

Dear Director

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 Cardiff City 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 of this letter is informed by the performance evaluation activity undertaken by the inspectorate during the course of the year. This activity included:

- Review of looked after children self – assessment and subsequent challenge meeting held in 2018.

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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.

- Review of self-evaluation report in respect of promoting independence and preventing escalating needs of older adults (65+).
- Focused activity undertaken in the authority during April 2019, in relation to the family support service within children's services.
- Focused activity undertaken in April 2019 in relation to adult's independent living service concentrated on the first point of contact (FPOC).

We discussed these matters and our proposed performance evaluation activity for 2019/20 with you at the annual Performance Review meeting on 17th April 2019.

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

- Well-being

The local authority's social services directorate has had a number of changes at senior management level over the last 12 months. The directorate has used these changes as an opportunity to build on good practice and review areas for development across the whole service. Consequently, the directorate has achieved a good understanding of its own strengths and areas of challenge in both adult and children's services. Strength based, rights based and outcome focused approaches are being introduced with all staff are undertaking training to ensure consistency. These approaches are yet to be embedded in practice throughout the service.

There is a good level of corporate support for social services in Cardiff. In line with the local authority's ambition to achieve integrated early help provision, a new delivery model is being implemented. We carried out focused activity in the family support service; one of three services that had already implemented the new model. We found that early help preventative measures had undergone significant development over the past 12 months. This included training staff in the Signs of Safety model. We observed a team culture where the voice of the child is central to practice. We heard about work with families where positive outcomes were achieved, and saw examples of extremely positive feedback from families who had received interventions.

There has also been a shift in the balance of care to early intervention within adult services. Improved resources and staff training at the front door is enabling an early focus on wellbeing outcomes. This shift is supported by performance measurement and quality assurance arrangements that look not only at quantitative data but captures information about impact and encourages learning.

Within children's services the average social worker caseload increased to 19.5 in December 2018 from 16.9 in September 2018 and we found an over reliance on agency social workers. This is due to difficulties in recruiting experienced social workers. Vacancies currently stand at 30%. To address this a workforce project group has developed an action plan concentrating on three priority areas: recruitment, retention and career development. It is essential to have a stable cohort of social workers to enable children and families to develop trust and positive relationships to support them to achieve positive outcomes.

Within adult services staff retention is described as good with low levels of agency cover. A specific area of difficulty in recruitment is for approved mental health practitioners (AMHP). This is being addressed through additional training opportunities.

- People

The involvement of people in the design and delivery of their care is an area of strength for Cardiff City Council. The local authority has used a range of engagement and consultation methods to gain the views of service users and carers in developing services. Within the learning disability service family carers have engaged in service consultation and evaluation. Within children's services young people have contributed to the development of the children's service strategy and act as advisors to the corporate parenting group. Within both services, service users are supported to act as interview panel members for staff recruitment in line with the authority's safer recruitment procedure.

Through the regional forum with Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (UHB) strategies are in place to enhance co-ordination of Welsh language activity within the local authority. The forum has considered ways of attracting more Welsh speaking staff including undertaking community and staff profiling work and making available Welsh language courses tailored to social services staff such as those working in care homes.

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

We carried out focussed activity in adult services focussing on the first point of contact for people (FPOC). The FPOC aims to support people to live independently by resolving issues by telephone and providing by information and advice. The team uses a strengths based approach in line with SSWBA to help people recognise their potential to achieve positive outcomes. We found staff treated people with respect and provided people with a positive first point of contact. Staff we spoke with were enthusiastic and positive about working collaboratively with other professionals. People we spoke with who had used the service were positive about the response they received.

The local authority is working closely with health board partners to develop a new way of working to facilitate timely hospital discharges, enabling people to return home where possible. We saw the positive impact of the "Get Me Home" scheme being piloted jointly with University Hospital Wales (UHW) with local authority contact officers working on hospital wards to help facilitate more timely discharge back to the community for people who do not require ongoing social care support. We were told due to the success of the pilot the scheme is to be rolled out to a further eight wards by June 2019.

The local authority has experienced an increase in demand for children's services and has developed an action plan to address demand at the front door. It is also considering how to enable families to 'step-down' to early help services more appropriately. We will monitor with interest the development of much needed commissioning and market position strategy to map future demand for services and help shape the market.

There is urgent need to improve quality and placement choice for care experienced children. A high number of looked after children are placed outside of Cardiff and are

unable to return due to the lack of appropriate local provision. As well as reviewing all children in residential placements the local authority has initiated a project to develop an 'in-house' local provision of small group homes.

The local authority acknowledges difficulties in recruiting foster carers and consequently a disproportionate reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA). The importance of maintaining a positive relationship with IFA's is acknowledged and the local authority is working toward a recruitment campaign that focuses specifically on improving a more diverse range of placements.

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

Partnership arrangements at local and regional level continue to develop and mature with key emphasis on collaborative working. This has resulted in improvements in commissioning, pooled budgets and increasing social care delivery on a regional footprint. Examples of this would be Welsh Government's approval of the Cardiff and Vale regional partnership board's transformation proposal – "Me My Home, My Community" which resulted in significant investment into regional well-being, social care and health services to drive forward plans to deliver seamless services, and; joint commissioning arrangements for older people, including pooled budgets for care accommodation.

Within children's services the introduction of a multi-agency resource panel has helped allocate and identify resources in order to stabilise placements, inform care plans and support children to remain at home when safe to do so. This greater management oversight and joint decision making was much needed to achieve best outcomes and is a positive development.

Working jointly with Vale of Glamorgan Council there has been improved engagement with communities. Working in partnership with local churches and mosques the local authority has advised on safeguarding policies with regard to community sponsorship schemes for refugees. The re-settlement programmes for Syrian refugees and their families provides an opportunity for community sponsors including local charities, community businesses and faith groups to help build a home and stable life in the Wales.

CIW Performance Review Plan for 2019-20

Our scheduled thematic inspection programme for 2019/20 will be focusing on prevention and promoting independence for older people and for children 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.

Alongside the thematic inspection programme, we will undertake engagement activities aligned to the theme of inspections and meet with people who receive care and support services. We will convene a meeting with the local authority and its key partners during the summer to follow up on the self-evaluation of promoting independence for older people that local authorities' submitted in January 2019. National reports will be published upon the completion of the thematic inspection programme and engagement activities.

We will also undertake two pieces of focused activity within the local authority throughout the year. The details for the focus of these will be confirmed.

CIW will continue to work with HIW to jointly inspect community mental health teams (CMHT). We will also follow up recommendations made within joint HIW and CIW review of CMHT (Cardiff – The Links) March 2018 and the joint thematic report of community health teams February 2019 during bi-annual head of service meetings.

CIW are working together with HMI Constabulary (HMICFRS), HMI Probation, HIW and Estyn to develop a model of joint inspection of child protection arrangements in Wales (JICPA). We will be piloting one JICPA during autumn 2019. 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 support improvement in social care services.

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



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