

**Service Report Card 2016-2017  
Directorate Support Office**

**Section 1:  
Brief description of the service**

The Directorate Support Office (DSO) is under the Head of Commissioning & Support Services; the Office has a number of multi-functional roles within it, but predominantly that of the Designated Complaints Officer, the Welfare Rights Unit and the Directorate's iProcurement system. Other roles include responsibility for the Directorate's Secretariat Team, coordination of FOIs and Access to Records, emergency planning arrangements, monitoring of welsh language standards and accommodation requirements.

The Office consists of **22.9** FTE staff, split between the Directorate Support Office (central), the Welfare Rights Unit and the Secretariat, managed by the Business Strategy Manager and 2 Business Strategy Officers with responsibility for Complaints and Welfare Rights.

The Designated Complaints Officer is responsible for ensuring the Directorate maintains a procedure for considering complaints and representations, monitoring, analysing and reporting complaints, comments & compliments; this includes ensuring complaints are resolved as quickly as possible and as close to the point of delivery as is possible.

In relation to the Welfare Rights Unit, the role is to promote benefit maximisation to people living in the Neath Port Talbot County Borough; it is worth noting that the Unit is heavily reliant on external funding, working in partnership with Communities First and MacMillan to provide benefit advice to the most vulnerable people within the County Borough; following the recent Welsh Government announcement, funding for Communities First is to be phased out during 2017. This will have a significant effect on the Unit and the work it undertakes. Officers are currently exploring options for securing further funding and different ways of delivering the service.

The DSO is the lead office for the Directorate's iProcurement System; it is the central point of ordering for goods on behalf of front-line services and back office functions, this includes the centralisation of budgets for stationary, furniture and H&S access to work arrangements. The office monitors and reviews order requests and ensure value for money is always achieved.

## Section 2: Overall Summary of Performance for 2015-16 Financial Year

Performance across the Directorate Support Office during 2015-16 was good; the Office met service priorities which were formally monitored by the Head of Service through the supervision and appraisal processes of senior officers within the Office. Although no formal performance measures were in place during 2015-16, new measures were considered in preparation for this years' Service Business Plan and the necessary monitoring processes adopted. Some key levels of performance and activity are:

The Complaints Team dealt with **84** formal complaints during 2015-16 across Children's Services, Adult Services and Business Support Services (including Housing); activity in dealing with complainants on an 'informal' basis is far greater, with the Team being proactive in supporting Managers to achieve satisfactory outcomes.

Welfare Rights was successful in obtaining **nearly £7m** in benefits for people within Neath Port Talbot, including just shy of **£1m** through representation at Appeals. The Unit was also awarded the **Advice Quality Standard** through Recognising Excellence Limited; this was a significant achievement for the Unit and means that the people of Neath Port Talbot can be confident in the service and the advice given by the Unit.

The Directorate Support Office dealt with **2,397** orders; early benefits include efficiencies through staff savings, positive changes in direct care roles and responsibilities, e.g. care staff now providing more direct care, we have reduced the number of petty cash accounts, encouraged the use of corporate credit cards and consolidated budgets particularly in Business Strategy.

Sickness levels across the DSO were slightly better than corporate sickness rates; all sickness was managed in line with the policy.

**Section 3:  
Service Priorities 2016-17**

| Priority  | Actions to deliver priority   | Officer Responsible          | Timescale                 | What will be different? Measures and/or Outcomes  |
|---|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| <p>1: Review working practice and working arrangements within the Welfare Rights Unit</p>   | <p>Analysis of the front line services provided:<br/>Home visits, Benefit advice surgeries, Office based appointments;</p> <p>Review of the Advice Line;</p>  | <p>Rebecca Shepherd (RS)</p> | <p>March 2017</p>         | <p>Analyse the volume of home visits, surgeries, office appointments</p> <p>Identify number of calls dealt with and the outcomes (i.e. cases that need allocation)</p>  |
| <p>2: To carry out Complex Casework including appeals and to continue to facilitate the take-up of benefits in Neath Port Talbot particularly through the current Personal Independence Payments (PIP) Migration.</p> | <p>To deal with all referrals in communities first areas &amp; throughout NPT (excluding Sandfields &amp; Aberavon)</p> <p>To ensure we complete all benefit claims within the timescales set by DWP</p> <p>To continue to work with other teams within the Authority i.e. Court Deputy Section and Social Work Teams</p> <p>Further promotion of service</p> | <p>Rebecca Shepherd (RS)</p> | <p>Throughout 2016-17</p> | <p>Communities first targets and referral rates;</p> <p>Analysis of time clients are waiting for appointments – to be explored;</p> <p>Volumes of referrals from in house teams;</p> <p>Attending team meetings and CSMG;</p> |

