

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **CABINET**

**DATE:**               **TUESDAY, 10 JULY 2012**

**REPORT BY:**       **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**SUBJECT:**           **CHILDREN'S SERVICES INSPECTION**

**1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01   To advise Elected Members of the outcome of the inspection in March 2012 of Children's Assessment and Care Management within Flintshire County Council's Social Services for Children, and agreement of the action plan in response to the inspection report.

**2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) was set up in 2007 as an operationally independent division of the Welsh Government. This body has powers and functions enabled through legislation including the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards Act) 2003 which allow CSSIW to review Local Authority Social Services at a local and national level to inform the public whether services are up to standard and promote the improvement of services to help safeguard the interests of vulnerable children and their families.

The Inspection Team wished to examine the Council's performance in relation to four criteria namely:-

- a) Children, young people and their families and carers are supported by assessment, care management and review practices which comply with national policy, statutory guidance and regulations.
- b) Children, young people, and their families and carers benefit from consideration and use of a range of support services appropriate to their needs.
- c) Children, young people, their families and carers are supported by staff who are properly supervised and receive appropriate management support.
- d) Improved outcomes for children, young people, their families and carers are supported by effective and consistent,

performance management and quality assurance arrangements.

The methodology that was used was a random selection of files, interviews with children, young people, their families and carers together with a range of professional workers who were involved with the assessment and case management process of the case selected. Prior to their arrival, the inspection team viewed a range of documentation and performance management information to assist with their understanding of how the Council was managing and delivering support for children and young people

The Inspection took place from 12/03/2012 to 23/03/2012 including six full days on site inspection.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 The Community Services Directorate and the council have to consider the outcome of this Inspection Report and have in place an Action Plan to respond to the recommendations from the Inspection Report.

3.2 The headline summary from the Inspection Report was as follows:

- Flintshire County Council is committed to further developing and modernising Children's Services and now has leadership arrangements in place to deliver upon its potential. There are early signs of a strong focus upon communication and in working closely with the workforce to gain commitment to modernised ways of delivering services. This has been evidenced by initiatives such as 'back to the floor', where senior managers work at frontline locations, workforce conferences and newsletters. Morale is good, and there is a commitment to identifying 'rising stars' within the organisation, with active encouragement for them to shape policy and procedures.
- The Head of children's Services provides strong strategic and operational leadership. Social work staff and their managers feel well supported and this is evidenced through a number of initiatives, such as active caseload weighting, that ensures a considered approach to pressures in demand which are managed within a supportive framework.
- Information about the role of the Children's Services is widely available and there is an effective response to those who make contact, with prompt advice and support arrangements. There are good systems in place to ensure work is appropriately prioritised. Partnership

arrangements work well in delivering a co-ordinated approach to meeting need.

- There is an increasing focus upon prevention and early intervention that supports the whole family, with better outcomes for children as fewer are needing care.

3.3 The Inspectors also referenced evidence of detailed and comprehensive pre-birth risk assessments that were both analytical and outcome focused (4.6 p4). Regional partners identified the council as one of the best to engage with in North Wales (5.2 pp6).

3.4 Inspectors found that targeted work is having an impact and the Council is committed to developing robust arrangements for Out of County Placements (5.4 pp6). Inspectors found a clear sense of purpose together with the enthusiasm and commitment to deliver responsive services (6.2 pp7). They felt that a culture of flexibility has been established to ensure that workload pressure in key areas could be shared with others (6.6 pp8). They expressed the view that Elected Members were actively involved, well informed, responsive and supportive of new developments (7.4 pp9).

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That members accept the findings of this inspection and the resultant action plan (appendices 1 and 2).

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 There may be a need to increase the number of social workers on the duty and Assessment Team at some stage.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Completed.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Consultation has been undertaken with relevant Managers in Children's Services, and with Senior Members and Corporate Management Team colleagues.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

CSSIW Inspection Report, Inspection of services for children and families, Flintshire County Council

Inspection Report Action Plan

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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