

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

UPDATE OF THE REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURE OF SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide the Committee with an update of the review and restructure of Safeguarding and Family Support Services that commenced in November 2014.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 This report links to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Working with children and families to tackle problems early;
- Working together to make the best use of our resources.

3. Background

3.1 In November and December 2014 employees were consulted on proposals to re-structure the former Safeguarding and Family Support Service. During the period of consultation, extensive feedback was received from individual employees and teams.

3.2 This coincided with changes to the Corporate Management Board Structure which resulted in the realignment of the management of the service to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing, with effect from 1 January 2015.

3.3 Consideration of the feedback from the consultation exercise consequently resulted in revisions being made to the proposed structure which was subject to a further consultation exercise in February and March 2015.

3.4 These changes included a commitment to maintain the Assessment Team whilst proposals were developed and agreed for the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the establishment of three Safeguarding Locality Hubs.

3.6 It was recognised that there was a need to establish the role of a deputy team manager to increase the management capacity in the hubs and ensure a robust support and supervision structure.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 The implementation of the new structure commenced in April 2015 and was completed in July 2015. Staff from the previous five safeguarding teams were co-located within one of three newly formed safeguarding hubs – East, North and West of the county. Each hub has a team manager who leads a team comprising of a

deputy manager, senior practitioner (s), social workers, social work assistants and contact workers.

4.2 A working group on recruitment and retention were tasked with focussing on:

- Implementing the new staff structure;
- Improving the learning and development arrangements;
- Developing more attractive recruitment materials;
- Marketing and promoting BCBC as an employer of choice;
- Creating capacity by developing a flexible bank of qualified, experienced social workers who would be able to support the service if and when required.

4.3 The new staffing structure has been successfully implemented with the team manager and new deputy team manager positions having been filled alongside the majority of social work posts. Two vacancies remain at Senior Practitioner level and discussions are underway about how the Authority promotes these and attracts applicants.

4.4 Investigating why people leave and obtaining accurate information can be difficult. Therefore, in order to focus on the retention of the current workforce, a staff survey was undertaken in July/August 2015, the outcomes of which are being considered in addition to the routine exit interviews.

4.5 Issued specifically to qualified social workers, senior practitioners, deputy team managers and team managers in the front line Safeguarding teams, the survey was undertaken over a four week period to gain a better understanding of employees' views. The response rate was 69%, with 45 responses from a potential of 65.

4.6 The main messages coming from the survey showed that the most important factors in attracting employees to work in BCBC were 'Permanent employment opportunities' and 'Opportunities for continuing education and professional development'. The well-established arrangements for continuing educational and professional development in BCBC will be promoted as part of the work being undertaken to improve recruitment materials and market BCBC as an employer of choice.

4.7 It is recognised that a high number of newly qualified Social Workers have been recruited which means that the overall number of Social Workers with less than two years' experience continues to present a real challenge for the service. It also places a pressure on managerial capacity to provide adequate support, which is essential to enable newly qualified Social Workers to become experienced and confident practitioners, who will want to continue to work in BCBC.

4.8 Additional measures have been put in place to support the newly qualified Social Workers so that they are better equipped to undertake the role and feel more confident and resilient; these include:

- The First Year in Practice programme has been updated and is being implemented on a mandatory basis;
- Consultant Social Workers based in the hubs providing direct support to staff through case mentoring, direct observation of practice and reflection and peer supervision.

- 4.9 Similarly it is also recognized that learning and development activities play a key part in the ongoing professional development of all of our staff. The Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) offers a range of continuing professional development opportunities for all Social Workers, team managers and deputies. This includes bespoke training including induction, a specific programme for newly qualified workers, a consolidation programme for those entering their second year in practice and mentoring support for managerial positions.
- 4.10 In addition to supporting the qualified social work workforce, the SCWDP team also contributes to the provision of new Social Workers through the co-ordination and support of practice placements for social work students and the employment of a Social Work Trainee.
- 4.11 The Social Care Supervision Policy has been relaunched and is due to be implemented across all Safeguarding Social Work teams. Going forward, compliance with the Supervision Policy will be monitored through local performance data.
- 4.12 Bridgend has developed 3 Safeguarding Locality Hubs which have been up and running for four months. These are now well established with the early intervention team co-located with the safeguarding team. This has resulted in more effective joint working to identify the needs of children in a more timely way and having mechanisms for transferring cases across the relevant services more efficiently.
- 4.13 The implementation of the Deputy Manager role has been critical in terms of ensuring robust management arrangements within the Safeguarding hubs. The Deputy Managers support the Team Managers in the oversight and improvement of performance and this is being reflected in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 4.13 The Service continues to be fully committed to developing a MASH and partner agencies have joined the Strategic Group to take this forward.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes only.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report as the costs associated with the activities outlined will be contained within existing resources.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
26 November 2015

Contact Officer: Laura Kinsey
Telephone: (01656) 642314
E-mail: laura.kinsey@bridgend.gov.uk
Postal Address Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Background documents: None