**Section 3:  
Service Priorities 2016-17 (cont'd)**

| Priority   | Actions to deliver priority  | Officer Responsible      | Timescale  | What will be different? Measures and/or Outcomes  |
|--|--|--------------------------|------------|---|
| 3: Update of electronic recording system/databases (WRU) | <p>New database has been created to record statistics from advice provided at benefit surgeries</p> <p>Liaise with IT to identify needs</p> <p>More cases/forms recorded via database to reduce paperwork to help efficiency</p> | RS                       | March 2017 | <p>More accurate statistical recording to support the volume of outreach work completed (Not currently recorded)</p> <p>Scanning facility</p> |
| 4: Review staffing within Welfare Rights Unit            | <p>Identify further funding streams and simplify current funding</p> <p>Liaise with HR officers to update vision records</p>   | RS / Leighton Jones (LJ) | March 2017 | <p>Single staff contract</p> <p>Improved individual Vision record</p>   |

**Section 3:  
Service Priorities 2016-17 (cont'd)**

| Priority  | Actions to deliver priority  | Officer Responsible | Timescale          | What will be different? Measures and/or Outcomes   |
|---|--|---------------------|--------------------|--|
| 5: Continue to lead and develop the iProcurement system across the Directorate. | <p>Liaise with Accountant to review and streamline budget coding and identify areas of savings.</p> <p>Liaise with Corporate E-Procurement Business Improvement Manager to ensure maximum benefits of Corporate contracts</p> <p>Identify and review reporting tools i.e. APEX and roll out training to team</p> | Lisa Morgan (LM)    | Throughout 2016-17 | <p>% of orders undertaken within 24 hours of receipt;</p> <p>Budget savings achieved by central management, monitoring &amp; control of Directorate's procurement needs.</p> |
| 6: Facilitate the coordination of Freedom of Information requests               | <p>Receive and record individual requests</p> <p>Improve recording method &amp; analyse response rates through liaising closer with service responders</p>   | LJ                  | Throughout 2016-17 | Fortnightly reports to Children's PO Group.  |

**Section 3:  
Service Priorities 2016-17 (cont'd)**

| Priority  | Actions to deliver priority  | Officer Responsible | Timescale   | What will be different? Measures and/or Outcomes  |
|---|--|---------------------|---|---|
| 7: To maintain management oversight of Directorate wide compliments and complaints and specific adherence with statutory guidelines | <p>To review the performance information/data to be extracted from the database</p> <p>Introduction of customer feedback – liaise with Corporate Communications Team to develop customer feedback forms</p> <p>Build upon relationships with key service stakeholders e.g. Children’s Complaints Officer</p> | LJ / LM             | <p>On-going throughout 2016-17</p> <p>Sept 2016</p> | <p>Annual &amp; Quarterly Reports reported in an appropriate and timely manner;</p> <p>% of complainants receiving a feedback form (from implementation date) – <b>forms drafted;</b></p> <p>% of customer feedback forms returned – <b>yet to be implemented.</b></p> <p>Feed/report into Children’s Improvement Plan.</p> |
| 8: Ensure complaints service is prepared for the implementation of the Act  | <p>Ensure information, advice and assistance is appropriate; literature is available in readily accessible format</p> <p>Recognise the importance of Advocacy</p>  | LJ / LM             | April 2016  | <p>Review corporate website</p> <p>Review literature</p>  |
| 9: Raise profile of the Complaints Team   | <p>Regular input into Children’s &amp; Adults PO Group meetings.</p> <p>Visiting frontline/direct services.</p> <p>Reporting to Members</p>  | LJ / LM             | On-going throughout 2016-17                         | Annual Reports, Ad Hoc Reports.   |

## Section 4: Service Performance Quadrant 2016-17

*up to Quarter 3 (1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016)*

As previously alluded to, performance measures have been identified and developed for 2016-17; despite this officers within the DSO have embraced the new measures, some have been difficult to capture and have required additional work to set up. It is for this reason there will be areas where either data is not available or has only been produced during the year. These are being established and will help towards more meaningful analysis and understanding of performance as they mature and become embedded in practice.

