



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

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

**09<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Report of the Head of Children and Young People Services –  
Keri Warren**

**Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected** All Wards

**Social Services Adults and Children's Single Point of Contact**

**Purpose of the Report**

To introduce and accompany a presentation by officers on Social Services Single Point of Contact

**Executive Summary**

Following a request from Scrutiny Committee, officers of Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC) will give a presentation focused on the Adults Social Services Single Point of Contact (SPOC) which provides an over-view and reassurances of the current performance, pressures and outcomes of the team. This report will offer a narrative which will assist Scrutiny, and will also compliment the presentation. The presentation will provide data, bring the team to life and include service user feedback

## **Background:**

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council benefits from an integrated Social Services 'front door' known as the Adults and Children's Single Point of Contact or, more commonly known as, SPOC. The integration of SPOC across the directorate offers a holistic approach to the citizens of NPT which promotes positive outcomes through collaborative working. Although our internal pathways branch off into two strands of SPOC, which specialize in Adults and Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), the team as a whole offer a joined up approach for complex cases with multiple identified needs for the adults and the children involved in any given family. Most commonly these types of cases involve young people transitioning into adulthood who are presenting with vulnerabilities, and mothers before they give birth to their children where there are assessed vulnerabilities and needs requiring support.

Across Social Services we have felt the pressures of the pandemic and are currently battling with an 'over heated' system. Families are presenting with more complex needs as we come out of the pandemic and have to contend with the unintended impact of the last few years on their emotional, social and mental wellbeing.

In March of 2022, in recognition of demand and in line with the remodelling of Adults Social Care, we began to formally undertake Proportionate Assessments (PA) in SPOC which would support, where ever possible, outcomes being met quickly through IAA (Information, Advice and Assistance). Although we were already undertaking PAs up until this point, we were doing them less frequently and our IT system did not allow us to capture them appropriately and in a way that would assist the wider service. We came together as a service to agree pathways for new referrals, with a general rule that all new referrals would undergo a proportionate assessment except for specifically agreed circumstances which would result in the referral being screened straight to a long term team for assessment and intervention.

Once our pathways were agreed, we ensured the team was appropriately resourced to meet the demand we were anticipating. We resourced the team with Occupational Therapists (OTs), in recognition that a large number of our referrals into the service were in relation to OT support of varying complexity. The OTs and Social Workers in SPOC are able to support an individual to meet his/her outcome as quickly and efficiently as possible. This approach has meant that only those individuals with the most complex needs would transition to our long term teams for more in-depth assessment and care packages. This approach has also allowed us to 'slow down' the process and take pressure off of our wider Adults Social Care Teams. Cases are transferred from an assessed position and in most situations service users have already received a level of intervention to support them and manage their identified needs whilst they wait for a more in-depth intervention/care package. This way of working is in line with our outcomes focused model of practice, whereby we support service users to identify what matters to them early in their journey with us and work to achieving those outcomes as quickly and efficiently as possible without creating a dependency on services.

In the summer/autumn of 2022, concerns were raised by cabinet members that there was a delay in the call answering times by Contact Officers in SPOC. At the point when concerns were raised our average calls answered rate was 51%. A review was undertaken by the Safeguarding Principal Officer in October 2022 where it was recognized that due to pressures in the service and sickness/vacancies in the Contact Officers resource we were not sufficiently staffed to manage the demand of the phone calls we were receiving. As a result, additional resources were brought into the service. We have seen a steady improvement since the addition of resources and as of February 2023, we are answering 83.5% of all calls coming through to SPOC. Typically, callers are waiting around 5 minutes for a call to be answered, with average call wait times in February being 2 minutes and 18 seconds. Our data shows us that most callers will wait up to 8 minutes before they abandon a call.

Although we have seen a healthy improvement in this area, we are keeping this resource closely under review. We continue to work closely with our colleagues in Human Resources to ensure any vacancies are filled quickly and sickness is supported appropriately. We are also working closely with our IT colleagues to improve our answer phone facilities with the hope that we can provide citizens with an average wait time before calls are answered. We hope that by providing a general timeframe to manage expectations of callers we will be less likely to have abandoned calls. Furthermore, with the roll out of the new IT system for Social Services, we will have the opportunity to develop other platforms citizens can use to contact us, which will be more user friendly and in line with the digital transformation opportunities across NPT.

### **Financial Impacts**

No implications.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

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

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

No implications.

### **Workforce Impacts**

No implications.

### **Legal Impacts**

The report outlines the respective legal duties and impacts.

### **Risk Management Impacts**

No implications.

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

SPOC has a positive impact in respect of this duty.

### **Consultation**

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

### **Appendices**

None.

### **List of Background Papers**

Presentation.

### **Officer Contact**

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