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Children's Services – Control Environment Update

Deborah Driffield
Director of Children's Services

Governance and Audit Committee
15th November 2022



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Directorate Overview



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Sarah McGill
Director of Social Services

Deborah Driffield
Director of Children's Services

Suki Bahara-Garrens
OM Central Services

Sarah Skuse
OM Assessment and
Care Planning

Sarah Thomas-Britton
OM Wellbeing,
Protection & Support

Matt Osborne
Operational Manager
Reviewing Hub

Angharad Thomas
OM Youth Justice
Service

**Vacant
Jade Harrison**
OM Service Improvement
& Strategy

Rhian Evans
OM Locality Services
South

Sarah Canterbury
OM Locality Services
North

Peter Sixsmith
OM Locality Services
East

Amy Reed
Operational Manager
Child Health & Disability

Nick Blake
OM Business,
Performance & Policy

Kate Hustler
OM Substitute Family
Care

Natasha Hilderley*
Operational Manager



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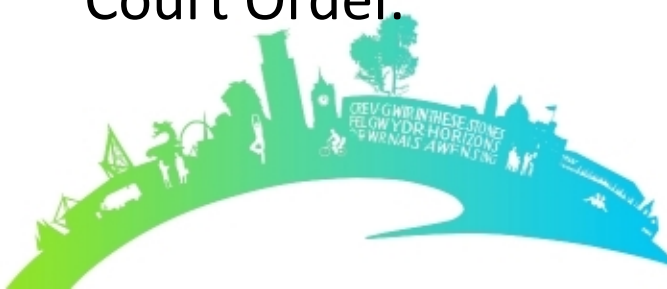
Key Priorities and Remit



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- Statutory obligation to safeguard and promote welfare of children at risk, including:
 - Following request from the child / young person or their family,
 - Provision of assistance for children with disabilities – e.g. short breaks.
 - Responding to child protection concerns.
 - Placement of a child in foster or residential care where they are not able to remain safely at home with family.
 - Placement of children for adoption – at request of parent or in response to a Court Order.



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Risk Management



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Corporate (high level) Risks - see Appendix A:

- Corporate safeguarding (shared risk)
- Increase in demand for services

Escalated Directorate Risks:

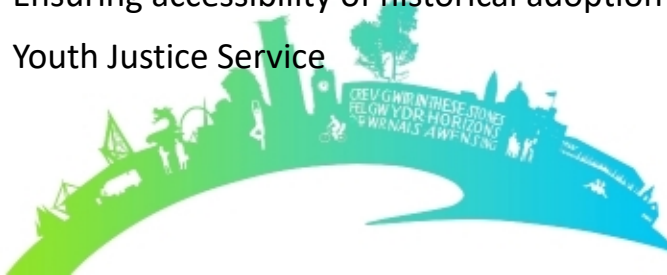
- Workforce
- Insurance claims under Human Rights Act and referrals to Official Solicitor
- Sufficiency of accommodation for children looked after and care leaver

Directorate (operational) Risks:

- Ensuring care planning is outcome led and implemented without drift
- Transition to adult life / independence
- Issuing of care proceedings and compliance with Court Orders
- Securing stable lives for children looked after
- Ensuring accessibility of historical adoption records and avoidance of data breach in work to resolve risk
- Youth Justice Service



Report sets out the red / amber residual risks



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Internal Audit Assurance

Audit	Report Status	Assurance Rating	Outstanding Actions	Completed Actions	Total Actions	Implementation Status
2021/22						
Child Health & Disability	Final	Effective with opportunity for improvement	0	9	9	All actions completed
Payments to Care Leavers	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	2	15	17	2 recommendations requiring input from other Directorates
Contract Monitoring and Management	Final	N/A	3	2	5	2 recommendations due 30.11.22; 1 recommendation to be closed on provision of evidence
Pre-Contract Assurance	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	1	0	1	1 recommendation due 31.01.23
2020/21						
Children's Residential Placements	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	3	0	3	3 recommendations due 31.12.22
Commissioning and Procurement - Social Services	Final	Insufficient with major improvement needed	0	5	5	All actions completed

9 outstanding actions - commentary is included in paragraphs 16 to 21 of the report



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Senior Management Assurance



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- Directorate primarily assessed as “mixed” or strong” application across all areas of the Senior Management Assurance Statement.
- Recently completion of COVID-19 recovery self assessment.
- Partnership and governance arrangements in place across multi-agency initiatives, for example:
 - Regional Partnership Board
 - Regional Safeguarding Board
 - Youth Justice Board
 - Starting Well Partnership
- Budget monitoring ongoing and supported by colleagues from the corporate finance team.
- Two primary risk areas for the Directorate are:
 - Placements and bespoke support arrangements for children looked after.
 - Appointment of agency social workers to cover permanent social worker vacancies.



