

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 December 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services /
Corporate Director Modernisation and Wellbeing

Report Author: Principal Manager: Business Support

Title: Local Authority Social Services Inspection Evaluation
and Review 2012-13

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report sets out the key issues arising from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) evaluation of Denbighshire social services performance for 2012-13. A copy of the full evaluation is attached at Appendix I.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To ensure that Committee is aware of the performance evaluation for social services including areas of progress, areas for improvement and risk.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. It is recommended that Members consider the CSSIW evaluation and the associated progress report from social services and consider whether any further scrutiny is required. The Area Manager for CSSIW will be attending the meeting to enable Members to seek clarification on any particular element of the evaluation report.

4. Report details.

4.1. Every year CSSIW undertake a comprehensive evaluation of each local authority's social services performance. The evaluation draws on a wide range of evidence, including: the Director of Social Services annual report on performance and plans for improvement in their local authority area; CSSIW's regulatory work; and the views of other auditors and inspectors. The evaluation is moderated to ensure a consistent, transparent and proportionate approach.

4.2. In summary the evaluation of Denbighshire Social Services has highlighted that the council is undertaking an ambitious programme of modernisation that will shape services and citizen's experiences. It is acknowledged that there is strong and effective leadership at all tiers within the authority with strong

evidence of continued progress despite the challenges being faced by the services.

4.3. A number of specific areas for improvement have been identified in the CSSIW report. The council's progress in relation to these will be discussed during regular engagement meetings between the Senior Management Team and the CSSIW in the coming year. The areas for follow-up by the CSSIW next year are:

- Establishing clear measurable outcomes to assist with the evaluation of existing and proposed services.
- Assessment and support to carers.
- Performance in relation to looked after children.
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.
- Staff sickness levels.
- National thematic inspection of looked after children.
- National thematic inspection of commissioning of social care for older people.
- Partnership working with BCUHB.

4.4. Appendix II provides an overview of the areas that are identified as demonstrating progress and areas that are identified for improvement in the performance evaluation. It also includes information about how the council is responding to the areas identified for improvement.

4.5. Areas identified as requiring improvement are in line with the Director's self assessment and have been embedded within Service Business Plans for 2013-14. These plans are formally monitored each quarter by the services, and many elements are reported bi-annually to Performance Scrutiny and Cabinet as they form part of the Corporate Plan. Each service also has an annual Service Performance Challenge which examines progress against Service Business Plans.

4.6. Significant progress has been made against the areas of improvement highlighted within the 2011-12 performance evaluation report. However, it is recognised that progress has not been as significant as had been anticipated in the following areas:

- Levels of sickness absence. Despite stronger management accountability, and more rigorous reporting and monitoring within both services, staff sickness levels do remain high in comparison with the rest of the authority. This therefore remains as a high priority for both services.

- Improved consistency in the provision of support to families following de-registration from the child protection register. However, it should be noted that progress has been made in this area with clear transitional arrangements within services (Integrated Family Support Service; Team Around the Family; Families First) that ensure an appropriate service response to families as their needs improve and/ or deteriorate.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. The inspection provides an external perspective of the Council's effectiveness in protecting vulnerable people and promoting their independence (one of the priorities in our Corporate Plan). The evaluation also provides a perspective on programmes for modernising and adapting social care services.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. The Service response to delivering improvement actions has been integrated into the Service Business Plans for 2013/2014. The delivery of these plans will be managed within existing financial resources.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not required because this report does not ask for a decision that will result in any change for staff or the wider community.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. Scheduled engagement meetings take place with the Senior Management Team for Social Services and CSSIW which help inform the evaluation as well as assess progress in delivering improvement. The CSSIW are now also invited to the Service Performance Challenge for both services, and the CSSIW Area Manger attended the most recent Children and Family Service Challenge on 25th July 2013.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. Responses to improvement actions have been integrated into Service Business Plans and must be contained within existing resources.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. "The risk of a significantly negative report(s) from external regulators" is currently a risk identified on the Corporate Risk Register. Overall, this is a very

positive report, but the council will need to respond positively to the issues raised in the report in order to ensure that the 2013-14 report remains positive.

11. Power to make the Decision

- 11.1. Section 3 of Local Government Act 1999 – Best Value duty to secure continuous improvement.
- 11.2. Section 7 of Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 – duty to secure continuous improvement of service delivery.
- 11.3. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 – duty to secure continuous improvement of service delivery.