



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Performance Evaluation Report 2014–15

Bridgend County Borough Council  
Social Services

October 2015

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Bridgend County Borough Council Social Services for the year 2014–15

# **Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2014 - 2015**

**Local Authority: Bridgend County Borough Council**

**This report sets out CSSIW's evaluation of Bridgend County Borough Council's performance in delivering its social services functions.**

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The council remains realistic about the challenges posed by the need to deliver improving services within the context of reducing financial resources. This has accelerated the drive to greater efficiency, improving strategic partnership working, more integrated services and a growing commitment to regional commissioning which aligns with the preparations for the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 1.2. In October 2014, the council appointed a new head of adult social care and this has provided additional leadership capacity for the council's challenges. The director of wellbeing also assumed line management responsibility for children's social services and overall line management of children's safeguarding, in January 2015, alongside a corporate restructure. Children's services continues to manage its performance in an efficient and effective manner.
- 1.3. Within adult social care, the council's remodelling and transformation programme continues to be the central foundation for strengthening the prevention and wellbeing agenda across Bridgend, and regionally across the Western Bay Health and Social Care Collaboration (Western Bay). The current climate of austerity and demographic change continues to contribute to the challenge of delivering quality support and services. Despite these challenges, adult social care remains committed to modernising in order to make social care sustainable and proportionate in the future.
- 1.4. The transformation programme has been structured around the strategic priorities held within the corporate improvement plan, which provides the framework for the changes needed for the council to be aligned to the expectations of the new Act. This has been fully outlined within the director's annual report.

- 1.5. The Western Bay regional programme continues to develop. The principle objective is to work across the wide range of local authority social services in the counties of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea, and through organisational boundaries to progress the integration of health and social care. The Western Bay established a partnership forum which provides strategic overview. Leadership currently comprises the three leaders of the three local authorities, relevant portfolio holders, the chairman of Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMUHB) and non-executive members and the chief executives of the councils and the health board.

## 2. Response to last year's areas for improvement

Identified improvement last year	Progress in 2014-15
To continue to make progress with the work on developing new models of care and support in adults services	The remodelling programme continues to be the framework for taking forward the transformation of adult services. This included the development of a local community coordinator model under the prevention and wellbeing agenda, a number of learning disabilities projects, the development of planning and service design for the remodelling of residential care in older people and the remodelling of home care services. Also development of a tender for supported living and a review of the meals at home service.
Make progress with the work on a local dementia plan	This is currently out for consultation on a local joint strategy and delivery plan for dementia services.
Bring district nursing services into the integrated referral management centre	This was delayed in 2014/15 due to a number of factors, and a plan is in place for this to be completed in 2015/16.
Develop a quality assurance framework across Western Bay to ensure that mental health commissioning is consistent and effective	A regional quality framework has been developed across Western Bay to be approved in 2015/16. A mental health brokerage system is in place under the contracting and procurement board.

To increase awareness across the sector of the requirements of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	The council has worked with providers to raise awareness regarding their responsibilities within the DoLS process.
Continue to monitor absence levels in adults services	There is a continued focus on the monitoring and management of sickness absence. Actions have included targeted training in key areas, quality assurance of absence review meetings and focused monthly sickness meetings.
A system of effective case files audit and supervision across both adults and children's services. Monitor the impact on senior practitioners of carrying complex caseloads due to the relative inexperience of newly recruited social workers	Focus has been on the new ways of working informed by the practice audit. Targeted evaluation of case files and peer review system in place for mental health files.
To continue to develop the strong corporate and political support to drive modernisation and to respond effectively to the requirements of the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014	Robust infrastructure in place for corporate and political support to drive modernisation and to respond effectively to the requirements of the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

### 3. Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

3.1. Site visits provide CSSIW with an opportunity to speak with people who the services, their families and staff who manage and work in the services. During 2014/15, site visits were made to:

#### Children's services

- Assessment team
- Fostering and adoption teams
- Placement team
- Safeguarding hub – Y Dderwen

- Sunnybank Residential Home.

### **Adults services**

- Carers Centre - community café
- Llys Ton extra care scheme
- Bridgend day centre
- Learning disability projects.

