



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

# Performance Evaluation Report 2013–14

City and County of Swansea  
Social Services

October 2014

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

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

**Local Authority: City and County of Swansea**

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

## **Summary**

The council is making significant progress with its plans for transformational change within adult and children's services and has gained strong political and corporate support for the changes being undertaken. This is evident from the effective scrutiny arrangements that are in place for adult and children's social services. The strategy for transforming social services has been presented to full council and there has been engagement with elected members with specific responsibilities.

In terms of delivery, the transformation of adult social services has realised positive results in that the balance of care has moved from the longer stay residential care model to one that is community based and focussed on reablement. The council has invested its resources in a model of social care which is outcome focussed and promotes prevention and early intervention in order to support and optimise independence for people. Services work to identify and support strengths rather than focusing solely on need, building individual resilience and that of the local community. This is a refreshing and positive approach which empowers people to maintain their independence, their voice and control.

There are strategic business plans in place for both adult and children's services which align to the council's single integrated plan. These focus on the development of the best solutions for delivering support and services that meet the needs of people in a flexible and person centred way which is cost effective and of best value. Children's services are the first in Wales to adopt the signs of safety approach for all teams. This strengths based safety model, has empowered social work practitioners to be solution focused in their practice not just within child protection but broadly across all teams. Due to the efficacy of this approach there are plans to adopt it universally within social care. This year children's services report the best performance results in recent years.

There is a clear understanding of the challenges ahead which include the target of saving £45 million across the whole council in the next three years. There is also the challenge of managing increasing demand whilst ensuring existing services are provided in a way that ensures better outcomes for people.

The role of the chief social services officer has become established, and whilst not structurally conforming to the Welsh Government's guidance, is able to meet the responsibilities of the statutory director for social services this describes. There is strong leadership in place and the council is confident about making the changes necessary in order to meet the challenge laid down by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. The chief officer's report identifies the areas where progress has been made but also highlights future challenges against a picture of changing demographics, deprivation and poverty and an ageing and frail population.

The council has prepared an action plan to support the underlying principles of the Welsh Government's strategic framework for the Welsh language within the social care workforce, entitled "*Mwy na Geiriau*", "*More Than Just Words*".

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

CSSIW undertook a number of site visits to adult services this year. These included the community mental health team base at central clinic, Swansea carer's centre, to a children's team session on signs of safety case mapping exercise and wellbeing panel scrutiny sessions for both adults and children. These visits were in addition to the annual programme of inspections carried out on the council's regulated care settings and on the independent services for both adults and children in the Swansea area. For this inspection year, regulatory inspectors undertaking the inspections reported that no non-compliance notices were issued.

The council participated in a thematic review across all councils in Wales for commissioning arrangements; a national inspection of safeguarding and care planning for looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours ('looked after children inspection'); and a review of the deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS) under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Meetings with both heads of service and quarterly meetings with the strategic director and the senior management team have been held throughout the year.

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

The Council continues to demonstrate positive improvements across all service areas for adults and children. It is clear about its priorities and about how services should be shaped for the future. The council has responded well to last year's areas for improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor performance against the key objectives set out in the adult and children's services business plans.

<b>Area for improvement identified last year</b>	<b>Progress in 2013 - 14</b>
To continue to monitor the balance between supporting older people in their own homes and admission to residential care beds.	The council reports a change in the balance from long term residential care to a service which is more community based and focused on reablement. Fewer people have been admitted to traditional residential care. The use and availability of assessment beds has been extended. There are plans to increase the availability of home care to assist people to remain at home for longer.
To continue to make progress in outcome/recovery based care planning in mental health services.	The community mental health service is continuing to work to a rehabilitation and recovery model with assessment and care planning undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.
Improvement in the uptake of carer's assessments as part of the preventative agenda.	There is improved performance with carers' assessments. Swansea works closely with and core funds the Carer's Centre which is involved directly in undertaking carer's assessments.
To reduce the number of children becoming looked after through preventative and supportive strategies	The number of looked after children has reduced. There is a safe looked after children reduction strategy in place.
<p>To increase performance in statutory visits and reviews to looked after children, children on the child protection register and children in need.</p> <p>Improve the timeliness of core group meetings.</p>	<p>The council reports its best headline performance figures to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fall in numbers of looked after children;</li> <li>• reduced rate of referrals and re-referrals;</li> <li>• stability of placements;</li> <li>• timeliness of initial assessments and core assessments; and</li> <li>• reviews and timescales held to statutory timescales.</li> </ul>
Reduce staff sickness rates across children's services.	This is a well recognised issue being addressed across the council. Recording processes have been

