

# CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Healthier Communities Scrutiny

**Date of meeting:** 2 September 2024

**Title:** CIW Performance Evaluation – Actions progress

**Purpose of the report:** Update on progress with recommendations made by CIW following the evaluation in 2023

**For:** Information

**Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:** Cllr. Alun Williams

## Introduction

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) carried out a performance evaluation inspection of Ceredigion County Council's Social Services in March 2023.

Aligned to the four principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA), CIW outlined strengths and areas for improvement and this report updates on progress to those development areas.

## Current position

Most improvement areas have now been addressed. In addition, the launch of a formalised Quality Assurance framework in Spring 2024 and the deployment of regular Thematic Reviews and Practice Assessments within this has strengthened the Division's oversight.

In the summaries ahead, attention is drawn to the areas where continuing activity is underway across the four domains, People (voice and control), Prevention, Wellbeing and Partnerships.

## 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?*

- Quality Assurance thematic reviews engagement form agreed at Scrutiny in March 2024 and first reviews undertaken seeking feedback from service users and those around the client. QA team recruited and in place.
- Complaints processes strengthened and regular meetings between Statutory Director and Complaints Manager are embedded in the operating rhythm; links between QA, L&D & Policy Reviews established.
- Recording policy review underway incorporating specific reference to voice and controls, and specifically, carer's assessment offers and take up.
- A Care Experience forum established within the Corporate Parenting Group; however, this needs further strengthening to ensure care experienced children and young people can better have their voices heard. Further widening of the Adult Service user group expected in Autumn 2024
- A Through-age Disabilities user group will launch early in 2025 when Support Workers in the department are registered for Domiciliary Care with CIW

- Our partners, Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers, are working with schools to promote understanding around young carers.
- The Social Care Enquiry form (initial contact), Proportionate Assessment and Client & Family Assessment forms (detailed assessments) have triggered questions to offer Carer's support with any client refusal also overtly collected so that accurate tracking can be undertaken.
- A designated Corporate Lead Officer (now Greg Jones) oversees the Carer's service development. As part of that these CIW actions are being driven alongside the national Ombudsman's findings from multiple authority samples
- A Carer's Breaks resource is being recruited to make services more visible.
- A Foster Carer recruitment campaign, underpinned by refreshed policies and procedures has been undertaken with the first adverts resulting in nine (9) applications all of which have passed the Skills to Foster accreditation with one already moving through to full accreditation.
- New Ceredigion propositions for Specialised Disability Services and Supported Lodgings will widen the options for Parents and Carers. Target launches are between November 2024 and April 2025
- Part of supporting clients and carers is having a robust and resilient workforce. National recruitment issues continue in all sectors and given its geography; Ceredigion is finding it particularly difficult to recruit qualified social workers. That said, the investment in Trainee Social Workers, begun in 2021, is starting to mature and currently forecasts an outturn of 21 social workers by 2027 with two in play and three qualifying/registering in November 2024. This development is part of an updated Workforce Strategy published in early 2024.
- For improved oversight, and to strengthen practice decision making, a new Supervision policy has been rolled out alongside a focused Annual Appraisal process. The council-wide hybrid working policy is now fully embedded in TAW and all colleagues have opportunity to meet at an office, with each other and with families.

## Prevention

*How well is the local authority ensuring the need for care & 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 promoting resilience within communities and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging them and supporting people who need care & support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society?*

- Relationships between Clic, Porth Gofal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar have been revisited to reinforce efficient transfers of clients between services, build capacity and respond quickly to client contacts.
- Whilst capacity to manage case reviews has been stretched, the development of a peripatetic team comprised of qualifying trainee social workers has been established to resolve backlogs (which are often exacerbated over summer months)
- Partnerships with Hwyl Dda, the Regional Partnership Board(s), Welsh Government and third sector (include WWDAS and DDAS) are playing an increasingly important role in the development of early help solutions. Ceredigion has multiple grant supported initiatives in play that are focused on preventative and universal service access.
- As part of a focused strategy on Assistive Technology and Sensory Services, the authority opened the Penmorfa Centre for Independent Living (PenCIL) in