3.2. CSSIW also met with senior officers of the council throughout the year to review social services performance and discuss progress with the areas for improvement, identified in last year's performance evaluation. The council were helpful in their engagement with us and readily facilitated access to enable site visits to take place.

3.3. CSSIW carried out follow up work on the recommendations from the national inspection looking at safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers, who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours. The inspection found a number of positives as well as highlighting some areas for improvement. Progress on the areas for improvement is monitored through CSSIW's annual performance evaluation process, specific follow up work and engagement with the council. The council has responded well, producing a detailed action plan which during the course of the year has been actively worked toward, with good progress having been made.

### **4. Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year**

- 4.1. A number of specific areas for improvement have been identified in the body of this report. The council's progress in relation to these will be discussed with the council during regular engagement meetings in the coming year. Specific areas for follow up will include:
- The ongoing implementation of the service changes in readiness for the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
  - The progress made towards the implementation of the extra care model.

## **5. CSSIW inspection and review plan for 2015 -16**

5.1. CSSIW is also undertaking the following national thematic inspections and services in Bridgend may be selected for fieldwork:

- National review of domiciliary care
- National review of services for people with learning disabilities
- National review of care planning for looked after children.

## **6. The extent to which the experiences and outcomes for people who need care and support are improving their wellbeing**

### **Adults**

#### **Overview**

- 6.1. Ongoing progress continues to be made in the council's remodelling programme which aligns with the preparations for the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. The appointment of a new head of adult social care in October 2014 has provided additional leadership and capacity to drive forward the transformation agenda.
- 6.2. The council is well placed to implement the Act and is aligned with the strategic direction of Western Bay. There has been much focus on the preparation required for the implementation of the Act, including the development of a high quality information and advice service to the public through the creation of a "one stop shop." This manages general inquiries and enables them to respond to people who need assessment and intervention in line with the expectation of the new legislation.
- 6.3. The council works effectively with its partners to safeguard and protect vulnerable people in Bridgend. Since moving to the regional safeguarding boards, the council has ensured local accountability and governance by the creation of a local, multi-agency safeguarding operational group and the heads of service ensure that safeguarding issues are standard agenda items at divisional management meetings. The council has developed a corporate safeguarding policy and is in the process of identifying a number of safeguarding champions from across the council through the heads of service group.
- 6.4. The safeguarding team provides advice, support and guidance on a range of safeguarding queries, including threshold decisions in

safeguarding alerts, and risk assessments within complex case management. Over the last year the council reports a change in the trend of safeguarding alerts and safeguarding referrals, reflecting a more proportionate and risk based response. Less serious situations are being more appropriately managed through safeguarding, care management or provider agency arrangements. The more serious concerns continue to be handled by the formal multi-agency framework set out in all-Wales guidance.

- 6.5. Three contract monitoring officers are part of the safeguarding team; this enables them to undertake more preventative work with the provider sector. Effective support and monitoring arrangements help providers to improve their performance and to achieve better outcomes for service users. During this year the council has worked well in partnership with CSSIW in addressing poor provider performance particularly through implementation of the escalating concerns process, which in one case promoted the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals. It is worthy to note the good working relationships between the council, the health board and regulator.
- 6.6. The council is enabling people with learning disabilities to live more independent fulfilling lives and continues to implement the recommendations from the Alder review. Progress throughout the year has been made in the development of social enterprises, and increased community project work. Progress has also been made in working with the supported people team in supporting users with new tenancy models and the completion of an effective and comprehensive resettlement programme for users. This has enabled people to move out of two large care homes into supported living opportunities. The development of supported living arrangements in partnership with the independent sector is progressing with local housing and support providers developing plans for two schemes designed to enable people to achieve greater independence. A number of site visits have taken place where CSSIW has observed good working relationships with partner agencies.
- 6.7. The council is looking at ways to implement its vision for mental health services over the next three years. The council is currently consulting on the Mental Health Commissioning and Delivery Plan for people who require mental health services, which will have five priorities including improved service provision and improved access to better information. The council sees dementia care as a priority and this is reflected in the development of its local plan. Whilst some work has progressed it



is felt to be patchy and further work is now necessary.

