

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

18 SEPTEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR, WELLBEING

SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present to Council the Director of Social Services' Annual Report for 2012-13 and request that members:

1.2

- a) note the judgements reached locally about social care services in Bridgend, and
- b) consider whether they wish to comment on any aspects of the report.

1.2 This is the fourth Annual Report of the Director of Social Services and is based on the authority's self assessment of the performance and delivery of social services. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priority

2.1 This report links to nearly all the Council's priorities:

- Working together to help vulnerable people stay independent
- Working with children and families to tackle problems early
- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
- Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles
- Working together to make the best use of our resources.

3.0 Background

3.1 Following an announcement by the Deputy Minister for Social Services in November 2007 to end the local authority joint review programme, including the annual performance evaluation, the Chief Inspector of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW) put in place new arrangements for the inspection, evaluation and review of local authority social services.

3.2 The CSSIW framework provides the foundations of our duty to report on the whole circle of care from commissioning, contracting, assessment care management to service provision. CSSIW guidance explains that:

- the authorities themselves will report annually on progress and outcomes and their plan for improvement;
- the Inspectorate will undertake a review and analysis of evidence underpinning the annual report including evidence from other inspectors and regulators;
- the analysis will result in an individual Inspection and Review Plan for each authority; and
- all authorities will receive a fieldwork visit from CSSIW annually as a minimum.

3.3 The analysis and review of the 22 local authorities will feed into CSSIW's overall analysis of social services and social care in Wales to inform policy and Ministerial advice.

4.0 Current Situation/proposal

4.1 The aim of this report is to provide the Council and people living in Bridgend with an overview of how well social care delivered. It aims to highlight the progress we have made during the year and to identify where improvements are needed during 2013-14.

4.2 The preparation of the report involved a detailed analysis, based on evidence, of the services that are delivered. Many people contribute to this work, including a joint scrutiny panel made up of representatives from the Health and Wellbeing and Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committees who provided valuable feedback on the draft report.

4.3 The report is in four parts. The first part provides an overview of Bridgend, and summarises the main achievements and priorities for social services in 2013-14. The second and third sections provide more detail about the two main service areas: safeguarding and family support and adult social care. The analysis for each area draws on performance data for each service area, as well as feedback from service users, carers, staff and partners. Some examples about the lives of people in the county borough are provided to give an illustration of the impact that the services have on their lives. The final part of the report is a glossary of terms.

4.4 In preparing the report, two fundamental questions were considered:

- Are there effective arrangements in place to safeguard children and adults and to promote their welfare and voice and their independence and social inclusion?
- Can performance be sustained and improved?

4.5 Parts 2 and 3 of the report provide detailed information for 2012-13 on both performance and developments. These indicate that the arrangements in both children and adults services are generally sound – although there is always room for improvement and mistakes do sometimes occur. This is inevitable where services rely on individuals' judgements but case reviews do confirm that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Services are generally effective in meeting the needs of people who require the support of social care. Our services are getting better overall, although we have also identified areas where we need to improve and sometimes change how we do things to meet the changing needs and aspirations of our carers and service users.

4.6 Our priorities for improvement in 2013 -14 reflect our learning from our analysis of performance and try to address the increasingly challenging context, both financial and demographic.

4.7 In Safeguarding and Family Support, our priorities for improvement in 2012-13 can be summarised as:

- maintaining quality in social work practice, through improving workload management, how we share learning, effective supervision and support for the high number of newly qualified staff;

- improving the engagement of service users, including better capture of their views and making more information available;
- extending the reach of integrated family support services to further support both earlier intervention and families with acute and complex needs;
- increasing the number and range of both fostering and adoption placements available;
- continue to implement the improvement activities identified as part of the *Workwise* project and ICT strategy;
- continuing to improve outcomes for children and young people by delivering on key requirements such as timely statutory visits, personal education plans and health assessments, alongside robust permanence plans that minimise unnecessary moves;
- Improved support for looked after children; in particular minimising school moves and the provision of annual health assessments.

4.8 In Adult Social Care, the priorities are to:

- work with service users, carers and all partners to enable more people to live independently;
- help our partners, especially in the third sector, to develop and expand their services to help people to stay physically and mentally healthy;
- provide support to carers to enable them to continue in their caring role;
- work with partners to develop a broader range of accommodation options and support for those vulnerable and older people who need help to achieve or sustain independence;
- work with partners across the Western Bay area to enable better outcomes for older people and people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions. In doing this, we will avoid duplication, reduce costs and improve the quality of the information and advice for citizens;
- focus on improving health outcomes for older people and their carers by working with partners to develop services that enable older people to live healthy, independent and engaged lives.

