



## ***BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL, TAI A DIOGELWCH CYMUNEDOL Y CABINET***

***YN SYTH AR ÔL CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR CRAFFU  
DYDD IAU, 8 MEHEFIN 2023***

***CYFARFOD AML-LEOLIAD, SIAMBR Y CYNGOR PORT TALBOT A  
MICROSOFT TEAMS***

### **RHAID GOSOD POB FFÔN SYMUDOL AR Y MODD DISTAW AR GYFER PARHAD Y CYFARFOD**

Caiff y cyfarfod hwn ei recordio i'w ddarlledu drwy wefan y cyngor. Drwy gymryd rhan, rydych yn cytuno i gael eich ffilmio ac i'r delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gael eu defnyddio o bosib at ddibenion hyfforddiant.

#### **Rhan 1**

1. Penodi Cadeirydd
2. Cyhoeddiad y Cadeirydd
3. Datganiadau o fuddiannau
4. Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blaenorol (*Tudalennau 3 - 6*)
5. Blaenraglen Waith 2023/24 (*Tudalennau 7 - 8*)
6. Amser Cwestiynau Cyhoeddus (*Tudalennau 9 - 14*)  
Mae'n rhaid cyflwyno cwestiynau'n ysgrifenedig i'r Gwasanaethau Democrataidd, [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk) heb fod yn hwyrach na chanol dydd ar y diwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod. Mae'n rhaid i'r cwestiynau ymwneud ag eitemau ar yr agenda. Ymdrinnir â chwestiynau o fewn cyfnod o 10 munud.

## **Er gwybodaeth**

7. Diweddariad tai tarian (*Tudalennau 15 - 34*)
8. Gwiriad Iechyd Bach Rheoli Risg y Gwasanaethau Plant (*Tudalennau 35 - 54*)
9. Rhannu gwybodaeth mewn perthynas â'r Adolygiad cenedlaethol o gynllunio gofal ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc sy'n destun proses cyn-achos yr Amlinelliad Cyfraith Gyhoeddus (*Tudalennau 55 - 64*)
10. Eitemau brys  
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Regulation 5(4)(b) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 (as amended).

## **Rhan 2**

11. Mynediad i Gyfarfodydd - Gwahardd y Cyhoedd  
Yn unol â Rheoliad 4 (3) a (5) Offeryn Statudol 2001 Rhif 2290, gellir gwahardd y cyhoedd ar gyfer yr eitem fusnes ganlynol a oedd yn debygol o gynnwys datgelu gwybodaeth eithriedig fel a ddiffinnir ym Mharagraff 14 Rhan 4 Atodlen 12A o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972.
12. Cynllun Cyfiawnder Ieuenctid Drafft Cyfiawnder Ieuenctid ac Ymyrryd yn Gynnar Castell-nedd Port Talbot 2022-2023 (*Tudalennau 65 - 116*)

**K Jones**  
**Prif Weithredwr**

**Canolfan Ddinesig**  
**Port Talbot**

**Dydd Iau, 1 Mehefin**

## **Aelodau Bwrdd y Cabinet:**

**Cynghorwyr:** J Hale, S Harris ac A Llewelyn

**Nodiadau:**

- (1) *Os nad yw unrhyw aelod o Fwrdd y Cabinet yn gallu bod yn bresennol, gall unrhyw aelod arall o'r Cabinet gymryd ei le fel aelod â phleidlais ar y pwyllgor. Gofynnir i'r aelodau wneud y trefniadau hyn yn uniongyrchol ac yna i hysbysu staff y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd.*
- (2) *Ystyrir barn y Pwyllgor Craffu blaenorol wrth wneud penderfyniadau (proses craffu cyn penderfynu). Gwahoddir Cadeirydd neu Ddirprwy Gadeirydd y Pwyllgor Craffu perthnasol i fod yn bresennol yn y cyfarfod hwn.*

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag

**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD**

**SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD**

**20 APRIL 2023**

**Cabinet Members:**

Councillors: S.Harris, J.Hale and A.Llewellyn

**Officers in Attendance:**

A.Jarrett, K.Warren, A.Thomas, C.Howard, M.Shaw,N.Jones and A.Thomas

**Wales Audit Office:**

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor Harris be appointed Chairperson of the meeting.

2. **CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

There were none.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were noted.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions from the public were received.

6. **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

Decision:

That the Interim Head of Housing & Communities is to be authorised to commence a two week public consultation exercise on the draft Strategy attached at Appendix 1, and the outcome of that consultation be reported back to the Cabinet.

7. **WEST GLAMORGAN PARTNERSHIP AREA PLAN 2023-2027**

Decision:

That Members would Endorse the West Glamorgan Area Plan 2023/2027 for consideration by the Health Board at the end of March and onward submission to Welsh Government.

8. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

9. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

10. **CONTINUATION OF ORIENTATION SUPPORT TO FAMILIES SETTLED UNDER THE AFGHAN RELOCATION AND ASSISTANCE (ARAP) SCHEME**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

11. **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A THIRD SECTOR AND NON-REGULATORY SERVICES FUNDED BY SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

12. **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A RANGE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES FUNDED BY SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

13. **HILLSIDE MANAGER'S REPORT**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

14. **ECO 4 FLEX SCHEME**

Decision:

That Members

- Approve the Council's participation in the ECO4 Flex Scheme.
- Exclude the requirements of the Councils CPRs in accordance with Rule 5 in order for the Council to enter into an SLA with Warm Wales and extend the term of the SLA for the duration of the ECO4 flex scheme.
- That delegated authority be given to the Interim Head of Housing and Communities to enter into the SLA with Warm Wales and extend the term of the SLA for the duration of the ECO4 flex scheme.

15. **LEASE AGREEMENT WITH TAI TARIAN**

Decision:

That Members approve the extension of the lease agreement between Neath Port Talbot Council and Tai Tarian for 32 Southville Road, Port Talbot. The lease will be for a period of 36 months on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Head of Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Interim Head of Housing and Communities.

**CHAIRPERSON**

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# Eitem yr Agenda5

<b>Meeting Date 2023</b>	<b>Agenda Item and Type</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>	Ukrainian Humanitarian Response Update	Claire Jones
	Report of Adult Family Placements	Hayley Short
	Review of Domestic Abuse Services – Consultation	Hayley Short
	Loneliness and Isolation Strategy Draft	Sarah Waite
	Commissioning Strategy	Angela Thomas
	Commissioning Strategy	Chele Howard
	Children’s Strategy	Keri Warren

<b>Meeting Date 2023</b>	<b>Agenda Item and Type</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> September</b>	Liberty Protection Orders Inspections	Chris Frey-Davies

<b>Meeting Date 2023</b>	<b>Agenda Item and Type</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> November</b>		

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

### **Name and date of Meeting**

### **ACCESS TO MEETINGS/EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

<b>Purpose:</b>	To consider whether the Public should be excluded from the following items of business.
<b>Item (s):</b>	Agenda Item 13 - Neath Port Talbot Youth Justice and Early Intervention Draft Youth Justice Plan 2022-2023
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Paragraphs listed below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007 subject to the Public Interest Test (where appropriate) being applied.
<b>Relevant Paragraph(s):</b>	18

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

To enable Members to consider whether the public should be excluded from the meeting in relation to the item(s) listed above.

Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales)

Order 2007, allows a Principal Council to pass a resolution excluding the public from a meeting during an item of business.

Such a resolution is dependant on whether it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **2. Exclusion of the Public/Public Interest Test**

In order to comply with the above mentioned legislation, Members will be requested to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item(s) of business identified in the recommendation(s) to the report on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Exclusion Paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Information which falls within paragraphs 12 to 15, 17 and 18 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended is exempt information if and so long as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The specific Exclusion Paragraphs and the Public Interest Tests to be applied are listed in Appendix A.

Where paragraph 16 of the Schedule 12A applies there is no public interest test. Members are able to consider whether they wish to waive their legal privilege in the information, however, given that this may place the Council in a position of risk, it is not something that should be done as a matter of routine.

## **3. Financial Implications**

Not applicable

**4. Integrated Impact Assessment**

Not applicable

**5. Valleys Communities Impact**

Not applicable

**6. Workforce Impact**

Not applicable.

**7. Legal Implications**

The legislative provisions are set out in the report.

Members must consider with regard to each item of business the following matters.

- (a) Whether in relation to that item of business the information is capable of being exempt information, because it falls into one of the paragraphs set out in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended and reproduced in Appendix A to this report.

and either

- (b) If the information does fall within one or more of paragraphs 12 to 15, 17 and 18 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, the public interest test in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information; or

- (c) if the information falls within the paragraph 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in considering whether to exclude the public members are not required to apply the public interest test by must consider whether they wish to waive their privilege in relation to that item for any reason.

