



To: Neil Ayling

June 2017

Director of Social Services

Dear Director

CSSIW Performance Review of Flintshire County Council Social Services

This letter is informed by CSSIW's inspection, performance review and engagement activity during 2016/17. At the Performance Review meeting on 16 March 2017 we provided feedback on our inspection, engagement and performance review activity over the past 12 months.

Progress on key areas for improvements and developments in the last year

There has been sustained progress in meeting the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the local authority has aligned its review of its own performance within the context of the national outcomes framework. This provides an effective measurement tool for determining the success of personal well-being outcomes. The explicit adoption of this methodology signals a more open evaluation by the local authority and invites more robust scrutiny of its effectiveness.

Information, advice and assistance arrangements continue to evolve and there is a clear sense of direction, however, a more integrated gateway for the public will necessitate a single point of access that also incorporates health matters – this will require greater commitment from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) for it to reach its full potential.

Proposals for the development of the early help hub in children's services are promising, and reflect an ambition to rebalance resources to build resilience at an earlier stage, when preventative work can have a greater chance of delivering successful well-being outcomes. CSSIW will monitor progress in its implementation during 2017/18.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The transformation of learning disability services has continued with the development of alternative delivery models that will enable people to better access new skills that secure greater independence. This approach will result in the delivery of modernised operations, with greater emphasis upon the development of more meaningful, and sustainable, day and work opportunities

Work has continued to promote the development of social enterprises that underpin local authority priorities. The continued growth of initiatives such as Double Click - a design and print studio that supports people in the community with mental health needs - provides strong evidence of this commitment, whilst also delivering a thriving and sustainable service that additionally stimulates the local economy.

There is an increasing commitment to strengthening Welsh language services, and the local authority has established an Equality and Welsh Language Network in order to embed the 'more than just words' legal framework.

People have a greater say in shaping strategic commissioning, and this is evidenced in developments such as 'working together for change'. Likewise, there is increasingly effective engagement with providers, as shown through initiatives such as 'progress for providers' that aims to deliver more personalised services.

There is a strong commitment to strategic partnership with an increasing emphasis upon measurable outcomes and this reflected, for example, in the development of the Repatriation and Prevention project with the clear aim of supporting local foster placements, thereby reducing the need for placements for children and young people that are out of county.

Strategic partnership working with BCUHB continues to be a challenge that local authorities in the region need to address collectively.

Feedback on annual engagement themes

During 2016 – 17 we carried out a range of engagement activities across all authorities in Wales. This engagement activity focuses on two main themes, adult safeguarding and carers.

- Safeguarding adults

A Corporate Safeguarding Panel was established in December 2015 and has resulted in the creation of a corporate policy, a structured communication plan.

The local authority was a strong advocate and supporter of National Adult Safeguarding Week in November 2016, during which a number of information points were set up for the provision of advice to the public.

Safeguarding systems have been restructured with the aim of providing a more consistent response, with increased emphasis upon cross-learning with children's services. Systems are largely responsive and contract monitoring services remain a key element in the early identification of adults at risk. However, safeguarding thresholds are inconsistently applied, and sometimes there is not enough urgency in risk mitigation. The local authority is addressing these issues and is establishing more robust systems that will better monitor the effectiveness of practice and

subsequent outcomes. This will remain an area for further monitoring over the next year.

- Carers

A new co-produced carer's strategy has been developed that is more rooted in the needs of people and their views of the things that matters to them. Referrals for young and adult carers have reportedly increased by 23% during the past year.

The Barnados Young Carers Project provides advice and support whilst Flintshire Young Carers works with young people aged 5 to 18 who provide care to someone in their family with a disability, long-term illness, substance misuse or mental health needs. The local authority has previously developed the innovative A2A card to facilitate additional support whilst at school.

NEWCIS facilitates a wide range of information and support for adult carers – this is reinforced by the practical support provided by Carers Trust Crossroads Care Services, British Red Cross, The Neuro Therapy Centre and Daffodils.

CSSIW met with carers at an event commissioned by Hafal and, whilst social services was a valued resource, few were aware of the support social services could potentially offer at times of mental health crisis.

Progress on recommendations arising from CSSIW inspections

The inspection of children's services in 2015 has been subject to a structured series of progress review meetings that have tracked and evaluated action by the local authority to address recommendations. Good progress has been made so far and the implementation of the early help hub will be reviewed in due course as a continuation of this process.

Inspection, Engagement & Performance Review Plan

In 2017-18 in addition to areas identified for follow up above, CSSIW themes for inspection, engagement and performance review are:

- Support provided for people with mental health needs with a focus on Community Mental Health Team's
- Placement decisions for children looked after

CSSIW will provide six weeks notice if the authority is scheduled for an inspection during 2017/18.

CSSIW will also continue to consider what actions have been taken by the local authority in relation to recommendations contained in its national thematic reviews including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, services for people with learning disability, domiciliary care and Public Law Outline.

CSSIW work with partner inspectorates

You will note that this letter has been copied to colleagues in WAO, Estyn and HIW. CSSIW works closely with partner inspectorates to consider the wider corporate perspective in which social services operate as well as the local context for social services performance.

As this is the first year we have written to you in this format we will not be publishing this letter, but will do so in subsequent years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Poole', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vicky Poole

Regional Director

Copy sent to

Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council
Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
Estyn
Wales Audit Office