

Performance Evaluation Inspection Report

Newport City Council Adult Services

This document is also available in Welsh.
Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Cymraeg.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspected adult social services in Newport City Council between 03 February 2025 and 07 February 2025.

1.2 The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers. We considered the quality standards in the *Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales* and key lines of enquiry. We sought to answer the following questions aligned to the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (The Act):

1.3 People – voice and control

How well is the local authority ensuring all people are equal partners who have voice, choice and control over their lives and can achieve what matters to them?

To what extent are people's views captured and documented, considering their personal circumstances, personal outcomes, strengths, risks and barriers?

1.4 Prevention

How well is the local authority ensuring the need for care and support is minimised, and the escalation of need is prevented whilst ensuring that the best possible outcomes for people are achieved?

How well is the local authority providing information, advice, and assistance which is easy to access, and are people being signposted to early help and prevention services?

1.5 Well-being

How well is the local authority ensuring that people are protected and safeguarded from abuse, neglect and any other types of harm?

1.6 Partnership

How well is the local authority able to assure itself effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver fully integrated, high quality, sustainable outcomes for people?

Are people encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners?

2. Glossary of Terminology and Quantity Definitions

A glossary of terminology is contained in Appendix one and a table of quantity definitions in Appendix two.

3. Summary of Inspection Findings

3.1 Leaders of the local authority's adult services navigate a complex landscape marked by high demand, increasing complexity of needs, and significant budgetary pressures. They understand the diverse characteristics and unique challenges of their community, enabling them to implement strategic plans that align resources with identified needs and risks. The local authority addresses these challenges through effective strategic leadership, strong partnerships, and a consistent focus on prevention and early intervention.

3.2 Strategic leaders address key priorities outlined in the Newport City Council Corporate Plan 2022-27. The council's strategic vision centres on promoting independence, improving quality of life, and ensuring timely access to services. This vision is supported by collaboration with strategic boards such as the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) and Regional Partnership Board (RPB), which help deliver integrated and sustainable outcomes for people.

3.3 Practitioners demonstrate dedication and a strong commitment to providing high-quality care and support. This commitment is reflected in the positive culture within the workforce, with 95% of staff who responded to our survey recommending working for the local authority. Staff highlight the supportive leadership, inclusive nature, and the emphasis on employee wellbeing as key factors contributing to their positive work experience.

3.4 The local authority emphasises strength-based practice, with most assessments and care and support plans we reviewed reflecting what matters to people and their personal outcomes. Practice would be strengthened further with greater focus on how people can use their own strengths and resources to promote their own well-being.

3.5 The local authority demonstrates robust safeguarding practices, responding promptly and proportionately to concerns. Effective multi-agency collaboration ensures coordinated responses, and a strong safeguarding culture embeds the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding practices adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, ensuring consistency and compliance with national standards.

3.6 The local authority demonstrates a strong commitment to prevention and early help, supported by the appointment of a dedicated Head of Prevention and Inclusion. This approach is well-integrated, with leaders consistently working towards increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need. While there are areas for further enhancement, the overall implementation of prevention and early help, as set out in the 2014 Act, is well established.

3.7 The local authority has strong partnerships which enhance the delivery of integrated care and support. This collaborative approach is a key aspect of the local authority's strategy, enabling it to address the diverse needs of its communities effectively.

3.8 Areas for improvement include reducing waiting times for assessments and reviews of care and support plans, addressing delays in responses to requests for information, advice, and assistance, enhancing the quality and reflectiveness of formal supervision, ensuring consistent quality assurance, and improving the recording of advocacy offers.

4. Key findings and evidence

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

People – Voice & Choice

Strengths

4.1 Most people are treated with respect and dignity. Staff are described as approachable and supportive, making efforts to understand and address the needs of people. The First Contact Team (FCT) is skilled at holding 'What Matters' conversations, capturing people's strengths and needs to provide outcome focussed care and support. Many people agree that social services listen to their views and work in partnership with them. This **positive practice** is in line with the principles outlined in the 2014 Act.

