected that this grant will then transfer into the Revenue Support Grant from 2014/15. It is anticipated that the grant will be significantly underspent in 2012/13 as the award was not made until May 2012 and subsequent timescales needed and delays in recruitment. Bridgend Council is the lead for this scheme and the grant is to cover costs across the 3 Local Authority areas and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Trust with Social Work staff across the area being employed by BCBC and a SLA being drawn up with Health to fund their staff. It is anticipated that future years grant will be fully utilised.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the progress made in the establishment of the regional IFSS.

**Hilary Anthony**  
**Corporate Director Children**

**Contact Officer:** Colin Turner  
Head of Safeguarding and Family Support

**Telephone:** 01656 642314

**E-mail:** [colin.turner@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:colin.turner@bridgend.gov.uk)

**Postal Address** Children's Directorate  
Safeguarding & Family Support Services  
Sunnyside Offices  
Sunnyside  
Bridgend  
CF31 4AR

### **Background documents**

Appendix 1 – Western Bay Integrated Family Support Service – Proposal, Values, Vision and Evaluation Document

Appendix 2 – Western Bay IFSS – Team Structure

Appendix 3 – Draft Western Bay Performance and Monitoring Framework