

Mr Andrew Jarrett
Director of Social Services
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Neath Civic Centre
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Date: 07 June 2019

Dear Mr Jarrett

CIW Local Authority Performance Review

We published our code of practice for review of local authority social services in April 2019 which outlined our intention to write and publish an annual letter for local authorities which will:

- provide feedback on inspection and performance evaluation activity completed by us during the year;
- report on progress the local authority has made in implementing recommendations from inspections and/or child and adult practice reviews;
- outline our forward work programme.

This letter summarises our review of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's performance in carrying out its statutory social services functions. It follows the four principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) and our increasingly collaborative and strengths based approach to supporting improvement. The letter is intended to assist the local authority and its partners to continually improve.

The content is informed by our performance evaluation activity during the course of the year. The activity included:

- Inspection of services for older adults in Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council during March 2019
- Adult Services Self Evaluation
- Visit to Commissioning Unit December 2018
- Reviewing the Pathway to Adulthood team in March 2019
- LAC challenge meeting held in 2018

We discussed these matters and our proposed performance evaluation activity for 2019/20 with you at the Annual Performance Review meeting on 23rd April 2019.

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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.

Summary of strengths and areas for improvement in line with principles of SSWBA

- Well-being

There has been a new senior management team within social care over the last 12 months. The directorate now benefits from stable leadership with a skilled, well-motivated and supported workforce who understands and shares the local authority's vision.

There is a current consultation in respect of remodelling adult services. The local authority have a clear vision to deliver a modern sustainable services supporting people to live independently. Effective partnership working with other agencies will be pivotal in ensuring people will receive modern, high quality and sustainable services which will meet their assessed care and support needs and demands both now and in the future.

The local authority recognises the change of practice to CIW will continue in 2019/2020 to work with HIW in jointly inspecting community mental health teams. CIW will be following up recommendations made within HIW and CIW joint thematic review of Community Mental Health Teams as part of bi-annual head of service meetings with local authorities.

Our focused activity with the local authority is likely to include some follow up to inspection findings relating to LAC and care leavers in children's services; our engagement in adult services will focus on people aged over 65s in the community, and possibly day services.

Prevention and early intervention and outcome focused practice has been a challenge for some staff. The local authority will need to ensure a clear communication strategy is in place, which supports the principles of the Social Services Well Being Act.

In December 2018 HMI Probation undertook a full inspection of the Western Bay Youth Offending Service (YOS). The report was subsequently published on the 28th March 2019 and rated the Service as inadequate. On the 1st April 2019 the Youth Offending Service across Western Bay ended and Neath Port Talbot has returned to a stand-alone service for Youth Offending and Early Intervention. The new Neath Port Talbot service is currently developing and will be responsible for delivering the local action plan in relation to the relevant areas of concern raised in the inspection report.

Hillside Secure Unit has been integrated fully into Children's services to ensure a more robust monitoring of the service. Following the review of Hillside by the Youth Custody Service (YCS) and non-compliances issued against the service by our regulatory team. In addressing these issues the authority continues to deliver on its action plan with YCS improving the governance and quality assurance processes in order to promote young people's well-being and safety. All legal requirements in respect of CIW have been met.

The Local Authority has a robust quality assurance framework which is embedded in practice within children's service. As part of the framework the local authority information is gathered from children and families on their views about the services they receive, and an audit programme which includes social work team managers and practitioners who meet on a monthly basis to undertake thematic audits and develop practice standards. Feedback from audits are circulated to staff via a practice improvement group and all practitioners have the opportunity to be involved in shaping practice development. The local authority need to the same level of robust quality assurance within Adult Services is embedded within practice.

- People

The local authority has been developing integration between Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) and Adult Services. This had included developing a shared "front door" provision (SPOC) which will align processes between the two services. The co-location of teams in January 2019 is already showing positive results with both multi-agency teams working more closely, sharing information in a timely manner and gaining increasing understanding of each other's roles. Further developments within this area include developing a standardised referral form across both services.

Within adult services during the inspection we observed work being undertaken by Local Area Coordinators who provide a local, accessible single point of contact for people who may be vulnerable due to age, disability, mental illness or social isolation. We heard of many examples of their work making a real difference to people's lives. This is an area for the local authority to consider expanding to reach all communities within Neath Port Talbot to further promote community engagement

In March 2019 we undertook focused activity visiting the pilot of the Pathway to Adulthood team. The team which sits within the structure of children's services but is co-located with adult services ensure there is a clear pathway for children and young people with complex needs. We were shown many examples of how the team had worked to improve young people's outcomes in ways which promoted independence through developing working relationships with partner agencies such as housing and education. With the extension of the pilot agreed we will return to review the project within the next 12 months.

Our monitoring of the deprivation of liberty safeguards has identified the local authority, in common with many others in Wales, is unable to assure itself people's human rights are not being breached by being deprived of their liberty unlawfully. We will continue to monitor this.

