

Mr Jonathan Griffiths  
Director of Social Care and Housing  
Pembrokeshire County Council  
County Hall  
Haverfordwest  
SA61 1TP

Date: 03 August 2020

Dear Jonathan Griffiths,

### **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Local Authority Performance Review April 2019 - March 2020**

The code of practice for review of local authority social services in April 2019 outlines 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 Pembrokeshire County Council's performance in carrying out its statutory social services functions from April 2019 - March 2020.

We acknowledge, that due to the unprecedented circumstances relating to COVID-19, we were unable to complete the annual performance review meeting.

However, we believe that there remains significant benefits in identifying and drawing the attention of the local authority and its partners, to the areas of both strengths and improvements required. The letter is intended to assist the local authority and its partners to continually improve.

It follows the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and our increasingly collaborative and strengths based approach to supporting improvement.

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:

- practice and performance meetings (children's and adults services), 20 August 2019
- focused activity, 4 and 5 September 2019
- self-evaluation meeting (prevention and promotion of independence for older adults), 31 October 2019
- assurance and risk assessment review meeting, 20 January 2020
- practice and performance meetings (children's and adults services), 13 February 2020

During the course of the year we have been in discussions with you during all of the activity listed above, and as such, our annual performance letter content is an accurate reflection of our ongoing findings which we have consistently shared with you.

### Summary of strengths and areas for improvement in line with principles of the 2014 Act

#### **Well-being**

CIW's focused activity in Pembrokeshire County Council centred on older people (over the age of 65) who had stayed at home as a result of intervention from integrated services and who had a care and support plan. Overall, we found the promotion of independence and personal outcomes were considered in the planning and delivery of services within Pembrokeshire. It was positive to note the service used a strengths-based model and a range of services in securing people's well-being and meeting individual outcomes. We found the process of review of people's needs was inconsistent and people's care and support plans were not receiving timely reviews. This means that for some people with changing needs, then support could be over prescribed or increasing need not addressed.

A key safeguarding performance indicator is the percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days; for the local authority this was 66% at time of the CIW older people self-evaluation completed at the beginning of 2019, by October 2019 this had improved to 87%.

#### **People**

Pembrokeshire County Council has had a focus on health and well-being of staff, with a number of informal approaches being used, such as lunches and posters signposting to mental health support. This is a positive strategy partly based on Welsh Audit Office feedback and a staff survey. CIW's focused activity found staff were positive about management and senior management support, support within teams, and across different disciplines.

There are challenges in sustaining the workforce within the local authority. The senior manager complement in children's services is currently depleted and with a new head of service, staff vacancies and difficulties in recruitment, this is a particularly challenging period. In adults services we found capacity to review care and support plans was a

challenge. It is positive senior managers have since approved additional resources to improve the review process. CIW will be interested to review how this additional support will improve service delivery in 2020-2021.

The local authority has had low recourse to agency social work staff which has been positive in terms of consistency of the staff group. In recent months, however, recruitment has become problematic across children's and adult services and agency staff have been utilised. This is an issue for many Welsh local authorities and clearly an area that the local authority has recognised will require monitoring in terms of the quality of staff and cost implications. The local authority is ambitious in terms of developing new services exemplified through three new service development posts being recruited; to lead on accommodation, domiciliary care and care homes for older people. Internal recruitment, however, has resulted in a challenge to backfill front line posts. Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS) have recruited to social work posts across region, but in doing so appointed four local authority staff. The appointments are positive however, and it is the intention of the new head of children's services to better understand how these posts will work across other services commissioned to work with emotional and mental health needs.

Domiciliary care recruitment in the north of the county due to rurality is an on-going challenge which impacts on the delivery of care. The average wait time for a domiciliary care package at the time of the self-evaluation was over a month, this had reduced to twenty five days as at October 2019.

During focused activity we found people were satisfied with the care and support they received. Some people were frustrated information was not provided at important times and there was delay in receiving the right support. In talking to carers, we received varied responses in relation to their needs being fully recognised and met.

The local authority's implementation of the 'More Than Just Words' plan ensures their Active Offer meets Welsh language needs of customers. A corporate Welsh language standards group ensures compliance with these standards. The local authority offers provision of a service in Welsh to foster carers if they require this. The fostering statement of purpose also includes reference to the Active Offer and requirements.

