

COUNCIL:

24 SEPTEMBER 2015

CABINET PROPOSAL

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is for the Council to receive the sixth Annual Report of the Director of Social Services (Appendix 1) as required by the Welsh Government. The requirement is outlined in the document 'Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services' issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.

Background

2. From 2009-10, the Statutory Director of Social Services in each council in Wales has been required to produce and publish an Annual Report as part of an Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) for social services.
3. The Report and the systems and processes established to inform its production have been refined and developed in 2014-15 to take account of learning from previous years. Feedback and comments received on the report this year will be taken into consideration during the preparation of future reports.
4. The Report was prepared following an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of social care services. The resulting judgements and identification of improvement priorities are supported by performance information.
5. The report has been submitted to the Care & Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW). At the time of writing CSSIW is finalising a review and analysis of the Report having triangulated this with evidence from other relevant site visits and inspections that took place during 2014-15. Once CSSIW have concluded this process, the Director of Social Services will receive a draft of the Chief Inspector's Annual Evaluation prior to its publication at the end of October. This evaluation will then be presented to a joint CYP and CASSC.

6. Feedback provided by CSSIW's Regional Director on 19 August, acknowledged that although there is a mixed picture in terms of overall improvement, performance indicators evidence good direction of travel. The inspectorate recognise that the realignment of operational responsibilities has brought about change and improvement in the delivery of services, balancing the pace of change against risk in the social care environment, particularly in relation to children. This is consistent with the assessment of performance outlined on pages 4-5 of the Director's Annual Report.
7. As with all Welsh Councils, their analysis will inform the development of an individual Inspection and Review Plan for Cardiff Social Services in addition to any other themed reviews or inspections included in the inspectorate's national annual programme.
8. The Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) supported the introduction of the ACRF and produced a 'toolkit' for use by authorities that provides guidance on the areas to be covered in the Report.
9. The priorities for action identified in the Annual Report are reflected in the Business Plans for Health & Social Care and Children's Services Directorates for 2015-16.

Issues

10. As required by the ACRF the report was finalised as a result of engaging managers and staff in a structured challenge process.
11. In previous years, the need to improve the opportunity for citizens who use or are eligible for social services to engage in some level of challenge prior to finalising the report and lessons learned has been noted. This year the Director and senior managers, alongside members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, engaged in a face to face challenge session with young people based upon their own analysis of the report. This was a positive and mutually beneficial experience and some of the key messages emerging from young people were:
 - Young people want to be consulted and want their opinions to be considered.
 - Contact is a key issue for young people, and they need to understand the reasons behind agreed contact arrangements (e.g. when contact is supervised / frequency of contact).
 - Young people do not like the acronym "LAC" as it suggests they are lacking something.
 - The Pathway Plan is an important document.

Scrutiny Consideration

12. The draft Director's Report was considered at a joint meeting of the Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committees on 29 July 2015 and has been amended in light of feedback from members.

Reasons for Recommendations

13. To receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2014-15 in order to fulfil the responsibilities required by the Welsh Government in the document entitled 'Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services'.

Legal Implications

14. The legal requirements to which the report relate are referred to earlier in the report. Further advice has been received which confirms that the report should be presented to full Council, following consideration and approval by Cabinet. There are no other legal implications directly arising from the report.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

COUNCIL PROPOSAL

Council is recommended to receive the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services for 2014-15

THE CABINET

24 September 2015

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix 1: Director of Social Services Report 2014-15

The following Background Papers have been taken into account:

Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services

Social Services Improvement Agency Annual Council Reporting Framework Toolkit