

**ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL**

<b>REPORT TO :</b>	<b>Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>14 January, 2015</b>
<b>SUBJECT :</b>	<b>Annual Council Reporting Framework (ARCF) Local Authority Social Services Inspection Evaluation and Review</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):</b>	<b>Councillor Kenneth Hughes</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR: Tel: E-mail:</b>	<b>Gwen Carrington, Director of Community Ext 2706 GwenCarrington@anglesey.gov.uk</b>

## **1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to accept the letter with the opportunity to request any additional clarification on its content.

## **2.0 REASONS.**

The Annual Council Reporting Framework is an agreed framework within Wales in order to evaluate, in public and transparent manner, the performance of the Social Services functions within each Local Authority.

The letter acknowledges the progress made by the Authority whilst highlighting the need to maintain commitment and progress with the required changes.

CSSIW makes reference to the ongoing potential risks identified by the inspectorate.

Specific reference is made to the issues of capacity and the challenge of a small authority addressing the scale of change required in transforming social care services.

Performance improvements in Children's Services have been maintained nevertheless risks remain given the comparative inexperience of the workforce and management structure.

The letter notes that there is little reference to the actions required by the Authority in readiness to the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (April 2016). In response it is maintained that this forms part of a national implementation programme where the authority is appropriately engaged. Additionally the work programme adopted by the Service and Council is in accord with the ambitions and principles of the Act.

Whilst no specific additional inspections have been identified for the Isle of Anglesey for this financial year key areas of interest are noted for ongoing monitoring and engagement. Work is ongoing in response to the letter received within this framework and in preparation for the presentation of the report for the current financial year.

The letter acknowledges the financial pressures and the challenges faced by the Council in meeting its statutory planning and service delivery responsibilities for social services. This requires a continued focus on delivering safe and effective services whilst progressing the required change agenda arising from the transformation programme.

The letter sent by CSSIW follows the presentation of the Annual Report by the Director of Social Services in October 2014. The observations and comments made by CSSIW are based on this overarching report, accompanying evidence grids and the information collated during inspections and contact with the service and authority. The letter is presented independently of the Authority and has been validated following consideration of the delivery of Social Services functions across Wales.

The actions and requirements arising from the letter have been incorporated within the business processes and priority programmes within the Council's Transformation Programme and the individual service business plans.

It is clear when considering the key messages from the letter that it is essential for progress to be maintained. This requires a continued focus on delivering safe and effective services whilst progressing the required change agenda arising from the transformation programme and financial imperatives facing the Authority.

**Author:** Gwen Carrington  
**Job Title:** Director of Community  
**Date:** 22 December, 2014

APPENDIX 1-

CSSIW - Performance Evaluation Report 2013–14 - Isle of Anglesey County Council Social Services  
<http://cssiw.org.uk/docs/cssiw/report/141031angleseyen.pdf>



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Performance Evaluation Report 2013–14

Isle of Anglesey County Council  
Social Services

October 2014

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Isle of Anglesey County Council Social Services for the year 2013–14

# **Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2013 – 2014**

**Local Authority: Isle of Anglesey County Council**

**This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Isle of Anglesey County Council Social Services for the year 2013 - 14**

## **Summary**

Isle of Anglesey County Council is in the early stages of implementing an ambitious transformation programme for both adults and children's services. These are significant change and development programmes for a small council and the pace of change is hampered by a lack of capacity. At the same time, a new council has been elected, a third of which are newly appointed members. This has also affected the pace of change as it has been important for officers to invest time in ensuring elected members fully understand the transformation programme. Despite these constraints, there is evidence of steady progress underpinned by political support particularly in relation to services for older adults. Performance has improved in core areas, predominantly in relation to Children's Services although the relative inexperience of the workforce in Children's Services means that risks remains and continued vigilance is required. In adult services, the focus given to services to older people has resulted a lack of focus on services for younger adults including people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs.

The council have been open about what they have achieved and recognise where it is behind schedule. There remains much to do; the Heads of Service reports highlight 50 priorities for action for Adult Services and 23 for Children's Services during 2014-15.

Whilst the council's transformation programme is in line with the intentions of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, there is little specific reference to it in the director's report. Whilst the more detailed head of service reports do outline development in areas aligned to the requirements of the Act, these links are not explicit. The report therefore does not assist citizens in understanding the council's preparedness to implement the new legislation. The council is well-paced to respond to More than Just Words – the Welsh government's strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care - but needs to work closely with commissioned services to enable them to achieve compliance.

