

Appendix 7 - Children & Young People Services Quality Assurance Overview Report.

This report seeks to provide members with an overview of some of the quality assurance activity that has taken place or been reported during quarter 3 in 2022-23. This report collates activity from across Social Services: Children and Young People Services, Adult Services and Youth Justice Early Intervention Service and the work of the Quality Practice Strategic Group.

Inspection

During the quarter we inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) on a thematic audit around planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) pre-proceedings. PLO sets out the duties Local Authorities have when thinking about taking a case to court to ask for a Care Order to take a child into care or for a Supervision Order to be made. Usually when PLO is initiated, the child has been subject to a Child Protection Plan, but the service continues to have worries in relation to Safeguarding.

The purpose of the CIW activity 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*
- *To consider the extent to which practice has progressed since the publication of both the CIW 'National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to public law outline pre proceedings' and the publication of the Public Law Outline working group report 2021 including best practice guidance.*

The review and the subsequent report will be framed against the following four questions.

- 1. Is there a systematic approach to ensuring that the threshold for Public Law Outline pre proceedings has been reached?*
- 2. Are arrangements in place to support effective communication and collaborative planning with parents/significant others about the PLO including the opportunities for change?*
- 3. Do care and support planning arrangements support timely permanence for children and young people to achieve good outcomes?*
- 4. Do arrangements promote rights-based practice and the voice of the child?*

As highlighted in the previous quarterly report NPT was selected as the first local authority in Wales to undergo the fieldwork element of the review. In preparation for the fieldwork dates and the array of advance information requested by CIW, extensive work went in to demonstrate the work of the service, such as:

- Overview of support services

- Arrangements for permanency
- Strengths based model of practice handbook
- Supervision arrangements
- Practice guide for PLO
- Underpinning models of practice

A small number of cases was selected for the fieldwork element, this involved inspectors case file reading, interviews with Children's Services workers involved with each case, and one was selected for a multi-agency interview with partners. The verbal feedback received from the Inspectorate was positive and complimentary of many of the initiatives within the local authority in its response to cases that meet the threshold for PLO.

Children's Rights Approach Action Plan

As highlighted in the previous quarterly report the Quality Practice Strategic Group is responsible for overseeing the Children's Rights Approach Action Plan that was developed following a series of training sessions for a cohort of staff to become Children's Rights Champions. The plan continues to be monitored through the group and due to the good progress being made against the plan it was agreed with Principal Officers that new recruits for active Children's Rights Champions would be sought from across the service. Once this has been completed, training will be provided to those interested in joining the working group, at the training session further areas to include on the plan will be established with the Children's Rights Unit. The training is scheduled to be completed in early 2023 and the new champions will be invited to join the existing Children's Rights Approach Group for their next meeting in March 2023.

Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)

During this quarter the strategic group continues to have oversight of the work being undertaken around Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS), which provides protection for people aged 16 and above who are or who need to be deprived of their liberty in order to enable their care or treatment and lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements. Due to the changes in legislation, this has required the department to review all cases that are affected, the Quality Practice Strategic Group has oversight of this work through the Principal Officer for Safeguarding. A project lead for this is now in place and has overall responsibility for leading on this project in the region for the local authority. Areas that the project will now focus on are:

- Preparatory work on establishing baselines in practice, templates to use and workforce planning for LPS implementation
- Practice pathways and understanding codes of practice in relation to the new legislation
- Training for staff within Neath Port Talbot
- Introducing and embedding LPS within everyday practice

NIHR – School for Social Care Research

During this quarter Liza Turton and Rachel Scourfield were successful in applying for and achieving funding for the Practice-Based Research Leaders Award. The aim of the funding is to develop the evidence base for adult social care practice in England and Wales by commissioning and conducting high-quality research. Over the last 13 years the School has commissioned research studies, and numerous methods and scoping review papers across the scope of adult social care.

The Practice-Based Research Leaders Award (PBRLA) Scheme aims to provide tailored and targeted support for individuals or teams in positions of responsibility who have the ability and influence to develop research skills and/or capacity within their organisations (or across organisations). This is particularly where resources would help accelerate progress in developing team or organisational research capacity.

The project will commence in early 2023 following the funds being released, it is anticipated that the project will run for up to 18 months. By gaining this research award we will be seeking to develop a research culture across adult social care practice and policy within Neath Port Talbot. This will include increasing organisational research capacity by developing research skills (research leaders) and establishing research champions (consultant social workers) to build research capacity under the initiatives we will develop across adult social care. The research initiatives include:

- **E-Learning for research in practice:** This would be mandatory training
- **Train the trainer:** For research champions to cascade 'research in practice' workshops
- **Intranet research based tool (Social Work Toolkit area):** Categorized under key topics
- **Case Mapping:** Would allow practitioners to build their confidence for research to underpin their practice
- **Champion research within adult social care policy**
- **Develop research culture within NPT:** By developing research skills and processes where research informed practice is an expectation

Further updates on the progress of this work will be provided in future quarterly reports.

Quality Assurance Activity

An audit on Mental Capacity Assessments was reported on in this quarter, the purpose of the audit was that we wanted to provide assurances in respect of capacity assessments being undertaken across Neath Port Talbot Social Services and Health in the Swansea Bay Region. The results of this audit would feed into the work of the Liberty Protection Safeguards project and was being undertaken on a regional basis.

The audit analysed audits completed by social care staff in Neath Port Talbot and other professionals within Swansea Bay University Health Board. Overall the audit found that there were clear differences between the two agencies in respect of the capacity assessments. For

social care staff in Neath Port Talbot we were able to undertake a qualitative analysis of the audits, this evidenced that there were some really good examples of capacity assessments audited, clearly demonstrating how the practitioner has used the correct form, considered the communication needs of the individual and with clear evidence of the decision that has been made. Most assessments had a clear analysis to draw out conclusions and recommendations. On meeting with the Consultant Social Workers who participated in the audit it was clear that although it was evident the standard was mostly good, they felt that more could be done to drive practice forward and provide consistency across all teams. The resounding recommendation was that a practice guide should be developed setting out the expectations on practitioners when completing a capacity assessment with accompanying completed good practice documents as an example. The practice improvement group has also been asked to consider how we feedback the individual audit tools to teams/practitioners and how the consultant social workers can monitor these capacity assessments informally within the teams.

Other Work

The Quality Practice Strategic Group is also responsible for overseeing a variety of work requests and action plans of operational groups across the directorate, these include but are not limited to:

- **Practice Improvement Group Plans** – These groups (1 in Childrens and 1 in Adults) are responsible for developing and driving practice development across the directorate
- **Strategic Outcomes Meeting Plan** – This group focusses on embedding the strengths based model of practice across the directorate
- **Research Requests** – Any research requests are considered by the group and if accepted they are also tracked
- **Learning Reviews** – requests for learning reviews are considered by the group
- **Adult and Child Practice Reviews** – The actions emanating from these Safeguarding Board reviews are tracked and monitored by the group

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