- 6.8. The council has an effective system in place for addressing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications, ensuring that risks are managed, timescales are adhered to and that legislative compliance is monitored. It introduced a new DoLS database as part of its action plan following a review in April 2014 by CSSIW and the Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW) of DoLS across Wales. The action plan was developed by the safeguarding manager to improve outcomes for people and the service area going forward, working with partner agencies, including the independent mental capacity advocate service and provider agencies. Due to the significant increase in DoLS applications, from 12 in 2013/14 to 325 in 2014/15, this has proved an invaluable asset in providing timely information for senior managers. The numbers of DoLS applications and authorisations granted are monitored on a monthly basis and a quarterly report is prepared for scrutiny by the Western Bay safeguarding adults board.
- 6.9. Engagement with and support of carers has improved with an appointment of a carers development officer late in 2013 which has been critical in involving carers as equal partners in care. Central to the development of the carers information and consultation strategy has been a wide range of engagement activities undertaken with carers. As a result, their input has provided clear direction to the services and support arrangements developed during 2014/15.
- 6.10. There has been significant progress of the remodelling programme for homecare, residential care and learning disabilities. In relation to homecare, it was previously reported that the council planned to tender 4,400 hours of internal support to the independent sector. However, the tender was unsuccessful and the contract could not be awarded. A "lessons learnt" exercise was undertaken within the council in procurement in order to ascertain the reasons behind the market's inability to respond.
- 6.11. The council's performance in reviewing the needs of adults receiving a service has dipped slightly this year from 83% in 2013/14 to 79% in 2014/15. This could be due to the impact of receiving an increased referral rate of 17% in the last year. Performance in delayed transfers of care remains steady which is an indicator of good performance and clear evidence of the council's effective partnership working in this area.

## **Key National Priorities (adults)**

### **Preventative and early intervention services**

- 6.12. The council's transformation agenda has been driven for the past few years by the remodelling adult social care board which has overseen the planning of new models of service delivery into implementation phase. This includes the redevelopment of residential care for older people into an extra care service model, the remodelling of the home care provision and the transformation of traditional learning disabilities services. In addition, work has started on prevention and wellbeing responsibilities in preparation for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. Two consultation exercises are underway: one for mental health and another for dementia services. Significant development has been evidenced in integrated services with health, including building a robust community resources team and key developments in services for carers.
- 6.13. The integrated referral management centre continues to develop. It has consolidated the first contact arrangements for adult social care and the community resource team, with an established duty professionals system. The council recognises that further work is necessary to ensure that this becomes truly a single point of access for all integrated community health and social care services. However, the service has reduced duplication in the referral management system ensuring that people's requests for advice, signposting and assessment are more effectively responded to.
- 6.14. The council is continuing to enable people to live more independently in the community, which, despite an increased demand for services during 2014/15, is evidence of the effectiveness of its early intervention and prevention strategy. The appointment of a senior nurse in 2014 has enabled the in-reach nurse referral pathway to facilitate transfers from secondary care into the district nursing service, within the community integrated networks. The service received 7,058 referrals, an increase of 1,021 (17%) on the previous year. There was an increase on the previous year of 6% in people supported in the community. Of these, 32% were between the ages of 18 and 64, and 68% were over 65 years. The number of people receiving a reablement service was 411; whilst 2,299 received a telecare package and 761 people were supported in long term residential care.
- 6.15. The council partly attributes its success to new initiatives and

positive work carried out by the community resource team with increased specialist services such as speech and language therapy, medicine's management and dietetic support. The team has enabled greater and faster access to these services, established the mobile response team to a 24-hour, seven day a week service, and has successfully established the first phase of Better@home, a service which facilitates faster hospital discharge whilst the person waits for a commencement date of their ongoing support package.

6.16. A priority for the Western Bay collaboration has been the development of prevention and wellbeing services and funding has been identified to take forward local community co-ordination across the region. This approach will support people who are vulnerable through disability, mental health issues, age, frailty or social isolation to pursue their own vision of what is a good life for them. It draws on individuals' strengths and resilience and focusses on the outcomes that make a real and lasting difference to people's lives. This service sits outside statutory services, with initial focus on the Llynfi Valley to develop this as a pilot project before it can be developed in other areas of the borough. Consultation has already commenced with the voluntary sector to focus this piece of work and link in with existing community resources and networks.