The council has a strong platform to build upon in relation to integration of services with the health board having developed Model Mon over a number of years. This

has enabled them to establish an Integrated Delivery Board in partnership with BCU Health Board and which is being used as a pilot for the region as a whole in the context of the North Wales Statement of Intent for Integration for delivering integrated health and social care for older people with complex needs. The council has ambitious plans for the Board but it is too early to evaluate its impact in improving outcomes for citizens.

The council's medium term budget strategy is to reduce by £22million over five years– equivalent to 17%.The director's report sets out the budget position for 2014-15 as a 5.88% reduction requiring savings of £1,774,940. The report provides broad proposals for securing the savings, but these are not specifically set out and there is a lack of medium term financial planning clearly linked to commissioning strategies.

### Response to last year's areas of improvement

<b>Area for improvement identified last year</b>	<b>Progress in 2013 - 14</b>
Taking forward the plan to modernise adult services, managing and mitigating the associated risks	Solid progress in modernising services for older people but limited for younger adults.
Evaluating the impact of signposting people to community based services	The number of people supported has fallen substantially but the council have not yet formally evaluated the impact of this for people.
The council needs to implement its review and then begin to remodel children's services.	Some progress, but further work needed. There has been a focus on, and progress in getting the basics right in relation to first contact arrangements and the quality of help and intervention. This will require continued close monitoring to maintain momentum.
Increase the number and range of foster carers available	Some progress: the number of foster carers has increased but there remains limited placement choice.
The performance of the fostering service in recruiting and supporting carers.	As above, there has been improvement in this area
Establishing a good range of community based children and family support services	Focus has been on improving access and frontline social work. This remains an area for development.

Improvement in the range of services for children with disabilities and placement choice for looked after children	This remains a significant area for improvement
Putting in place a clear strategy of sustaining the children's workforce	Key posts have now been filled and the use of agency staff has reduced significantly.
Review the application of DoLS thresholds	This has not yet been carried out and is recognised by the council as a priority for urgent attention.
Embed the quality assurance system	Whilst the council have made some improvements in this area, the framework developed is not yet embedded and it remains an area for improvement.
Capacity for contract monitoring	The council is working with the regional Commissioning Hub for monitoring of some provision, but this remains an area for continued development.
Clear financial planning which identifies how savings will be achieved and how risks will be mitigated	Some progress made: The council has invested in a new financial system that will enable clearer financial planning in the future but there is a lack of clear financial plans across social services and this remains an area for improvement.
Safely implementing change programmes	Significant improvement achieved: The council has invested in a development programme for its middle managers which has included the management of change. It has recognised the need to pace itself and delayed implementation in some instances.
Development of effective scrutiny with new members	Significant improvement achieved: A Member induction programme has been developed and implemented. Carers and Older Persons Champions have been nominated and key Members are part of the Older Adults Transformation Board.

Developing the use of the website.	More work needs to be done: There has been some improvement but there remains a lack of information available to download and no facilities for on-line low level assessment.

### **Visits and inspections undertaken during the year**

- National Inspection of safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour, within Anglesey County Council, ('looked after children inspection').
- National Review of Commissioning.
- Service visit to Plas Crigyll to view developments for people with dementia.

CSSIW met with senior officers of the council throughout the year to review social services performance and discuss progress with the areas for improvement identified in last year's performance evaluation. CSSIW also undertook inspections of regulated services run by the council and by independent operators. This included reviews of the Adoption Service and the in house Fostering Service. Detail on these is contained in published reports.

In addition the council's social services department were involved in:

- review of the closure of Ty Gwyn care home by the Older People's Commissioner; and
- National Youth Justice Inspection by HMIP (YJ).

### **Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year**

A number of specific areas for improvement have been identified in the body of this report. The council's progress in relation to these will be discussed with the council during regular engagement meetings in the coming year.

- Progress and impact of the review and modernisation of services for younger adults, in particular, services for people with learning disabilities.
- Progress with and impact of Older Adults transformation project.
- Impact of changes made to services for children with disabilities.
- Impact of the development of the Integrated Delivery Board.