**8. Risk Management**

To allow Members to consider risk associated with exempt information.

**9. Recommendation(s)**

As detailed at the start of the report.

**10. Reason for Proposed Decision(s):**

To ensure that all items are considered in the appropriate manner.

**11. Implementation of Decision(s):**

The decision(s) will be implemented immediately.

**12. List of Background Papers:**

Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

**13. Appendices:**

Appendix A – List of Exemptions

## Appendix A

<b>NO</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraphs in Schedule 12A</b>
<b>12</b>	Information relating to a particular individual
<b>13</b>	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
<b>14</b>	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
<b>15</b>	Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority
<b>16</b>	Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
<b>17</b>	Information which reveals that the authority proposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person, or</li><li>• To make an order or direction under any enactment.</li></ul>
<b>18</b>	Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag





Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD**

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Report of the Interim Head of Housing & Communities – Chelé  
Zandra Howard**

### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected:** All

### **TAI TARIAN UPDATE REPORT 2022-23**

#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet Members with an update on the work Tai Tarian has conducted throughout Neath Port Talbot Borough during 2022–2023.

#### **Executive Summary**

The report provides an overview of the work Tai Tarian has conducted throughout Neath Port Talbot. The report highlights include keeping the new homes promise, continuing the commitment to build sustainable homes; providing employment opportunities; tenant opportunities to join the Board and Operations Committee; Community initiatives, such as environmental and biodiversity schemes and reinvestment; tenant support; and Tai Tarian’s Corporate Plan.

#### **Financial Impacts**

No Implications.

#### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes only.

## **Valleys Communities Impacts**

No Implications.

## **Workforce Impacts**

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

## **Legal Impacts**

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

## **Risk Management Impacts**

There are no risk management impacts associated with this report.

## **Crime and Disorder Impacts**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have “due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment);
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area”.

There is no impact under the Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

## **Counter Terrorism Impacts**

There is no impact on the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

## **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts**

Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a general duty where a person exercising relevant functions must have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which:

- (a) increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or

(b) exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.

There is no impact on the above duty.

**Consultation**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendation**

This item is for information purposes.

**Reasons for Proposed Decision**

Not applicable.

**Implementation of Decision**

Not applicable.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Tai Tarian Update Report 2022-23

**Officer Contact**

Chelé Zandra Howard, Interim Head of Housing & Communities  
email: [c.howard@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.howard@npt.gov.uk)

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag



# Tai Tarian

## Tai Tarian Update Report 2022 – 2023



## Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide cabinet members with an update on the work Tai Tarian has conducted throughout Neath Port Talbot Borough during 2022–2023.

## Highlights

### Keeping our new homes promise

We have continued with our commitment to build sustainable homes with several ambitious construction projects.

At the heart of our programme is the re-development of the County Flats estate in Sandfields, Port Talbot. The first two blocks have now been renovated, with elements of the project being built off site at the Sevenoaks Modular factory in Neath, before being transported the short distance to site.



Natural materials including wood pulp and wool form a major part of the insulation along with the latest technology, meaning these homes are some of the most environmentally friendly homes in Wales. Attention now turns to the re-development of the next phase of the project.

The project has benefited from a variety of community engagement. Collaborating with primary contractor J.G Hale we have been able to conduct a successful community challenge at the neighbouring NSA Centre, donated equipment to Port Talbot Panthers RFC and donated towards the 'Funky Friday's' additional needs discos.

There have been several employment opportunities at the site which included, work experience positions, traineeships, apprenticeships, and full-time employment.

A community hub was created central to the site to encourage the residents to engage with the contractors and Tai Tarian. A local graffiti artist was appointed to design and paint two murals inside the hub. There was no fee for the works, instead a donation to be given to a local children's charity, Action for Children towards their Positive Outcome Play Services (POPS) that provides support and play sessions for children and young people with disabilities.



Work has continued to build 25 new homes at Pant Celydd in Margam by building contractor CJ Construction. Through community engagement, CJ Construction completed a community project for the local football club by building two new dugouts on the playing fields. They also gifted to local foodbanks during the Christmas period. With our partnership links with CJ Construction, two Tai Tarian apprentices have been given the opportunity to further their knowledge and skills, by spending time collaborating with our contractor on site.



Eaglesbush, just off Meadow Road in Neath, is Tai Tarian's biggest development to date, with a further 52 homes under construction. The project will include flats, large family homes and bungalows.



Through community engagement, Jones Brothers recognised two local boys who live opposite the site who had been intrigued by the work and the various machines on site. Both boys were invited to take a closer look and presented with a toy digger to remind them of their visit.

The contractors sponsored a beehive at Melin primary school. They visited the school along with the 'Bee1' project, where the children learned about how a beehive works and the importance of bees to our ecosystem. The pupils had fun making seed bombs during the session.

Another major re-development is also due to begin soon in Cwmafan. Thirty bungalows which have reached the end of their natural lives will make way for 43 modern, energy-efficient homes with improved public spaces.



Elsewhere, work is due to start on the re-development of the Eagle House site in Port Talbot town centre. This will involve the demolition of the existing building and the construction of 18 energy-efficient apartments with a commercial space on the ground floor.

Welsh Government Homelessness Grant Funding was used to convert the 'Big Cam', a well-known pub in central Neath, into 10 modern, energy efficient apartments.

### Changing lives with job opportunities

We have continued to provide employment opportunities across the business with our apprenticeship programme recruiting four individuals. The four recruits are working towards qualifying in several trades, including plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry, and plastering.

Elsewhere we have marked a milestone with our Copper Foundation, with our 10<sup>th</sup> intake of recruits. Launched in 2016, the programme aims to give people struggling to find work a route back into employment, by offering them a 12-month contract as well as support to complete training courses and obtain qualifications.



Our contractors have also created job and training opportunities for local youngsters, with apprenticeships in trades such as scaffolding, site management and quantity surveying being offered as part of their commitment to us.



## New faces for Board and Academy

All tenants were given the opportunity to take part in a Board Ready training programme. Following a recruitment exercise we have appointed 2 additional tenants to our Board and one to our Operations Committee initially, with a view to



her joining the Board during 2023. Our new recruits are already playing an integral part in the decision making of the organisation ensuring we are accountable to tenants and other stakeholders.

Elsewhere our Academy has been bolstered by 10 new members. The Academy, which is comprised of our tenants, assist in assessing how we have performed. By working jointly with our staff and reviewing performance information, they

helped us to develop a set of improvement actions, all of which are set out in our Making a Difference Storyboards which are reviewed by the Board for approval and published on our website.

This work is an important element of our self-evaluation, and we hugely value the work undertaken by the Academy, as this helps us to continually improve services to our tenants.

## Continuing to make homes greener

Green energy has made a big difference to tenants following the installation of solar panels and battery storage at 96 homes. The panels will help reduce electricity bills – but tenants will make bigger savings if they adapt their electricity use to make the most out of them.

Solar panels on just one of these homes can reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 tonnes per year. In simple terms, that is the equivalent of the amount of CO2 emissions that comes from using 536 gallons of petrol or charging 607,904 smartphones.



We have also been retrofitting empty homes to make them more energy efficient for new tenants. Our team look at homes on an individual basis before energy efficiency measures such as external and internal wall insulation, new windows, solar panels, battery storage, increased ventilation or insulated floors are introduced. The aim is to get these homes from on average an EPC D rating to an EPC A rating, that means not just a more comfortable home for tenants but a reduction in real terms energy usage which is great for the planet too.

We have continued with our External Wall Insulation (EWI) programme which has now been ongoing for several years. Its purpose is to keep homes cosy during cold weather and cool in warm weather. This means tenants enjoy a more comfortable home, plus lower energy usage. Thanks to its decorative outer layer, homes also look refreshed and the high-quality finishes we use are designed to be low maintenance over a long period of time.





### **Platinum Recognition for community efforts**

Our continued commitment to making lasting positive changes in our local communities and our environment has been recognised with a prestigious accolade. Assessors from Healthy Working Wales have awarded us the Platinum status check for the work we have done to improve the health and wellbeing of our staff and the local community.

The award, which is the highest accolade given, is presented to exemplar organisations. The assessors were impressed by our commitment to biodiversity and engagement with local schools and communities, our Acts of Kindness Fund (donations made by Tai Tarian staff) and regular donations to foodbanks and support given to tenants struggling with the cost of living.

The Copper Foundation initiative and apprenticeship opportunities were also commended along with our sustainable planet commitment, especially our energy efficient homes.

