

Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2021/22
Cardiff Council

Appendix 1 - Overview of Challenge / Consultation

Feedback	Response	Amendment
Scrutiny		
<p>The report is clear and concise and is written in clear, every day, jargon free language. The layout used with each chapter starting with tables such as “outcomes we have achieved during the year” “what went well from 21/22 DDP / what is progressing”, case studies, statistics and then a priorities chart is good. However, the report lacks sufficient detail on challenges that arose during the year, what did not happen or outcomes not achieved.</p>	<p>Information about the challenges faced during the year is available in the service overview sections and represented by our key priorities going forward.</p> <p>Planned actions that have not been achieved are represented in amber or red in each of the chapters of the report.</p> <p>Detail of how these will be progressed in 2021/22 is included in the Directorate Delivery Plans.</p>	
<p>The report is fairly comprehensive but could do better at surmising. The overviews should be shorter and expanded later in the report, with also summarised findings and action points made clear too (not just top five priorities). The layout for section 8 is very clear and accessible, and should be adopted for the overview sections.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the structure of the report is provided nationally so we are limited in the changes we can make. We have, however, contributed to a consultation to shape a new format for the report going forward. Where possible we will take these comments into account when formatting the report next year.</p>	
<p>The report is presented in a more engaging way and covers a wide range of issues, challenges, actions and outcomes. However, because of the mass of information it is not always easy to identify the key priorities. Without some sense of prioritisation the risk is that the scale of the challenges look overwhelming.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that this is a big report that covers a lot of issues both for Adult and Children’s Services. Key priorities are set out on pages 31 and 32, supported by additional priorities that are displayed at the bottom of each chapter. Further detail in relation to priorities and how they will be implemented is available in the Directorate Delivery Plans.</p>	
<p>The case studies are all positive, there should also be information about bad results/ complaints informing priorities. Also, how was</p>	<p>The report has been amended to provide more detail about themes identified in relation to complaints. Further detail will be available via</p>	p.42

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it decided which statistics to use – how has it been determined that these stats paint a fair assessment of service performance.	the Social Services Annual Complaints Report for 2021/22. Learning from complaints is fed back via the Quality Assurance cycles, however, we are aware that we need to increase the visibility and focus on this learning – this will be set out in an action plan that will be appended to the Annual Complaints Report.	
I have not had any direct experience of social services and, since becoming a candidate and then councillor, have not had need to make contact and, therefore, cannot give a view on this matter.	Noted.	
The aspects covered relating to Children’s Services are unsurprising and relate to matters scrutinised during the last year.	Noted.	
The Report lacks detail on corporate contribution to services in terms of outcomes e.g., transport, housing, and education.	The report references input by key partners, however the report is an evaluation of the effectiveness of Social Services, so references to other directorates are limited. A corporate evaluation will be available in the Council’s Annual Wellbeing Report.	
I am not in a position to say whether partnership working is adequately reflected in this report but accept it in good faith. The report does identify several areas where the Council works with other groups demonstrating a decent level of engagement. However, this must lead to positive outcomes and Cardiff continues to face long-term problems in social services.	Noted.	
Even though mention is made of a range of partners the emphasis appears to be on how the council’s own services are analysing and dealing with need. The role of other key partners and their work	It is acknowledged that many of the issues facing the services are national and require a wider approach. This is noted where appropriate in the report, however the main focus is on the work being	

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<p>alongside the council isn't always explicit. In particular, the role of the Welsh Government is unclear.</p> <p>Given that the problems highlighted in both Children's Services and Adult Services are national – recruitment, retention, huge increases in need relating to CLA – for example- the need for better co-ordination between health and social services- an individual LA is not able to solve these on its own.</p>	<p>undertaken within Cardiff to address these issues.</p> <p>National issues are taken forward via work with the All Wales Heads of Children's Services group and All Wales Heads of Adult Services group.</p>	
<p>On the whole, there seems to be an admirable number of courses of action being taken by the Council to address issues. However, many of these issues are long-term, and identified solutions – logical or not – do not seem to be shifting the dial.</p> <p>For example, the report states that the Council is building on good work to recruit permanent social workers and the declining vacancy rate. However, recent data from the Welsh Conservatives showed Cardiff spent the most money (£5.4m) on agency social workers in 2021/22 – 103 of them. This is an increasing amount.</p> <p>The report also states how it is struggling to recruit experienced social workers then identifies a series of measures that are better tailored for new ones (e.g. "engagement with universities to bring students to Cardiff"). Therefore, the answer to the question posed is "sometimes" at best.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The number of permanent social workers in Children's Services continues to be on an upward trajectory. Agency social worker numbers have increased as a result of new initiatives using quick spend, temporary monies / grant funding from Welsh Government.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
<p>The areas for improvement set out a wide range of challenges in a context where need continues to grow. In order to judge whether the</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The services would be happy to engage in a dialogue with the</p>	