Spring 2024, including a dedicated Sensory Room; with new agreements with CAVO, RNIB and centres promoting BSL broadening the reach in this area

- In tackling high re-referral rates the Proportionate Assessment (that has been successful in the Adults' arena) has now been rolled out for Children's assessments. Improved enquiries with professionals and families means there has already been a slight downturn in re-referrals.
- Funding from the *Eliminating Profit in the Care of Children* grant has been used to purchase additional legal services to pursue revocations and the discharge of care orders with ten cases already completed.
- To strengthen third sector strategic engagement a full review of contracts is underway linked to a review of grants driving those contracts.
- Investigations into plan drift are ongoing, having been delayed in the early part of 2024 by significant professional concerns activity in supplier businesses, the integration of Hafan y Waun and continued challenges recruiting Independent Safeguarding Reviewing officers.

The Leaving Care protocol and When I'm Ready documentation has been updated and these now directs for better identification of needs for 16yr olds with care leaver status.

## Wellbeing

*How well is the local authority ensuring that people are protected and safeguarded from abuse, neglect and any other types of harm? How well are people supported to actively manage their wellbeing and make their own informed decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible?*

- Feedback loops with Health and other professional referrers have been revisited to ensure Assessment outcomes are more widely disseminated.
- Better Management Information dashboards are in pilot so that backlogs and pressure points are more readily identified and tackled.
- The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been updated whilst recognising a number of practice reviews have reiterated that there are no weaknesses in Ceredigion.
- A thematic audit of Strategy discussions/meetings was undertaken and concerns in Ceredigion regarding consistent recording protocols highlighted to Region.
- As above, thematic reviews via the new QA team and documentation reviews as part of the Signs of Safety and WCCIS replacement programmes aim to further strengthen data collection, insight and overall compliance.

## Partnerships

*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?*

- Both the Signs of Safety programme and the QA Thematic Reviews are bringing visibility to how families, friends, and networks (professional and social) are engaged to be part of client assessments and plan solutions. The Proportionate Assessment in particular offers clear opportunity for partners to engage and be engaged early in the referral.
- Family Group Meeting Co-ordination services have been widened to encourage families to create and deliver their own plans (for safety actions or for care and support) and the assessment forms also now encourage this 'partnered recovery' focus.

- It has been necessary to engage a number of Agency partners to bolster resources in statutory services. Much of this has been successful, and with a small uptick in the market plus investment in Trainees, the Authority now aims to wind back some of these arrangements as safely and as soon as possible.
- The Through Age Wellbeing Strategy has now been widely communicated alongside the operating model of services and their prevention focus. The Social Care website pages have been refreshed (look and feel, navigation) and a programme of content development kicks off in Autumn 2024 aimed at simpler self-service and wider cross-service connection.

## **Summary**

Development / repair activity across the four domains of SSWBA remains a key focus for the Social Care Teams as they are central to the overall long-term Through Age Wellbeing strategy.

Despite the significant recruitment challenges referenced throughout (meaning that one in four statutory roles currently requires Agency personnel to cover), the permanent management teams within the Social Care establishment continue to collaborate on the Division-wide priorities of Safeguarding, prevention, early help and step-down recovery to independence and wellbeing.

It is envisaged that as the third year proper of the six-year TAW Strategy comes to an end (in October 2024) that the planning for the second half of the programme will focus even more on strengthening the base practice, responding to and leveraging repair action from the CIW evaluation. This should ensure the full benefits of Proportionate Assessments, What Matters Conversations and Early Interventions can be fully achieved.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.**

No; individual initiatives noted may well have IIAs of their own that are presented to Scrutiny through the democratic process, but this specific paper is a response to CIW Evaluation actions rather than a change to a specific service or support.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- To continue to monitor CIW Evaluation Actions at CLO level, including visibility at Leadership Group
- To return to Healthier Communities Scrutiny and Overview in early 2025 providing more detail on closing out the Actions and to update on expected evaluations by Social Care inspectorates that are due in the interim.

**Contact Name:** Audrey Somerton-Edwards

**Designation:**

**Date of Report:** 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024

**Acronyms:**