### **Being bold for biodiversity**

Last year we left many of our open spaces rewild for nature. By doing so we had lots of native wildflowers pop up along with 100s of trees which had self-seeded. It was a bold step which demonstrated our commitment to doing our bit for biodiversity, backed by Welsh Government’s encouragement to let it grow.

Reduced grass cutting on our land also allowed wildflowers to grow, creating a better habitat not just for bees and butterflies but invertebrates, birds, small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles.



With many hectares of land throughout Neath Port Talbot, changing our approach to managing our land will make a big difference. Our passionate neighbourhood team are driving the change and we are also sharing our knowledge with young people in the Borough through schools’ visits.

### **Renting Homes Wales**

The Renting Homes Wales Act became law on 1<sup>st</sup> December. The Act improves how people rent, manage, and live in rented homes, which is good news for all tenants across Wales.

From December all new tenants have been signed up to new style contracts, with everyone else receiving theirs in the Spring. The contracts are large documents which legally have to be sent. To make things easier we included a letter explaining key areas, created an easy read guide, video series and included lots of frequently asked questions on our website.

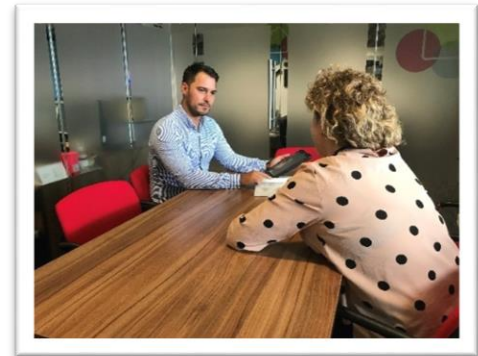
### **Support for tenants**

The cost-of-living crisis is being felt keenly by tenants, so our Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit teams have supported them with money worries, budgeting help



and claiming or appealing benefits, which helps our tenants sustain their tenancies.

With energy costs higher than ever the team has worked tirelessly to ensure we have accessed as much income and funding as possible, to help support those most in need. The fuel bank support scheme demand has been very high, with 87 vouchers being issued on average each month. Tenants have been limited to three vouchers in 6 months and multiple vouchers have been issued to some individuals.



Our in-house Universal Credit team has also seen referrals up by 20 per month. Successful benefit claims are up 27% on last year and over £4 million in additional benefits has been raised for tenants. Demand for foodbank vouchers has also doubled in recent years, we are now issuing 44 per month on average.

Working jointly our income and Financial Inclusion teams provide support on benefit changes, budgeting, and digital support. Tenants are also supported to claim and manage their Universal Credit claims. Our performance:

- 1,445 Financial Inclusion referrals for benefit advice
- 1,285 Universal Credit referrals for claimant support
- 2,132 successful benefit claims
- 34 tenants supported with benefit appeals
- 85% benefits appeal success rate
- £4,706,962 money raised in unclaimed benefits
- 75 tenants received digital support
- 605 foodbank vouchers issued

The team have also shared their knowledge through ‘Steph’s column’ in Cartref, providing lots of useful information about reducing bills, government support and even awareness of scams, they have also created videos for social media to help share this information wider than just our tenants.

### Community Reinvestment

Using the Welsh Government’s Value Wales Community Benefits toolkit, we have been able to demonstrate that, for every £1 spent on our major works programmes, £1.99 is reinvested in our local community out of a maximum £2 achievable.

### Repairs

We want our tenants to feel proud of their homes and our dedicated staff and contractors are committed to delivering a high-quality repairs service. During this year we completed:

- 2,394 emergency repairs 100% were completed on time
- 16,156 non-emergency repairs 92% were completed on time
- 86% of tenants were satisfied with how we deal with repairs and maintenance (*1,031 tenants surveyed during 2022/23*)
- 99.99% gas safe homes \*
- 99.83% electrical testing completed \*



- 100% Fire Safety checks completed on our communal areas and Haven schemes \*
- 100% Asbestos checks completed on our communal areas and Haven schemes \*

(\*as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

We completed:

- 21 New heating systems
- 88 External wall insulations
- 328 Windows
- 328 Doors
- 112 New roofs
- 271 Rewires
- 73 New kitchens
- 121 New bathrooms
- 140 Properties have benefited from improvement works to their external areas
- 5 Communal refurbishments



### Customer Satisfaction

1,031 tenants were surveyed during 2022-23.

- 95% would recommend us to family and friends
- 91% overall service satisfaction
- 93% satisfaction with the overall quality of their home
- 93% neighbourhood satisfaction
- 90% say our rent provides value for money
- 63% say we listen and act on tenant views
- 92% trust us
- 93% say we provide a safe and secure home

### Procurement

Through the procurement process we have awarded 17 contracts, to the value of circa £4,600,000. All tenders must maximise value for money and sign up to our community benefits scheme, which this year has seen a £63,000 donation to local groups and good causes.

### £44,000 for local communities

We have continued to support our local communities, this year by investing over £44,000 worth of goods and services.

Through the Community Benefits Programme from April 2022- March 2023, we have donated to various projects in our communities within Neath Port Talbot. The donations have been broken down into the following categories:



Community Donation	£14,793
Community Projects	£11,097
Biodiversity Projects	£1,690
Community Challenge	£3,503
Sponsorships	£ 3,265
Welsh Procurement Alliance Funding	£10,000

**Grand Total** **£44,398**

### Community Donations

Throughout the year we have collaborated with our contractors and gifted over thirty donations to the community, including:

#### Parc Howard Pony Club

Using our Community Benefit Programme, Joyners Ltd were able to purchase and deliver a fully equipped portacabin which will be used as a learning and development centre for young, disadvantaged community members.

#### NPT Pass Fit & Fed Programme

Through their community benefit obligations two of Tai Tarians contractors; Carl F Group and Jones Brothers Ltd kindly donated packed lunches for 135 children over two days of sport sessions. The purpose of the programme is to target the children in the most deprived areas and allowed them to enjoy free sports activities as well as a packed lunch.



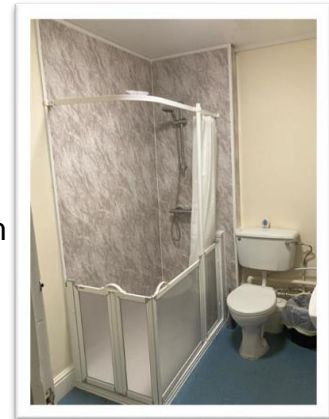
### Community Projects

April 2022- March 2023, we completed seven Community Projects with our contractors through our Community Benefit programme.



**Contractor: ASW Property Services; The Haven Centre - Neath**

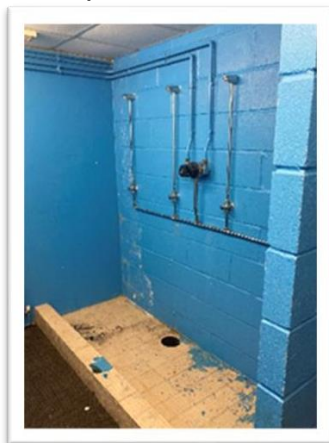
This project was identified as part of our working relationship with our housing department and their involvement with the Haven Centre. Our contractors ASW Property Services, installed a new walk-in shower facility in the existing bathroom area, giving the Haven Centre’s homeless service users a clean and safe bathroom space.



**Contractor: Wynne Jones Property Maintenance; Neath Boys & Girls Club**

Wynne Jones Property Maintenance at Neath Boys & Girls Club conducted this community project. Trades removed an old shower facility, upgraded the flooring, and decorate the area, so it can now be used as a multipurpose space when the club is re-opened to the public.

Before:



After:



**Community Sponsorships**

Multiple sports sponsorships and donations towards equipment have been given through our contractors’ community benefits programme throughout the year.



## Target Recruitment and Training

Our Community Benefits programme is not just about giving donations to groups, it is also about giving opportunities to local people. Between April 2022- March 2023 our Target, Recruitment and Training programme has been a remarkable success. We have been able to work in partnership with our contractors and external partners to share a variety of employment opportunities on our website, complete mock interviews, provide on-site work placements, and provide apprenticeship opportunities.



Working in partnership with our contractor Hale construction and Cyfle Building Skills, two school leavers were given the opportunity to study for technical apprenticeships at our redevelopment site, County Flats.

Through our partnership with Pinnacle Scaffolding, two local young men were given the opportunity to work towards completing their apprenticeships before becoming fully qualified scaffolders.

## School Engagement

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we completed four school engagements across the borough.

### Trebanos Primary School:

We visited Trebanos Primary School to deliver a biodiversity presentation in their morning assembly and presented the school with nature themed gifts for their shared communal garden.



