

Isle of Anglesey County Council	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	21st March 2022
Subject:	Progress report: Social Service Improvement
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Llinos Medi
Head of Service / Director:	Fôn Roberts, Director of Social Services & Head of Children and Families Services Arwel Owen, Head of Adult Services
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Local Members:	

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

To provide an overview of the recent progress within Social Services.

Purpose of report:

1. To highlight the improvements within Children and Families Services.
2. To highlight the improvements within Adults Services.

Recommendation

That the Committee are offered reassurance that the continued progress made by Social Services department are reasonable and timely.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

To offer reassurance, clarity and transparency that Social Services continue on their improvement journey.

Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

NA

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

NA.

Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):		
1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island?	Yes, in the Services that Social Services provide.
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority? If so, how?	Ongoing review of financial situation.
3	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, please advise whom.	Yes, some examples are included in the update.
4	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Please explain how.	Yes – Compliment and Complaint process, consultations etc.
5	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.	Yes.
6	If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impact that the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.	N/A
7	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	N/A.

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	14/3/22 TBC
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	As above
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	As above
4	Human Resources (HR)	N/A
5	Property	N/A
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	N/A
7	Procurement	N/A

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
8	Scrutiny	N/A
9	Local Members	

F - Appendices:

Children’s and Families Service:

We continue to meet our Statutory duties and as we come out of the pandemic we have noticed some staffing difficulties in terms of staff going off sick, which appears to be a national issue. We continue to work hard to meet the needs of Anglesey children and are trying to bring in additional staff to assist during this difficult period.

Looked After Children – we have seen a reduction in the amount of children who are looked after by the council from 160 what was it at its highest in the last 6 months to now at 144 and this is due to a number of factors i.e. children have returned home to the care of their parents, some children have left care as they have turned 18 year of age and now receive a leaving care service and some children have been adopted. The reduction of looked after children has meant a considerable amount of work by our social workers and the work they have produced in order to achieve robust plan is to be thanked.

Social Services Improvement Panel – has continued to meet and during last months meeting a presentation was received by the Director of Social Services showing ‘the distanced travelled’ from 2017 to date. The presentation showed not only an improvement in the performance indicators, but also a continued pattern of improvement. Considering that the service did not have a culture of using data effectively back in 2017, the data to date shows a different picture which gives assurances to the most vulnerable children, their families and senior leaders and elected members in the Council on Ynys Mon that we continue to meet their needs.

No Wrong Door

The Children’s Commissioner for Wales has highlighted the need for transformation in the way services work together to support children and young people whose needs are not deemed severe enough to require specialist support but, who are emotionally distressed and/or have behavioural issues. The aim is to produce a strategy that enables the North Wales Local Authority and Health Board partners to support the emotional resilience and mental health of children and young people in this group, across the region. The strategy proposes how agencies can best work together to respond to the full spectrum of needs of children and young people who are experiencing mental health problems. It identifies opportunities for the future development of services drawing on models of good practice in Wales and beyond.

In North Wales, Our Vision is outlined as:

We want the children and young people of North Wales to enjoy their best mental health and well-being.

We will do this by ensuring the organisations that support them are easily accessed, work effectively together, and aim to deliver outcomes in a timely way, based on children and young people's choices and those of their families

The strategy proposes a regional approach based on a shared vision and an agreed set of common principles that will apply across the whole of North Wales. It however recognises that there are significant differences across the region reflecting culture, language, population density, economic factors, amongst other things. The model is therefore flexible and implementation can be tailored to local circumstances. The RPB will ensure that there is local accountability for compliance with the principles and system performance. We refer to this approach as Tight – Loose – Tight: Tight adherence to the principles and outline service model – Loose (flexible) implementation of the service model – Tight accountability and monitoring of performance against the strategy.

The aim of this strategy is for partner agencies to collaborate in a service which enables effective joint working and reduction and management of risk. It is important that all partner agencies agree to adopt these common principles and that these are contained with an explicit partnership agreement.

- Children and young people will be valued for themselves, and their worth appreciated.
- We will listen to children, young people, and their families to understand their world and experiences. Their opinions will help us to shape and evaluate our services.
- We will reduce the numbers of children and young people requiring targeted support by investing in preventative measures.
- We will reduce the number of children of young people requiring more intensive support through timely, early intervention.
- We will make it easy for children and young people and their families to find information about mental health and, if required, to obtain help that is accessed using simple and convenient arrangements.
- There will be better support for mental health in schools.
- No child should be excluded from a service because of their family circumstances
- All the children and young people will have access to co-ordinated help from a range of professionals, when this would be in their best interests.
- All children and young people will have the opportunity to form a trusting relationship with appropriate professionals. They, and their families, will have the

support of a co-ordinator who will manage their case and help them to navigate the system.

- Intervention will be timely, avoiding long waits for services and will be based on needs not diagnosis. Services will be child-centred, evidence based and flexible to ensure that needs are met and provided in ways that are suitable and convenient, including on-line.
- The pathway will operate seamlessly across health and social services, education, community provisions and the criminal justice service.
- We will have effective governance of system resources and professional activity.

