

# Isle of Anglesey County Council Performance Evaluation Review





## **Introduction**

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) conducted a performance evaluation review of adult and children's services in Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC / 'the local authority') in October 2022.

The purpose of the inspection was to review the performance of the local authority in undertaking its social service duties and functions in accordance with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers.

We aim to answer the following questions in line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (2014 Act).

- **People - voice and control**

How well does the local authority ensure that everyone is an equal partner with a voice, choice and control over their lives and can achieve what matters do them?

How well does the local authority ensure that the workforce has sufficient numbers, has the relevant skills, is experienced and supported?

- **Prevention**

To what extent does the local authority ensure that the need for care and support is minimised, and that need does not become greater while ensuring the best possible outcomes for people?

How effective is the local authority in responding to people when their needs change or their situation changes?

- **Well-being**

To what extent does the local authority ensure that people are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect and other forms of harm?

- **Partnerships**

To what extent can the local authority assure itself that effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver wholly integrated, sustainable and high quality outcomes for people?

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. As with many other local authorities in Wales, IACC is experiencing a challenging time in terms of the provision and commissioning of social care. The many pressures experienced by the local authority's adult service reflects the national context of post-pandemic recovery, including high levels of demand and people's increasingly complex needs.
- 1.2. It is clear the challenges of a lack of social care services due to staffing capacity are impacting on the delivery of care and support to people. This was the area of most concern raised by practitioners and managers in adult services. Staff told us about the challenges in supporting people to achieve their personal outcomes due to a lack of resource and insufficient capacity to meet demand. For some people, no domiciliary care services were available, and they had no choice but to move into a care home for interim periods even though their preference may be to receive care and support at home.
- 1.3. We identified that there is room to strengthen and standardise good practice in terms of encouraging and considering the voice of people.
- 1.4. Reducing the need for formal care and support is clearly a priority for IACC and we found successful joint working at a strategic level to drive forward the prevention agenda.
- 1.5. IACC demonstrates a strong enthusiasm and readiness to work with partners. We heard examples of successful joint working with partners at a strategic level with plans then implemented on an operational level for the benefit of people. We saw good examples of joint working on an operational level but in some cases the response to people could have been timelier to ensure that their needs did not become greater. The partnership with the health board at a secondary care level can be challenging at times. The local authority should continue with its current efforts at joint working to improve its partnership with the health board, to include in relation to hospital discharges.
- 1.6. We heard a consistent, positive message from the workforce regarding the quality of leadership and the culture across children and adult services. Feedback included managers being visible, approachable, providing regular and dependable support, with access and opportunities for professional development.

- 1.7. Workforce well-being remains a positive focus across both services, with strategies in place to support staff throughout the pandemic and beyond. IACC has a clear workforce strategy in place and the success of the investment of its trainee social work and occupational therapy programme is acknowledged.
- 1.8. We recognise the political and corporate support that IACC social services department has received since 2016. In light of the financial challenges, it should be ensured that the support continues in order to further drive improvements across children's and adult services.
- 1.9. IACC actively promotes a reflective learning culture with quality audit approaches throughout. We saw examples of good practice in audit work to identify practice which was good and where improvements are required. Corporate scrutiny and support is strong and helps to challenge performance across the local authority.
- 1.10. The local authority should continue to reflect on its practice relating to the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and ensure that practice is in line with the principles of the act.
- 1.11. Retention of social workers and occupational therapists across services remains positive with less turnover than IACC's corporate target.
- 1.12. IACC's commitment to provide a Welsh language service is positive. IACC's demonstrates its commitment through its Strategic Equality Plan for 2020-2024. We saw consistent and encouraging evidence that people were receiving the "Active Offer" to speak Welsh, and peoples wishes were taken into account with regard to language choice. The local authority should consider further how the "Active Offer" can be further improved, for example, the language people wish to communicate in written correspondence.

## **Key findings and evidence**

We present our key findings and evidence below in accordance with the four principles of the 2014 Act.

### **2. People – Voice and Control**

#### **Strengths:**

- 2.1. We saw positive examples where practitioners had considered people's need for an advocacy service, with an active offer of advocacy being

made. Suitable arrangements are in place for people to receive formal advocacy together with independent professional advocacy. We saw examples of people benefiting from informal advocacy and positive record keeping where advocacy was not required, however the rationale for this was not always clear. The local authority should demonstrate more clearly that it is meeting its statutory duty in terms of offering advocacy.

- 2.2. We saw positive examples of person-centred social work practice enabling people's voices to be strengthened alongside a focus on what matters to them. This included using communications aids, adjusting the timings and settings of assessments. We saw practice where staff persevered in their efforts to build a relationship with children and their families and were successful as a result of their efforts.
- 2.3. People receiving domiciliary care services can be assured that their care plans reflect their needs. We heard from providers of domiciliary care services that the standard of assessments received from social workers was on the whole good, reflecting the needs of people. This then makes it easier for them to plan suitable care and support to meet those needs.

