

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 Rhondda Cynon Taf 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 inspection of adult services during March 2019 and performance evaluation activity during the course of the year. This included the 'challenge meeting', held in the context of CIW's inspection of services for children looked after / care leavers; and bi-annual meetings with respective heads of service.

We discussed these matters and our proposed performance evaluation activity for 2019/20 with you at the annual performance review meeting on 3rd April 2019.

Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru (AGC)
Swyddfa Caerfyrddin
Llywodraeth Cymru
Adeiladau'r Llywodraeth
Heol Picton
Caerfyrddin
SA31 3BT
www.arolygiaethgofal.cymru

☎ 0300 790 0126
☎ 0872 437 7303
✉ CIWLocalAuthority@gov.wales

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
Carmarthen Office
Welsh Government
Government Buildings
Picton Terrace
Carmarthen
SA31 3BT
www.careinspectorate.wales

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

The local authority has demonstrated a sound understanding of its own areas of strength and those in need of further development, or where barriers to further progress require additional managerial attention and / or resources in order to deliver the anticipated outcomes.

There is corporate support for the direction of travel for social services, aligned with an understanding within the wider council of the challenges it faces in continuing to deliver positive results. An example of this is the recognition that maintaining community-based services such as libraries and leisure centres is likely to have a positive impact in promoting and sustaining people's general well-being.

Alongside this, there is a recognition of the need to update the local authority's own in-house adult accommodation provision, in line with people's changing needs and expectations. The pace of this change needs to be maintained and accelerated, in order to ensure that the services provided are in line with both presenting and anticipated needs. The planned further expansion of Extra Care facilities, based on a successful new build in Talbot Green and the new build on the site of a previous residential care facility, is an illustration of the local authority's practical response to this identified need.

People can be assured the local authority recognises people are themselves best placed to make judgements in relation to their own wellbeing, and has increasingly effective systems in place to help to support and deliver on this. It recognises the systems currently in place in relation to recognising and supporting the needs of carers are less robustly implemented, and need to be further strengthened.

The local authority continues to consolidate its approach to quality assurance, with the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel (CLAQAP) initiative recently introduced following an independent review. A revised, overarching model of quality assurance is also being implemented in relation to adult services. This is based on an auditing schedule that emphasises strengths, and promotes practice learning.

- People – voice and control

The local authority continue to make progress in implementing the Welsh Language Standards with all public documentation now available in Welsh. The 'active offer' is now embedded, and the local authority continues to monitor requests for the provision of assessments and other services in Welsh, which have been low in numbers. The adult services portfolio lead is the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Welsh language champion and actively promotes and raises awareness of the language in the workplace.

During our inspection of adult services we found practitioners were well-motivated and increasingly adept at ensuring people's voices are heard; and ensuring this is incorporated into the assessment of their needs, and subsequent planning and delivery of individualised care and support. The local authority recognises more work needs to be done in this regard in relation to carers. The consistency with which the voice of the carer is heard and

recognised needs to be improved, with enhanced support for carers to enable them to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes.

The local authority has identified future workforce planning and development as a priority; particular challenges remain in relation to retaining more experienced staff in some teams. Capacity in some adult care and support teams is under review, due to identified workload pressures. It is encouraging to note the recent downward trend of agency staff within children's services.

Some care leavers spoken to as part of our engagement activity told us they felt the support they received from the local authority needed to be more consistent. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is working in conjunction with care leavers to enhance the range of accommodation available for them. There is a need to develop more effective interventions for young people who are not in education or employment.

We found that there is a need to enhance the consistency with which the voice of people and their families or representatives are actively heard and responded to within the safeguarding process. There is an acknowledged area for further development in terms of capacity for delivering advocacy services for adults.

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

People can be assured they will receive a sound assessment of their need, and a prompt response in relation to safeguarding / protection. Strategic managers from across health and social care promote a shared approach to prevention, and are putting into effect services underpinned by a vision aimed at supporting individuals within their own community.

The local authority recognise there is further work to be done in terms of establishing more coherent community hubs – one approach to which is currently being piloted. When successfully embedded, this will promote services delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector, with the aim of preventing further escalation of need through improved engagement with people.

A more effective interface between primary and secondary care is recognised as being key to improving the effectiveness of Community Mental Health Teams. A recently completed 'whole system review' should help to inform these changes. Recruitment and retention in some key roles, such as AMPH's & CPN's continues to be a challenge.

A new service manager is overseeing developments within of Learning Disability & Mental Health services for adults as a need to focus on improvements was recognised. Effective regional partnerships are key to progressing this.

It is too early to assess impact of the recently launched 'resilient families' initiative, which has been combined with early years provision; although initial indications are encouraging

with reductions in referrals to planned care and support services. The single point of contact for children is reported to have enhanced communication and consistency.

Throughout 2018 our programme of work focused on care experienced by 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

Effective operational and strategic relationships with other regional partners have facilitated the implementation of some innovative projects, such as the hospital based, multi-professional Stay Well @ Home initiative. This reflects a strong commitment to co-production across its services. The local authority and its partners are aware the long-term sustainability of this and future planned projects need to be secured, as in the meantime they remain dependent on short-term, grant funding.

We found an effective multi-disciplinary approach in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub assists in promoting sound safeguarding practice.

The development of the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional arrangement has resulted in a number of 'shadowing' arrangements being in place over the past year. There will continue to be significant work required to re-align previous local and regional arrangements.

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 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 work on aspects arising from the recent adult services inspection, together with some engagement activity relating to the recent developments in children 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
Interim Head of Local Authority Inspection Team
Care Inspectorate Wales

Cc.
WAO
HIW
Estyn