## Community Challenge



Working in partnership with our contractors, Tai Tarian completed two Community Challenges during the year. These challenges saw staff volunteers and contractors help with maintenance and improvement works across Neath and Port Talbot.

**NSA Centre - Port Talbot:**

Tai Tarian and Hale staff took part in the Community Challenge at the NSA Centre in Sandfields, Port Talbot. The free day's maintenance included: clearance, gardening and painting the external areas of the building.



**Giants Grave Boys & Girls Club - Neath:**

This Community Challenge was held in the Giants Grave Boys & Girls Club. The works included fully decorating the internal sports hall. It will be used for community engagements.

**Biodiversity Projects**

Our Economic and Social Regeneration (ESR) team play a key role in stakeholder engagement. We collaborate with our partners and our communities, and naturally, engagement with schools is a key part of this. The team have been delivering sessions with local primary schools on biodiversity and the importance of nature. Primarily focusing on enhancing our own land for tree planting projects as part of our carbon neutral initiative while creating habitats to encourage the migration of bees by planting native plants alongside other environmental initiatives identified as part of the 'B- lines' project. We have also actively encouraged community growing to create sustainable communities.

**Ty Banc Canal**

PBM contractors through their community benefits obligations took part in a biodiversity project and assisted Ty Banc canal group with the installation of a nature and heritage trail along the Neath canal. The work included digging out old rotten posts, creating holes, and installing the new nature trail posts to include a QR code, linking to information and following the trail to find out the history of the canal and learn about the biodiversity in the area.



**The Orchard Project Riverside Court - Pontardawe**

After a successful consultation with the residents at Riverside Court Haven Housing Scheme, The Orchard Project gifted Tai Tarian an orchard of fruit trees to plant at the



scheme.

On the day, residents from the scheme volunteered, along with the ESR team and our Neighbourhood Officers. This was a wonderful opportunity for residents at the scheme and Tai Tarian staff to learn how to maintain the orchard trees in the future. The Orchard Project introduced orchard themed activities to prompt discussion around biodiversity. We will maintain our partnership work with the Orchard Project scheme on future projects.



### Welsh Procurement Funding Canolfan Maerdy

Using the £10,000 funding secured from Welsh Procurement Alliance, we were able to complete a biodiversity project at Canolfan Maerdy in Tairgwaith. In line with Tai Tarian's Corporate Plan, this project falls under our Sustainable Planet and Sustainable Community objectives. Works included:

- Creating a community garden
- Planting an orchard
- Clearance works
- Jet washing the external area
- Installed new fencing
- Provided a new path
- Installed new signage
- Created planters and planted a variety of flowers and shrubs
- Purchased a new glass house and provided the scheme with various gardening equipment
- Purchased and built a storage shed
- Removed unsafe trees and reutilised the stumps as a seating area
- Planted fruit and vegetables for the community



On completion of these works, the aim of the community centre is to provide a 'Food Cooperative' to grow and produce a small amount of fruit and vegetables, which can be allocated to their foodbank and donated to the community.





**Before:**



**After:**



### **Act of Kindness (AOK)**

An 'Act of Kindness' initiative created from staff and Tai Tarian contributions helps to deliver acts of kindness to staff, tenants, and community members, who may have experienced difficult times or those who have/are making positive impacts within their community. With an aim that a small act of kindness will make a big difference to peoples' lives. The fund works on a referral basis, with all staff being able to make suggestions on a case-by-case basis at any given time. The Act of Kindness fund is split into two subgroups, the Hardship Fund and Community Award.

#### **The Hardship Fund:**

Will help those who are struggling with everyday expenses, like buying food or clothing, or any other essentials.

#### **The Community Award:**

Will make donations to organisations such as foodbanks and community groups, helping them to provide valuable services to the community.



From April 2022 to March 2023, 59 referrals have been made and £4,000 has been donated. Due to ongoing external pressures, such as the cost of living and energy crisis demand on the Acts of Kindness fund has increased. In a bid to continue supporting staff, tenants, and community groups the AOK committee worked to



establish fundraising events. These events include fitness classes, cake sales, raffles and much more. The committee group launched its first fundraising appeal in February 2023 and plan to continue these events into the future. The continuation of these events will enable to the AOK fund to support more referrals.

### AOK Donations

The AOK fund was used to ensure sixty-five isolated tenants received a Christmas dinner and desert. The donations meant that our vulnerable tenants could enjoy a warm meal on Christmas day.

Through Community Awards, over £800 worth of donations were made to local foodbanks to assist our tenants and the community. Donations have been spread across the borough and in conjunction with the Community Benefit programme to ensure all foodbanks were covered.

An in-house foodbank drop-off point has now been set up at Ty Gwyn where staff can make donations, with a different foodbank being selected each month. The AOK committee also pledged monthly donations of sanitary products in line with the Welsh Government initiative, A Period Proud Wales.

Tai Tarian staff purchased and donated gifts for the Young Carers Christmas gift appeal. The initiative is set up to ensure all young carers in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough have a gift to open on Christmas day. The generosity of staff and the AOK fund meant that eighty children had something to open and enjoy over the festive period.



### Corporate Plan

Our 5 year Corporate Plan, which was launched in 2020, focuses on three key strategic themes that we believe will improve the health and wellbeing of our tenants, communities, and staff. We reviewed these themes, detailed below, in 2021/2022 to ensure our goals were still appropriate, and although the projects feeding these have changed slightly to respond to external impacting factors, we still felt confident in our themes and associated goals. Our teams continue to work extremely hard on the goals highlighted below and some notable projects include (but are not limited to) building new energy efficient homes, creating community plans and partnerships, and developing our decarbonisation strategy.

**Themes:** Sustainable Homes; Sustainable Communities; Sustainable Planet.



We are committed to creating homes where people can thrive so will strive to provide affordable homes and tailor our services to support our tenants.

We want to see our communities achieving their full potential so will form community partnerships to deliver services that matter to our customers.

We will support tenants to be healthy and active within their communities, through involvement and learning opportunities.

We want to change our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow so will be carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030.

We will implement the principles of the circular economy and maximise any potential to invest and contribute to the foundational economy. A very ambitious plan, but one we are confident we can deliver.



### **Sustainable Communities - Communities achieving their full potential**

- Community partnerships delivering services that matter to our customers
- Tenants supported to be healthy and active within their communities through focused and targeted involvement and learning opportunities

### **Sustainable Planet - Changing our behaviours today for the generations of tomorrow**



- To be carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030
- Implement the principles of the circular economy and maximise any potential for the foundational economy.



### **Sustainable Homes - Creating homes where people can thrive**

- Affordable homes for our tenants
- Tailored services to support tenants in their homes







Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD**

**8<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Report of the Director of Social Services, Health & Housing -  
Andrew Jarrett**

### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected: All**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES RISK MANAGEMENT MINI HEALTH CHECK NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To share the outcome of a recent health check on the management of risk across Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Children's Services.

#### **Executive Summary**

A number of high profile investigations and adverse reports regarding Local Authority Children's Services in the national press over recent times have placed pressure on organisations that provide children's services to review their service provision to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Many of the adverse reports have highlighted failures in the governance of these services, directly attributing liability to local authorities. The consequences of these failures can be profound and include physical and psychological injury to the affected children. The implicated organisation can suffer significant reputational damage and financial losses associated with claims for compensation. Against this backdrop, the main purpose of the mini health check is to review the organisation's performance in providing children's services and to offer constructive and practical recommendations to assist with compliance

and support activities that will reduce risk and its adverse consequences'. (Risk Management Mini-Health Check, 2023, p3).

The Risk Management Mini-Health check, attached at Appendix 1, provides Members with a comprehensive overview of the findings.

### **Financial Impacts**

No Implications.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes only.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

No Implications.

### **Workforce Impacts**

There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

### **Legal Impacts**

There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

### **Risk Management Impacts**

Whilst the attached report is positive in the broadest of senses in respect of risk management, the Strategic risk register is used to dynamically assess and reflect risk across Children's Services and Social Care per se. For example, increased demand across Children's Services and staffing are two areas of vulnerability to the Local Authority.

### **Crime and Disorder Impacts**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have "due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment);

- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area”.

There is no impact under the Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

### **Counter Terrorism Impacts**

There is no impact on the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

### **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts**

Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a general duty where a person exercising relevant functions must have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which:

- (a) increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or
- (b) exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.

There is no impact on the above duty.

### **Consultation**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendation**

This item is for information purposes.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

Not applicable.