#### **Areas requiring improvement:**

- 2.4. The local authority must continue to build on the good work already occurring in the completion of assessments and care and support planning to ensure the voices of people and what matters to them is consistently represented.
- 2.5. The local authority should ensure records are consistently completed to evidence people are aware of the core decisions being made about them. We were not confident that regular contact was being made with people at very significant times such as when it was not possible to designate a social worker, following an agreement by a panel to delay making a decision about care and support, or when people remained on a waiting list for services.
- 2.6. We recognise the local authority has implemented measures to manage workloads such as waiting lists and delays, which prioritise assessments. These delays are adversely impacting on the well-being of people with some examples of people's needs becoming greater. We saw an example where there was an unacceptable delay between the person contacting the local authority and the social worker completing the assessment. In addition, we saw a further example of a person waiting three months for an assessment. It is acknowledged that an urgent care and support plan had been arranged to support their discharge from hospital, but in this instance

the assessment should have been prioritised in order for the local authority to be confident that the plan met the person's eligible needs. Therefore, the arrangements for monitoring waiting lists need to be strengthened, and records made should evidence robustness of the arrangements.

- 2.7. We saw evidence of re-assessments carried out when it was clear people's situation had changed. Despite this the local authority must ensure all reviews of care and support are undertaken in a timely manner.
- 2.8. IACC has good strategic plans coupled with generally good operational delivery in place to identify and support carers. Despite this, a small number of examples were seen, where carers had not been offered an assessment, and where there was no record to confirm the preferences and capacity of a carer to continue giving care. The local authority must strengthen its offer of a formal carers assessment to ensure the rights and voice of all carers are fully promoted. Carers' assessments, when applied consistently, will ensure opportunities for supporting carers and promoting their well-being can be more effectively identified, including a record of how carers benefit from the support offered.
- 2.9. In accordance with a main principle of the 2014 Act, the local authority must ensure that people receive information and advice to enable them to decide whether they want to tailor and manage their care and/or support themselves. It was encouraging to hear from practitioners about specific examples of how some people had benefited from direct payments. It is recognised the recent audit completed by IACC focussed on how effectively it encourages people to use direct payments. The resulting implementation plan focuses on some practices which should be reintroduced in order to ensure complete compliance with the statutory requirements in terms of direct payments. The local authority should continue to prioritise increasing its promotion of direct payments to ensure these are easily accessible for people.
- 2.10. Most practitioners reported receiving regular supervision from their managers. Supervision files viewed varied in content and quality. Some practice had a clear focus on welfare of staff, including training needs but records demonstrated limited evidence of opportunity to reflect on practice. Practice should be strengthened to demonstrate that supervisors give time for staff to reflect on the progress they are making with people, and to demonstrate further the additional support and direction given to staff based on their experience.
- 2.11. Ten people completed CIW's survey specifically in relation to adult services. A majority confirmed that they felt that they were treated with dignity and respect, but half of the people noted that it was not easy to contact the local authority. It is acknowledged that ensuring people have

timely communication and access to staff and increasing capacity was an important stimulus to amalgamating Teulu Môn and SPoA (Single Point of Access) more recently .

### **3. Prevention**

#### **Strengths:**

- 3.1. Various IACC strategies demonstrate there a clear vision to reduce the need for formal care and support, and this is seen in how it invests in preventative services to attain this objective. Senior leaders, managers and councillors are aware of the importance of early intervention and prevention services.
- 3.2. An example of this is the Ageing Well strategy which focuses on promoting Anglesey as age- friendly, for people to receive support to live independently and age well. We visited a dementia centre based at the Llangefni Mencap Hub and saw how activities for people living with dementia and learning disabilities are successfully integrated into the community. In addition, IACC provides an active dementia service which uses physical exercise and general movement to support the well-being and health of people and prevent isolation.
- 3.3. The local authority has invested in the Forward Thinking, Forward Planning project in the carer support service, promoting well-being. The focus is on empowering people to think ahead, plan and make decisions in a timely manner which will be of assistance to them as they grow older supporting them to have choice and control over their lives and what matters to them. In addition, an information booklet has been produced recently specifically for unpaid carers on receiving a carer assessment.
- 3.4. A team of local asset coordinators continue to operate on the island, and they have a core role in informing people of what is happening in their communities and sharing information about the various services/support which may be of benefit to them. It is encouraging to see that coordinators are part of the meetings of community resources teams. They can share information and consider whether they have a role to support people.
- 3.5. The local authority has two extra care housing projects already successfully established in terms of supporting people in their own homes. Information from the local authority's most recent housing strategy and older people needs assessment has identified the requirement for an additional scheme. With corporate and political support, plans are in place to address this. This demonstrates effective joint working, including inter-departmental joint working within the local authority, in terms of forward planning for the future.