**Progress on delivering the priorities for 2016-17 is on target.**

### **Summary of Overall Performance**

The DSO continues to operate at high levels despite growing pressures on budgets and changes in staffing.

The Complaints Team have dealt with **41** formal complaints up to the end of December 2016; this is showing a decrease in activity which highlights the positive work being undertaken throughout the services and improvements in responding to them 'informally'. All complainants receive an acknowledgement letter within 48 hours of receipt.

The Welfare Rights Unit has dealt with **1,726 referrals** (April - December 2016), compared to **1,578** in the year 2015-16; this is showing a projected **33% increase**. Whilst the monies obtained for people within Neath Port Talbot is projected to be **over £9m** during 2016-17. The high workloads have been undertaken in the light of a reduction of resources, e.g. Appeal caseloads have increased from an average of 60 to 96 per staff member.

The DSO has undertaken **1,852** orders up to the end of December 2016; **98.6%** of orders received are acknowledged and actioned within 24 hours of receipt. It is anticipated that significant savings will be made in 2016-17 through the ordering processes.

**Section 4:  
Service Performance Quadrant 2016-17**

| Measure  | Comparative Performance       |  |   | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 1<br>(cumulative)      | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 2<br>(cumulative)      | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative)      |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
|  | 2014-15 Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2015-16 Actual<br>(Full Year)          | 2015-16<br>Qtr. 1-3<br>(cumulative)                     |  |  |  |
| <b>Service Measure 1 (Priority 1/3):</b><br>% of: a) home visits, b) surgeries, c) office appointments | N/A (new indicator)           | <b>48%</b><br><b>35%</b><br><b>17%</b> | <i>Data not collected<br/>prior to January<br/>2015</i> | <b>29%</b><br><b>41%</b><br><b>30%</b> | <b>25%</b><br><b>46%</b><br><b>29%</b> | <b>23%</b><br><b>49%</b><br><b>28%</b> |
| <b>Service Measure 2 (Priority 1):</b><br>% of calls with outcomes needing allocation                  | N/A (new indicator)           | <b>37%</b>                             | <i>Data not collected<br/>prior to January<br/>2015</i> | <b>33.5%</b>                           | <b>32.7%</b>                           | <b>33.9%</b>                           |
| <b>Service measure 3 (Priority 2):</b><br>% of referrals from in-house teams                           | N/A (new indicator)           |  |   | <b>N/A</b>                             | <b>N/A</b>                             | <b>29.5%</b>                           |
| <b>Service measure 4 (Priority 4):</b><br>% of staff with single contracts                             | N/A (new indicator)           |  |   | <b>100%</b>                            | <b>100%</b>                            | <b>100%</b>                            |
| <b>Service Measure 5 (Priority 5):</b><br>% of orders undertaken within 24 hours                       | N/A (new indicator)           |  |   | <b>97.5%</b>                           | <b>98%</b>                             | <b>98.6%</b>                           |
| <b>Service Measure 6 (Priority 5):</b><br>% of budget savings achieved                                 | N/A (new indicator)           | <b>19%</b>                             | N/A   | <b>49%</b>                             | <b>47%</b>                             | <b>41%</b>                             |

**Section 4:  
Service Performance Quadrant 2016-17 (cont'd)**

| Measure  | Comparative Performance       |                               |                                | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 1<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 2<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative) |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  | 2014-15 Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2015-16 Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2015-16 Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative) |                                   |                                   |                                   |
| <b>Service Measure 7 (Priority 6/7/9):</b><br>% of fortnightly reports sent to Children's PO group on time   | N/A (new indicator)           | 100%                          | 100%                           | 100%                              | 100%                              | 100%                              |
| <b>Service Measure 8 (Priority 7):</b><br>Annual & Quarterly reports completed within timescale  | N/A (new indicator)           | 100%                          | 100%                           | 100%                              | 100%                              | 100%                              |
| <b>Corporate measure (CM01):</b><br>a) Number of transactional services fully web enabled<br>b) Number of transactional services partially web enabled | N/A (new indicator)           |                               |                                | NA                                | NA                                | NA                                |

**Section 5:  
Financial Quadrant 2016-17:**

Spending up to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter is showing an **under-spend of 3.6%**; this is predominantly saved through staffing costs and managing the 'vacancy factor' of posts within the DSO.