Inspection of the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services

4.9 Council may recall that, in October 2012, the authority was inspected, by CSSIW, on the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services. The inspection was a pilot, the first of several across Wales that contributed to a thematic inspection on the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services. The main focus of the inspection was on the arrangements that the Council has put in place to fulfil the responsibilities in the Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services (WAG, June 2009).

4.10 CSSIW did not publish individual reports on each local authority that was inspected as part of this work but they did publish an overall, national report in June 2013. The findings included that:

- no one structural configuration appeared to confer significant advantages in terms of its effectiveness in supporting or securing the role of the Statutory Director;
- adherence to guidance on the role of the Statutory Director and the effectiveness of these arrangements has been variable;
- in the best examples, authorities had explicitly negotiated the delineation of responsibilities between key post holders, including the Head of the Paid Service;
- the Head of Paid Service has a pivotal role in empowering the designated Director of Social Services and in ensuring that the corporate infrastructure supports them with their statutory accountabilities;
- in too many examples, the stability and effectiveness of the role appeared to rely too heavily on the personal standing of an individual;
- there is a need to raise awareness amongst Councillors concerning the role of the Statutory Director... and how Councillors can both support the role and hold post holders to account more transparently;
- the Director's accountabilities in relation to both safeguarding and workforce, whilst highly valued, was not always explicitly understood in relation to the delegated functions of other officers and partners;
- where corporate performance systems were well developed, these supported the Director to maintain more reliable oversight of the totality of Social Services.

4.11 Bridgend Council did receive unpublished feedback which echoed some of the findings nationally. The following gives a flavour of the content of the feedback, including areas that need to be addressed (in italics):

- The constitution reflects the relocation of functions and a formal protocol has been developed between the two directorates (Children's and Wellbeing) which includes reporting arrangements.
- The Director of Social Services is a member of the corporate management board. *The Chief Executive should ensure that the corporate management team understands and takes account of the Director of Social Services statutory responsibilities.*
- The level of resilience in the arrangements depend on heads of service providing professional expertise and assuming responsibility for the operational and strategic agenda in their service area.
- A significant corporate profile has been afforded to the social services agenda by a positive collaborative ethos.
- The Director has the negotiated authority to fulfil the accountabilities of the statutory role but *these need to be more clearly understood and communicated in respect of adult social services.*
- Strong arrangements have been established to ensure appropriate access to the Chief Executive and councillors.
- The authority has embedded, and now mature, corporate systems that provide oversight of social service functions.
- The Chief Executive, Directors, officers and members had a high degree of confidence and trust in the post holder's own personal authority to deliver against her accountabilities despite the span of her responsibilities she currently holds. *However, the Chief Executive will need to evaluate the benefits of locating such a span of responsibilities in one officer.*

- Officers and partners viewed the structural arrangements as preventing silo working and delivering positive integration between social services, education and health, as well as reflecting a corporate ethos in which responsibility for service delivery is shared.
- Directorates are supported through a strong corporate infrastructure and these arrangements help the statutory Director to deliver against her accountabilities and report to members against performance.
- The Statutory Director has maintained highly visible leadership for the development of key priorities across children's services but *has a less well established profile in relation to adults' services.*
- There appeared to be positive engagement between housing and social services.
- Strong systems have been developed that support the Director of Social Services to receive and provide relevant information, assistance and challenge from and to other parts of the organisation in relation to performance information and workforce issues.
- The Director's annual report is viewed as an integral part of the authority's planning processes for both children's and adult services. *However, the opportunity for partners and service users to contribute to this process appears variable.*
- Overall, offices and members were confident that there is enough robust challenge to avoid complacency and provide assurance regarding social services performance.

4.12 The Chief Executive has addressed the issue of the span of responsibilities being vested in one officer through his senior management review.

5.0 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 implications in this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications the report highlights service areas which are facing financial pressures.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that Council consider the Director of Social Services Annual Report for 2012-13 and comment on any areas as appropriate.

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Background Documents

CSSIW report 'National inspection of the role of the statutory Director of Social services' June 2013