4.2 Assessments and care and support plans are mostly comprehensive and person-centred. They reflect people's needs and preferences, outline personal goals, and detail preferred methods of support. The local authority values what people want and ensures their consent and participation is central to the process.

4.3 Leaders possess a comprehensive understanding of their community's needs and have developed strategic plans to allocate resources effectively based on identified priorities and risks.

4.4 Newport adult services staff are flexible, professional, and positive, with an emphasis on applying strength-based approaches. Nearly all staff feel well-supported by colleagues and managers. Despite financial constraints and recruitment challenges, staff demonstrate resilience and dedication to providing high-quality care. The Newport City Council People Plan 2023 - 2028 sets out the approach to employee wellbeing, which helps maintain a motivated and engaged workforce. Staff describe leaders as approachable and supportive, noting, *'Newport adult services has a very supportive culture and inclusive nature. Newport breeds loyalty through respect shown to the workers.'* This is **positive practice** as leaders model behaviours that foster a supportive and inclusive work environment.

4.5 Most staff view workforce development positively, with accessible and actively promoted opportunities. There is a focus on professional growth, supporting a 'grow your own' approach for internal social work staff. Staff are encouraged to undertake Best Interest Assessor (BIA) and Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) training. The commitment to workforce development ensures staff are well-equipped to meet the community's evolving needs and safeguard people. While most staff have positive views, some expressed a desire for training that better addresses their specific needs. Leaders should work with practitioners to ensure training is designed to meet the diverse requirements of all staff. Overall, the commitment to workforce development is strong and well-received.

4.6 Nearly all people receive an active offer of support in the Welsh language. Proactive measures promote the Welsh language, including regular Welsh Conversation Groups (Siawns am Sgwrs) as part of Newport City Council's Work Welsh scheme. When people's preferred language is neither Welsh nor English, language line ensures effective communication, and literature is produced in various languages to meet diverse needs.

4.7 Most carers' needs are identified and assessed in a timely way. The majority of carers feel recognised and valued, with their contributions acknowledged and supported. Carers have access to accurate and timely information about their rights and available support services, evidenced by resources such as a carers handbook, carers directory, and monthly newsletter. Some carers were unaware they had undergone an assessment. Support for carers would be strengthened by ensuring the outcomes of assessments are shared in a timely manner and that carers are clearly informed when they have undergone an assessment.

Areas for Improvement

4.8 Most supervision is completed within agreed timescales. However, some staff felt that formal supervision lacked depth and meaningful reflection, which was evident in the records we reviewed. Formal supervision would be strengthened through increased emphasis on reflective practice and specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) actions. **Leaders should work with managers to develop consistent standards for supervision.**

4.9 Quality assurance activities take place within teams and leaders regularly monitor performance. Approaches to quality assurance varied between teams and best practice is not shared consistently. **Leaders should strengthen arrangements to ensure the consistent application of agreed standards and develop a formalised quality assurance approach to improve practice.**

4.10 The local authority commissions advocacy services, and many people report being offered advocacy. However, this is not consistently reflected in the social care records we reviewed. Practitioners need to ensure that the offer of both formal and informal advocacy is accurately documented. **The local authority should ensure advocacy is consistently recognised, offered, and recorded.**

4.11 Most people receive care and support which focusses on their strengths and 'what matters' to them. The recording of how people can use their strengths and resources to promote their well-being requires improvement. **Leaders should ensure assessments and care and support plans include detailed information about how the persons strengths and resources will ensure outcomes are achieved.**

Prevention

Strengths

4.12 The local authority has embraced a culture of prevention and early help in line with the 2014 Act. Having a dedicated Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlights the local authority's commitment to this approach, creating strong systems and initiatives. While some areas could benefit from further enhancement, the overall commitment to, and implementation of, these principles is **positive practice**.

4.13 Most people consider the information, advice, and assistance (IAA) provided by the local authority via the FCT to be useful. People receive accurate information, which helps them understand processes, access services, and make informed decisions.

