

## ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	11.09.19
<b>Subject:</b>	Quarterly Monitoring of Children & Families Services Improvements
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	Report on progress in implementing the Service Development Plan
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	Councillor Aled Morris Jones
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Councillor Llinos Medi Huws
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Fôn Roberts, Head of Children and Families Services
<b>Report Author:</b>	Elin Williams, Children & Families Services Transformation Programme Manager
<b>Tel:</b>	01248 751813
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:ElinWilliams@ynysmon.gov.uk">ElinWilliams@ynysmon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Local Members:</b>	Relevant to all members

### 1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to:

- 1.1. Confirm that the Committee is satisfied with the pace of progress and improvements made to date within Children & Families Services.

### 2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

There are clear links from the Service Development Plan within Children and Families Services and the Isle of Anglesey Plan 2017/2022. The objectives are:

1. Ensure that the people of Anglesey can thrive and realize their long-term potential.
2. Support vulnerable adults and families to keep them safe, healthy and as independent as possible.
3. Work in partnership to ensure that they can cope effectively with change and developments whilst protecting our natural environment.

### 3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

The following set of guiding principles will assist Members to scrutinise this subject matter:

- 3.1 The customer/citizen [looking at plans and proposals from the point of view of local people]

- 3.2 Value [looking at whether plans and proposals are economic, efficient & effective. Also, looking at the wider requirements of community benefits]
- 3.3 Risk [Look at plans & proposals from the point of view of resilience and service transformation. It is about the transition from a traditional service to a transformed one, and about the robustness of the transformed service once it is in place]
- 3.4 Focus on the system (including organisational development) [Ensuring that the Council & its partners have the systems in place to ensure that they can implement transformation smoothly, efficiently and without having a negative effect on service delivery]
- 3.5 Focus on performance and quality [Scrutiny undertaking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role, on an exception basis]
- 3.6 Focus on Wellbeing [Looking at plans and proposals from the perspective of the Wellbeing of Future Generations requirements]

#### 4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

1. Is the Committee satisfied with the pace of progress and improvements made to date within Children and Families Services?

#### 5 – Background / Context

As Elected Members you are fully aware of the background regarding the Service Improvement Plan and that this was regularly reviewed by the Children's Services Improvement Panel. Following the recent re-inspection of the service by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), the service is now working to a new Service Development Plan that is replacing the previous Service Improvement Plan.

Since the last report the focus of the work within the Children & Families Services has been:

##### 1. Resilient Families

The Resilient Families Team has been operational since October 2017 and consists of a Practice Leader; two Social Workers; two Support Workers; a Parenting Development Officer and a Reflect Worker. The Reflect Worker post is part of a national project aimed at increasing the resilience of women who have had one or more children permanently removed from their care, to reduce the amount of repeat pregnancies which result in further removal of children into the care system.

The team intervenes with families who present a high level of need to provide intensive support and interventions around Prevent, Return, Reduce and Review principles to families in crisis. This is to support family breakdowns; preventing children from becoming looked after and the reunification of children with families from care.

The team provides structured face-to-face intensive intervention around parental change, developing strategies to manage behaviours and developing attachment-

focused parenting skills. The team also provides consultation, training, advice, and guidance to the wider workforce.

Through the Resilient Families Team, Anglesey is developing an increased national profile for actively contributing to the landscape and knowledge in the social care field and related professions. Anglesey is involved in creating, shaping and disseminating research and is involved in work around Personal Outcomes Approach in collaboration with Social Care Wales.

Sian Morgan, a Support Worker within the team, was honoured at this year's National Eisteddfod for the use of Welsh in the workplace. Sian received the 'Caring in Welsh' award at the National Eisteddfod in Llanrwst. Sian was one of six finalists for the award, and was chosen as the winner by a public vote.

The impact of the Resilient Families Team since October 2017 has been significant and has now become a part of the core service. A thorough report on the work of the Resilient Families Team will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

## **2. Voices from Care Cymru Project**

The Local Authority and its partners have a responsibility for the Corporate Parenting of local children in care and for young people who have left care. This group is amongst the most vulnerable in our society and we have a joint responsibility to ensure that we do our very best to improve their personal circumstances.

In this regard, we are keen to listen more to their experiences in order to try and improve services on their behalf by developing a Participation Group for children and young people who receive care and who have left care. The purpose of establishing the group is in order to co-produce a Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers in Anglesey and a Corporate Parenting Charter.

Following presenting the matter to the Anglesey Corporate Parenting Panel on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 and securing agreement in principle for the plan, both the Housing Service and Learning Services have made a contribution towards this work. North Wales Police and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board declined to contribute towards this project.