- Prevention

The local authority has invested in whole service training for staff in relation to outcome focused practice. This shared approach has helped staff to work more effectively with families and supported them in identifying what matters to them and what they want to happen.

The local authority have adopted a whole outcome focused approach which helps families to clearly identify what they want to happen and identify outcomes to achieve positive change. We found good practice being delivered by practitioners within Integration of Family Action Support Team (FAST), Intensive Family Support Team (IFSS) and Hidden Harm service focuses on key priority risks, so that families and agencies have a shared understanding of what needs to happen to make the changes they want, and drawing on the strengths within the family to achieve the identified outcomes building and drawing on strengths of the family. Within children's services the number of looked after children continues to remain stable with a reduction of 6% children and young people becoming looked after. The number of children who are placed with parents under legal arrangements has halved in the past 4 years. We were informed of how having a dedicated team to support care experienced children and young people has assisted the local authority in supporting children return to their families, and supporting children remain with parents and family members.

The local authority has recognised within adult safeguarding there is a need to review the processes and ensure quality assurance is embedded in practice. The appointment of a new safeguarding manager for both adult and children's services will develop a joint safeguarding approach. This is an area we will follow up in the next year as part of a focused activity.

Within adult services pressures continue due to the fragility of the domiciliary care sector where challenges of recruitment and the, inability to provide packages of care in a timely manner is having a negative impact on delivering services. In addressing this issue the local authority has undertaken review of its in house homecare and reablement service.

We were told of the developments in joint working with the health board with a supportive review of The Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The review undertaken by the local authority and the health board identified areas for further improving practice and efficiency. Work had already begun on addressing these areas prior to the joint inspection by CIW and HIW review of Adult Community Mental Health Services to take place in 2019.

Throughout 2018 our programme of work focused on care experienced children and young people. Qualitative evidence was gathered from six local authority children and fostering inspections, 22 self-evaluations completed by local authorities, challenge meetings held with those local authorities who were not subject to an inspection and engagement activity with care experienced children, care leavers and foster carers. The report will be published on our website, with key findings made in respect of profile, sufficiency, practice, partnerships, stability, governance and corporate parenting. Many of the areas we have identified for improvement are being considered by Welsh Government's Ministerial Advisory Group on improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people and we also hope local authorities will consider their own contribution to addressing these findings.

- Partnerships

The local authority has informed us of the new opportunities to develop and build upon existing relationships with partners under the newly formed West Glamorgan Partnership.

During the adult services inspection, we saw how integrated working with the health board has developed ensuring commitment to partnership working and the development of an optimal model of practice through delivering integrated intermediate care services meet the well-being, care and support needs of older people.

The local authority has informed us of the work being undertaken with social housing and land lords through Housing and Homeless Strategy. To ensure that resources are spent effectively and on services which promote independence and enable local people access to quality, affordable housing. Strategies have been developed to improve homelessness prevention, along with plans to develop housing units delivered through Social Housing Grants and intermediate care and innovation funds. This shows an area of joint working with partner agencies focusing on the changing demographics within Neath Port Talbot.

CIW Performance Review Plan for 2019-20

Our scheduled inspection programme for 2019/20 will be focussing on prevention and promoting independence for older people and for the children's services thematic inspection the focus will be on prevention, partnerships and experiences of disabled children. If your local authority is selected for inclusion in this programme, you will receive four weeks' notice of the scheduled date of the inspection.

We will undertake engagement activities aligned to the thematic inspections and meet with people who receive care and support services. CIW will be convening a meeting with the local authority and its key partners in the summer term to follow up areas identified in the self-evaluation submitted in January 2019 focusing on prevention and promoting independence for older people self-evaluation. A thematic national report will be published upon the completion of inspections and engagement activities.

In late 2019 we will pilot a joint inspection of child protection arrangements. The joint inspection will be led by CIW and in partnership with HIW, Estyn, HMI Constabulary (HMICFRS) and HMI Probation. With the drive towards collaboration and integration in public services, CIW work closely with other inspectorates to share intelligence and jointly plan inspections. We will work closely with Social Care Wales to share information to support improvement in social care services.

CIW will continue in 2019/2020 to work with HIW in jointly inspecting community mental health teams. CIW will be following up recommendations made within HIW and CIW joint thematic review of Community Mental Health Teams as part of bi-annual head of service meetings with local authorities.

Our focused activity with the local authority is likely to include some follow up to inspection findings relating to LAC and care leavers in children's services; our engagement in adult services will focus on people aged over 65s in the community, and possibly day services.

This may be subject to change in the light of emerging issues.

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

We will publish the final version of this letter on our website.

Yours sincerely



Sharon Eastlake
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Care Inspectorate Wales

Cc.
WAO
HIW
Estyn