4.14 Prevention and early intervention services connect people to community-based support and activities that promote well-being. The Community Connectors service provides localised support, connecting people with services and opportunities within their communities. They help individuals access activities, develop skills, and build relationships in their local areas. Community Connectors are seen as highly effective at identifying community support, reducing the need for commissioned services, and managing demand. **This is positive practice.**

4.15 The local authority commits to implementing the Welsh Government National Carers Strategy, actively improving recognition and support for unpaid carers. This includes providing accurate information about carers' rights, helping carers balance responsibilities, and supporting them through services like 'Bridging the Gap,' which helps carers take necessary breaks. The Chatty Café initiative reduces isolation and access to assistive technology supports independence. One carer noted, *"The support received for my husband and myself as his carer has been incredible. We were listened to, our thoughts and feelings always taken into account, and regular updates provided."* **This is positive practice.**

4.16 The local authority actively cultivates collaborative partnerships with third-sector organisations. They allocate resources strategically to bolster early help and preventative support. Third-sector partners spoke positively about the **positive partnerships** with the local authority in facilitating the well-being outcomes of people. We were told, *'Newport has developed a very robust understanding and strong communication with us. The relationships work very well, and we feel our voice is respected.'*

Areas for Improvement

4.17 The partnership between the FCT and early help and prevention services, along with the use of proportionate assessments, aims to ensure timely and outcome-focused support for people. A few social care records showed a lack of follow-up and oversight, leading to people being directed inappropriately to either prevention and early help services or long-term support teams. This results in missed opportunities for timely support. **Leaders should ensure quality assurance systems are in place to support effective oversight of decision-making. This will ensure people receive the right service at the right time.**

4.18 The Reablement service faces challenges that impact its ability to provide preventative and early help support. Reduced managerial support, high demand, and delays in social work assessments impact service efficiency. **Leaders must ensure the timely completion of social work assessments and timely recruitment to fill absent posts.**

4.19 The local authority provides direct payments and works with a private provider for recruitment, contracts, and insurance to streamline administration. Areas for improvement include waiting times, inconsistent practitioner knowledge of direct payments, and invoicing inaccuracies. The appointee service is at times at capacity, causing delays for those needing an appointee for direct payment purposes. The local authority aims to increase direct payments uptake by 20% as part of their 2024-2025 Adult Services plan and is on target to achieve this. Recent improvements include new procedures, process mapping, and regular assurance checks. **Leaders should continue addressing these issues to ensure direct payments are more accessible and effective.**

4.20 There are delays when responding to some requests for information, advice, or assistance. Although these requests are screened for priority and there is a system for handling urgent needs, people report that the wait times can be lengthy. Waiting times fluctuate depending on staff resources and demand. Reducing these delays is crucial for enhancing the service's effectiveness. **The local authority must ensure timely access to information, advice, and assistance.**

4.21 In some service areas, there are delays in assessing people's needs and reviewing their care and support plans. Senior staff assure they conduct regular monitoring of those awaiting assessments and reviews, with a priority review system in place. Staff update people's priority for assessment using the Social Care Prioritisation Risk Assessment Tool and provide information on what to do if their situation changes. **The local authority must ensure people receive timely assessments, reviews, and plans to meet their needs.**

Well-being

Strengths

4.22 The local authority responds in a timely and proportionate way to adult safeguarding reports. They conduct initial checks, enquiries under section 126 of the 2014 Act, strategy discussions, meetings, and investigations in compliance with statutory requirements. They prioritise the safety and wellbeing of people. **This is positive practice and should continue.**

4.23 The local authority collaborates with health services, police, and other agencies to ensure coordinated and timely responses to safeguarding concerns. Regular strategic meetings and shared responsibilities demonstrate a unified approach to protecting vulnerable people. Safeguarding partners highlight the effectiveness of multi-agency working, stating, "*Links are very beneficial, and the sharing of information is paramount – it feels like it works well in Newport.*" Police co-location is notably effective. These partnerships enhance decision-making, resolve differences,

and keep people safe. This is **positive practice**, and partners should continue to work together to safeguard people.

4.24 The local authority fosters a robust safeguarding culture, embedding the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. **This positive culture** ensures that safeguarding principles are understood and consistently applied across the local authority and with external stakeholders.