- 3.6. We saw examples of good practice in supporting children and their families, joint working and reducing the possibility of needs becoming greater.
- 3.7. We saw children benefiting from the integrated approach adopted by IACC to improve educational outcomes for children, including children in care. The model supports children in care within the local authority and out of county, people who used to be in care up to 25 years old, as well as children on the edge of coming into the care of the local authority.
- 3.8. There is a clear vision for the local authority to be a “trauma informed island”. The programme of a trauma informed approach has already been shared with most schools in the local authority, with specific plans to expand knowledge across more services such as youth services and fostering services. This is to be commended as it will ensure consistency in working and communicating with children.
- 3.9. It is very clear that the resilient families team which operates at a high level of support has been tailored to the needs of children and their families. We saw examples of staff working hard to prevent young people from entering the care system. Children in care can also benefit from the service with support being provided to them and their foster carers which is also a means to preventing the breakdown of placements.
- 3.10. It is encouraging to note that the number of children in the care of IACC is stable, with performance indicators giving further evidence that the local authority works hard to help children to stay with their families.
- 3.11. We also heard that children and their families benefit from Early Help Hub services which include about 20 different agencies focussing on the early support of children and their families.

**Areas requiring improvement:**

- 3.12. We are aware of serious concerns about the availability of services to support people nationally resulting from issues such as workforce shortages across the sector. Like most local authorities across Wales IACC is also experiencing serious challenges in this respect. We saw a significant impact on people because of a lack of domiciliary care services, and the available capacity in nursing / care homes due to staffing. However, the local authority must continue to work on its strategic and operational developments in partnership with others, in order to ensure that people receive the correct care and support in a timely manner.
- 3.13. At an operational level, we saw varying practices in terms of the timeliness of the

response to people, or in the delivery of a service that would reduce the possibility of people's needs becoming greater.

- 3.14. The local authority should consider its approach to recording and documentation to streamline and improve recording practice. We saw and received direct feedback from staff that many of the documents completed are often duplicated.
- 3.15. IACC is facing difficulties in providing registered accommodation for certain children with profound and complicated needs. This results in the local authority placing a small number of children in unregistered placements. Despite the successful establishment of Cartrefi Clyd ( the local authority's children's homes), the local authority needs to continue its efforts to identify suitable, registered placements when such situations arise.

#### **4. Well-being**

##### **Strengths:**

- 4.1. It is encouraging to note that the service is continuing to consider a pilot scheme undertaken in the region whereby district nurses are trained to undertake enquiries under Section 126 of the 2014 Act for adult services. This is an important development as it could ensure that there is greater opportunity for professionals who may be more familiar to the individual to undertake this work.
- 4.2. We saw a record of assessments demonstrating that employees were regularly considering whether people had mental capacity and whether they had agreed to assessments.
- 4.3. IACC clearly identifies safeguarding as the responsibility of everyone and that was demonstrated in the interview with the Leader of the Council and the children and adult social services portfolio holders. We heard how it was a priority for the Leader to promote understanding of and responsibility for safeguarding across departments.
- 4.4. We saw examples where enquiries in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 were timely with clear analysis and references to risk management. We saw decisions made to ensure appropriate safeguarding with clear reasoning for any recommendation for further intervention.

##### **Areas requiring improvement:**

- 4.5. The local authority must continue to prioritise its improvement in practice relating to safeguarding in adult services, the quality and completeness of work undertaken, including record keeping in order to comply with the Wales Safeguarding procedures (WSP).