Activities with children and young people aged 11-17 will begin in August 2019 with a 'start up group' under the Change Makers Project which creates a space for care experienced children and young people to come together and become leaders for positive change for children looked after and care leavers in Ynys Môn. This one off workshop is to discuss and agree 10 key areas for change. Young people will choose their 'Top 3' over the coming months, with the Change Makers Project working in detail on these top 3 over the next year. Voices from

Care Cymru will also attend the STAR Awards and Fun Day in September to engage with care experienced children and young people.

Voices from Care Cymru are also in the process of recruiting a local officer that will be working on the project and will be co-ordinating the Participation Group meetings and taking forward what is important locally.

### **3. Fostering Fortnight 2019**

Fostering Fortnight took place in June. The aim of the fortnight is to raise the profile of Foster Carers and to ultimately encourage more members of the public to sign up and become Foster Carers.

This year the Ynys Môn Child Placement Team held two main events. The first was an ambitious relay style walk around the whole of the island using the Coastal Path footpaths. Elected Members; Head of Service; various panel members; social work staff and managers; independent agency professionals; health workers; education workers; Mistar Urdd and many more participated. Not only did the walk receive a positive response from the public in terms of support, but it also raised money for the Anglesey Foster Care Association. The sum of £836.52 was raised.

The second event that took place was the very popular Bake Off. Officers and officials of the Council baked cakes that were subsequently judged by Ynys Môn's very own celebrity chef, Richard Holt. After the judging, the cakes were sold to all who were present and raised another £440.

By holding these events, the profile of the Anglesey Foster Carers was raised and positive responses were received in terms of public relations and recruiting, with a total of £1,478.34 being raised for the Anglesey Foster Care Association. This will be presented formally to the association at the group's next meeting.

### **4. Foster Care Recruitment**

Since the announcement of the new fostering package in January 2019; 18 foster carer households have enquired and have shown an interest in becoming foster carers for the Isle of Anglesey Borough Council.

12 have started on the assessment process with a further 2 imminent.

6 have already been approved as Foster Carers by the Fostering & Permanency Panel to date and a other foster carers will be presented to the Fostering in the coming months.

The recruitment campaign has been succesfull with the potential of up to 24 new foster care beds being available to Ynys Môn children by October 2019.

### **5. Service Development Plan**

The Service Development Plan is a 3 year plan and consists of the following 5 themes:

1. A confident and competent workforce to provide a consistent and effective service;
2. Quality and timely assessments, care planning, interventions and decision making to protect, support and manage the risks for children: good quality chronologies, record keeping and research evidence and tools;
3. Quality assurance and performance framework that supports the local authority in effectively managing its responsibilities towards children;
4. Appropriate social work intervention 'at the right time' in order to enhance family life and support families at times of trauma;
5. Improve outcomes for children in care.

There have been encouraging developments in all the above areas and the service continues to work through the 3 year Service Development Plan.

Area's which have progressed are:

1. A confident and competent workforce to provide a consistent and effective service

Workforce Strategy is now in place for the Children and Families Service. Whilst the Service has seen some staffing changes recently these have been in the main due to either internal or external progression by some staff and also maternity leave.

2. Quality and timely assessments, care planning, interventions and decision making to protect, support and manage the risks for children: good quality chronologies, record keeping and research evidence and tools;

Internal audits continue to take place which shows positive progress in Social Work practice, continued work need to be undertaken in order to assure Social Work practice is consistently good across all cases.

3. Quality assurance and performance framework that supports the local authority in effectively managing its responsibilities towards children;

A thorough report in relation to the above was presented in June 2019 Committee.

4. Appropriate social work intervention 'at the right time' in order to enhance family life and support families at times of trauma;

Internal Audits continue to take place and children and their families are now offered appropriate intervention at the right time. The development of the Ynys Môn Early Help Hub also assures that families and children are offered advice, support and assistance at a much earlier stage on a Multi Agency basis.

5. Improve outcomes for children in care.

Several new policies are now operational which allow staff to support and improve outcomes for children in the care of the Local Authority:

- Joint Protocol for the Young People and Care Leavers of Anglesey between Housing Services and Children & Families Services;
- Leaving Care Policy;
- Young Person's Guide to Financial Help & Support.
- Pocket Money, Bank Account and Savings Policy for Looked After Children

The service is enthusiastic about its Service Development Plan moving forward.

**6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]**

Not applicable

**7 – Financial Implications**

The Head of Service continues to scrutinise all contracts and will at times challenge costs in particular to looked after children provision. An effort is also made to reduce spending across the service and this in turn has reduced the projected overspend to date.

**8 – Appendices:**

None

**9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):**

None