6.17. The council's telecare service continues to develop and provide more support to people at home. At year end there were 1,759 people using the telecare mobile response service. The telecare service is utilised during the day to support people receiving the early nurse-led clinical response service. All potential service users have a specialist assessment by an occupational therapist: the service includes a 24/7 mobile response team. The team are trained and registered domiciliary care workers who have specialist equipment to move people who have fallen and can also undertake personal care if required.

### **Areas of progress**

- Remodelling of adult social care to include further development of the community resource team and Better@Home scheme
- Creation of a transformation team to ensure key objectives is delivered on.

### **Areas for improvement**

- To bring the district nursing services into the integrated referral management centre

- Improve access to quality information, advice and assistance.

## **Children and young people**

### **Overview**

- 6.18. Children's services has an established leadership and management structure with a clear plan that focus on delivering preventative services to support children and families within their communities. The council commenced restructuring its five safeguarding teams in preparation for co-location with the early prevention and intensive family support service, within one of three safeguarding hubs. Management capacity has been strengthened with the introduction of the new roles of deputy team managers and increasing the number of senior practitioners. The council hopes this will facilitate greater support, supervision and mentoring to front line social workers. This is particularly important at a time when the council still has relatively high numbers of newly qualified social workers, resulting in senior practitioners having to carry the more complex workloads.
- 6.19. All child protection cases were allocated to qualified social workers and movements in the Child Protection Register demonstrates significant child protection activity throughout the year. Performance in holding initial child protection case conferences within 15 working days of the strategy discussion has improved from 88% the previous year to 92% during 2014/15, and 88% of initial core groups were held within 10 working days of the initial child protection case conference. There was further improvement from the previous year in conducting reviews of children on the child protection register within statutory timescales to almost 100%.
- 6.20. When initial assessments are undertaken, the council monitors the percentage of assessments where children are seen alone by the social worker. In 2014/15, this was over 50%. The council states that the primary reasons that children were not seen alone as part of the initial assessment resulted from the fact that the children were either too young or they refused to meet with the social worker alone. As a significant number of this year's initial assessments were in respect of children under two, and it is understandable why this performance indicator has dipped slightly compared to the previous year.
- 6.21. The percentage of referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months rose from 13% the previous year to just over 20% in 2014/15. The council is currently analysing potential reasons for this increase. Early analysis suggests that the increase results from closing

children in need cases that had been open for prolonged periods where re-referrals were subsequently made. Re-referrals to children's social care services have historically been very low in comparison with other councils.

- 6.22. During 2014/15, 63% of core assessments were completed within prescribed timescales which the council acknowledge is a dip in performance compared to the previous year. The increased pressure placed on frontline safeguarding teams as a result of increased contacts being made to the service has inevitably impacted on social workers' ability to complete all core assessments within statutory timescales. This will be an area of priority for the council this year, and will be an area for further monitoring by CSSIW in the coming year.
- 6.23. Within the council the group manager for disability, transition and case management retains the strategic lead for the development of services for disabled children and young people. The council continues to provide a range of services for this area which include short breaks, day centre provision and a complex needs play scheme.
- 6.24. Whilst the council works to ensure that the voice of the child is considered at assessment and review of service provision, it does not have specific arrangements in place outside of these arrangements.
- 6.25. The recruitment and retention of experienced registered social workers remains a priority during 2014/15 as it was the previous year. Recruitment practices within have been improved along with a rolling advertising campaign to target experienced social workers. This has had limited success with majority of posts being filled by newly qualified staff.

## **Key national priorities**

### **Preventative and early intervention services**

- 6.26. The assessment team operates during normal office hours. It receives contacts and referrals from members of the public and professionals in respect of safeguarding and child welfare matters. The council received an increased number of referrals in 2014/15 from 1,302 the previous year to 4,619 referrals. The significant increase of referrals made to the service is felt by the council to be as a direct consequence of South Wales Police withdrawing from the programme of joint screening of all police referrals made to the service. Ultimately, this has placed considerable pressure on the assessment team.