- 4.6. In one record viewed in children's services, there was an over attention on one type of risk and lacked opportunity to consider and assess wider risks. Risks are expected to be considered in their entirety, and reports and care plans should refer consistently to all possible risks.
- 4.7. In cases where there are doubts regarding the safety of an adult, it should be demonstrated more clearly whether the adult is at risk of abuse and / or neglect. This to include clearer recording of decisions following initial screening, as well as the rationale and decision as to whether Section 126 enquiries of the Act are required.
- 4.8. In addition, the correct response must be taken when an allegation is made by a child. This by utilising a strategy meeting forum to make multi-disciplinary decisions as to whether or not a S47 enquiry is required.
- 4.9. We saw variations in how effectively staff operated professional curiosity. There was evidence in some cases that consideration had been given to potential risks, but this did not happen consistently every time. Despite this, it was pleasing to see an independent review officer raising the risk of this in relation to one case. This case would have benefited from greater oversight by the practice lead to ensure the quality of the work and identify drift in the plan in a timelier manner.
- 4.10. The local authority service provision plan for 2022-2023 sets out that plans are in place to identify workforce understanding of and confidence in WSPs and that this will feed into a training plan on the safeguarding of adults. The local authority intends to review its approach including forms and templates to make sure these promote practice that ensures that safeguarding continues to be person-centred.
- 4.11. Practice varied in terms of the completion of mental capacity assessments. In the best examples, we saw work being completed in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act and the Code of Practice, but this practice was inconsistent. We saw assessments where more details were required; about how the decision had been made that an individual did not understand / retain information and to reflect and confirm a greater voice for the individual. We saw another example where an assessment should have been completed because of uncertainty regarding the mental capacity of an individual to make a safeguarding decision, but this was not carried out. It is recognised that the local authority has completed an audit of mental capacity assessments, and that audit had also identified areas of practice requiring improvement. IACC intends to hold further training and is committed to undertaking further quality audit work to make improvements and be assured practice is meeting its statutory duties in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act (2005) more consistently.

- 4.12. We saw an example of a management oversight form being completed to a high standard in children's services, but matters set out were not followed up consistently, or there was no record. It should be ensured that there is better oversight of actions needing to be followed up and that a record demonstrating the action taken is made in a timely manner.

## **5. Partnerships**

### **Strengths:**

- 5.1. IACC's readiness and enthusiasm to work in partnership at a strategic level is clear in its approach. Clear plans are in place for partnership working in order to transform services across adult services, and these are highlighted in the 2022-2023 adult service provision plan.
- 5.2. We saw examples of good joint working with partners on an operational level with children obviously benefiting from the working relationship. For example, we saw a good working partnership between a psychologist and the children's service, with the children's service accepting the recommendations of the psychologist and working to commission provision in line with those recommendations.
- 5.3. It is positive to note that staff from the children and young people's mental health service are co-located in IACC offices. This will strengthen joint working on an operational level and allow the sharing of information and timely planning for the benefit of children and their families.
- 5.4. There are positive examples of joint working with health including the structure of the learning disability teams and the community resources team, as well as the pilot for a pooled fund.
- 5.5. We received positive comments from a representative of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) in a survey on the level of joint working.
- 5.6. IACC, like other local authorities in North Wales together with BCUHB, approved the Learning Disability North Wales strategy in 2019, and from that strategy a recommendation arose to investigate the potential benefits of a pooled fund. IACC is leading on this pilot to see whether it is possible to put more effective arrangements in place to commission care and support jointly with health. There is a plan in place to evaluate the pilot and share learning.
- 5.7. We heard about the positive relationship between adult services and the third sector, with a clear appreciation that the third sector is promoting engagement and driving forward the local authority's prevention agenda.

Reference was made to IACC successes in using existing forums and boards to seek views on the effectiveness of various strategies and new ideas. Representatives from the third sector interviewed agreed that the local authority undertakes active engagement and take into consideration the views of people in driving plans and agreements. Reference was made to IACC's readiness to diversify third sector services during the pandemic in response to what was beneficial to people.

- 5.8. The positive working relationship in place was also confirmed by private home care service providers. Reference was made to a good standard of communication, from the specific needs of people to commissioning issues. Reference was made to the head of adult services' readiness to take part in discussions which enriched the working relationship. Providers very much appreciate being part of multi-disciplinary discussions about people and feel strongly that issues are resolved more quickly through these structures.
- 5.9. It is a priority for IACC that children in care live in their own communities. As a result, IACC has worked closely with its housing department to develop the Cartrefi Clyd model where it has established a small number of registered children's homes. At any given time, only a small number live at the homes which ensure that care is focussed on individual children.
- 5.10. Estyn also recognised strong joint working between various IACC departments such as youth services, children's services, and the education department to provide an integrated approach towards support for children at risk of disengagement.

## **Next Steps**

CIW expect CSYM to consider the areas identified for improvement and take appropriate action to address and improve these areas. CIW will monitor progress through its ongoing performance review activity with the local authority.

## **Methodology**

### **Fieldwork**

Most inspection evidence was gathered by reviewing the experiences of people through review and tracking of their social care record. We reviewed 28 social care records and tracked 8 in adult services and reviewed 13 social care records and tracked 4 in children's services.

Tracking a person's social care record includes having conversations with the person in receipt of social care services, their family or carers, key worker, the key worker's manager, and other professionals involved.

We also; -

- interviewed a range of local authority employees
- interviewed a range of partner organisations
- reviewed a sample of staff supervision files
- reviewed supporting documentation sent to CIW for the purpose of the inspection
- administered surveys to staff, partner organisations and people

### **Acknowledgements**

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