



To: Nick Jarman
Director of Social Services

June 2017

Dear Director

CSSIW Performance Review of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Social Services

This letter is informed by CSSIW's inspection, performance review and engagement activity during 2016/17. At the Performance Review meeting on 5 March 2017 we provided feedback on our inspection, engagement and performance review activity over the past 12 months.

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

Senior management stability has been maintained within children's services but the post of Head of Adult services remains vacant. The Head of Children's Services continues to oversee both services along with the Head of Commissioning and Support Services and this is acknowledged by the authority to be an area of risk. . Recent appointments to a number of senior management posts within adult services have supported the planned changes to deliver a more robust outcome focused service.

The local authority has made good progress in response to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (SSWBA) having placed significant importance and investment on ensuring new ways of working are understood by staff and partner agencies.

Early Intervention and Preventative services in children's services are well developed. There is now a need to develop and progress early intervention within adult services. Good integrated work with the Health Board is evident within operational teams and through the local authority's front door service (The Gateway). Integration with Health and the third sector has been a priority over the past two years and this has resulted in effective joint working with positive outcomes for adults using services. Partnership working with the Health Board at both a senior level and

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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.

in the community has progressed throughout the year, this is reflected in the Delayed Transfers of Care in Neath Port Talbot which continue to remain relatively low.

Services have been reviewed and remodelled to meet local need and in response to the SSWBA. For example, the remodelling of Learning and Disability services has been completed and the in-house home care service has developed its rapid response team in line with the commissioning strategy. This has resulted in reducing both care home admissions and delayed transfer of care.

The local authority continues to make changes to its home care provision to ensure that an efficient, productive and financially viable service continues to be provided. The local authority, staff and Trade Unions have worked hard together to improve the efficiency of the in-house service, particularly in changing shift patterns and reducing sickness levels. Discussions are continuing with staff and trade unions on re-modelling the service however proposed changes have met with opposition from unions and local Assembly Members on the promotion of Direct Payments and changes to working practices of the in-house service. This is an area that will be monitored by CSSIW in 2017-18.

The transfer of day care services to a community based model has proved successful with people now accessing services within their locality and developing links with local community coordinators. The local authority has actively promoted the use of Social Enterprise with its community meals service successfully transferring to a social enterprise within the community.

Children's services continue to develop under the experienced management team where there has been a high level of stability. Early intervention and prevention services are embedded, continuing to put individuals at the centre of their care and support. To ensure an outcome focussed approach to practice is consistently applied, a recent multi-agency conference was facilitated by the local authority. The conference, involving partner agencies, looked at outcome focused practice and how working together benefits children, families and carers. CSSIW will monitor how the key messages will be used to improve working practices between the local authority and other agencies.

CSSIW undertook a national inspection of Children's Services in 2016/17. While the authority was not part of this review it did contribute through submitting self-assessment data. In addition the authority has audited its Information Advice and Assistance functions within its children's service to implement recommendations from the review to improve practice.

The authority continues to promote the Welsh language and an action plan is in place that supports "More Than Just Words" strategic framework. Training is available for all staff and information available to people bilingually.

Feedback on annual engagement themes

During 2016/17 we carried out a range of engagement activities across all local authorities in Wales. This engagement activity focused on two main themes, Adult Safeguarding and Carers.

The work with carers encompassed meetings with the relevant officers, carers and third sector. Our review of safeguarding focused on meetings with senior staff and those operational managers, staff and partners who lead on this area of work.

- Safeguarding

Safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened following a review by the local authority. Re-structuring of the safeguarding team resulted in a number of temporary posts being made permanent, this has resulted in stability within the team and clear lines of accountability. The decision undertaken in November 2016 to create a designated lead with responsibility for adult and children's safeguarding has led to greater consistency, improved joint working and a combining of safeguarding functions. This will be monitored by CSSIW as the arrangements are embedded in practice.

The authority's Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for the service setting out its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding adults at risk. In addition, safeguarding training on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has been delivered to staff and partner agencies to promote awareness and improve practice. This has included delivering CSE awareness training to all taxi services commissioned to provide home to school services.

- Carers

In line with the local authority's Carers' Commissioning Strategy, a carers' assessment form has been developed for adults and children's services. Joint training between these divisions has improved understanding in roles and responsibilities for completion of assessments. This has resulted in an improved service for those requesting an assessment and an increase in the number of assessments undertaken.

The carer's service jointly funded with the health board has relocated to the integrated hub. This has provided an opportunity to improve joint working, care management teams showing a commitment to continued improvement in their working relationships with health partners. The appointment of an outreach worker, to engage with carers that are hard to reach by visiting Job Centres and other facilities, and a health liaison worker, to provide links to hospital and GP practices has improved access to services. This has improved awareness of carers and identified people who had not viewed themselves as carers resulting in the number of assessments being doubled.

The young carers' service has been reviewed and there is a clear plan to raise awareness of young carers throughout the local authority especially within schools and youth services. In addition, the use of social media, including Twitter and Facebook, is being used to promote the awareness of the service to young people. This should improve identification of those young carers who do not come into contact with social services. The local authority should monitor progress with this.

Progress on recommendations arising from CSSIW inspections

The local authority was not involved in any inspection activity or site visits for CSSIW thematic reports undertaken during the year, although as with all other local authorities, did contribute to the data collection underpinning each of these. The authority has reviewed their services against recommendations from all these inspections as a “lessons learnt” development opportunity to improve practice.

Inspection, Engagement & Performance Review Plan

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

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

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

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

CSSIW work with partner inspectorates

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

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

Yours sincerely



Sarah Glynn-Jones

Regional Director

Copy sent to

Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
Estyn
Wales Audit Office