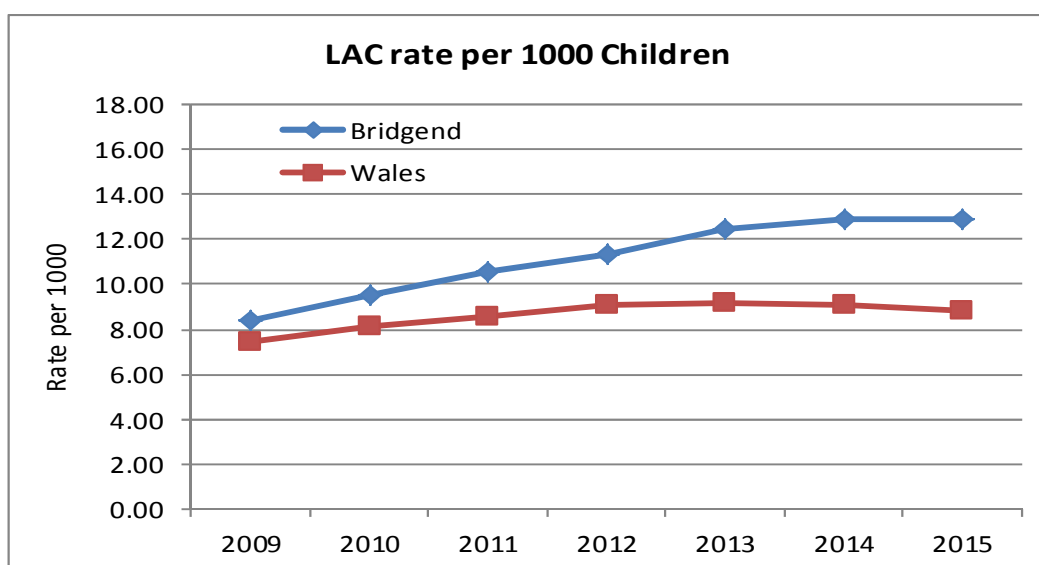
- 6.27. The council comments that investment in prevention and early intervention initiatives in Bridgend has provided challenges given the different grant funding schemes. Whilst many services are still relatively new, it is recognised that there is now a need to organise these more effectively to make more robust links between the approaches to children at different tiers of need. In recent years there has been some significant investment and commitment to prevention and early intervention within Bridgend, especially in respect of connecting families, the intensive family support service (which it also delivers on behalf of other authorities in Western Bay), rapid response team and Families First funded initiatives. The restructure of the family intervention service should enable work with families to be more joined up, with work being undertaken on a multi-agency basis.
- 6.28. Connecting Families has continued with participation events inviting a service users' participation group to share their views and offer ideas for further development. In 2014/15, the service worked with 60 families. Of these, the Connecting Families' edge of care service provided support to 24 families, with a total of 46 children/young people prevented from becoming looked after.

### **Looked after children**

- 6.29. Children's services has seen a significant increase in the number of safeguarding referrals and family support. In spite of this, the council reports that the numbers of both looked after children (LAC) and children placed on the Child Protection Register have reduced. Pressure on the front line teams has been influenced by high numbers of reported incidences of domestic violence where children have been present, parental substance misuse and the associated neglect of children.
- 6.30. The council has developed a permanency strategy which aims to safely reduce the numbers of looked after children. Despite this strategy, numbers remain high and the safe reduction of children looked after continues to be a priority for the council. The number of children on the Child Protection Register also fell from 179 last year, to 125 on the 31 March 2015, a 30% reduction. This area remains a priority and the council recognises that continued reduction of looked after children will be a challenge into the future.
- 6.31. Last year, whilst significant improvement had been made in relation to the performance around statutory visits made to looked after children within timescale, it was acknowledged that further improvement was required. Whilst the council are reassured that the vast majority of visits have been undertaken regularly and

children are being seen, there remains an issue in terms of visits being promptly written up due to social workers' competing work pressures. During 2014/15 performance did improve and just over 76% of statutory visits took place in accordance with regulations.

- 6.32. There is evidence that the council may not be meeting the needs of children and young people with a variety of complex needs and behaviours which challenge. It now needs to consider in its strategic development whether its current residential provision is able to respond to the challenges that can be displayed by some young people. During the past year CSSIW has received a number of applications to vary the conditions of registration of the council's residential provision, to either increase the number of children that can be accommodated or admit young people outside of the registration category. This was as a result of the need to respond to emergency situations.
- 6.33. CSSIW undertook an inspection of the council's fostering service in early 2015. Whilst good practice was identified, the need to appoint to the position of team manager is critical. The impact of having no dedicated manager in place during the year has destabilised the team and impacted on its performance.



