



To Susan Cooper
Director of Social Services

June 2017

Dear Director

CSSIW Performance Review of Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services

This letter is informed by CSSIW's inspection, performance review and engagement activity during 2016/17. At the Performance Review meeting on 2 March 2017, we provided feedback on our inspection, engagement and performance review activity over the past 12 months.

Progress on key areas for improvements and developments in the last year

The local authority has worked hard reshaping services in line with the implementation of the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) across both adult and children's services. This has resulted in the development of new practice models.

Changes to the 'front door' for adult and children's services in line with SSWBA has led to improvements in the local authority's Information Advice and Assistance service (IAA). A common point of access is planned for the autumn. The authority will need to monitor the impact of this change on the team and the outcomes for people seeking support.

The local authority has led on the implementation of the national Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) to supporting the delivery of integrated information technology services across Health and Social Care. This has allowed the sharing of information between organisations, including sharing of assessments and reduced duplication of information.

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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 local authority continues to work with its partners through the Western Bay regional collaborative on its Western Bay Optimum model to develop an integrated information, advice and assistance response service. The local authority has an agreed operational model for the common access point with a multi-disciplinary team in place to deliver these changes in practice. With the restructuring of the senior management team this has improved focus and the delivery of services.

The local authority is committed to developing modern services that meet future demands and local needs. Within adult services, remodelling plans for residential care services have progressed, including working with third sector partners to develop new services such as the development of extra-care housing provision (scheduled for completion 2019).

Homecare and learning disability services are focusing on people with more complex needs and the services developed to reflect this. CSSIW will monitor the progress of this and the impact of the changes on people receiving the services.

The development of independent professional advocacy services is being undertaken in response to SSWBA and an Advocacy Pilot Scheme will inform the development and implementation of a new service model in 2018/19. The local authority will want to monitor progress and the impact of this scheme on outcomes for people accessing services.

The local authority intended to incorporate Adult and Children's services into a joint safeguarding model from April 2017. The development of this hub to provide an effective multi-agency response to safeguarding issues is still ongoing. Capacity within the children's senior management team delayed implementation intended to take place in 2016 and this has resulted continuing inconsistencies of thresholds for making decisions. On a positive note, screening decisions are timely, with prompt and proportionate action undertaken to protect children. The appointment of a new principal officer should contribute to progress on this. This will be followed up by CSSIW.

Good cross directorate working is evident in IAA within children's services through close working with Early Help and Prevention that falls within the Education and Family Support Directorate. The ability to co-ordinate and deliver an effective range of services is reliant on both directorates working together. An Early Intervention and Prevention strategy has been finalised which has led to a mapping out of need and the development of new templates to support a better understanding of safeguarding needs and priorities.

A review by the local authority of residential care for children and young people to safely reduce reliance on out of county placements and specialist therapeutic services has been completed. This will inform the re-modelling of residential provision for children within the authority. Current developments include the move to 52-week residential service for disabled children allowing greater access to respite care; and, looking at the needs for specialist in house residential provision for adolescents with complex needs. The authority is in the process of applying to register this service with CSSIW.

The authority continues to make progress on the implementation of the Welsh Language standards and the "More than just Words" strategic framework. It has

measures in place to ensure people have access to information and services through the language of choice.

Feedback on annual engagement themes

During 2016 -17 we carried out a range of engagement activities across all local authorities in Wales. This engagement activity focused on two main themes, adult safeguarding and carers.

With regard to Bridgend County Borough Council, engagement with carers involved meetings with the relevant officers, carers and third sector. The safeguarding engagement focused on meetings with senior staff and those operational managers and staff who lead and carry out the work.

- Safeguarding

One of the main strengths of the adult safeguarding team is the experience of staff and the level of stability. This allows a consistent approach to practice through the application of thresholds and decision making. Excellent collaborative working is evident within the care management teams and work has started linking in with children's services to promote understanding and joint working. This is demonstrated through the joint working across adult and children's services as well as housing to support vulnerable young people going through the transition process.

There is positive engagement from partner agencies such as Police and third sector. Working practices with Health have improved at practice level but there is still scope for improvement at a strategic level. This area of work is being lead by Western Bay Safeguarding Board with the authority contributing to developing practice that is consistent in delivery over the three authorities. We found that, where possible, the involvement of the person in the safeguarding process is promoted including attendance at case conferences and joint meetings.

- Carers

The local authority continues to develop practice in line with its Valuing Carers Strategy. There is evidence of excellent joint working with partner agencies, with the Carers Centre delivering a range of crucial services for both carers and young carers. Evidence of consultation and hearing the "voice" of carers has shaped services; this has been achieved through information days and workshops.

To promote carers awareness the local authority has introduced an e- learning programme that has been rolled out through targeted programmes in schools. The authority will want to monitor progress with this and its impact on identifying young carers.

All carers were very positive and spoke highly of the commitment and accessibility of the authorities Carers Development officer who they see as an excellent asset. Additional work is required to support the carers of people with Mental Health needs who told us that their assessments were rarely updated or reviewed and that they would have appreciated more assistance. Carers also voiced disappointment with the transition of children to adult's services. In order to address the concerns the Disabled Children's Team is now co-located with the multi-agency adult team, with

specific transition worker posts in place to work with young people and families through the transition process.

Progress on recommendations arising from CSSIW inspections

Following the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) inspection 2014, the authority has implemented its action plan which included a lead for DoLS in the safeguarding team and appointment of an additional DoLS/Safeguarding Officer. In addition a training programme for all staff, partners and providers has been developed along with a reporting framework for the local authority and other bodies. There is currently a backlog of referrals and a paper provided to Corporate Management Board on the current position and risks. This will be monitored by CSSIW

The local authority has made good progress in implementing its action plan arising from CSSIW's review of care and support for people with learning disabilities in 2016. A number of new models of service delivery have been implemented including re commissioning of Supported Living services for people with learning disabilities.

The recent inspection of IAA within children's services will be subject to a structured series of review meetings throughout the year following publication of the report.

The local authority undertook a self-assessment survey contributing to the CSSIW national inspection of domiciliary care and children subject to the public law outline process. The authority has used recommendations from both reports to improve its practice and develop services. Lessons learnt from the domiciliary care report are reflected in the changes made to the in house homecare service

Inspection, Engagement & Performance Review Plan

In 2017-18 in addition to areas identified for follow up above, CSSIW themes for inspection, engagement and performance review are:

- Support provided for people with mental health needs with a focus on Community Mental Health Team's
- Placement decisions for children looked after

CSSIW will provide six weeks notice if the authority is scheduled for an inspection during 2017-18.

CSSIW will also continue to consider what actions have been taken by the local authority in relation to recommendations contained in its national thematic reviews including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, services for people with learning disability, domiciliary care and Public Law Outline.

CSSIW work with partner inspectorates

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

As this is the first year we have written to you in this format we will not be publishing this letter, but will do so in subsequent years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'SGJ', followed by a period.

Sarah Glynn-Jones

Regional Director

Copy sent to

Chief Executive of Bridgend County Borough Council
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
Estyn
Wales Audit Office