### **Implementation of Decision**

Not applicable.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Children's Services Risk Management Mini Health Check Neath Port Talbot Council (2023)

**Officer Contact**

Chris Frey-Davies, P.O. Safeguarding & Quality Assurance. Tel. No. 01639 685763 email: [c.frey-davies@npt.gov.uk](mailto:c.frey-davies@npt.gov.uk)

Keri Warren, Head of Children's Service. Tel. No. 01639 686803 email: [k.warren@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.warren@npt.gov.uk)



# Appendix 1



RMP - Childrens  
Services RM Mini Hea

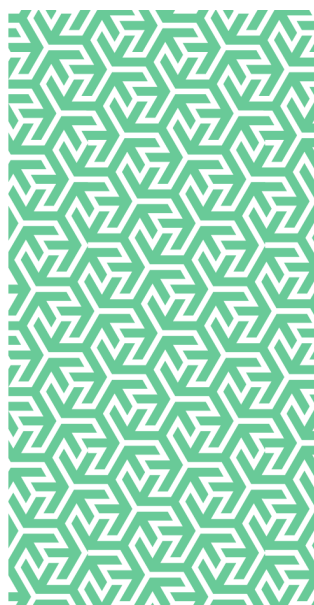
Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag



## Risk control

Children's Services Risk  
Management Mini Health Check  
Neath Port Talbot Council

Date 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023



In partnership with



# Children's Services Risk Management Mini Health Check Neath Port Talbot Council

## Contents

Introduction	3
Review Details	4
Executive Summary	5
Risk Management Review	6
Recommendations	13

# Introduction

A number of high profile investigations and adverse reports regarding Local Authority Children's Services in the national press over recent times have placed pressure on organisations that provide children's services to review their service provision to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Many of the adverse reports have highlighted failures in the governance of these services, directly attributing liability to local authorities.

The consequences of these failures can be profound and include physical and psychological injury to the affected children. The implicated organisation can suffer significant reputational damage and financial losses associated with claims for compensation.

Against this backdrop, the main purpose of the mini health check is to review the organisation's performance in providing children's services and to offer constructive and practical recommendations to assist with compliance and support activities that will reduce risk and its adverse consequences.

## Disclaimer

This report is made without any liability whatsoever being placed upon Gallagher Bassett International Ltd, its officers, agents or employees.

This report is limited to a review of the adequacy of policy, strategy and systems adopted by the client and is based upon information provided by the client or their representatives. Where information was provided, it was assumed that it was correct at that time and no independent verification has been made by us in any way. The views and judgements expressed within this report are based upon our interpretation of the information provided during the review.

Legislation and best practice standards are subject to change. This report can only consider legal requirements and best practice standards applicable at the time of the review.

It is the responsibility of the client to ensure that the implementation of any risk improvement recommendations does not contravene any statutory requirements placed upon them.

# Review Details

**Date of Review:** 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Person(s) Interviewed:** Keri Warren - Head of Children and Young People Services  
Ian Finnemore - Principal Officer – Business Support & Performance Management  
Chris Frey-Davis – Principal Officer – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance  
Jayne Howells – Insurance Manager  
Deborah Lawrence – Insurance Officer

**Location of Interview(s):** Virtual via Microsoft Teams

**Review Conducted By:** Roger Lye CMIOSH, SIRM, EnvDip NEBOSH  
Risk Consultant  
roger\_lye@gbtpa.com  
07824 139 566

**Date of Progress Review:** 3yrs TBC

# Executive Summary

A Children's Services Risk Management Mini Health Check was conducted at Neath Port Talbot Council on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023. We would like to thank everyone who organised and/or participated in this mini risk review as we do understand how busy everyone is. We would particularly like to thank the interviewees from Children's Services for their open and candid contributions.

The main purpose of the exercise was to review the organisations performance management arrangements for its Children's Services Department and to offer constructive and practical recommendations for improvement.

The review focused on the following areas:

1. Governance
2. Management
3. Employees
4. Regulator Inspections
5. Risk Management / Claims Management

Detailed findings can be found in the reports main body. A summary overview of findings is:

The interviewees projected a confident & competent image of the service where good/sensible risk management practice appears to be well embedded. Staffing at all levels continues to be stable and well supported. There seems to be a tangible desire to seek out and share information and improvement opportunities for the benefit of service users primarily, but also for the sustainability of the service. We hope that your passion and practices continue to deliver the results you strive for.

SUBJECT	Points Available	Points Awarded
Governance	30	30
Management	35	35
Employees	45	45
Regulator Inspections	35	35
Risk Management / Claims Management	30	30
<b>Totals</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Compliance Percentage</b>		<b>100%</b>

## The most significant areas for risk improvement are...

There are no formal risk improvements to make at this time.

## Next Steps

We would be happy to receive your feedback and discuss in more detail any aspect of the report.

We would recommend a repeat of this process in approximately 3yrs to seek assurance of your continued control over your service risks. Should you need any risk management advice or training please reach out to us.

# Risk Management Review

GOVERNANCE				
	QUESTION	Answer	Points Available	Points Awarded
1	Has an Elected Member been nominated to oversee the performance of the Children's Services Department?	Yes	5	5
2	Does the Senior Management Team (or equivalent) routinely receive reports on the performance of the Children's Services Department?	Yes	5	5
3	Does the Senior Management Team (or equivalent) actively oversee any improvement plans formulated in response to recommendations made by regulators or other interested parties?	Yes	5	5
4	Does the Senior Management Team (or equivalent) demonstrate its commitment to the continuous improvement of the delivery of children's services? (How?)	Yes	5	5
5	Is there a Director of Children's Services in post who holds the statutory responsibility as set out in the Children Act 2004? (How long in post?)	Yes	5	5
6	Does the Director of Children's Services hold the statutory responsibility for only one authority? (If no, please specify any other authorities?)	Yes	5	5
<b>Sub-total</b>			30	30
<b>Findings</b>				
<p>There is a relatively new Cabinet Member appointed from the community to oversee Children's Services (CS) and this is working well. This is regarded as a positive situation that allows a "fresh pair of eyes" to raise questions from different perspective.</p> <p>There are a variety of reports from the service that are circulated to senior management these include a 30 page weekly report, 6 weekly and quarterly performance reports that go to scrutiny.</p> <p>Part of Chris Frey-Davis's (CFD) role is to ensure &amp; oversee any action plans from regulator inspections are monitored, managed and circulated to the Senior Management Team (SMT).</p> <p>It was stated that there is a clear commitment from the top of the organisation (inc. the Council Leader) to support CS with adequate &amp; continued investment funding and there is a desire to set high standards and keep improving. An example of this was a recently approved 3yr preventive family support strategy that is none statutory.</p> <p>Andrew Jarrett is Director of Social Services, Health and Housing. He has been with the authority for more than 10yrs in a number of senior social services roles. There are 3 x Heads of service reporting into him, one of which is Head of Children &amp; Young People Services – Keri Warren. It was reported that all of the SMT and principal officer roles within the service (with the exception of the Business Support &amp; Performance Management Officer) are held by qualified &amp; experienced social workers.</p>				



MANAGEMENT				
	QUESTION	Answer	Points Available	Points Awarded
7	Are the staff retention levels throughout the management hierarchy of the Children's Services Department considered to be good?	Yes	5	5
8	Does the organisation have plans in place to maintain and / or improve social work practice and the Children's Service generally over the next 12 months?	Yes	5	5
9	Are Practice Guidance for Children's services reviewed at regular frequencies? (If yes, how often?)	Yes	5	5
10	Are Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures reviewed at regular frequencies? (If yes, how often?)	Yes	5	5
11	Are the dedicated CSE hub practice and procedures reviewed at regular frequencies? (If yes, how often?)	Yes	5	5
12	Does the organisation ensure compliance with the organisations practice guidance and procedures? (How?)	Yes	5	5
13	Have good standards of multi-agency working and sharing of information with partner agencies been achieved? (How?)	Yes	5	5
<b>Sub-total</b>			35	35
<b>Findings</b>				
<p>Retention of Management level staff in CS is reported as very good within a very experienced team. There are 5 x Principal Officers but it is understood this is being expanded with the addition of another new role funded by the council. Most management appointments come from within the CS team and there are opportunities for advancement / personal development within the service.</p> <p>Head of service and the director are understood to be accessible and supportive for the CS management team</p> <p>There appears to be a strong culture and framework for continuous improvement in all aspects of the service. A new 3yr strategy is due to be launched in May 23 following next scrutiny committee approval. Below which there are more detailed operational plans for the various CS Teams. Groups have been established to manage and monitor these plans and their outcomes these include, a Quality Assurance (QA), Practice Improvement and an Outcomes group There is investment approved for a new tailored social care IT system to support practice led social care that will be introduced over the next 18 months. There are several groups who meet regularly to focus on practice improvement and CS at NPT are also involved in partnerships with a number of higher education institutions as they seek to be leaders in the field.</p> <p>All practice guidance has a review date although this can be done more dynamically if needed based on change / risk. Where good practice guidance is published by other recognised organisations this is reviewed and sometimes adopted and circulated internally without redrafting / personalising e.g. The Centre for Expertise in Child Sexual Abuse have produced a tool kits. There is a quarterly rolling programme of review by the policies, practices and procedures group of the Safeguarding Board of the</p>				

body of procedures etc. for safeguarding children partnership although again these can be prioritised based on risk. Example provided – The domestic abuse procedure had recently gone through review because of the current national focus.