The North Wales Regional Partnership Boards – Children’s Sub Group will be monitoring the implementation of the about.

Trauma Informed Island – we continue on our journey to become a Trauma Informed Island and number of schools on Ynys Mon have received the training as well as Children and Families Staff, Independent Reviewing Officers and Foster Carers.

The training provides delegates with key insights into the psychology and neuroscience of mental ill-health and challenging behaviour alongside vital tools and techniques in knowing how to respond to a child’s narrative of painful life events. So often this is enough to prevent years of suffering and the medicalising of their distress with psychiatric labels and medication. Delegates will also be trained to know when to seek the support of psychologist-led supervision and when, due to limits of competence, to refer on. The course not only focuses on work with individual children but also on changing whole school cultures to be mentally healthy for all. The training aims to,

- Learn to relate to children and young people in ways that alleviate their suffering, support their learning and make them feel cared for and appreciated
- Know how to respond to children who are in distress/stress states in ways that help them to emotionally regulate, feel psychologically safe and develop the capacity to handle stress well over time
- Learn how to relate with children in ways that enhance their self-esteem, confidence and feelings of psychological safety.
- Know how to listen and empathise when children want to talk about painful issues and help them reflect and resolve
- Develop an in-depth understanding of what it’s like for a child or teenager to suffer from specific mental health problem (e.g. depression/ anxiety and feel confident in offering them accurate empathy, understanding and key psycho-education without inferring meaning
- Develop an in-depth understanding of the long-term impact of specific adverse childhood experiences and how to enable the child or teenager to work through feelings of anger and traumatic loss.

- Employ strategies for early intervention (early indicators of mental health difficulties) know limits of competence and refer on to other agencies, when these are available.
- Feel more confident in distinguishing developmental trauma from possible diagnosis of ASD, ADHD and FAS and be able to challenge misdiagnosis.
- Work to increase the protective factors and 'safety cues' in the school culture to prevent adverse childhood experiences from becoming long-term mental, physical and societal health problems.
- Enable other staff to think psychologically about pupils in terms of what has happened to them rather than simply "why are they behaving this way".
- Educate staff to understand when challenging behaviour and explosive outbursts are likely to be trauma triggers and how to calm children
- Support staff to relate to children in ways that enable them to move from blocked trust to trust
- Using accessible language, educate staff with the brain science and psychological research on child mental health problems and their impact on quality of life and learning
- Educate staff about what children need in their relationships with adults, so they don't suffer misdiagnosis, distress or additional trauma in the school environment
- Support staff in ways that prevent them suffering from high levels of stress, developing secondary trauma and leaving the profession as a result.

We will be rolling out more training, which will include to Elected Members during 2022.

Adults Services Update:

While the Covid-19 pandemic has been a barrier to some activities it has also highlighted learning and development opportunities to support an integrated service vision. There have been effective partnerships with Housing and the third sector and we hope to extend these relationships while developing new resources including the Additional Care Homes. During this period we have strengthened the virtual access to day opportunities and access to technology to have a positive effect on individuals and reduce social isolation and it is important that we continue with these successful activities.

The Community Resources Team

The practices of the 3 Community Resources Teams are driven by the Partnership Steering Group which is integral to providing integrated services and presenting innovative ways of working. As more people return to work we hope that this relationship will mature. An options evaluation for a Single Point of Access model has been completed with the intention of moving towards a single point of access model in the future.

Monetary Funds

The Recovery Fund and the Integrated Care Fund have been used to support new initiatives to support users and offer respite with plans in place to develop Dementia and Learning Disability respite opportunities.

WCCIS

The integrated WCCIS system is in operation despite a number of issues being highlighted and despite the difficult and arduous transition process the situation has now stabilised. It is hoped that this will further expedite the joint working arrangements and assist the service user's experience and journey.

Training

The training programme to support operational practice is ongoing and staff training needs are identified within training plans and during supervision sessions to support a culture of change. The number of staff completing the mandatory training caused difficulties for the Department but good progress was made recently moving us closer to the expected thresholds.

Capacity and Staffing

Recruitment and staff retention has been challenging especially care home and residential staff. We have held and contributed towards national and local campaigns in an attempt to attract staff and support the sustainability of the local care market. Despite the challenging situation the situation regarding social workers and therapists is more stable and the use of agency workers has reduced.

Performance Management

We have review the information being collated and review performance regularly during team meetings to make sure that the data is correct, robust and timely.

External Reviews

The Assurance Inspection Report in July 2021 confirmed the improvement in operational practice and we have received positive feedback following the annual meeting with the Care Standards Inspectors. Despite this we still recognise the need to continue to conduct file audits to ensure compliance.

Transformation

As part of the Learn Disability Transformation programme we have commissioned People Too to review the Housing and Support arrangements and a report and action plan will be published shortly.

Protecting Rights and Mental Wellbeing

The Mental Capacity and Best Interests documentation has been main streamed and efforts are underway to deal with the list of cases awaiting assessment.

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