## **Performance**

### **Shaping services**

#### **Adults**

The council has a clear vision of how it wishes to shape services for older adults. For example, last year's annual report set out 41 actions for development, the majority of which related to older adults, and six of which were completed, two are behind schedule and 33 remain in progress. However these actions are not underpinned by comprehensive needs assessments across all services and the council acknowledge its lack of capacity to do this. The council commissioned some needs mapping to underpin its older adult transformation programme via the Housing Support Partnership.

To also address this deficit, the council have begun working more closely with the third sector to develop stronger community links and collect feedback in order to work co-productively with citizens map needs.

Alongside this is a lack of detailed market analysis and of well-developed plans as to how the council will develop the market to support its transformation plans. There is still considerable improvement required to move to a focus on outcomes rather than inputs and processes. Strategic commissioning informed by needs mapping and market development remains a key area for improvement.

The lack of clear strategic commissioning plans across social services makes it difficult for the council to align its medium term financial plans. There has been progress made in understanding unit costs for domiciliary care and this has led to the setting of unit price for independent providers which will enable future market development. Overall the budget for 2013-14 was overspent, but older adults budget was underspent which the council attributed to its strategic intent to move away from residential care. The planned review of services for people with learning disabilities during 2013-14 was postponed and the transformation programme contains little reference to the needs of people with mental health needs or people with physical disabilities or sensory impairments.

The council is working well with its partners and key stakeholders. In partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) it has established an integrated delivery board which will be the first of its kind in the region. The council is also working well with its partners on its older adults programme, engaging with local communities and the third sector; for example, the director has met with Town

and Community councils as part of consultation on its older adults modernisation programme. It has also begun to reinvigorate its links with independent providers.

## **Children**

The council has continued to focus on improving its core functions in terms of assessment and safeguarding of children and young people and has consolidated its performance over the last year. This is evidence that this strategy is creating a stronger foundation on which to build change, but it has left little capacity to re-shape services. The council has a vision for the type of children's services it wants for the future, with a focus on productive interventions with children and families to ensure better outcomes and moving away from being process driven. However, whilst a commissioning strategy for children's services has been developed it has not yet been fully implemented.

Last year, the director's report outlined 22 priorities for improvement in children's services, of which six (27%) have been achieved, 14 are in progress and two are behind schedule. A significant number of these actions are being carried forward to 2014-15. For example, in 2013-14, the Family Support Service was remodelled but will not be fully operational until late 2014. This service, along with the service for children with disabilities, need to be embedded and the impact of the changes evaluated.

Additional resources have been prioritised to enable the development of more cost effective models, for example the appointment of a marketing and recruitment officer for foster care. The children's services on out of county placements budget was overspent, but overall the budget for Children's Services had a slight underspend.

### **Areas of progress**

- Progress in implementing transformation programme for older adults.
- Engagement with key stakeholders including people who use services and elected members in relation to older adults.
- Remodelling of family support and children with disability services.
- Recruitment of foster carers.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Ensure remodelling of family support service and service for children with disabilities is fully operating and outcomes evaluated.
- Review and transformation of services for younger adults.

- Increase the range of services available for children, young people and their families and reduce out of area placements
- Strengthen market and demand analysis to inform commissioning and financial planning.

## **Getting help**

### **Adults**

During the year, the Council dealt with 5,061 new referrals in a timely manner and is at an early stage of developing its single point of access in partnership with the NHS to assist citizens in getting help.

There has been a significant reduction over the last two years in the number of older people who are supported to live at home and the council are now significantly below the average for Wales (54.4 older people per 1000 compared to a Wales average of 74.5). This is also demonstrated by the council's analysis of domiciliary care hours which have seen a 47% reduction in the number of older people receiving domiciliary support from 1340 people in 2011-12 to 630 in 2013-14 which equates to a reduction of 99,440 hours. There has also been a reduction in the number of people supported to live in a care home. This significant reduction in community support cannot be attributed to the impact of an increased focus on reablement alone and may reflect the council's application of its eligibility criteria; the council assert that this is evidence of their conscious effort to strengthen more appropriate community support by referring and signposting people to other services in the third sector. These developments are in line with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and it is expected that all councils will focus on supporting fewer people, with more complex needs. However, this reduction is much larger than elsewhere in Wales and the council will need to fully evaluate the impact of this to ensure people are not being left with unmet needs.

There has been an improvement in the number of people who have a review of their care and this is above the Wales average. There has also been an improvement in the number of carers who are offered an assessment of their needs.