CSE Hub practice & procedures are reviewed at a minimum every 2yrs, but social workers guidance is not just focused on one type of child exploitation.

Compliance with the organisations practice guidance and procedures is ensured via training and development opportunities, quality framework and regular supervisions (also see next section).

NPT have mature and effective relationships with partner organisations including the local police, youth service, health & probation services etc. They see this as one of their strengths in gaining essential intelligence to enable early interventions. CS at NPT follow the accord on the sharing of personal information (**WASPI**) in their partnership arrangements. Corporate safeguarding practices within NPT have recently gone through internal & external audit with a “clean bill of health”. CS have secured some additional funding from the safeguarding board to put together a multi-agency tracker system to assist in sharing information with partners.

EMPLOYEES				
	QUESTION	Answer	Points Available	Points Awarded
14	Have you confirmed that all social workers working within your Children’s Services Department are registered with the appropriate regulatory body?	Yes	5	5
15	Are the recruitment and retention levels for social workers and other associated professionals within the Children’s Services Department considered to be good?	Yes	5	5
16	Does the organisation support its children’s services workforce (specifically including Social Workers)? (How?)	Yes	5	5
17	Do you achieve and / or maintain employee competency within the Children’s Services Department? (How?)	Yes	5	5
18	Would you describe the current workload levels placed upon social workers and other associated professionals within the Children’s Services Department as reasonable?	Yes	5	5
19	Does the organisation ensure employees receive appropriate information, instruction and guidance on changes to practice guidance and procedures?	Yes	5	5
20	Are clear procedures in place to ensure employees can confidentially raise concerns?	Yes	5	5
21	Have all social workers been DBS checked within the last 12 months?	Yes	5	5
22	Are procedures in place to ensure that less experienced employees receive enhanced levels of supervision?	Yes	5	5

<b>Sub-total</b>	45	<b>45</b>
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<b>Findings</b>
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	<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>Registration of social care staff is covered within the council's safer recruitment policy. The HR function have aligned / dedicated officers who support CS.</p> <p>It was stated that from a workforce of between 150 – 200 social work staff only 2 x people were agency workers (at any one time) and the overall vacancy rate was approx. 5%. Ave case management team may have 12 – 15 staff members. Then there are specialist teams such as fostering</p> <p>These metrics are monitored and reported upon. It is thought that staff turnover is low because of the service ensuring case rates for social workers are reasonable at an average of approx. 13.4 cases.</p> <p>Strategically CS has been a priority area within NPT Council for some years and a high proportion of the councils budgeted is directed to the service to enable reasonable caseloads to be maintained. It is also thought that the clear practice framework used, comprehensive workforce development programme, commitment to staff with regular supervision and support from HR and Occupational Health aligned to the service (for approaching a decade), all contributing to stability amongst the team.</p> <p>Establishing and developing competency begins at recruitment with those starting in the social work field going into a 1 year structured development programme with a combination of learning opportunities inc. foundation &amp; mandatory courses plus specialist training depending on the precise nature of the role. There are opportunities for career development into management / aspiring management or specialisation. Supervisions by management are undertaken to ensure progression can be demonstrated in practice delivery. NPT have recently adopted a development matrix for safeguarding that has been rolled out across Wales. There is also an element of autonomous / self-development that is expected. There is a well embedded quality assurance mechanism and sharing of learning has become an established part of how CS teams operate.</p> <p>There is a regular flow of information through internal review some thematic performance clinics to explore &amp; examine practice. Documented practice guidance etc. across CS exists but it is recognised this can sometimes be substantial and work is ongoing to distil some of this into more user friendly one page documents. There is a practice tool kit / practice directory that is due to go online imminently for staff.</p> <p>There is a communications officer who helps to support the service (internally and externally) along with an investment in Consultant roles (internal subject matter specialists within the teams with significant experience) who can offer guidance and support to their team. In addition the team work with several universities in developing good practice in various aspects of social work.</p> <p>There is a Whistle Blowing Policy (along with others including Dignity at Work etc.) although it was felt most concerns from employees are likely to be dealt with more informally by local managers. There is a good working relationship with the unions.</p> <p>There is a Safe Recruitment Policy that includes seeking a full DBS check pre appointment and an annual review, there after the legislative expectation is for a full renewal check every 3yrs or when there is a change in role.</p> <p>Inexperienced / unqualified social workers would expect to undergo supervision at a frequency no longer than 28 working days by the team or deputy team manager (could be more frequent agreed by mgr.). The QA process would also include case reviews and some peer / mentor review if individual's practioner sought it. There also the opportunity case consultations</p>
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REGULATOR INSPECTIONS				
	QUESTION	Answer	Points Available	Points Awarded
23	When was the date of the last Children's Services Inspection undertaken by the relevant regulator*?	<b>Date: 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022</b>		
24	Have all improvements recommended at the last Children's Services inspection been fully implemented? (Describe?)	Yes	10	<b>10</b>
25	Have there been any focussed visits by the regulator in the last 24 months?	<b>Answer: Yes (as above)</b>		
26	Have all improvements recommended at the last focussed visit been fully implemented? (Describe?)	Yes	10	<b>10</b>
27	Does the organisation maintain a robust approach to the development and implementation of improvement plans formulated in response to any recommendations made within a regulators inspection report?	Yes	5	<b>5</b>
28	How many Looked After Children currently reside in unregistered placements?	<b>Number: 1 Currently</b>		
29	What is the average length of time (during the last 12 months) that Looked After Children are accommodated in S20 accommodation for?	<b>Duration:</b> Not a utilised metric		
30	Has the Children's Services Department avoided being judged as 'inadequate' within the last 5 years?	Yes	10	<b>10</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>			35	<b>35</b>
<b>Findings</b>				
<p>The last focused inspection in Nov 2022 was on "Care planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) pre-proceedings in Neath Port Talbot". As an outcome of this inspection there was one relatively minor action requiring nuances to existing procedures to improve sharing of info with parents was required and has been actioned.</p> <p>There are regular visits by the regulator (allocated inspector) who meet &amp; challenge the Director &amp; Head of Service to focus on different areas of the service.</p> <p>As part of the QA processes all actions are tracked and regularly reported upon to the SMT's.</p> <p>Regulators have commented previously on the service's positive work &amp; attitude to responding to actions from inspections and continually striving to seek out &amp; implement developmental improvement.</p> <p>The use of unregistered placements is not a usual or preferred options and then only done for older young person with carefully constructed support plans. There is a process to follow that includes an assessment and a locally there is a preference for utilising family members to place looked after children (where it's a better option based on assessed &amp; process).</p> <p>The average length of time (during the last 12 months) that Looked After Children are accommodated in S76 accommodation this is not a currently used as a routine measure of performance by NPT but it</p>				

is understood this information could be gathered if necessary. 1100 – 1200 children being supported and there are more appropriate measures such as drift.

\* England – OFSTED / CQC; Scotland & Wales – The Care Inspectorate

RISK MANAGEMENT / CLAIMS MANAGEMENT				
	QUESTION	Answer	Points Available	Points Awarded
31	Does the organisation promote accepted risk management practices as an active management tool, including within the Children's Services Department? (The use of risk assessment, risk registers etc.)	Yes	5	5
32	Does the Children's Services Department maintain a risk register? If so, is the risk register regularly reviewed, updated and key risks and controls reported?	Yes	5	5
33	Is there a good working relationship between the Children's Services Department and the Insurance Department? (Regular dialogue and flow of information?)	Yes	5	5
34	Are there robust procedures in place for responding to a complaint, allegation or claim? (If so, what are they?)	Yes	5	5
35	Does the Children's Services Department maintain an effective document management system to assist in the investigation of a complaint, allegation or claim?	Yes	5	5
36	Is the Children's Services Department routinely provided with information related to complaints, allegations or claims submitted against it?	Yes	5	5
<b>Sub-total</b>			30	30
Findings				
<p>There is a service level and corporate/strategic risk register maintained by the council. It is understood only 2 x risks from CS exist on the corporate register currently and these have mitigation in place and are regularly reviewed. The service has a critical friend within the audit &amp; governance team.</p> <p>The insurance team commented that the child care legal team of CS always provide a quick response to requests for information following receipt of formal liability claims. Meetings are arranged with CS members when a claim arrives. The CS legal have also been proactive at alerting insurance when they have been involved in civil proceedings where a judge has directed the individual/ or their family to pursue a legal claim.</p>				

There are complaints procedures that ensure a timely response is provided to complainants and where possible resolution comes from face to face meetings. Claims are acknowledged on the day of arrival. Head of service is made aware of any complaints arriving and a senior officer is appointed to manage the complaint. Compliments & complaints are reported upon as are the resulting actions / confirmation of closure etc. and these routine reports are publicly available.