4.25 The local authority is focussed on increasing the cohort of BIAs and enhancing management capacity to authorise deprivations of liberty. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) compliance is monitored, improving the local authority's understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Many people who are deprived of their liberty have legal protection and an opportunity to challenge the DoLS authorisation and leaders take a proactive approach to monitoring arrangements.

4.26 In most of the social care records reviewed, practitioners consider people's mental capacity to engage in their assessments, care and support planning, and safeguarding enquiries. This is achieved through comprehensive training programmes that equip practitioners with the necessary skills and knowledge to apply the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 effectively. The mental capacity assessments reviewed were thorough, indicating a consistent approach to ensuring people's capacity to make decisions is assessed and supported appropriately.

Areas for Improvement

4.27 The recruitment and retention of AMHPs is a significant challenge for the local authority. The local authority recognises this issue and takes steps to increase AMHP numbers through targeted recruitment, enhanced training, development opportunities, and increased payments. A review of the AMHP service is underway to identify areas for improvement and ensure the service meets current demands. **The local authority must ensure they have enough AMHPs to meet their statutory responsibilities.**

4.28 The local authority operates two entry points for safeguarding referrals, leading to missed opportunities for early help and prevention support. For example, when people are referred directly to the safeguarding team, the report may be closed with no further action if there is no immediate need to safeguard them from abuse or neglect. This process may overlook the potential need for early help or prevention support. The local authority plans to implement a single-entry point via the FCT for all safeguarding referrals. This aims to ensure people receive the appropriate interventions and support they need. **The local authority should focus on the successful implementation and effectiveness of the new system to improve**

responses to safeguarding referrals, so people receive the right support at the right time.

4.29 When the safeguarding team receives concerns about a care provider, a few social care records we reviewed showed no evidence of them sharing the reports with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), discussing the report with CIW, or inviting CIW to strategy discussions. **The local authority must always share information with the relevant regulator when safeguarding reports indicate a failure to meet care standards or a breach of regulation by a regulated provider.**

4.30 The Gwent Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team, hosted by the Health Board manages the DoLS process for Newport as well as other local authorities in the region. The role of the consortium is currently under review and as part of the review, Newport piloted the screening of applications, successfully reducing the waiting list. Challenges remain regarding the consortium's governance and funding responsibilities. Addressing these issues will enhance regional collaboration and compliance with the DoLS Code of Practice. **Leaders should continue to work with partners in the region to improve DoLS arrangements.**

Partnership

Strengths

4.31 The local authority collaborates effectively with the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB). The Director of Social Services chairs the RPB leadership group, driving improvements and ensuring strong links with health, housing, and third-sector partners. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion integrates services and supports the population programme with the RPB. Leaders demonstrate strategic alignment and commitment to improving health and social care outcomes for people.

4.32 Leaders in the local authority develop services and approaches that enhance internal collaboration. The integration of the Prevention and Inclusion team with adult services fosters a holistic approach to care and support. The strong relationship between the FCT, the frailty service, and the safeguarding team ensures effective communication and support. Regular multi-disciplinary and strategic meetings further strengthen collaboration and problem-solving across teams.

4.33 Practitioners in the local authority develop professional relationships with people based on cooperation and a shared understanding of what matters. They recognise the importance of trust and persist in their engagement efforts. This approach supports the effectiveness and reliability of the support provided.

4.34 The local authority collaborates with partners to improve the well-being of adults with care and support needs. Practitioners, managers, and senior leaders work with health services, housing, criminal justice, and community organisations to provide coordinated support. The local authority also promotes and supports healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as, social prescribing and community connectors. Partners told us *'We work so closely with Adult Services and sometimes my team are the ones completing assessments. Communication between teams is good and ever progressing. I think we are all keen to work together.'* **This is positive practice.**

4.35 The Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) demonstrates effective collaboration between social services and health services. The co-located team provides integrated care, addressing both mental health and social needs. Practitioners told us that co-location improves communication, facilitates quicker decisions and more efficient case management.

