

Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	5th December 2024
Report Subject	Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales, Performance Evaluation Inspection November 2023 – Action Plan Update
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2023, CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) announced that they would be visiting Flintshire to undertake a full, routine PEI (Performance Evaluation Inspection) of both Adult's and Children's Services.

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.

This was to be the first full inspection the portfolio has received for over eight years and an opportunity to showcase the creative and innovative practice undertaken here in Flintshire.

The full report was published on Thursday 22nd February 2024 and was largely positive in their findings across Social Services (See Appendix 1).

An action plan was produced based on the recommendations made by inspectors (see Appendix 2). This report updates on the progress of implementing the action plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members acknowledge and support the progress made in implementing the action plan.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING SOCIAL SERVICES CARE INSPECTORATE WALES, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INSPECTION NOVEMBER 2023 – ACTION PLAN UPDATE
1.01	In total, there were seven inspectors involved in the inspection, operating on a hybrid basis with some inspectors visiting Flintshire in person and some working remotely. The in-person inspectors were based at Tŷ Dewi Sant but also travelled around to meet staff, partners, service users and their families. The remote inspectors held Microsoft Teams meetings as well as case file reading.
1.02	The inspection lasted for two weeks, starting on 27 th November (file reading began on 20 th November) and ended on 8 th December 2023.
1.03	<p>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. The inspectors focussed on four themes aligned under the principles of the Social Service (Wales) Well-being 2014 Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People - voice and control• Prevention• Well-being• Partnerships
1.04	<p><u>The scope of the inspection was:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of the experience of adults and children at the point of performance evaluation inspection.• Evaluation of the experience and outcomes people achieve through their contact with services.• Evidence of the local authority and partners having learnt lessons from their recent experiences and plans for service developments and improvement.• Consideration of how the local authority manages opportunity and risk in its planning and delivery of social care at individual, operational and strategic levels.
1.05	<p>The full report was published on 22nd February and can be found in appendix 1, however, from the report they summarised the findings as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. <i>“There is a stable and experienced senior management team in place across both services providing continuity of leadership.</i>b. <i>Partner agencies, providers and stakeholders told us that leaders are visible and there are good relationships at a senior level with open communication.</i>

- c. *Practitioners also stated leaders are accessible, approachable, and supportive, and overall, ensure practitioners have the right training and skills. A few practitioners (16%) from children's services who responded to the staff survey noted the leadership and culture within the local authority needed to improve, although (86%) said they were well-supported by managers. Similarly, practitioners (91%) from adult services who responded to the staff survey also stated they were well supported by managers.*
- d. *There are procedures in place to induct new staff members, although at times they would benefit from increased pastoral support. It is acknowledged that a new face-to-face social work collective has been set-up to offer peer support to all social workers across children's and adult services.*
- e. *Practitioners clearly know the people they support very well. In response to a survey by CIW, many people said they felt respected and listened to by practitioners.*
- f. *Recruitment and retention of social care practitioners is a national challenge across Wales. The local authority continues to work hard on strategies to support continued recruitment and retention of staff. Examples include commissioning a communications agency to promote working for the local authority and increasing capacity in the workforce development team.*
- g. *The recent restructure across both services is acknowledged and has potential to provide more resilience, opportunities for greater support and managerial oversight, as well as career progression. A few practitioners across both services felt the consultation about changes in structure had not adequately considered practitioner's views and had impacted their morale as it did not benefit everyone.*
- h. *The local authority is well sighted on market stability in its area and the needs of its population. There are examples of the local authority implementing successful strategic plans in response to identified need and the lack of certain support services in its area. This has been achieved by working in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and other relevant partners to develop innovative services with significant capital investment. Examples include Marleyfield Care Home and Tŷ Nyth Children's Care Home.*
- i. *The local authority has a comprehensive supervision policy. Practitioners benefit from regular supervision although the practice and standard of recording is inconsistent. The best supervision records focus on reflective practice and professional development. In other examples, more reflection on practice, and an improved focus on professional curiosity, outcomes and staff well-being is required.*
- j. *The local authority benefits from good corporate and political support. There is a focus on ensuring statutory duties are met. Senior leaders, managers and politicians recognise significant*

	<p><i>action and resource is required to ensure the local authority's ability to deliver statutory safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, the local authority commissioned two managed care agency teams in children's services to provide additional capacity. This is impacting positively on the outcomes for children and families."</i></p>
1.06	<p>An action plan was produced based on the recommendations from the Inspection Report which can be found in appendix 2. However, a summary of the main actions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A Practice Directive to practitioners covering inspectors' findings of inconsistency in practice of case recording, including good practice examples to drive improvement. b. Drive recruitment and retention through the Workforce Resilience Project to address local workforce shortages caused by national issues. c. Advocacy training sessions delivered by newly commissioned providers to update practitioners on practice requirements and new processes. d. Review of Adults Safeguarding documentation templates to ensure that outcomes are clear and evidenced effectively. e. Introduction of a new casenote type on Paris to ensure the effective management of enquiries and the recording of actions are clear. f. Review of Children's Safeguarding documentation to ensure that that evidence is clearly set out to show completion within set timescales. g. Programme of core group training to support Children's Safeguarding and ensure consistency in processes. h. The already planned introduction and implementation of the "Effective Child Protection Model" will contribute significantly to support across Children's Services. i. Implementation of the NSPCC Child Neglect Tool will support to identify and appropriately manage risks. j. Commissioning "Leaderful Action" to deliver compassionate leadership workshops with Management Team. k. Continue and build upon the work to develop relationships with our partner's, ensuring communication is strengthened. l. Work in partnership with Housing Portfolio to develop strategies to improve housing options for care leavers.
1.07	<p>The action plan document contains commentary and evidence gathered of completion of the identified actions to date. There has been good progress made towards achieving the objectives with many having been completed.</p>

	<p>There are a small number of remaining actions with target completion dates for March 2025. These are currently on track for completion. After March 2025, the only longer-term objective remaining will be the procurement of a new client information system. Work on this was initiated prior to the inspection, is ongoing and, subject to national funding, and is due to be implemented in 2027/28.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	<p>Revenue: Overall, there are currently no additional implications for the approved revenue budget for this service for either the current financial year or for future financial years. However, the procurement of a new IT system will have revenue implications and this is being developed through a national business case.</p> <p>Capital: There are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years.</p> <p>Human Resources: Actions with proposed implications to human resources were limited to process changes. Actions have not required additional resources or result in additional workload for current workforce. Again, the longer-term implementation of an IT system has a separate work package.</p>
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	<p>Impact assessment is not required for this report. Impact Assessments have been undertaken individually (where required) for each action point.</p>
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	<p>Consultation with service users, staff and partners was carried out as part of the inspection as detailed above.</p>
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	<p>Final Report.</p>
5.02	<p>Action Plan with commentary and evidence (embedded documents within are available on request)</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p>Previous Scrutiny Report from June 2024.</p>
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Naomi Harper, Planning and Development Officer. Telephone: 01352 702544 E-mail: naomi.harper@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW): is a public body that inspects, regulates and improves the quality and safety of services in Wales.</p> <p>Performance Evaluation Inspection (PEI): is a routine inspection to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers.</p> <p>Social Services (Wales) Well-being 2014 Act: This Act sets out the legal duties and powers of local authorities in Wales to provide care and support for adults, children and carers. It also covers the assessment, charging, financial assessment, looked after children and looked after children's accommodation.</p>