

JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 DECEMBER 2015

Present: County Councillor (Chairperson)
County Councillors Ali Ahmed, Boyle, Carter, Richard Cook,
Lomax, McGarry, Murphy, Sanders and Lynda Thorne

17 : CHAIRPERSON

Councillor Mary McGarry was nominated as Chairperson for the Joint Committee meeting.

18 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chaundy, Chris Davis, Gordon, Joyce and Dianne Rees.

Apologies were also received from Mrs P Arlotte; Ms Catrin Lewis; Hayley Smith and Carol Cobert.

19 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A declaration of interest was received from Councillor Sanders.

Councillor Sanders declared a personal interest as she arranges care via the Direct Payments method for a family member.

20 : CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE WALES - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT 2014/2015 - SOCIAL SERVICES

The Chairperson welcomed Bernard McDonald, Area Manager Cardiff (CSSIW) to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation on CSSIW Performance Evaluation Report 2014-2015; which included information on Summary of Findings; Response to last years areas of improvement; Adult Services – areas of progress and areas for improvement; Children's Services- areas of progress and areas for improvement and Leadership & Governance.

The Chairperson thanked Bernard McDonald for the presentation and invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked why it was considered that one Director of Social Services would be more effective than two separate Directors of Adult and Children's Services, as they were two very distinct areas. Mr McDonald stated that there were Assistant Directors for both areas and the one Director provides oversight re roles, responsibilities, pressures etc.
- Members asked what the CSSIW's view was on how the local authority is performing in comparison to others. Mr McDonald explained that he only visits Cardiff as he is the Area Manager so it was difficult to answer, however he

stated that Cardiff scrutiny is robust, it challenges, it has innovative ideas, innovate commissioning and appears to really understand Social Services.

- In relation to follow up work on delayed transfers of care (Detoc), Members asked if the terms of reference for that work were known yet. Mr McDonald stated that he doesn't have that information as yet; they have quarterly figures and are aware that figures are going up. The work will consist of meetings with senior officers to follow up rather than site visits etc. as there are other programmes of work in this area planned.
- Members sought Mr McDonald's views on the fact that following on from changing to one Director of Social Services, there was still a split in Cabinet Member responsibilities. Mr McDonald stated that he couldn't answer this, the report was based on 12 months previously.
- Members asked if, based on what has been seen so far, whether Mr McDonald considered that Cardiff was ready for the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (The Act). Mr McDonald stated that he asks the Director and he assures him that Cardiff is moving in the right direction; progress was being made; the first year of implementation would be a testing time to see areas of improvement, he added that Cardiff was as prepared as it could be.
- Members noted that Members of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee were disappointed that the issue with Personal Education Plans had yet to be resolved; they were also disappointed that they had been told that quality was a problem, and asked how other local authorities compared to Cardiff. Mr McDonald stated that he did not have comparative data so couldn't comment; he said he had had discussions with the Director who knows the timescales are not being met but they were providing very good outcomes for Looked After Children. Members asked if the statistics were valid if this was the case, Mr McDonald stated that they are a good tool for measuring young people's attainment and successes however they may change or even go as Performance Indicators often do and may not be in the new Indicators coming in as part of the implementation of the Act.
- Members referred to the Support for people who are eligible to access the personal advisor service needing further improvement and sought clarification on whether this was due to lack of numbers or children not being eligible to access the service. Mr McDonald explained that in April/May of last year a review was completed and issues became apparent; the personal advisor service was very well regarded and people wanted to continue to have access however there was an issue with the staff numbers and recruitment.
- Members asked if Cardiff is compared to other like authorities across the UK and were advised that it is not, due to access to information in England.
- Members found the lack of comparable data frustrating, they also noted that the information contained within the report seemed very different to the information in the Data Unit Wales Performance Report, in which Cardiff was the lowest quartile for many social services indicators and sought clarification. Mr McDonald stated that the issue was with data, however he stated that they

now have the analysis to look at information behind the data and a change to the Performance Indicators should give a more balanced approach.

- Members made reference to the enhanced fostering service and noted that Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee had looked at this and a Member considered that it raised questions about the managerial oversight of important changes. Mr McDonald noted that this was something for next year's report as the Enhanced Fostering Service had not commenced in the period of this report.
- Members noted that there was not much information about financial rigour and value for money in the report and were advised that this was more of a Wales Audit Office role.
- Members made reference to commissioning in residential care and noted that there was no quality element included. Members sought Mr McDonald's view on the quality of residential care in Cardiff and asked without that element included in the commissioning, whether there were any concerns. Mr McDonald stated that during the report period of April 2014-15, he worked very closely with Cardiff Safeguarding Teams and some non compliance notices were issued but there were no issues put on the escalating concern register, whereby the previous year there had been two. He added that they continue to monitor and inspect every regulated service every year.
- With reference to future work on commissioning of residential and domiciliary care, Members asked what CSSIW would be looking at knowing that they would prefer the quality element included; Members also asked what the terms of reference of the work would be. Mr McDonald stated that it had been challenging to implement a new commissioning model, they had just completed site visits, the implementation of the matrix for the domiciliary care system had raised concerns initially, however when the quality element was introduced the providers had found it very useful; residential care doesn't have that element currently but will have in future.
- Members made reference to the legislation change which requires all employers to make pension contributions for their employees and asked for information on any challenge this would present. Mr McDonald stated that the legislation changes had hit Local Authorities out of the blue, personal assistants would be included in the changes and this could increase costs as someone has to meet the persons pensions needs. It was noted that this could be the same across the board not only for Direct Payment users.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McDonald for attending the committee and for answering Members questions.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Children's Services, Councillor Susan Elsmore Cabinet Member Health, Housing and Wellbeing, Tony Young Director of Social Services, Irfan Alam Assistant Director – Children's Services, Amanda Phillips Assistant Director – Adult Services and Kim Brown Service Manager Policy and Performance to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Director of Social Services to respond to the CSSIW report and presentation. The Director stated that the findings are subject to quarterly planning meetings, the next meeting was imminent where they would pick up all areas of improvement and all would be included in the business plan for the next year, some had already significantly improved, such as Detoc.