Areas for Improvement

4.36 There are practical examples of co-production in various areas, such as tender submissions and the development of the Age Friendly Community Strategy. By further improving co-production and engagement practices, the local authority would align more closely with the principles of the 2014 Act, ensuring that services are developed and delivered in partnership with the people who use them. **The local authority should further enhance co-production principles in their strategies and plans.**

5. Next Steps

CIW expects the local authority 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. Where relevant we expect the local authority to share the positive practice identified with other local authorities, to disseminate learning and help drive continuous improvement in statutory services throughout Wales.

6. Methodology

Fieldwork

- Most inspection evidence was gathered by reviewing the experiences of 32 people through the review and tracking of their social care records. We reviewed 26 social care records and tracked 6.
- 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, where appropriate, other professionals involved.

- We engaged, through interviews and/or focus groups, with 14 people receiving services and/or their carers.
- We engaged, through interviews and/or focus groups, with 55 local authority employees and the elected member for adult social services. This included social workers, team managers, service managers, heads of service, and the director of social services.
- We engaged, through interviews, with 18 practitioners and leaders from partner organisations.
- We reviewed a sample of staff supervision files.
- We observed a planning meeting for a newly commissioned service for people with learning disabilities and a project working group for AMHPs.
- We reviewed supporting documentation sent to CIW for the purpose of the inspection.
- We administered surveys to local authority social services staff, partner organisations and people. We heard from 79 staff, 48 people, and 1 partner agency through our inspection surveys.

Our Privacy Notice can be found at <https://careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information>.

7. Welsh Language

CIW is committed to providing an active offer of the Welsh language during its activity with local authorities.

The active offer was not required on this occasion. This is because the local authority informed us that people taking part did not wish to contribute to this performance evaluation inspection in Welsh.

8. Acknowledgements

CIW would like to thank staff, partners and people who gave their time and contributed to this inspection.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'J' or 'K' followed by a flourish.

Lou Bushell-Bauers

Head of Local Authority Inspection

Care Inspectorate Wales

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terminology

Term	What we mean in our reports and letters
Must	Improvement is deemed necessary in order for the local authority to meet a duty outlined in legislation, regulation or

	code of practice. The local authority is not currently meeting its statutory duty/duties and must take action.
Should	Improvement will enhance service provision and/or outcomes for people and/or their carer. It does not constitute a failure to meet a legal duty at this time; but without suitable action, there is a risk the local authority may fail to meet its legal duty/duties in future.
Positive practice	Identified areas of strength within the local authority. This relates to practice considered innovative and/or which consistently results in positive outcomes for people receiving statutory services.
Prevention and Early Intervention	A principle of the Act which aims to ensure that there is access to support to prevent situations from getting worse, and to enhance the maintenance of individual and collective well-being. This principle centres on increasing preventative services within communities to minimise the escalation of critical need.
Voice and Control	A principle of the Act which aims to put the individual and their needs at the centre of their care and support, and giving them a voice in, and control over, the outcomes that can help them achieve well-being and the things that matter most to them.
Well-being	A principle of the Act which aims for people to have well-being in every part of their lives. Well-being is more than being healthy. It is about being safe and happy, having choice and getting the right support, being part of a strong community, having friends and relationships that are good for you, and having hobbies, work or learning. It is about supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
Co-Production	A principle of the Act which aims for people to be more involved in the design and provision of their care and support. It means organisations and professionals working with them and their family, friends and carers so their care and support is the best it can be.
Multi-Agency working	A principle of the Act which aims to strengthen joint working between care and support organisations to make sure the right types of support and services are available in local communities to meet people's needs. The summation of the Act states that there is a requirement for co-operation and partnership by public authorities.
What matters	'What Matters' conversations are a way for professionals to understand people's situation, their current well-being, and

	what can be done to support them. It is an equal conversation and is important to help ensure the voice of the individual or carer is heard and 'what matters' to them
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Appendix 2

Quantity Definitions Table

Terminology	Definition
Nearly all	With very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
A majority	Over 60%
Half	50%
Around half	Close to 50%
A minority	Below 40%
Few	Below 20%
Very few	Less than 10%