Reporting on complaints is part of the monitoring and assurance processes and data was readily provided i.e. during the first 9 months of 2022 there were 34 complaints received.

There is a regular flow of information on claims provided to the CS management team from the insurance team, but the number of claims are considered to be low / few.

# Recommendations

No.	Action	Priority A B C	Target date	Date Implemented
	None			

## Further information

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the RMP Resources or RMP Articles pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our LinkedIn page.

## Get in touch

For more information, please contact your RMP risk control consultant or account director.

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## NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

### NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD

8<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Report of the Director of Social Services, Health & Housing  
- Andrew Jarrett**

#### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected** All Wards

### **INFORMATION SHARING IN RESPECT OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF CARE PLANNING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUBJECT TO THE PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE PRE-PROCEEDINGS**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to share the outcome of the most recent inspection of the use of the Public Law Outline (PLO) pre-proceedings process within Neath Port Talbot Children Services.

#### **2. Background**

In November 2022, a field inspection took place in Children Services in relation to the use of the PLO process. Prior to the inspection Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), met with senior officers to explain that a National survey will be taking part in respect of PLO for all 22 Local Authority Children Services in Wales and out of the 22, 5 Local authority Children Services would be subject to a field inspection which would entail viewing files, interviewing staff, partner agencies, children and their families who are, or have been subject to PLO. NPT were to be the first to be inspected and the pilot Authority.

Being the pilot Authority meant that we collaborated with CIW to improve the survey and ensure that the questions were relevant to PLO and the data was able to be captured. Following the survey being returned, CIW spent three days within children services carrying out the inspection.

Prior to the inspection senior leaders had worked hard to develop a culture of partnership working which operationalises the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) act 2014, and aligned the principles of the best practice expectations identified in the Public Law outline working group report 2021 throughout the service.

The inspection findings letter that was received post-inspection was very positive clearly highlighting areas of good practice identified within the service and some areas that can be developed further to enhance the response to cases subject to PLO. The areas that are being developed further are subject to working plan and these include areas such as the letter received by parent(s) following PLO ending and the development of a PLO information leaflet for parents which can be viewed on the following link: [PLO Information Leaflet](#).

### **3. Financial Impacts**

There are no financial impacts arising from this report.

### **4. Integrated Impact assessment**

There is no requirement for an integrated impact assessment.

### **5. Valleys Communities Impact**

There are no implications.

### **6. Workforce Impacts**

There are no workforce impacts arising from this report.

### **7. Legal impacts**

There are no legal impacts arising from this report.

### **8. Risk Assessment Impacts**

There are no risk management requirements arising from this report.

### **9. Crime and Disorder Impacts**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have “due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment);
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area”.

There is no impact under the Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

### **10. Counter Terrorism Impacts**

The proposals are likely to have no impact on the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

## **11. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts:**

Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a general duty where a person exercising relevant functions must have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which:

- (a) increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or
- (b) exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.

The proposals contained in this report are likely to compliment and work alongside the impact on the above duty. VAWDA SV is included in the priorities of the Board under exploitation.

## **12. Consultation**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

## **13. Recommendations**

Not applicable.

## **14. Reasons for Proposed Decision**

Not applicable.

## **15. Implementation of Decision**

No decision to be made; for information only.

## **16. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – CIW PLO Inspection Letter for NPT

## **17. Background Papers**

None

## **18. Officer Contact**

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Keri Warren, Head of Children and Young People Services  
[k.warren@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.warren@npt.gov.uk)

Mae'r dudalen hon yn fwriadol wag

Andrew Jarrett  
Director of Social Services  
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

[a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk](mailto:a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk)

Date: 12/01/2023

Dear Director,

## **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) - National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline pre proceedings**

This letter summarises the findings of our activity between the 07 and 10 November 2022. The purpose of the review was to provide external scrutiny, assurance and to promote improvement regarding the quality of practice in relation to the care planning for children and young people subject to the public law outline pre-proceedings

### **Summary of findings:**

#### **1. Is there a systematic approach to ensuring that the threshold for Public Law Outline pre proceedings has been reached?**

- 1.1. The local authority has established a secure framework for ensuring that the threshold for the Public Law outline (PLO) pre-proceedings has been reached.
- 1.2. There was good evidence that children are central to strategic thinking, decision-making, and operational practice. A culture of partnership working has been driven by senior leaders who have worked hard to operationalise the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and who have invested in good-quality services delivered by a skilled and motivated workforce.
- 1.3. The comprehensive range of strategic and operational documents seen, were aligned with the principles and operational best practice expectations identified in the Public Law Outline working group report 2021. These documents were well-embedded and included a decision-making toolkit, signposting workers to current

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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.

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policy, practice information and research. An accompanying flow chart reinforces the importance of professional analysis and decision-making. Staff spoken to were confident in the training they had received and their understanding of practice expectations.

- 1.4. The local authority has adopted an outcome focused framework, underpinned by the principles of partnership working and relationship-based practice. Evidence from case files and interviews, demonstrate the authority's ambition and actions taken to ensure that children who need help and protection, receive a timely service that meets their needs. All cases seen, had clear management oversight and the rationale for decisions was recorded.
- 1.5. Most of the care and support assessments seen were thorough, timely and child focused; the best identified the family's strengths and captured the issues arising from the 'what matters conversation' in the child and family's own words.
- 1.6. Social workers were confident that relationship-based practice supported them to have the robust conversations needed with families, to better understand the risks and protective factors for the child. The identification and analysis of risk in the written record was evident but variable and some assessments would benefit from the use of plainer language. Families' ownership of the assessment and the resulting plan would be better supported by a more explicit linkage regarding the impact of the identified concern on the child and what needs to change.
- 1.7. Practice expectations in respect of the assessments of sibling groups, should ensure that children's individual needs are captured and addressed on an individual basis rather than as part of a shared family assessment.
- 1.8. The resulting plans seen, were well targeted and provided and encouraged participation of families in a good range of interventions, aimed at improving outcomes and reducing risk. The investment in preventative services has been key in supporting the authority in its stated aim to 'hold risk safely whilst building on family strengths'. The bespoke nature of the plans seen was a strength. Progress made against the expectations of the plan should be more explicitly recorded in relation to the child's experience and the parents' capacity to change within the child's timeline.
- 1.9. There is rigorous management oversight of pre-proceedings under the Public Law Outline; decision-making is timely and informed by relevant assessment including pre-birth assessments. The arrangements are well organised and supported by bespoke IT systems to track cases through every stage of the PLO system. These arrangements include dates, advice and outcomes from all legal surgeries and the date for review.
- 1.10. Professional decision making has been reinforced. Legal meetings are only held after social work supervision with the team manager and a subsequent case consultation meeting with a Principal Officer has been completed. These professional meetings provide an opportunity to review and address any gaps in assessments, plans, interventions and evaluate progress to date. Staff valued this approach and felt the rigour of the arrangements enabled reflection and helped to ensure that every opportunity to divert families from court intervention was actively explored before the legal gateway meeting.
- 1.11. Trigger points to consider the need for legal advice are embedded in the authority's child protection and looked after children's arrangements (third case conference and second looked after child review). Progress to a legal meeting, is again determined following consultation with a Principal Officer.
- 1.12. Legal support is accessible, effective, and highly valued by staff. Legal services also provide specialist training on the court process including the PLO. The Head of Children's Service chairs the weekly legal surgeries and leads by example by

maintaining a resolute focus on the child's voice, safety and the action needed to achieve child focused positive outcomes. The minutes of the legal meetings seen were comprehensive and captured the often-challenging discussions. Given the complexity of the family dynamics involved an individual decision template for each child would be helpful to ensure clarity of decision-making.

