

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 Carmarthenshire County 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:

- CIW inspectors consulted with staff and people experiencing mental health problems as part of our support to the HIW review of community mental health services. We received responses from people living at regulated services.

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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.

- CIW visited Cam Cyntaf and Coleshill learning disability community services to engage staff and those who access these services.
- Adult Services Self-Evaluation submitted to CIW earlier this year.
- Carmarthenshire Foster Carers Focus Group undertaken as part of CIW's thematic review of care experienced children and care leavers.
- Care experienced children and care leavers focus group undertaken as part of CIW's thematic review of care experienced children and care leavers.
- Children's Services Challenge Meeting.

We discussed these matters and our proposed performance evaluation activity for 2019/20 with you at the annual performance review meeting on 8th April 2019.

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

- Well-being

Carmarthenshire County Council's latest children's performance information identifies some positive indicators, for example the rate of care experienced children returning home and the number of children with three or more placements (8.3%) represents on-going improvement. The number of looked after children (per 10,000 population) is the lowest in Wales. There has been steady decline in the number of children being looked after since 2013. The local authority has a high proportion of looked after children and young people aged between 11-15 (67%) and 16-17 (26%). This is an area that will require significant focus on transition planning and on commissioning arrangements to ensure there is sufficient resource to meet the expected demand.

Carmarthenshire County Council has recently developed a regional safeguarding threshold document which identifies how they will promote well-being of an adult at risk. The document utilised across the four counties that make up the regional safeguarding footprint provides opportunity to apply consistent safeguarding practice.

During our support to the HIW review of community mental health services we consulted with staff and service users experiencing mental health problems. We received responses from people living at regulated services who told us that communication with social workers and CPNs was good and that they knew how and who to contact from the CMHT when this was required. CMHT staff were described as responsive in relation to reviews or in emergency situations. We saw people were provided with information on local advocacy services.

- People – voice and control

We found Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to developing documentation in the language of choice and is actively encouraging the use of Welsh language skills across the workforce. Carmarthenshire County Council adult services self-evaluation has highlighted that 90% of staff who deliver the IAA service are a Welsh speaker, which means people making contact can be assured of receiving a service in their first choice language.

The local authority does not have a dedicated advocacy provider for older people and are reliant on exploring advocacy providers for other service users like Eiriol, Peoples First or

other third sector organisations like the Alzheimer's society. This is an area for development and the local authority is working towards regionally commissioned arrangements.

We spoke to a group of Carmarthenshire Foster Carers. They were positive about the support provided by the local authority. For example, access to out of hours support which was always timely and supportive and training was readily available and of a good standard. They commented that they were fully involved in the planning of placements and the local authority were very proactive in trying to prevent placement breakdown. The group considered the child's well-being and voice was represented by the independent reviewing officer, social worker and advocate. They felt more could be done to support care leavers and to ensure that they have the support they need for the time that they need it and that they always have a safe place to go to.

We spoke to a group of care experienced young people who told us most of them, had experienced multiple changes of social workers and perhaps as a consequence, communication with social workers could be problematic and they felt they were not always listened to. The persistent problem of change of social workers is an on-going national concern and has been identified through CIW's national review of care experienced children and young people. The annual statutory director's report has emphasised the importance of the need to retain social workers who are trained and experienced, teams have continued to periodically experience vacancies and across some service areas this has had an impact on service delivery.

One of the strategic priorities in the director's annual report was a review of disability services and to continue to improve the provision of day opportunities for people across the county. To evaluate progress we visited Cam Cyntaf and Coleshill community learning disability services. We found the ethos at the centres was very much about voice and control of people using services and providing opportunities to gain skills, participate in activities, volunteer and socialise.

There have been concerns across Welsh local authorities about people being potentially deprived of their liberty unlawfully because of deprivation of liberty safeguards waiting lists. Our monitoring of the deprivation of liberty safeguards has identified Carmarthenshire County Council is addressing the backlog, which is diminishing, through a triage and risk assessment process. We will continue to monitor this.

- Prevention

Prevention is one of the strategic priorities adopted by the Regional Partnership Board. Carmarthenshire County Council state they are committed to reviewing arrangements across the region, identifying proven practice across Wales and the UK and developing a regional prevention framework based on shared quality standards.

Some areas highlighted in the adult services self-evaluation submitted to us earlier this year describe important components of preventative support that include; Llesiant Delta Wellbeing (LDW) which is a Local Authority Trading Company wholly owned by Carmarthenshire County Council which now manages the Careline service. LDW also provides the Information, Advice and Assistance service which includes social care, health and local authority safeguarding staff. This provides opportunity to respond promptly and effectively.

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

Carmarthenshire County Council has in place strategic arrangements to oversee inter-disciplinary working. The West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) oversees the work of the West Wales Care Partnership (WWCP) and comprises representatives from the statutory partner agencies, the third and independent sectors and users and carers. The local authority has developed with Hywel Dda University Health Board an integrated management structure where by the head of service, locality managers (responsible for the community resource teams), the service lead for OT, the modernisation and programme managers and the partnership and governance manager are all in jointly funded posts. This provides opportunity for a strong foundation for joint working across health and social care across the county.

The local authority has carried out well-being and SSWBA training with its staff and multi-agency partners such as physiotherapists, district nurses, the child and adolescent mental health service and elected members.

The clear emphasis on partnership and inter-disciplinary working should benefit people with care and support needs in Carmarthenshire. This is an area we have agreed to consider through our focused activity, particular pertinent to supporting independence in older persons, the CIW thematic line of enquiry for 2019-20.

CIW Performance Review Plan for 2019-20

Our scheduled thematic adult services 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.

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. 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 will include a focus on applying safeguarding thresholds (with reference to the threshold document) and planned visits to Dinefwr Child Care Team (observing a pod meeting) and Llanelli Assessment Team (to include discussion about network meetings).

These priorities may change as the year progresses.

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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