



COUNCIL – 17TH JANUARY 2023

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING 2021-2022

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The attached report was presented to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd November 2022. The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with the key messages that have been identified in the preparation of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services and Housing for 2021-22.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Part 8 of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) requires Directors of Social Services in Wales to publish an annual report about the exercise of the local authority's social services functions. The attached report has been written in a format that is compliant with the requirements of the SSWBA.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Council are asked to endorse and adopt the report prior their submission to Welsh Government, Care Inspectorate Wales and publication on the Authority's website.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Statutory guidance requires the Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing to present the Annual Report to Council for its adoption.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report is an opportunity for the Statutory Director of Social Services and Housing to provide a summary of the effectiveness of Caerphilly County Borough Council in delivering Social Services to its citizens.
- 5.2 The format and content of the report is prescribed by CIW and outlines in some detail how we addressed our priorities for the financial years in question.

- 5.3 Whilst the early part of 2021/22 still required us to prioritise our resources to the covid response, the latter part of the year saw an easing of the covid situation and the first steps back to some kind of normality.
- 5.4 Unsurprisingly the pandemic has left us with a significant backlog of requests for assessments/services that we now need to address. One of the key challenges that has emerged for both ourselves and our independent sector partners is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining care staff. As the pandemic drew to a close a number of carers took the opportunity to retire or to move onto pastures new, and replacing them in adequate numbers, has proved a real challenge. In addition significant number of vacancies in the retail and hospitality sectors means competition for good quality staff is fierce. We are working hard locally, with other local authorities and with Welsh Government to try to rectify what is a UK wide problem.
- 5.5 A key development for us has been the introduction of our Caerphilly Cares service which was a part of the Council's response to the pandemic. Caerphilly Cares has taken the basic principles of the Social Services Wellbeing Act (holding meaningful conversations and strength based assessments) and applied them to anyone who contacts the Authority for help and support. This ensures we get a better understanding of why people are in need of support and whether that support needs to come from Social Services or the broader Authority.
- 5.6 Despite a significant number of challenges the Directorate's performance has been strong throughout the financial year and we have been able to return to some of our performance reporting mechanisms. This report also highlights how we addressed our key priorities for 2021/22 and our priorities for 2022/23.
- 5.7 The key achievements for 20/21 listed in the report include;
- We transferred our Community Connectors and Volunteer coordinator to Caerphilly Cares to focus on prevention and enabling people to be part of their community.
 - We established a group of parents of people with autism to help inform our practice.
 - We expanded the Home First ethos to include Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil and secured funding to expand the service to cover the Grange University Hospital
 - We implemented the nationally agreed 6 pathways in respect of Discharge to Assess and Recover to improve outcomes for individuals
 - We supported unpaid carers, using the small grants scheme. Issued 194 leisure memberships 28 of which were to young carers
 - Increased the number of unpaid carers on our mailing list from 1303 to 1727 organised numerous events and individual activities in which 1388 people participated.
 - We supported the expansion of the My Support Team (MYST) service into Newport to complete the regional development.
 - We embedded the new All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
 - We introduced a Corporate Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool for all Council Service areas.
 - We continued to second staff to undertake the Social Work Degree.
 - We opened a coffee shop, staffed by individuals who previously attended day services to enable us to move towards employing people with a learning disability.

- We contributed to the development of regional plans for shared residential provision for young people in crisis.

5.8 In terms of 2022/23 our key priorities include;

- To embed the intake model of assessment for care to promote people's independence, choice and control.
- To increase the take up of Direct Payments to allow individuals' choice of how their care and support is delivered to best meet their needs.
- To work with the Health Board to increase capacity in the community
- To work with regional colleagues to develop a framework to support unpaid carers.
- To progress the development of the respite houses for adults and for children.
- To expand children's residential care and supported accommodation for young people across the Borough.
- To continue to support the National Transfer Scheme by offering accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- Commission an independent organisation to produce a model of day services for the future.
- Further expand South East Wales Shared Lives Scheme to provide a service for older adults with mental health problems.
- Work with partners to develop mechanisms to allow individuals to establish and maintain friendships.
- Continuation of the secondment scheme for staff to undertake the Social Work Degree.
- To employ people with a learning disability on the Council's terms and conditions.
- To expand children's residential care and supported accommodation for young people across the Borough (*also in Section 5*).

5.9 Paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7 are by no means an exhaustive list and Members are encouraged to read the report to get the full picture of the achievements and ambition.

5.10 **Conclusion**

Once adopted by Council the Annual Director's Reports will be made available to Welsh Government, CIW, members of the public, partner agencies and stakeholders.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no assumptions made or presumed in this report.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This report has no decision-making requests and an integrated impact assessment does not apply.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In 2021/22 the Directorate remained within its allocation, a position helped significantly by the allocation of grants from Welsh Government to assist the pressures experienced during and after the Pandemic.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 In order to produce the Annual Director's Report a wide range of information sources are taken into account including feedback from our customers and regulators/ inspectors. This feedback has been incorporated into the Annual Directors Report where relevant.