- 6.34. In relation to looked after children, children's services implemented a refreshed placements and permanency strategy during the year, aimed at safely reducing the number of looked after children. This strategy, along with the launch of the new prevention and early help strategy has influenced a steady reduction in the number of children looked after during the year, from 412 in April 2014 to 390 in March 2015, a reduction of 5.3%.

## Areas of progress

- Reduction in the numbers of children looked after
- Introduction of safeguarding hubs.

## Areas for improvement

- Improvement of review performance and outcomes
- Redesign of looked after children provision for adolescents with complex needs and challenging behaviour
- Monitor the re-referrals rate
- Monitoring of LAC reduction strategy.

## **7. The extent to which leadership, governance and direction for the council is promoting improvement in outcomes and wellbeing for people who need care and support**

- 7.1. The council has experienced significant changes within the senior management team. These changes have provided additional leadership capacity to meet the challenges ahead for the council in line with the expectations of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act. The early help and prevention services remained under the director of education who also took on responsibility for transformation, and was tasked with exploring ways to creatively and flexibly deliver services, develop effective commissioning and increase work with the third sector. Both directors are part of the corporate team led by the chief executive. They ensure close working relationships, with the director of social services and wellbeing being accountable as the statutory director for social services
- 7.2. The council has recognised the significant demographic and service demand pressures facing both children's and adult services and has identified savings elsewhere to allocate additional money to social services budgets.
- 7.3. To ensure consistency of delivery and a quality service to people accessing social care, the council has developed a performance management framework. It was formally introduced early in 2014 and it defines the council's performance management cycle, and identifies responsibility and accountability for each stage of this process. It is the mechanism through which the directors report into the corporate performance assessment process. The council



acknowledges that this has helped improve internal performance management processes, clearly linking the council's corporate plan to the directorate business plan, and the remodelling adult social care programme of transformation. Good oversight and reporting arrangements are in place with monthly performance management meetings, chaired by the corporate director and attended by the heads of service, group managers, performance management officers, and finance and Human Resources officers.

- 7.4. In its review of the corporate safeguarding arrangements in the council, the Wales Audit Office states that:

*“The council has various systems in place to monitor, review and challenge performance, including an annual safeguarding report, which sets out wider information related to safeguarding activity, timeliness and capacity. In addition, we found evidence of Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee directly influencing safeguarding policies and strategies.”*

- 7.5. During the last 12 months, further work has been undertaken by the commissioning team, finance and partner agencies, who have all worked closely with service providers in order to ensure that there are transparent mechanisms in place to discuss costs and performance with providers. All regulated services are monitored on an annual basis against the domiciliary care standards and residential/nursing fees quality standards. This provides service users and carers with an understanding of the expectations placed on commissioned services to adhere to the required standards of care, driving forward better outcomes for individuals.
- 7.6. The contract monitoring officers undertake announced and unannounced visits to domiciliary care providers and residential/nursing homes. To support this monitoring, there is an established programme of elected members' rota visits which included 13 independent sector adult establishments in 2014/15. During 2014/15, it was agreed to pilot visits to service users receiving home care from both the council and from independent care providers.
- 7.7. Since May 2015 political support for social care has been strengthened by two cabinet members for social services, one for children's services and one for adult social care. The dedicated cabinet member for children's services, including education, assumes the role of chair of the council's corporate parenting committee. Further scrutiny and challenge on the range and quality of services has been provided by the children and young people's overview and scrutiny committee and through the council's

corporate performance assessment processes.

- 7.8. Children's services does not have a dedicated commissioning and contracting team as services are predominantly commissioned by individual service areas, rather than offering a centralised approach. However, the council offers an outcome focussed commissioning model and toolkit to support commissioners and ensure best practice. A commissioning project support officer advises individual services on commissioning, procurement practices and contractual preparations, as well as providing a contract monitoring function for reviewing the services of third sector providers. This year the officer has been embedded within the equivalent team within the social services and wellbeing directorate to maximise resources, and allow opportunities for a more joined up approach to commissioning and contracting.

#### **Areas of progress**

- Strengthened cabinet support for social services.