**There are no anticipated risks to proposed FFP savings.**

| Measure   | 2014-15 Actual (Full Year)  | 2015-16 Actual (Full Year)   | 2016-17 Qtr. 1 (projected to year end)   | 2016-17 Qtr. 2 (projected to year end)   | 2016-17 Qtr. 3 (projected to year end)    |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM02):</b><br>% revenue expenditure within budget | +10.19%<br><i>overspend</i> | -10.48%<br><i>underspend</i> | <b>+3.41%</b><br><b><i>overspend</i></b> | <b>+6.82%</b><br><b><i>overspend</i></b> | <b>-3.60%</b><br><b><i>underspend</i></b> |
| Revenue Budget £  | £464,360                    | £390,240                     | <b>£375,620</b>                          | <b>£375,620</b>                          | <b>£375,620</b>                           |
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM03):</b><br>Amount of FFP savings at risk       | N/A<br>(new indicator)      | £0                           | <b>£0</b>                                | <b>£0</b>                                | <b>£0</b>                                 |

## Section 6: Employee Quadrant 2016-17

Sickness has seen a significant rise within the DSO; this can be attributed to 2 long-term sickness cases. These have been managed in accordance with the Council's sickness policy and procedures. 1 member of staff has now left employment, whilst the other member of staff has been issued with a formal Stage 1 sickness letter. This will see an upturn in sickness rates.

In relation to staff engagement, there is a working group made up of senior officers and trade unions looking at how to progress and measure this; discussions are on-going and a decision has not yet been made about corporately developed or individual surveys, optional or mandatory.

Please note 11 staff have received a performance appraisal since December 2016 with all appraisals planned before the year end.

| Measure   | 2014-15 Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2015-16 Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 1<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 2<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative) |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM04): Average FTE (full time equivalent) working days lost due to sickness absence</b> |                               |                               |                                   |                                   |                                   |
| <b>Service:</b> Directorate Support Office  | 1.8 days                      | 7.0 days                      | <b>2.5 days</b>                   | <b>4.9 days</b>                   | <b>8.6 days</b>                   |
| Total Service FTE days lost in the period   | 22                            | 122                           | <b>43</b>                         | <b>113</b>                        | <b>189</b>                        |
| <b>Directorate:</b> Social Services Health & Housing  | 11.7 days                     | 13.0 days                     | <b>3.0 days</b>                   | <b>6.7 days</b>                   | <b>9.8 days</b>                   |
| <b>Council</b>  | 9.4 days                      | 9.7 days                      | <b>2.4 days</b>                   | <b>4.6 days</b>                   | <b>7.3 days</b>                   |

|   | 2015-16 Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2015-16 Qtr. 1<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 1<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 2<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM11):</b><br>Staff engagement Measure  | N/A<br>(new indicator)        | N/A<br>(new indicator)         | See Note Above                    |                                   |                                   |
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM05):</b><br><br>% of staff who have received a performance appraisal during 2016-17 (Target 100%) | NA                            | 0                              | 8%                                | 8%                                | 8%                                |
| Number of staff who have received a performance appraisal during 2016-17  | NA                            | 0                              | 2                                 | 2                                 | 2                                 |
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM06):</b><br><br>Number of employees left due to unplanned departures                              | 0                             | 0                              | 0                                 | 0                                 | 0                                 |

## Section 7: Customer

The number of complaints against the DSO remain very low considering the contentious issues sometimes dealt with by the Office, e.g. Complaints Team and Welfare Rights Unit.

Formal compliments have seen a significant rise, primarily received by the Welfare Rights Unit; this can be reflected by the benefit monies received by people.

A customer satisfaction survey is undertaken for all users of the Welfare Rights Unit; nearly **400** feedback forms have been received up to the end of December with the vast majority stating they are “very” or “fairly” satisfied with the service.

| Measure   | 2015-16<br>Actual<br>(Full Year) | 2015-16<br>Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 1<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 2<br>(cumulative) | 2016-17<br>Qtr. 3<br>(cumulative) |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM07):</b><br>Total number of complaints<br>Internal<br>External (from the public)        | 0<br>0                           | 0<br>0                            | 0<br>0                            | 0<br>1                            | 0<br>1                            |
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM08):</b><br>Total number of compliments<br>Internal<br>External (members of the public) | 0<br>19                          | <i>Not available</i>              | <i>Not available</i>              | <i>Not available</i>              | 0<br>47                           |
| <b>Corporate Measure (CM09):</b><br>customer satisfaction measure/s   | 98.8%                            | <i>Not available</i>              | 98.1%                             | 99.3%                             | 99.5%                             |