

Claire Marchant
Director of Social Services
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Dear Claire Marchant

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Local Authority Performance Review April 2019 - March 2020

The code of practice for review of local authority social services in April 2019 outlines our intention to write and publish an annual letter for local authorities which will:

- provide feedback on inspection and performance evaluation activity completed by us during the year
- report on progress the local authority has made in implementing recommendations from inspections and/or child and adult practice reviews
- outline our forward work programme

This letter summarises our review of Cardiff Council's performance in carrying out its statutory social services functions from April 2019 - March 2020.

We acknowledge that due to the unprecedented circumstances relating to COVID-19, we were unable to complete the annual performance review meeting.

However, we believe that there remains significant benefits in identifying and drawing the attention of the local authority and its partners, to the areas of both strength and improvements required. The letter is intended to assist the local authority and its partners to continually improve.

It follows the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and our collaborative and strengths based approach to supporting improvement.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The content of this letter is informed by the performance evaluation activity undertaken by the inspectorate during the course of the year. This activity included:

- engagement activity, in relation to older people (aged 65 and over), undertaken 14 July 2020
- practice and performance meeting held with the Head of Adult Services on 8 October 2020
- practice and performance meeting held with the Head of Children's Services on 8 October 2020
- meeting with the Director of Social Services / Head of Adults Services to review self-evaluation of work in relation to promoting independence for older people (undertaken January 2019) 20 November 2019
- Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Services (YOS) (led by HMI Probation) 3 – 7 February 2020
- annual focused activity undertaken in children's services on 25 and 26 February 2020

During the course of the year we have been in discussions with you during all of the activity listed above and as such our annual performance letter is a reflection of our ongoing findings which we have consistently shared with you.

Summary of strengths and areas for improvement in line with principles of the 2014 Act

Well-being

There has been an increasing demand for social services from Cardiff Council. This and an escalation in the complexity of demand has been particularly challenging for children's services over the last 12 months. The role of Corporate Director for People and Communities has been expanded to include waste as well as housing and social services. We have some concern about the heavy reliance on the cohort of directors and assistant directors that support this post. The post of Assistant Director (Children's Services) remains an interim appointment.

Corporate support for social services remains strong in Cardiff Council. A budget realignment in January 2020 has significantly alleviated financial pressures. Children's services are receiving corporate support to recruit, for example, a market supplement for 'hard to fill' vacancies has been implemented. Additional corporate support for children's services to develop a sustainable workforce strategy could help to increase pace of recruitment and better ensure retention.

The joint inspection of Cardiff Youth Offending Service (YOS), found arrangements for: governance and leadership; staffing; partnership and services; and information and facilities all failed to meet required standards. The Chief Executive Officer has made an immediate commitment to address the issues found by inspectors, and has made resources available for this. An independent chair of the YOS management board has been appointed to drive forward improvements.

Development of an Adult Services Strategy is progressing. At the strategic level a restructure has been completed, including the appointment of an Assistant Director. Stable

operational and middle management tiers are in place. The service is rolling out new ways of working with an emphasis on strength based, person centred approaches that emphasise what matters to people.

Children's services is currently undergoing a significant period of change. The future vision is outlined in the Children's Services Strategy 2019–2022. The vision is grounded in a strength based approach with service design structures that reflect children's journeys through the social care system. There is a clear emphasis on the provision of early help, providing consistency and reducing dependency. To date delivery of the strategy has focused primarily on building resilience within the newly established operational management tier and restructuring the main body of children's services into locality teams. CIW is concerned about limitations in the overview of strategic leaders on frontline practice arising from lack of stability in management structures. The senior management team is now more stable but most are new into post.

During our focused activity in children's services we found that all professionals were committed to delivering strength based practice. Implementation of the Signs of Safety operating model was broadly welcomed and generally well understood. Most staff told us they found the model gave them the tools to engage effectively with children and families, confidence to capture the child's voice and do their job well. Social workers we interviewed and case files we reviewed reflected that workers knew what mattered to the children and families they worked with.

People

People's views have been sought by Cardiff Council. The Regional Learning Disability Strategy, launched in June 2019 was co-produced with people with a learning disability, their families and carers. Engagement work carried out by CIW with people who had contact with social services found that generally people felt listened to and were treated with respect and dignity. Children and families were involved in the development of the Children's Services Strategy and the design of Cardiff as a child friendly city. A range of engagement and celebratory events for people, including carers and staff have been hosted by social services throughout the year.

Cardiff Council is continuing to focus on the Active Offer, ensuring people understand what is available and offered. People are able to communicate in their language of choice.

After an initial period of resistance the adult services workforce is supporting change and is engaged positively in a major programme of work to embed strength based approaches. The changes underway in children's services are also broadly welcomed. However, implementation is causing significant challenge for many staff, including Youth Offending Service (YOS) staff. Many teams we interviewed told us they had not felt fully consulted prior to the implementation of change and that they did not feel listened to or that their ideas were valued.

Staff retention in adult services is generally good with sickness levels low. However, lack of capacity and high level reliance on agency social workers is posing a considerable issue for children's services. Recruitment to vacant social worker posts is ongoing, but progress continues to be slow. The children's services vacancy position for quarter three 2019-2020

was 32.9%. This is higher than other local authorities in Wales and a significant contributor to lack of service consistency for children and families in Cardiff.