	improved to give greater accuracy. All sickness and absence issues are managed corporately.
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### **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 the discussed during regular engagement meetings, and site visits in the coming year. Other areas for follow up are listed below.

- Progress on the modernisation and integration of adult social care.
- Early intervention and prevention services.
- Overview and scrutiny arrangements.
- Outcomes and recommendations of the looked after children inspection and the review of deprivation of liberty safeguards.
- Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme progress.
- CSSIW will contribute to a WAO led review to examine whether councils are effectively supporting older people to live independently, including through joined up working across health and social care.

## **Performance**

### **Shaping services**

#### **Adults**

In order to develop coordinated and responsive services which meet the needs of the changing population the transformation programme aims to deliver corporate sustainability of services. There is a focus on community support and preventative care, reablement and reclaiming of social work practice. The council is now moving to the implementation stage of the transformation programme. Relationships with partners in health and third sector are good. At a strategic level, there is a joint statement of intent with health which details plans for the integration of health and social services at the intermediate tier of care. A joint integration board has been developed with health, which will link to the Western Bay programme board. Beneath this there will be an integration steering group, which will ensure any work streams already in existence co-ordinate activity to agreed timescales.

The council has a strong commissioning framework for adult services. People in receipt of services continue to benefit from robust contract monitoring and commissioning arrangements which focus on quality and better outcomes. Recently there has been a re-structuring of these arrangements, with officers aligned to geographical community teams. There are individual commissioning

plans for all adult service areas including mental health, disability, and older people. The strategies have been developed with stakeholder groups to capture the views of the community and to direct service development towards services that people really want and value.

The authority was included in CSSIW's national review of the effectiveness of the commissioning for adult social care. The focus of the review was on the commissioning of care and support for people with dementia and their carers. Significant strengths and positive outcomes were noted in a number of areas for the council. CSSIW visited the Swansea Carers Centre and engaged with staff and carers who received support. There was excellent feedback from people regarding the value of the support they received and how it had shaped and affected their lives. The council consults and engages in meaningful ways with users and carers of services in order to shape future services and models of care and support. An independent review of older people services has been initiated following recent consultation feedback.

The council continues to make progress on an ambitious programme of change whilst also being the host authority and a strong partner of the Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme. This programme was established in 2012 and aims to bring together the City and County of Swansea, the county borough councils of Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board to deliver joint integrated services models with innovative and cost effective services. It is underpinned by the principles of shared best practice and the pooling of resources and expertise to deliver on savings. The focus last year was to review and test the case for collaborative working and make progress with joint business cases. The work programme has numerous separate projects including adult learning disability, adult mental health, community services for older people and a cross cutting project focussed on contracting and procurement. The programme is complex and very ambitious and will require full commitment from all partners in order to deliver the anticipated outcomes.

## **Children**

The council also has a strong commissioning framework for children's services. It continues to make good progress with its early intervention and preventative strategies to reduce escalating need. There is strong operational and strategic leadership in place and a five year safe looked after children reduction strategy which works to ensure better outcomes for looked after children. There is a focus on strengthening care management practice, using the signs of safety approach, together with a commitment to delivering financially sustainable services.

The council recognises that permanence planning within a stable and supportive family environment at an early stage is critical to achieving best outcomes for children. It works well with its partners to make sure that children and young

people receive the support they need at the earliest opportunity. There are plans to work effectively with high quality local services in order to develop a range of specialist placements and adoption opportunities to achieve permanence for children, especially those with vulnerabilities and more complex or high risk needs.