- 10.2 This report was presented to Social Services Scrutiny at its meeting on the 22nd November 2022. The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:-

- "The scrutiny committee asked what are the current issues and challenges specifically in relation to staffing and resources for domiciliary care and children services are there plans in place to mitigate any issues.

The committee were advised that in relation to domiciliary care there are 95 people waiting for 648 hours of care, there is an independent provider who has notified us that they will terminate their contract on the 5th December and they currently provide 850 hours in the south east of the county borough. Members were advised of the efforts to move some of the hours to another provider and to also TUPE staff across to our in-house service, with the offer to instead have the Council's terms and conditions, this has resulted in 32 staff who have accepted. This has taken considerable effort by our HART team and Human Resources. There are still vacancies however and we have attended recent fairs to speak to people interested in care work, there will be a major recruitment campaign with advertising in cinemas, buses and supermarkets.

In terms of children services there has been an increase in referrals and contacts that are challenging and complex in nature, this will then result in more complex needs which are a resource issue. The recruitment of staff is a significant issue with salary levels a key factor. We have developed a range of preventative services with early intervention and support very important, the budget settlement and future budget decisions may also be a risk.

- Members commented that they felt distanced from carers and would like to have the opportunity to meet with them to discuss how they feel and ensure they understand how important they are. Officer agreed to consider this and see how this could be done.
- A member recalled how previously that rota visits (now discontinued) were carried out and allowed members to visit residents at care homes and day centres which gave them a feel for what was going on and the opportunity to speak to residents. Members were advised that this would be a backward step, it

was stopped due to the lack of interest and participation, it also requires significant administrative support, which is no longer available.

- There was a specific query regarding Home First the ABUHB funded service, is it available until our care is in place and does it work well. Members were advised that this is a small service for the Caerphilly Basin area and will stay in place until CCBC brokered care is in place. In addition, Members asked if the recent agreement to increase the fees to providers had been passed on to staff. The scrutiny committee were assured that the funding had gone straight to the staff, and they were paid virtually the same hourly rate as CCB staff. However, in terms of the staff who have transferred over to CCB, we were able to offer some other terms and conditions that are better, such as rota patterns, we pay for their registration and have a good pension scheme etc. The reason the domiciliary care company had decided to cease working in the county borough was because they needed more hours to be viable but could not recruit the staff to support those hours.
- The scrutiny committee sought clarity on the term meaningful conversations and strength based assessments to give members a better understanding of why people are in need and what support they need. Members were advised that we provide and purchase a wide range of services. Essentially however people contact social services when someone needs support, they may not know what type of support and that is where the meaningful conversations take place alongside the strength based assessment. This is done alongside the family of friends to determine what support and resources they already have and what is in the community. To come to a reasonable outcome of what services they can expect, who will provide it and the costs involved.
- Members mentioned the coffee shop in Pontllanfraith which provides rewarding work experience for people with learning disabilities and the intention to provide paid employment. Members asked if there will be opportunities for those not able to do this kind of work, to have some kind of meaningful activity. It was confirmed that the intention is to employ 12 people on council terms and conditions after Christmas on a part time basis. It is however recognised that this isn't for everyone and the day services report will hopefully address this matter.
- The scrutiny committee asked if there are any concerns in relation to the financial structures for work with our partners, are they sustainable in view of the potential difficult financial climate ahead. Members were advised the majority of partnership funding is via the Regional Partnership Board, which members will be aware of from previous reports. The grant funding that comes from Welsh Government is significant. The financial climate is likely to impact upon public sector settlements, which we will know in the next few months, and we are expecting the grant funding to be reduced. However we don't know how much but the schemes that are funded may have to reduce or stop altogether, but as yet we don't know. Members commented that there are concerns for organisations that employ specialist staff that they may not be able to retain them.
- Members queried if we have looked at the homeless policy in terms of the causation and triggers for homelessness which apply to social services. Officers advised that the main issue is trying to get homeless people to engage with housing support. The supporting people will work with people to try and prevent homelessness and we have a rapid re-housing strategy.

- The scrutiny committee asked if we have plans to offer ‘smart’ accommodation as available in other local authorities. Members were advised that we had previously offered this but it underused so was converted to full time accommodation. However, we do offer the Telecare services which can be installed in any existing accommodation.

Having debated the report the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted its contents prior to its submission to Council”.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Part 8 of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

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Consultees: Cllr Sean Morgan, Leader of Council
Cllr James Pritchard, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
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Councillor Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care
Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, and Property
Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure, and Green Spaces
Councillor Julian Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
Councillor Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member Finance and Performance
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Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director of Economy and Environment
Jo Williams, Head of Adult Services
Gareth Jenkins, Head of Children’s Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Annual Report of the Director of Social Services and Housing 2021-2022