- 1.13. Families subject to legal planning and pre-proceedings work are given extensive support and opportunity to make effective changes, before further legal action is taken, even where the legal threshold for intervention has been reached. Evidence was seen that when parents successfully engage in helping to improve their children's lives, legal planning is ended but with appropriate care and support services continuing as needed. When identified improvements are not achieved, the authority takes timely and authoritative action. It was noted that children's pre proceeding work has been commended by the courts.
- 1.14. Those staff interviewed stated that the degree of management oversight, working relationships with families and focus on the outcomes for the child gave them confidence in their own professional decision making and a shared understanding of what good practice looks like.

## **2. Are there effective arrangements in place to inform parents and carers about the PLO arrangements and what this process means?**

- 2.1. The context of the PLO work was described as occurring in an environment of increasing complexity and growing demand including in the number of referrals to children's services.
- 2.2. There is a downward trend in relation to the number of children on the child protection register and those looked after by the local authority reflecting its commitment to prevention and early intervention. Children's services have well-developed quality assurance and audit arrangements that closely monitor and provide assurance against these populations.
- 2.3. Children and families benefit from good range of established early help and preventative services. The SPOC gathers information effectively, which helps to ensure that families receive timely advice and support and are appropriately signposted or directed to the right level of intervention.
- 2.4. The authority has a strong level of experience within its workforce. In relation to the PLO those staff interviewed evidenced good verbal communication skills and were clearly committed to ensuring families and children and young people were well informed about the PLO process and importantly, reinforced the opportunities available to work in partnership.
- 2.5. The pre-proceedings letters seen were based on the 2021 best practice template. A copy of a charter document is also provided to families reiterating the wish to promote an effective and mutually respectful working relationship with them. Parents were routinely provided with information about local legal advice available. By necessity, the language used in the letter remains formal but was generally easy to follow. The identification of the concerns would again be strengthened if written in plainer language. In one case example the letter seen had not been suitably adapted to reflect the parents additional learning needs. The authority is intending to further develop these letters including producing easy to read versions.
- 2.6. Parents and families are not provided with a letter when legal intervention ends which is a missed opportunity to reinforce the positive change made and to reiterate the basis of any future intervention. A PLO meeting is routinely

- convened with parents and their legal representative to support transparency of decision-making including progression or withdrawal from the PLO process.
- 2.7. Children services currently has no leaflets or written information on their PLO process. All staff interviewed provided categorical assurance that social workers personally hand deliver any pre proceeding letters and spend time with family's going through the document and providing information and support. This was not always well reflected in the written record. The PLO process is explained in detail at the first meeting when the family's solicitor is present. Whilst the lack of supportive literature is recognised as a shortfall, this is being addressed through the Performance Improvement Group. The intention is that a range of material will be developed involving those using the service.

### **3. Do care planning arrangements support timely permanence for children and young people to achieve good outcomes?**

- 3.1. Ongoing investment in early help and additional family services enable families to access support, often without the need for statutory intervention.
- 3.2. The cases reviewed evidenced that partners have a clear understanding of service thresholds when making referrals. The authority has embedded mechanisms such as a peer review meeting with partners to quality assure early decision making.
- 3.3. Timely safeguarding action is taken where there is a risk of harm, including well attended strategy meetings and initial case conferences. Support is quickly provided while assessments are ongoing, and the resulting care and support plans seen included realistic timescales for outcomes to be achieved. The progress of children subject to care and support, protection and looked after children plans, are reviewed at regular intervals, in accordance with guidance.
- 3.4. Child protection and looked after children plans are suitably informed by decisions made in other fora. For example, whilst IROs remain appropriately independent from the legal planning and PLO meetings they receive the minutes and are aware of legal planning decisions.
- 3.5. The range of services provided within the plans reviewed were proportionate, creative, and well-coordinated. This ensures that parents can utilise relevant help at the time they needed it but prevents them from becoming overwhelmed by global action. The work of the Resource Panel, chaired by senior managers, maintains an oversight of service requests, but also provides an important opportunity to explore alternative resources as needed. Good examples were seen of specific provision being commissioned as required, to meet assessed need e.g., independent child psychological assessment.
- 3.6. The local authority has been involved in the 'Born into Care' research in respect of working with families who may be subject to the pre-proceedings process (Nuffield Family Justice Observatory). In relation to the cases involving pre-birth assessments there was good evidence of:
- Appropriate early identification of risk and referral by health professionals. Close working relationships with maternity services.
  - A timely safeguarding response to referrals and assessments that resulted in prompt and proportionate action taken by experienced staff who focused on 'what matters' to children and families.
  - Persistent outcome focused efforts made by professionals to engage with families with the aim of supporting children to stay within the birth family if it was safe to do so.



- Creative use of resources and the commissioning of placements e.g., family and baby placements able to transition to community support as needed. Effective contingency planning was seen during the pre-proceedings phase which led to more timely outcomes where the birth parents could not care for their child in the longer term.
  - We heard that women who had or were at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care, were being referred to services including the Pause project.
- 3.7. Social workers understand the importance of achieving timely permanency for children. Staff and managers were confident that as far as possible all opportunities for children to remain within their immediate or extended family are exhausted before other options are pursued.
- 3.8. Written records demonstrated the routine use of genograms and early viability assessments to identify and utilize potential family networks. Inspectors saw good examples of how family group conferencing, chaired by an independent provider Tros Gynnal, was supporting stronger family-led support plans for children and more meaningful safe family time.
- 3.9. Oversight of permanency planning in relation to children in family placements under section 76 arrangements, has been strengthened and is subject to regular additional review by a Principal Officer. This process aims to ensure that consent is meaningful and that the approach taken secures the best outcomes for the child.
- 3.10. We saw evidence that children are brought into care through timely decision-making. The planning seen was responsive to concerns of escalating risk while still supporting the potential for positive change, any resulting delays were purposeful and not detrimental to the welfare of child. Head of Children's service chairing the Admissions Panels provides an additional layer of scrutiny and ensures a strong focus on understanding the child's journey into and diversion from care, that supports effective permanence decision-making.

#### **4. Do arrangements promote rights-based practice and the voice of child?**

- 4.1. There is a strong children's rights ethos and children are helped to understand their rights and entitlements. They are encouraged to access advocacy support to ensure that their voice is heard when plans are made about them.
- 4.2. The relative stability of the social work, "home grown", workforce means that social workers' relationships with children are a strength. Children benefit from established relationships with someone they know and are visited regularly and seen alone.
- 4.3. Social workers strive to establish the child's perspective and involve them, age appropriately, in any assessments and plans. Managers and social workers were confident that relationship building underpins practice, and their understanding of the child's unique experience and context informs professional decision making. Whilst it is positive that such in-depth understanding and knowledge was evident in discussion with workers, it was not always consistently well captured in the written record.
- 4.4. Direct work with children is encouraged and managers and social workers told us that efforts are made to ensure that caseloads are manageable to facilitate this. Workers use a variety of direct work tools to support them in gaining an understanding of a child's experiences. Some meaningful direct work was seen, undertaken at the child's pace, that was having a positive impact on the child. A

- parent told us how much he valued the time the social worker spent with his children helping them make sense of recent changes in the family.
- 4.5. The looked after child review is the primary forum for ensuring that relevant plans are in place to promote the overall welfare of the child and to achieve timely permanency. Care plans for children looked after are reviewed within the required timescale by experienced independent reviewing officers (IROs) many of whom have an enduring relationship with the children and know them well. IROs have contact with the children prior to the review to ensure that children are listened to. Children are proactively invited and supported to contribute to their reviews including with the support of or representation by an independent advocate. The IROs spoken to were confident that all looked after children have a timely relevant care plan and they monitor progress mid-way between reviews to help guard against potential drift.
  - 4.6. Children in the cases reviewed were in suitable placements that met their needs or were being supported to remain safely within their family network. The wishes and feelings of children, particularly older children clearly influenced decisions about where they lived. Relevant concurrent and parallel planning was seen and used well. Despite ongoing recruitment, commissioning, and placement support activity there is a recognised insufficiency of the range and choice of placements available to meet demand.
  - 4.7. Both children's services and Cafcass Cymru described effective working relationships. Recent work including a joint workshop has supported a better understanding of professional perspectives and boundaries while reinforcing the shared aims of the respective organizations to ensure and achieve timely good outcomes for Children. Cafcass Cymru told us improved communication has been supported by stability in the children services workforce and they recognised the significant efforts made to front-load planning, to safely divert families away from court.
  - 4.8. It was noted the local family justice board provides a helpful forum to progress a more collaborative but constructively challenging approach between stakeholders.

CIW will publish a brief national overview report informed by our findings in Spring 2023. We would like to extend our thanks to all those who helped with the arrangements for this activity and to those people and staff who spoke with us.

Yours sincerely



**Lou Bushell-Bauers**  
Head of Local Authority Inspection  
**Care Inspectorate Wales**

Document is Restricted

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