Child and family services reports improved performance results compared to last year. Swansea is using its performance information and quality assurance processes to inform practice and develop services. This is evident in the progress made against performance indicators such as timeliness of initial and core assessments and the reducing rate of referrals and re-referrals. Statutory reviews and conferences have also been held on time. The council's emphasis on early intervention and prevention has ensured that children and families are able to gain access to timely help and support and has reduced the need to use more complex statutory services.

### **Areas of progress**

- Safe looked after children reduction strategy.
- Strong user engagement and consultation.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Make progress with the commissioning and contract monitoring re-structuring in adult services.
- Evaluate the independent review of older people's services.
- Make further progress with the transformation of adult social care.
- Make further progress within the Western Bay Programme.

### **Getting help**

#### **Adults**

People are able to get advice and information regarding adult social care services through a single point of contact. In order to improve and simplify access the council has reviewed its assessment formats. The website has also been developed and is easy to navigate. There is a wealth of accessible and easy to read information about all services provided, supported by leaflets and information sheets that can be downloaded. The recent changes to the unified assessment process have simplified care management and promotes a focus on the individual. This provides a person centred plan of care which is flexible, responsive and proportionate. The signs of safety approach used within children's services are to be rolled out within adult services.

Carers receive good support and advice through the carer's centre. This year saw an increase in the number of carer's assessments being offered and undertaken.



The centre was identified as an example of good practice during the national review of commissioning. It provides benefits advice, advocacy, respite opportunities, carers support groups, newsletters, events, volunteering, life skills, training and development, and support for former carers.

There has been a significant increase in demand for mental health services reported by the community mental health team members. The mental health measure arrangements have been implemented well in Swansea, but this has affected the referrals being received directly to the teams for assessment. The relationships with primary care services are generally good although more work needs to be done with some GPs to ensure that people can get the right level of care they need at an earlier stage. The Western Bay mental health work stream aims to respond to the increase in demand across the three local authorities and the health board, which will also have to consider the associated staffing and resource issues.

Swansea has developed an action plan to support a phased implementation of the measures needed to comply with the Welsh Government Strategic framework for Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care."Mwy Na Geiriau"/ "More Than Just Words". Social Services have a Welsh language champion in post to help plan the implementation. They have updated their directory of Welsh and other language speakers.

## **Children**

The arrangements for managing referrals and initial assessments are strong. The central advice, referral and assessment team is the initial contact and referral point for families. The team provides a comprehensive range of information and signposting to children, young people and their families on the services provided, how to get help and what to expect from any support or intervention. Information on advocacy and the complaints procedure is also available. All concerns are referred on to the assessment teams.

This year there has been a marked improvement in performance across the board. In relation to completion of core assessments within statutory timescales these increased from 70% in 2012-13 to 82% in 2013-14. Initial assessments also improved from 84% to 91% and are now well above the Wales average. The quality of assessments is focused more on outcomes for children. Children and families can be assured that the council have a strong focus on children who are looked after by them. The safe looked after children strategy has achieved a further reduction in the number of children looked after from 588 in 2012-13 to 538 in 2013-14. This is further evidence of a strong emphasis on permanency. The use of signs of safety and a solution focussed approach have facilitated a greater understanding of the unique and complex issues that contribute to children needing to be looked after. The council has reviewed its looked after children

reviewing service which has resulted in an improvement in the number of reviews held on time: from 83% in 2012-13 rising to 98% in 2013-14.

### **Areas of progress**

- Performance improvements in the carrying out of initial and core assessments, and statutory reviews of looked after children.

### **The services provided**

#### **Adults**

Peoples' independence, choice, voice and control are supported by a broad range of services. Community resilience has been identified as a key factor by the council in ensuring community networks are able to give support from local resources as opposed to formal social care arrangements. The community connectors project puts people in touch with community resources and helps people stay independent and reduce social isolation. This project is a vital component of the transformation of services.

People are able to benefit from the use of integrated services via the community hubs. These have improved care pathways and joint liaison with health, GP and primary care services. An intermediate care tier has been developed with close working arrangements between the health board and domiciliary care providers to ensure that home care support is provided in a timely way in order to facilitate safe discharge from hospital. A joint statement of intent with health has been agreed to develop intermediate care services which will be funded through the Western Bay intermediate care fund. The integrated Gower domiciliary care team have successfully raised capacity in difficult to reach areas. Residential reablement services are utilising assessment beds together with beds in community hospitals to meet more complex needs.