Cardiff Council has been working closely with Social Care Wales to support the required registration of domiciliary staff. At time of writing 86% of Cardiff Council directly employed workforce had registered and most others were in the process of doing so. One hundred percent of the domiciliary care workforce from other sectors had achieved registration.

We continue to monitor the implementation of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which has identified the local authority, in common with many others in Wales, is unable to assure itself that people's human rights are not being breached by being deprived of their liberty unlawfully. Our joint national report on DoLS will be issued in due course.

Prevention

Cardiff Council has continued to remodel services shifting the emphasis to early help and prevention. Whilst hospital teams have been under pressure some additional resources were invested in supporting more timely hospital discharges for people. A 'Get Me Home Service' to assist discharge and help independent living has also been piloted and is now being rolled out to eight more wards at University Hospital Wales. In the community, a Single Point of Contact ensures that all adult referrals are pro-actively risk assessed in a timely way. This means that some people can be signposted earlier to other relevant services. There has been increased focus on well-being, community engagement and independent living with an emphasis on tackling social isolation and reducing loneliness through providing free events activities and groups including for carers. Inclusion Officers have been providing support for local groups anchored within Community Hubs.

During the first half of 2019-2020 some capacity issues within adult safeguarding were impacting on the timeliness of enquiries. Subsequently the safeguarding team has been restructured and leadership capacity strengthened. These changes have brought about some improvements although we remain concerned about delays in responding to notifications from care homes and some threshold decisions.

Implementation of the Children's Services Strategy emphasises shifting the balance of care and support so that more children live at home with their families. Nevertheless the number of children looked after continues to be a concern. In quarter three 2019-2020, 88 children started to be looked after (up from 66 in Quarter two; approximately 13% of children looked after are in kinship placements). A further area of concern is sufficiency of the right type of services for the most vulnerable children, including scarcity of fostering and residential provision for children and young people with more complex needs. Cardiff Council has been working hard, including using social media and online marketing as well as engaging with private providers to increase the volume of placement provision. Work was on-going to set-up several small children's homes within Cardiff.

At the time of writing, Cardiff Council do not have any children placed in unregulated placements.

In June 2019 we published our national report on our work about care experienced children and young people. The [report](#) is published on our website. Key findings highlight areas for improvement in respect of profile, sufficiency, practice, partnerships, stability, governance

and corporate parenting. Many of the areas we identified for improvement continue to be considered by Welsh Government's Ministerial Advisory Group on improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people and we expect local authorities to be considering their own contribution to addressing these findings. We will monitor with interest the development of much needed commissioning and market position strategy to map future demand for services and help shape the market.

In December 2019 we wrote to all local authorities asking for information about The Public Accounts Committee report following their enquiry into care experienced children, specifically recommendation 5, concerning the effectiveness and frequency of end of placement reviews. We did not receive a formal response from Cardiff Council and therefore request again that you advise us and confirm assurance of your practice in such reviews. For example, are disruption meetings or placement breakdown meetings held and if so how is learning from such reviews/meetings embedded within practice?

Partnerships

A range of effective well established active partnerships are evident within the statutory sector. Strategic regional arrangements with the Vale of Glamorgan local authority and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB) are well developed with Regional Partnership and Safeguarding Boards providing oversight of improving outcomes for people. A number of joint planning and commissioning groups, such as disability groups, children's and mental health partnerships and fostering and adoption arrangements result in service provision that meets regional and local population needs. Work streams have been established to implement the actions outlined in the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with Learning Disabilities 'Promoting Independence and Improving Lives' 2019-2024.

Partnership working with the third sector is effective. Relationships within this sector are better developed for disability and children's services than for older people. Whilst Cardiff Council is keen to further develop work with third sector partners there is also a drive toward bringing more services 'in house' to balance the market and strengthen resilience.

Capacity in the domiciliary care market remains fragile. Over this year there has been a significant amount of work jointly with private providers looking at how cost and capacity can better be addressed and at new ways of delivering domiciliary care. This activity is continuing to inform the re-commissioning of domiciliary care services is to be completed in April 2021. The focus of new services will be to flexibly support people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them. Further work is ongoing with providers to co-produce a provider quality assurance process for the new model.

CIW Performance Review Plan for 2020-2021

Our scheduled thematic inspection programme for 2020-2021 focused on prevention and promoting independence for older adults in the community and for current children services thematic inspection the focus is on prevention, partnerships and experiences of disabled children. Due to the current emergency situation relating to COVID-19 we have paused the publication of our older adults report and paused all activity relating to the disabled children's review. We will advise you in due course when we envisage recommencing our inspections.

We hope to publish the older adults national report in due course and want to take this opportunity to thank you for your local authority's contribution to this.

Due to the unforeseen circumstances we find ourselves in, we are currently reviewing and considering our work plan for the remainder of 2020-2021.

CIW worked together with HMI Constabulary (HMICFRS), HMI Probation, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Estyn to develop a model of joint inspection of child protection arrangements in Wales (JICPA). This approach was piloted during the autumn of 2019. This was a fantastic example of new ways of working across Wales and a real drive towards collaboration and integration in public services.

We continue to work closely with Social Care Wales to support improvement in social care services.

You will note that this letter has been copied to colleagues in Audit Wales, Estyn and HIW. CIW works closely with partner inspectorates to consider the wider corporate perspective in which social services operate, as well as local context for social services performance.

We will publish the final version of this letter on our website.

Yours sincerely



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Head of Local Authority Inspection Team

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