

TERMS OF REFERENCE & *MODUS OPERANDI*

SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

PART I – BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Scrutiny of Social Services

Keeping vulnerable children, young people and adults safe is a critically important role and one that requires the Council and partners to work together effectively. There has been significant public attention in recent years due to national high-profile examples where Local Authorities and partners have failed vulnerable individuals, with tragic consequences.

In reporting poor inspection outcomes, care inspectorates¹ often cite poor scrutiny practices amongst other system failings. Ensuring meaningful and robust scrutiny of policies and also support and / or services available to protect vulnerable individuals is therefore a key element of the leadership role of Scrutiny Elected Members.

Ensuring meaningful and robust scrutiny of Social Services is a key element of the leadership role of Scrutiny Members and is much more than adding value to the decisions of the Executive alone. It is about ensuring that a proper scrutiny process forms part of the planning, implementation and follow up on key decisions that have an impact on vulnerable individuals in our local communities or in the care system. As such, effective Scrutiny can:

- Challenge effectively
- Hold decision makers to account; and
- Assist the Executive to make robust decisions for future generations.

Our Local Arrangements

Scrutiny of Social Services has evolved and developed since the former Social Services Improvement Panel was established². The role of the Panel focused on monitoring and scrutinising progress and distance travelled against the Social Services improvement programme and performance against key performance indicators; provide assurance to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on adequate and timely progress / local performance. The scrutiny work carried out by the former Social Services Improvement Panel during the last Administration was a positive development, having an impact on Social Services performance and improvement journey:

- Development of a model focusing on a smaller group
- Members developing a level of expertise
- Encouraging good attendance and teamwork.

¹ Care Inspectorate Wales; Care Quality Commission (England)

² Children's Services Improvement Panel was established in June, 2017 the scope of which was broadened to include Adult Social Services in June, 2019

PART II – PANEL REMIT AND SCOPE

REMIT

It is a **natural next step** to further develop Member scrutiny of Social Services ensuring a broader scope to its work, with the following key benefits:

- Develop a model of working in Social Services which focuses on a smaller group to enable Members to be more involved, to develop a level of subject expertise and to encourage good attendance and teamwork
- Further strengthen the capacity of Members to challenge performance by improving the quality of information and data on services
- Forum to discuss information around Service risks as a basis to inform the forward work programme of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- Forum to develop a group of Members with the expertise and ownership to lead discussions on Social Services matters in the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

What Care Inspectorate Wales expects to see in terms of political leadership and scrutiny

Elected Members have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Social Services provision to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

The role of the Social Services Scrutiny Panel is to:

1. Monitor and scrutinise in a meaningful and robust way:
 - Progress and distance travelled against Service development programmes
 - Quantitative and qualitative performance of Social Services.
2. Ensure that the voices of children, young people and adults are heard when considering the effectiveness and impact of services
3. Provide assurance to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the following elements:
 - Adequate, timely progress in delivering Service development programmes
 - Quantitative and qualitative performance of support and care services to children, young people and adults

SCOPE

Topic	Work programme Focus	Timeline
Effective Scrutiny	Induction of Panel members – workshop format.	July 2022 and during Panel meetings.
Skills	Skills set - training & development inputs to ensure clarity of role and subject knowledge to enable effective	Delivery throughout the municipal year ensuring alignment

Topic	Work programme Focus	Timeline
Self-evaluation	scrutiny eg CIW, service area leads, partners.	with Panel scrutiny work
	Self-evaluation – Member critique of own performance to enable review, reflection & learning. Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stock take Review, evaluate and reflect Establish foundation for next period Confirm Member ownership. 	Annual – to be determined by Panel members November 2026 – overview of the work of the Panel 2022 - 2026
Fieldwork	Elected Members and Senior Leaders to meet staff from a variety of teams in order to hear first-hand staff experiences.	TBC – discussion with Panel members
Theme 1: Age Friendly Strategic Plan	Age Friendly Strategic Plan – detailed look at the strategic, whole Council direction	Fieldwork feedback – Haulfryn Llangristiolus
Theme 2: Youth Justice	Ensure effective delivery of the 2025/26 Youth Justice Plan for Ynys Môn and Gwynedd.	July 2025 - June 2026
Theme 3: Care Provision for Older People	The Anglesey vision, aims and objectives for care provision for older people Update on Extra Care Housing	Fieldwork feedback – i'w gadarnhau
Thema 4: Llesiant Meddwl Môn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on team restructure and embedding practice Identification of themes and early intervention 	Fieldwork feedback – Llesiant Meddwl Môn Team Community Support Team
Theme 5: Supported Living (Learning Disabilities)	Supported Living (Learning Disabilities) – detailed look at the care model Provision for individuals with learning disabilities – to what extent does provision meet need	Fieldwork feedback – Learning Disabilities Team (Children and Adults)
Theme 6: Trauma Informed Anglesey	Trauma Informed Anglesey – journey thus far and developments on the horizon	Fieldwork feedback – tbc
Voice of the Service User	Scrutinise the effectiveness of mechanisms in place to hear the voice of children, young people and adults as an integral part of the Social Services provision on the Isle of Anglesey Use of case studies, videos and pen pictures (mirror current good practice adopted by the Corporate parenting panel).	Delivery throughout the municipal year ensuring alignment with Panel scrutiny work – consider when reporting on progress under each of the themes (provide examples)

PART III – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Governance / Panel Membership

- The scrutiny panels have been established to undertake work streams on behalf of the parent scrutiny committees and as such are working groups without decision-making powers
- Panel membership will be subject to political balance principles and rules³.

The core membership of the Panel will include:

- Elected members** - 4 Members from both scrutiny committees and based on the political balance formula of the Council
- Portfolio Members for Social Services (Adults and Children & Families Services)** – as observers, with no vote
- Officers** – Director of Social Services, Head of Adult Services, Scrutiny Manager.

From time to time, the panel's work will require the attendance of other Elected Members (e.g. members of the Executive Committee) and / or officers from other service areas.

2. Frequency of Meetings and Quorum

- **Frequency of meetings** – the panel has been established as a standing panel to ensure accountability, oversight and scrutiny of social services on Anglesey, as summarised in the table above. The panel will therefore meet in accordance with the timeline for the submission of progress reports on social services scrutiny to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee as follows:
 - 2 hybrid meetings of the Panel each civic year – May and November
 - small group thematic fieldwork in local social services provision between each meeting of the Panel in order to scrutinise and monitor impact on service users. Fieldwork to focus on key priority themes aligned to the Council Plan 2023/2028
- **Quorum** – this will not apply to the panel.

3. Recording Meetings and Reporting Arrangements

- The panel will run in the format of a business meeting. The Scrutiny Unit will collate and distribute any papers in preparation for each meeting and provide a list of action points following each meeting
- **Reporting arrangements** - regular reporting by panel members to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

[14/07/2025, 21/08/2025, 26/08/2025 & 09/09/2025]

³ The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out the main principles governing political balance of local authorities