Performance in delayed transfers of care for social care reasons has slightly dipped this year; however, it is well below the Wales average and therefore represents relatively good performance.

Together with its partners in Western Bay, the council is embarking on a programme of modernisation in its learning disability services. An opportunities appraisal, the 'Alder' review, has been undertaken to collate evidence and information to inform future planning.

The numbers of direct payments have increased in line with the reablement approach in order to increase the range of support on offer to people. A tendering exercise is underway to identify a brokerage service to help citizens self manage their own care arrangements.

CSSIW inspections of the council's own regulated services did not identify any non-compliance issues. Inspectors report that registered managers work well with the inspectorate and are responsive to any issues raised during an inspection.

## **Children**

Children, young people and families benefit from a wide range of services. There are strong partnerships with health, the police, as well as third sector organisations. There is clear evidence of good joint working arrangements that lead to positive outcomes for children and young people living with their families and for children who cannot remain with their family for the short or longer term. A range of services are available to provide care in a fostering environment, or in residential care when it is appropriate.

CSSIW observed a team mapping exercise using the signs of safety approach which underpins practice in children's services. All staff have received training and the benefits of this approach have been recognised. This is a whole service approach which will also be eventually rolled out across adult services. Practice leaders have been trained and there is strong corporate and management support to move from a risk averse culture. The session observed illustrated an open and mutually challenging approach to decisions and conclusions. There was a refreshing focus on positives and safety factors rather than just based on risk and the negatives of complex cases.

Foster Swansea has had significant success in recruitment which ensures a wider choice of placement for children aged 0 – 14 years. The service is now going to focus on the more difficult to place teenagers and young mothers with their babies. There is clinical psychologist support to the fostering team for three days per week, and the council has protected staffing numbers during the restructuring.

The recent inspection of the adoption service by CSSIW highlighted a number of areas for improvement. The regionalisation of the adoption service will commence in October 2014. This service will be led by Swansea and overseen by the Western Bay programme board.

The council commission placements within the independent sector locally which has enabled a number of young people to return from out of county. This year there has been a fall of 15 percentage points in the cost of out of county placements. The council's stable lives and brighter futures panel monitor all out of county placements.

## **Areas of progress**

- Development of the reablement service.
- Continued good performance in delayed transfers of care.
- Wider range of placement choice for children and sibling placements.
- The bringing in –house of out of county placements for children and young people.

## **Areas for improvement**

- Continue to work closely with health to develop community networks and to implement an integrated assessment framework.

## **Effect on people's lives**

### **Adults**

The arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults was revised and restructured in 2012-13. Within adult safeguarding there has been a move to a “safeguarding is everyone’s business” approach. This has resulted in better understanding and awareness of safeguarding across adult services. The responsibility for managing safeguarding referrals has now been delegated to care management teams and workload is more manageable as a result. The council ensures that vulnerable people using commissioned services are safeguarded through close scrutiny and governance of referral information. A specific group of senior officers has been put in place to review referrals that do not meet the threshold for formal adult safeguarding investigation.

All adult safeguarding referrals are taken by the intake team. The referrals are logged and sent to the appropriate officer to consider the risks to the vulnerable person are assessed, and decisions are taken to instigate appropriate action. The designated team for adults has been disbanded with adult protection officers being placed within community teams. The care home quality team still manages the overview for care homes. The team works very closely with the commissioning officers to ensure quality in the care being delivered to vulnerable adults. Provider performance and poor practice is addressed effectively within escalating concerns protocol arrangements led by the local authority.

The adult safeguarding arrangements are currently under review. Statutory partners and stakeholders have been asked to contribute their views. CSSIW have been able to discuss specific issues regarding continuity of designated lead manager with the head of service during quarterly engagement meetings together with timeliness of managing the adult safeguarding process. The council is a member of the developing Western Bay Safeguarding Adults Board. The Chief Officer of social services for the council is the chair.