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<p>action proposed will make a difference harder evidence of the impact of provision would help to give an insight into the effectiveness of approaches</p>	<p>Committee about how progress is measured going forward.</p>	
<p>The Report could benefit from more information on the priorities identified last year and if they succeeded, what difference they made to outcome and how they have informed this year's priorities.</p>	<p>The updates in the service overview section primarily reflect the priorities that we were working on last year.</p> <p>A snapshot of priorities for the previous year is provided in each chapter, and RAG rated to demonstrate progress.</p> <p>Further detail about priorities that have been carried over from one year to the next, and how they will be implemented, is available in the Directorate Delivery Plans.</p>	
<p>While a many of these are achievable – any that involve implementing the Council's plans – but that does not necessarily mean they will achieve the desired results.</p> <p>The priority to recruit and retain a workforce in children's services is not realistic not deliverable. This is has been a long-term issues facing public services across Wales and is present across the entire British labour market with shortages of workers across the board as the pandemic led to a huge shift in working conditions and consumer demand.</p> <p>The Council should focus on more preventative approaches and securing partnership with other local authorities and the Welsh Government as it cannot be done in isolation.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	
<p>As indicated above it may be better to give a clearer sense of</p>	<p>Noted. The top 5 priorities for Social Services, Children's Services</p>	

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<p>prioritisation as the range of issues and challenges is very wide. Much is made in the report about lack of capacity for example in relation to foster care, in county residential provision and the continuing need to recruit. Children's Services has had to deal with extreme pressure and nothing in the report suggests this is going to change soon. Given the impact of the cost of living crisis which has barely struck yet, forward planning and scenario modelling are likely to be vital. The role of prevention through the intervention hub will be key as will the role of the reviewing hub in bringing together the work of appropriate partners.</p>	<p>and Adult Services are set out on pages 32-33.</p>	
<p>Not sure the report provides a balanced analysis of performance – more detail is required on outcomes not achieved; lessons learnt etc. This will help ensure the report is open and transparent.</p>	<p>The report has been amended to provide more detail about themes identified in relation to complaints. Further detail will be available via the Social Services Annual Complaints Report for 2021/22. An action plan will be attached to this report setting out how we will respond to the learning from complaints.</p> <p>As stated above, officers would be happy to engage in discussion about how performance is measured going forward.</p>	<p>p. 42</p>
<p>The infographics on pages 4 and 5 maybe useful headline figures to identify certain milestones but, without context can be fairly meaningless. For example, it says 37 children were adopted but does not say how many were not adopted or whether there is a preference for one age range over another.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	

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<p>The map on page 25 has no units in its key, so makes no sense.</p> <p>Additionally, a large increase of compliments and complaints are noted but no explanation given as to why – something that should be in this report.</p> <p>Finally, while Covid will have had an effect, the Committee should stress that it cannot become a convenient or long-term excuse – it is the job of the Council to work within the context of the time and address the issues as they face them.</p>	<p>Updated version of map inserted.</p> <p>We will develop an action plan in response to complaints to ensure that learning is captured and fed back into practice. This action plan will be appended to our Annual Complaints Report.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	<p>p. 25</p>
<p>In the outcome sections useful comment is made about improvements but, with some exceptions, these tend to focus on improvements in practice or provision. The report could be strengthened by giving more insight into harder evidence of the impact changes and strategy has made. Comparison between “before” and “now” would be helpful in illustrating improvement. Case studies are useful and often encouraging but as they inevitably focus on individual cases they don’t always give insight into the broader picture</p>	<p>Noted. Please see comments above about future monitoring arrangements.</p>	
Staff		
<p>Various corrections and clarifications offered.</p>	<p>Report updated.</p>	<p>p. 5 p. 29 p. 36 p. 49 p. 56</p>
<p>Feedback was generally positive with staff saying the report is completely or mostly clear, easy to read, matches with their experience</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	

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and reflects partnership working. Photos and case studies were well received.		
A number of requests were received suggesting that more detail should be included about individual teams.	Further detail about actions and how they will be implemented is included in the Directorate Delivery Plans and service / team plans.	
Children and Young People		
Young people queried what type of additional accommodation was being secured – due to their concerns in relation to the appropriateness of bed and breakfast.	Reassurance was provided that this refers to accommodation being secured via the Young Person’s Gateway, and does NOT include bed and breakfast accommodation.	
Young people found the references to mental health and emotional wellbeing and serious youth violence emotive and difficult to read.	Noted.	
Young people appreciated the difficulties the Local Authority face in finding suitable placements.	Noted.	
There was discussion around media representation of social work and a suggestion that positive stories need to be celebrated.	Agreed. Positive stories are now collated for sharing with staff via a newsletter and for inclusion in the monthly Council Statement. Consideration to be given to how these stories can be shared more widely whilst maintaining anonymity.	
In relation to work to shift the balance of care, young people stated that they should be able to remain in care until they are ready to leave - more support should be provided.	Work in this area is intended to ensure that young people received the support they need from the right person and at the right time – but at the lowest safe level of intervention to ensure the least intrusive level of intervention.	
Young people requested further information be included in relation to mental health and emotional wellbeing.	Report updated.	p. 16
Overall, there were difficulties with terminology and the young people feel that this report was not geared	The report is required to serve a number of purposes including being accountable to Members, the Care	p. 14-15

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towards them as they required a lot of explanation from NYAS staff. It was noted that this does not mention Asylum Seeking Children	Inspectorate Wales and citizens. We appreciate that it is difficult to pitch the report so it is fully accessible to all parties. We hope that by engaging NYAS to support the challenge session with young people, we are giving an adequate opportunity for them to ask questions about the areas that they need clarification on.	