The council have been working with the Older People's Council to receive feedback on its leaflets. There have been some improvements made to the council's website but there remains scope for improvement such as the use of online assessment.

### **Children**

A communication strategy for children's services has been developed and now needs to be fully implemented. There has been progress in improving information on the council's website including the use of YouTube videos.

The council have collaborated with the other north Wales councils to commission advocacy on a regional basis. During the LAC review, some concern was expressed that access rates are low and the advocacy service is now less responsive to local need. The council will need to monitor this.

The council has worked hard to stabilise its social work team and has carried out a fundamental review of its first contact arrangements, including analysis of re-referral rates which has resulted in improved performance. Whilst it has received an increased number of contacts and referrals during 2013-14 (31% increase in referrals) there has been sharp reduction in the number that proceed to allocation (down from 74.8% to 56.0% which is significantly below the Wales average of 75.5%). As in adult services, the council report that more children/young people and its families are being signposted on to other agencies including the 'Team round the Family'. The council will need to monitor the outcomes for families of this strategy.

There has also been a small decrease in the number of initial and core assessments carried out. The reduction in assessments alongside improvements in process, performance management and increases in workforce and training have enabled the council has been able to improve its performance in the completion of initial assessments within 7 days to 90.9%.. Performance in the completion of core assessments, within 35 working days however, has deteriorated from 80.5% to 71.7% and this is now below the Wales average. Improved performance in the completion of reviews has been maintained, with 95.7% being held within timescales. The council has yet to realise its aspiration to have capacity to focus on intensive social work interventions that facilitate sustainable change for families.

### **Areas of progress**

- Development of single point of access with co-location in Llangefni.
- Review of public information leaflets in partnership with citizens.
- Carers assessments.
- Performance in relation to completion of reviews in children's services.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Strengthen arrangements with community based services to collate and capture data in relation to needs and access
- Completion of core assessments within statutory timescales.

## **The services provided**

### **Adults**

Quality assurance of services is an under-developed area for the council. The report by the Older People's Commissioner and an Independent Management Review commissioned by the Council that were carried out during 2013/14 following a home closure highlighted the need to more consistently monitor quality and share intelligence across health and social care .

The council continues to directly operate 6 care homes and the care provided here is satisfactory, however CSSIW have expressed concern about the lack of investment in the environment of these homes. The council is currently considering and consulting on future plans for the Homes. The development of Plas Crigyll to provide both a care home and community support people with dementia is evidence of improvement following investment and service redesign in line with the aims of the council's transformation programme. During the year, the council has also further reshaped its internal home care provision to focus on reablement and there has been increasing proportion of domiciliary care purchased from the independent sector. To support this shift, the council has increased its engagement with independent providers and established a regular forum; it now needs to strengthen its mechanisms to monitor the quality of this provision.

Over the last year, the council has increased its efforts to engage with older people who use social care services, and with other citizens who have an interest in the transformation programme. This is evident from the consultation on service intentions document and the 'No Place Like Home' conference held in September 2013. The result of this work is that the council does now have a comprehensible plan to transform its services for older citizens informed by the views of local communities.

The council has also consulted with carers to develop its carers strategy which has recently been approved by elected members. In their feedback, carers requested more services and in particular greater access to short breaks (respite); the Council report that it is working with its partners to address this.

The council, in partnership with Tai Eryri, commissioned independent evaluation of its first extra care scheme, Penucheldre which reported in November 2013. There was very positive feedback from people living at the scheme but report concluded that the council's delay in putting care arrangements in place led to it missing a vital opportunity to divert people from residential care into extra care accommodation resulting in a high number of people living at the scheme who do not require support. It will be several years before this imbalance can be redressed and the council need to learn from this for future developments.

The focus of improvement activity in adult services has been on older adults. Whilst the council states its intention to move towards citizen directed support, there has been little development in this area and whilst the number of people in receipt of direct payments is slowly increasing it remains low at 44 people. The review of services for people with learning disability was postponed and the council need to make progress with this.

In adult services, 80% of the council's workforce is Welsh speaking and the council is able to provide a Welsh language service to adults who request this.

## **Children**

The number of Looked after Children has remained similar to last year and below the average for Wales. Placement stability is good but there remains lack of placement choice for looked after children resulting in children (29%) being placed out of county. However, the council report that 34% of placements are with independent foster agencies and 28% with its own foster carers.( This is an improvement and reflects the council's hard work to achieve its target for increasing its number of foster carers.