We continue to monitor the implementation of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which has identified the local authority, in common with many others in Wales, is unable to assure itself that people's human rights are not being breached by being deprived of their liberty unlawfully. Our joint national report on DoLS will be issued in due course.

In 2019, the local authority introduced a lead manager post at assistant team manager grade and three Best Interest Assessors posts, Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) qualified. It is positive to recognise that all team managers completed authorisation training. The local authority's backlog is therefore being addressed, but this continues to fluctuate.

## **Prevention**

Pembrokeshire County Council has invested significantly in prevention services and improving and supporting the sector and alternative models. This spend on prevention services should see a longer term reduction in demand. Notable examples from the local

authority's self-evaluation include the development of a community catalyst approach to support the development of micro enterprises which will offer greater choice and flexibility to Direct Payment users. Community Connector posts have been helping community focused services develop. Innovative partnership working is evident in the local authority; for example, a regional community connector post is being developed, hosted by Public Health Wales to provide strategic steer.

The local authority undertakes significant activity to involve citizens in key decisions about service provision, evident through workshops, conferences (such as the inter-generational conference) and consultation events. Learning Disability Champions have sat in on interviews and have attended a number of conferences.

During 2018 our programme of work focused on care experienced children and young people. The [report](#) is published on our website. Key findings highlight areas for improvement in respect of profile, sufficiency, practice, partnerships, stability, governance and corporate parenting. Many of the areas we have identified for improvement continue to be 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.

In December 2019 we wrote to all local authorities asking for information about The Public Accounts Committee report following their enquiry into care experienced children, specifically recommendation 5 concerning the effectiveness and frequency of end of placement reviews.

In the local authority, the looked after children review is always brought forward following a placement breakdown and these would ordinarily take place within a twenty day timescale. We noted that as part of the service review ahead of last year's CIW inspection of the local authority's family placement service, a need was identified to embed a more consistent process for carrying out disruption meetings. The head of service recognises managed placement ends are better for young people, but also represent an opportunity to improve foster carer standards.

## **Partnerships**

Pembrokeshire County Council has led on a number of regional work programmes such as independent professional advocacy development and commissioning workforce development.

The Director of Social Services and Head of Adults Services have taken on additional responsibility for housing in 2019. This has been a significant strategic change and the head of service has indicated the need to revise line management structures.

Significant domiciliary care changes have been progressed in the last year with the development of an in-house service and the embedding of people returning to local authority employment. A new reablement service also went live in 2019 as an in-house therapeutically led service. This has been a significant change to the service previously delivered by the registered provider service.

During focused activity staff expressed some concerns about communication between health and social care. For example, communication across social care and hospital ward

staff and the convoluted process of referring or re-referring to Community Mental Health Teams were highlighted.

Connected person assessments remain a demand on resource and this continues to impact on mainstream carer assessment work. The Family Placement Team also has staffing vacancies, which exacerbates the workload challenge. Pembrokeshire County Council and partner organisations have commissioned Narrative Edge in relation to regional fostering recruitment.

### **CIW Performance Review Plan for 2020-2021**

Our scheduled thematic inspection programme for 2019-2020 focused on prevention and promoting independence for older people, and the focus of the current children services thematic inspection is on prevention, partnerships and experiences of disabled children. Due to the current emergency situation relating to COVID-19 we have paused the publication of our older persons report and paused all activity relating to the disabled children's review. We will advise you in due course when we envisage recommencing our inspections.

We hope to publish the older people's national report in due course and want to take this opportunity to thank you for your local authority's contribution to this.

Due to the unforeseen circumstances we find ourselves in, we are currently reviewing and considering our work plan for the remainder of 2020-2021.

CIW worked together with HMI Constabulary (HMICFRS), HMI Probation, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Estyn to develop a model of joint inspection of child protection arrangements in Wales (JICPA). This approach was piloted during the autumn of 2019. This was a fantastic example of new ways of working across Wales and a real drive towards collaboration and integration in public services.

We continue to 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 Audit Wales, 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,



Lou Bushell-Bauers  
Head of Local Authority Inspection

Cc. Audit Wales, HIW, Estyn