The Director made reference to a previous comment about a single Director of Social Services and stated that he considered it the right move as it fits the responsibilities for safeguarding required by the Act in terms of the professional aspect, assessment, planning and commissioning.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members noted that the direction of travel was aligned to the Act and noted that there would be costs; Members asked how this would be monitored and at what stage would a response to the Act be reconsidered if costs go up. The Director stated that they had put in a growth bid for additional resources, and would be watching through robust arrangements with colleagues in the Vale. There would be monthly meetings, joint responsibilities, regulations and guidelines. The Andrew Cozens report had stated that Cardiff is doing as well as others in its preparation for the Act, the Director considered that regarding Governance Cardiff is doing better than others. He added that from now, there would be monthly updates to both committees on response to the Act, up until June 2016.
- Members noted that the Director had seen the draft report and commented before it was published and asked what he changed if anything. The Director stated that it was a formal opportunity to make changes, he had received the report at the end of September and had a month to make changes on accuracy only. He added that he had a good relationship with the CSSIW and meet quarterly so they have indications on what is coming up.
- Members commended the service on the work that has progressed well, however there were some questions around annual reviews and the figures that have slipped and also increasing the quality of residential care. Officers advised that Proactis was the residential care system, officers had been applying the escalating concerns procedure, very robustly, and this had meant that two homes had gone on due to better application of the procedure. It was also added that they had had to go out side of Proactis to encourage bidders.

With regard to reviews, there had been a number of savings set aside without robust business case around them, these had been delivered but it had meant a reduction in the workforce which meant that the review figures had declined. It was also added that carer assessment had been a focus but there was a recognised capacity issue.

There was a plan to address these issues, they had performance information in dashboard format so they have relevant information and with scheduling and mobile devices there would be increased efficiency and effectiveness of reviews and assessments.

- Members noted that Direct Payments had been successful and asked how often the companies that operate personal assistants and direct payments are reviewed. The Director stated that he would expect this to be in the contract; Officers added that the responsibility is with the provider, however they were currently reviewing contracts and modelling against in-house options.
- Members noted that, in the presentation, areas of concern were identified in Prevention (Adults) and asked if these were being addressed. The Director stated that relationships were getting clearer, this presentation was based on 2014/15, now more work was being done on demand management.
- With reference to the difficulty in recruiting personal advisors, Members asked what could be done to address this. Officers explained that recently they had received 42 applications, shortlisted to 18 and were unable to make an appointment. Officers added that this reflects the market and that finding appropriately skilled staff is becoming more difficult, it was a complex environment that requires a specific skill set. The Director had asked for a follow up on this to see what could be done. Members considered that as this issue was apparent in 2014/15 and was still now, that it was important to address it, possibly through providing training and support.
- Members were concerned about CSSW comments that costs could be prohibitive long term with regards to some preventative services such as Vaga watches. Officers stated that the service had not been well used in the Pilot but would come back with more information on this.
- Members felt reassured that things were improving and that what had been identified were things that had been discussed over the past year so there had been no surprises. With reference to the Managed Team, Members asked what lessons had been learnt and how going back could be avoided. Officers stated that it was the right thing to inject resources to have space to clear out the cases that were not actively being worked; it closed approximately 1000 cases, which allowed lower case loads and space to work; it was important to keep case loads lower. It would continue to be monitored and alerts if case loads increased, this was also important for professional development and for retention.
- With regard to the robustness of the savings, Members asked what approach changed in the development of the budget savings in this round to ensure they are robust and likely to be achieved. The Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Wellbeing stated that it was a key area in terms of financial management of budgets and savings proposals. She added that this was her second budget round and she considered it was much more robust and focussed; arguments had been won corporately in due diligence and financial robustness for managing budgets and savings proposals. It was stressed however that Social Services requires money and cannot be subjected continually to salami slicing.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services added that there were no guarantees as in Children's Services over half of the costs are on Looked After Children placements where a small increase in numbers can throw the budget.

It was added that numbers had come down recently due to prevention, so the focus was on prevention now.

The Director added that with reference to the Enhanced Fostering Scheme, there had been a business case and procurement arrangements which were very robust and it still had not worked as a provider had not done what was needed, he did stress through that he had not given up on the concept.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Members and Officers for attending the meeting, giving their presentations/views and for answering Members questions.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Cabinet Members and CSSIW to convey their comments and observations.

21 : CORRESPONDENCE