The council's improvements children's services has not been informed by engagement with children, young people or their families. There have been some cases of decision making which have led to complaints and also a child practice review (to be concluded in 2014). The council recognises this issue, which it attributes to the relative inexperience of its frontline managers and social workers. In response, they have appointed a quality assurance manager with frequent audits being carried out. The accountability of team managers has been increased through a programme of coaching, mentoring and training alongside regular performance monitoring meetings. The use of an evidence based risk tool is also being embedded to improve consistency in decision making.

During the year CSSIW inspected both the council's adoption and its fostering services and the findings were broadly positive. In addition, the council were inspected as part of the looked after children inspection. This inspection found a lack of evidence of the voice of children / young people being involved in reviews.

Whilst good progress has been made on stabilising the workforce in children's services, it continues to lack resilience due the small size of teams which means that staff absence can quickly affect performance and outcomes. For example, staff absence has resulted in a dip in performance on pathway plans for care leavers. Children's services have had difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced Welsh speaking staff however, 89% of children's services staff are now Welsh speaking.

Services for children with disabilities have been remodelled through the integration of health and social care staff and the appointment of an integrated services manager with a formal partnership agreement in place. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this development for children and their families. Another new development that started in 2013-14 is the Coedlys project providing housing and support for vulnerable young people including care leavers. Transition for young people from children's to adult services is also an area for improvement and the council anticipate that the new senior management arrangements will facilitate this along with creation of a dedicated transition coordinator role.

There has been a reduction in the overall number of complaints received in adult services and a slight increase in children's services. 42% were not responded to within statutory timescales and there was an increase (from 6 to 11) in complaints proceeding to stage 2.

### **Areas of progress**

- Monitoring of quality of frontline practice in children's services.
- Consultation with communities.
- Foster care recruitment.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Quality monitoring.
- Development of services for younger adults.
- Placement choice for looked after children.
- Establishing a good range of community based children and family support services.
- Transition between children's and adult services.

## **The effect on people's lives**

### **Adults**

The council commissioned an independent review of its safeguarding arrangements which reported evidence of good partnership working. There has been progress in establishing a joint Adult Safeguarding Board with Gwynedd in readiness to respond to the expectations in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act; the council has also contributed to regional work in relation to safeguarding. However, whilst the number of adult safeguarding referrals completed was at a three year low (90) there has been a downturn in performance in relation to the percentage of adult protection referrals completed where the risk has been managed. Performance here is below the Wales average and significantly below the council's own target. The council does not have its own policy or procedures for dealing with Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications and the number of

applications remains very low. The council has plans for the head of children's services to have oversight of safeguarding across social services.

The council is continuing to improve its focus on promoting independence. Last year it supported 30 fewer people in care homes, re-launched its reablement service and re-provided its community meals service by commissioning this service from local suppliers; however it is unclear if the significant reduction in the number of adults being supported at home is evidence of the council's increased focus on promoting independence. In 2011-12, 438 people were provided with a reablement service and this has steadily increased over the last three years with 42% of people not requiring ongoing support. However there has also been a 19% reduction between 2011-12 and 2013-14 in the number of people provided with equipment. Allied to this, the council have received feedback that it needs to improve its timeliness in providing equipment to facilitate hospital discharge.

There has been continued development of Model Mon Locality model to provide seamless health and social care support to people; this is being enhanced through use of the Intermediate Care Fund.

## **Children**

The council continue to improve its performance with 98.8% of decisions on referrals being made within 24 hours which is above the Wales average. The number of children on the child protection register fell during 2013-14.

Placement stability for children looked after has further improved but performance in relation to change of school has deteriorated. The council ascribe this to the lack of placements available locally. There has also been a decline in the educational attainment of looked after children, but it is acknowledged that performance here can be affected by one young person due to the low numbers of young people looked after.

For looked after children, the council completed 90.5% of statutory visits on time; these visits are an integral part of safeguarding and promoting wellbeing and performance here is above the Wales average performance. Access to primary healthcare is good and this is a positive reflection of partnership working and corporate parenting. The council have supported nine children to be returned to the responsibility of their parents or to have their care order discharged.

A Short Quality Screening inspection of Youth offending work to assess the quality and effectiveness of casework in January 2014 concluded that oversight of the work, in particular to safeguard children and young people was not effective enough.