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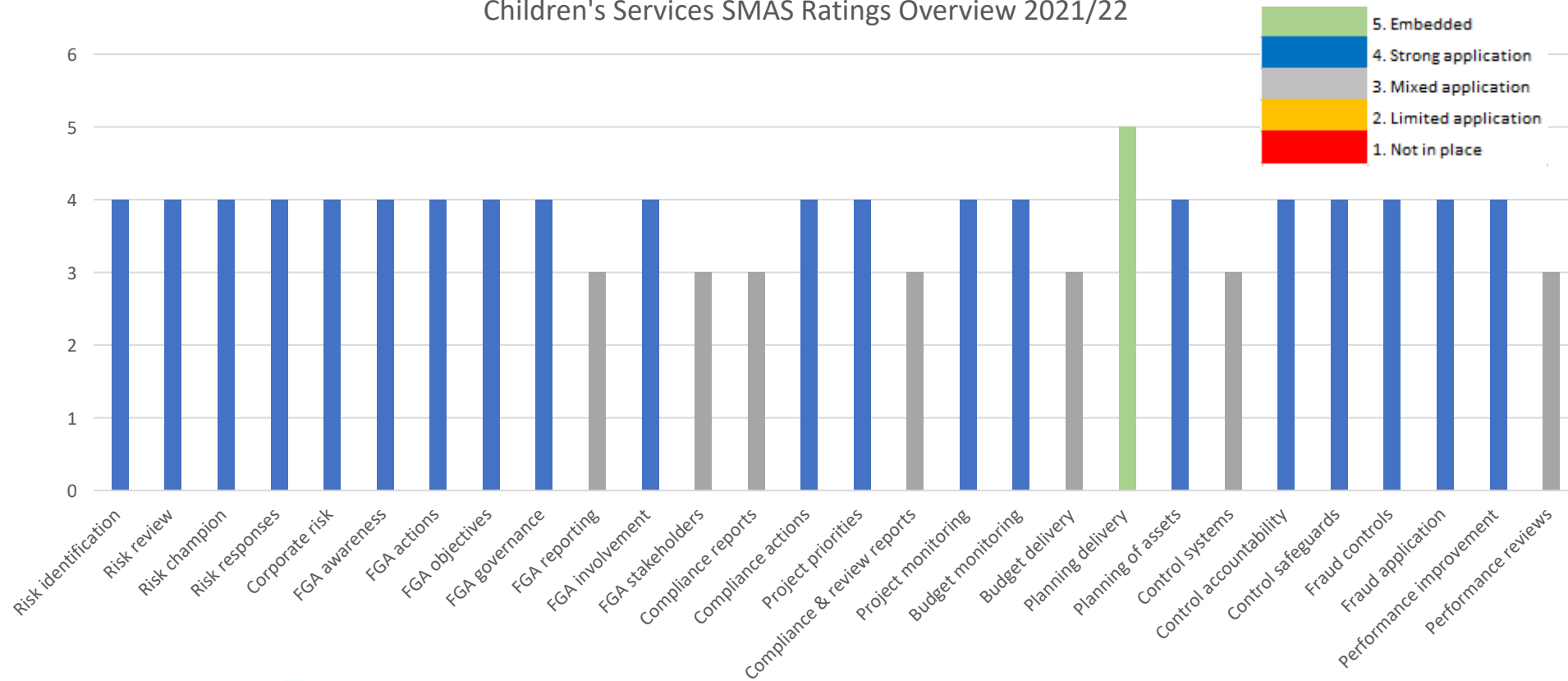
Senior Management Assurance



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Children's Services SMAS Ratings Overview 2021/22



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External Assurance



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External Audit / Inspection Area	Provider	Report Date	Rating / Opinion	Number of Actions	Completed Actions	Management Comments
Children's Services	Care Inspectorate Wales	November 2020	N/A	12	5	Implementation of work in relation to the 2020 report is ongoing and monitored regularly.
Youth Justice Service	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation	February 2022	Requires improvement	7	0	7 actions from HMIP – 4 for the Youth Justice Board, 3 for the Youth Justice Service. A wider updated action plan is in place and monitored regularly.



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Value for Money



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- Work with providers to address market sufficiency.
- Prudent social work.
- Hybrid approach to working:
 - Reduced travel time.
 - Reduced printing costs.
 - Hybrid mail.
- Adherence to recent corporate guidelines re: expenditure.



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Complaints



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- Complaints Officer is in post to manage the complaints and representations process with support of a lead Operational Manager.
- Stage 1 complaints – responses drafted in conjunction with Operational and Team Managers and signed off by Director before being issued.
- Stage 2 complaints – formal investigation by an independent external investigator.
- Final stage – Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- Annual report produced – linked to Local Authority Social Services Annual Report.
- Linked with Quality Assurance Framework to ensure lessons learned.
- Next steps – move to HALO.

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