Working in partnership with Gwynedd Council, improvements have been made to the information available about the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) including information available on the LSCB website. However, the LSCB is not carrying out case audits and needs to do in order to assure itself of the quality of practice.

The creation of the children's services quality assurance manager post in 2012 has led on the implementation of a quality assurance framework. This has sharpened the focus of managers on key performance indicators but more work is needed to develop an increased focus on quality issues and in ensuring that frontline managers take direct ownership of quality of practice issues. This is particularly important given the relative inexperience of teams.

The council is working in partnership with North Wales Commissioning Hub to develop a quality framework for commissioned children's placements.services.

### **Areas of progress**

- Performance management in children's services.
- Increased focus on promoting independence for older adults.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Development of quality monitoring framework across adults and children's services.
- Raise awareness and improve practice in relation to DOLS.

## **Capacity**

### **Delivering Social Services**

There have been improvements in the stability of the workforce with key management appointments in both children's and adult services allied with a reduction in the use of agency staff. Children's services staff retention has improved from 88.4% to 91.3%.

The workforce development unit has been moved out of the direct management of social services to become part of a wider corporate team. The head of service report notes the need to monitor this transition and to ensure close links are maintained. . A series of management development sessions have been held for first line and middle managers focusing on team and service development. 68% of the social care workforce is appropriately qualified.

The reduction in the number of people being supported at home coupled with more support being purchased from the independent sector has led to unused excess

contract hours for the in-house service. This has required significant engagement and negotiation with staff and trade unions to encourage staff to move to more flexible ways of working. It has also had an impact on financial resources.

Performance management arrangements are improving, but Anglesey is a small council and its lack of capacity affects its ability to develop, monitor and quality assure its service delivery. This issue was identified as the highest risk in the risk register for the older adults transformation programme risk register and evidence of its impact is the significant delay in its plans to develop a brokerage service.

The greatest improvements have been in children's services where there has been a significant focus on monitoring frontline practice and this attention needs to extend to adult services and for both services to increase their focus on outcomes. However, a number of complaints and ensuing investigations in children's services as highlighted the lack of experience in frontline teams. Plans have been developed over the last 12 months to address the lack of regular performance reporting, including budget and activity monitoring. This includes the introduction of a new corporate finance system. In addition, the council have put in place twice yearly service challenge workshops, led by the deputy chief executive.

The monitoring of commissioned services remains under-developed and resourced and is a key area for improvement. As a step towards this, the council have developed a Peer Service Monitors scheme and have recruited older citizens as volunteers to provide an independent view of service quality in some services for older people.

The council's corporate parenting strategy has not yet been approved and priority should be given to achieving this; however it is positive to note that the first Laming visit by elected members to frontline teams has been carried out.

### **Areas of progress**

- Change management workshops for managers.
- Stability in children's services teams.
- Peer monitors scheme.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Quality monitoring of commissioned services.
- Approval and implementation of Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- Outcome focused performance monitoring, particularly in adult services.

### **Providing direction**

The director reports strong support for social services across the newly elected council and there is evidence of significant improvement in leadership and direction for all social services functions, being driven by the new council. The council has introduced a formal induction programme for all new elected members and informal development sessions were provided for members of the Housing and Social Services committee. A member champion for carers and for older adults have been appointed in addition to the portfolio holder and elected members have been involved in a number of social services programme boards and its complaints panel.

Improvements in the training and support for members have enabled scrutiny committees, and elected members on the work programme boards, to provide constructive challenge to officers. However, the need to engage widely and build consensus has slowed the pace of change. For example, the plans outlined in last year's annual report with regard to developing older adults' accommodation were not approved by the council until July 2014. Now that the new council has established itself, there needs to be a step change in the pace of transformation across social services.

It has been a challenging year for the director in establishing a new senior management team following council restructuring; this led to the recruitment of a new head of adult services, with the post-holder taking up post in May 2014. The effectiveness of the new leadership arrangements in driving forward improvement will be an area for both the authority and CSSIW to monitor over the next twelve months.

The council has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest spend per head of population on social services across Wales. How the council responds to budget pressures over the next two years will be critical to the embedding of the improvements made over the last two years and the continued need for substantial modernisation of its social services functions.

### **Areas of progress**

- Strong political support for service transformation.
- Delivery of induction programme for elected members.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Step change in the pace of service transformation.