Overall, the council is achieving a balance of care for older people in favour of shorter term community based support rather than longer term more institutional types of care and support. For younger adults the supported living model continues to provide independence within the community for people holding their own tenancy agreements and receiving appropriate and proportionate levels of care. These measures are creating positive outcomes for people in receipt of care and support.

The council reports an increase in carers being identified and offered an assessment, and is committed to ensuring that carers services remains a high priority. Strategies are in place for both carers and young carers. This is supported by a designated post within the council.

CSSIW undertook a thematic review of deprivation of liberty safeguards across Wales. The council submitted a questionnaire which explained the arrangements it has in place to discharge its statutory responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The potential impact of the recent Supreme Court judgement regarding the Cheshire West case is significantly increasing the applications of deprivation of liberty safeguards to the council acting as the supervisory body. The response to this increased level of demand (and the affect on the workforce) will be an area for follow up in the coming year.

## **Children**

The council continues to invest in the signs of safety work, which underpins the model of social work practice. This emphasises the importance of direct work with children and their families at an early stage. This approach is used to build a partnership with the family around the safety of the child who remains central to the work. As highlighted elsewhere in this report, performance in child protection work and with looked after children has shown continued improvement.

The percentage of initial case conferences which were held to timescale improved from 82.5% in 2012-13 to 90.5% in 2013-14. The percentage of child protection review conferences to timescale improved from over 92% in 2012-13 to just above 98% in 2013-14. The percentage of looked after children reviews to timescale also improved from over 83% last year to 98% in 2013-14. The council undertook a pilot looking at extending the use of the signs of safety within child protection conferences. Positive results show engagement with children and families, where risk is more easily identified to inform effective child protection plans. Children's services has identified that they need to engage with children more to use their views and feedback in order to improve quality and develop the service further. The children's safeguarding board arrangements are coordinated regionally through the Western Bay.

The number of children on the child protection register at the end of March 2014 has improved from 236 last year to 229 in 2013-14. This has been attributed to the looked after children reduction strategy, but the council is frank about the fact that this performance may not be sustained in 2014-15. There is a recognition that there will always be children needing to be looked after for many reasons and despite strategies in place to reduce the looked after child population, demand may fluctuate. Permanency planning is a priority for the council, as is early intervention with proportionate and professional assessment and support. The council participated in the looked after children inspection. Advocacy, the voice of the child and improved outcomes were also a focus.

### **Areas of Progress**

- The looked after children reduction strategy and reduced numbers of looked after children.
- The signs of safety approach being used in conferences.

### **Areas for improvement**

- To evaluate adult safeguarding review findings and to maintain standards which ensure best practice, quality and governance arrangements.
- Progress on further establishing Western Bay adult and children safeguarding boards.

## **Capacity**

### **Delivering Social Services**

The council is committed to improving the skills and knowledge of the social care workforce to achieve the professional standards required. There is an emphasis on staff being able to gain the right qualifications. The social care workforce development plan has been reviewed to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Training priorities are set out in the plan and how the council intends to take continued professional development forward from management and leadership to the next implementation phase. There have also been developments in a new operating model which intends to “reclaim social work.”

Social work staff have been given a toolkit in the form of a reviewed unified assessment and a coaching skills programme, together with a person centred thinking approach. This method of practice encourages workers to emphasise positives and people’s strengths as opposed to deficits and needs. Supporting strengths and focussing on what is in place to support independence promotes best outcomes and people being fully involved in their care and support plans. A recent staff event for child and family services focused on sharing best practice

approaches. Improving the quality of social work practice is being seen by the council as central to achieving the targets set by the strategic plans. The use of the signs of safety approach has been rolled out across all children's service areas with great success. A significant number of staff have been trained in this methodology and plans are in place for this approach to be adopted across adult services as well.

The council is focussed on the impact that staff sickness is having on the capacity to deliver services. Specifically within children's services there has been success in being able to recruit, retain and train and develop a stable workforce.

### **Areas of progress**

- Child and family service staff events and focus on sharing best practice.
- Staff recruitment and retention in children's services.
- Comprehensive training plan at all levels.

### **Providing Direction**

The council is improving performance whilst taking steps to improve culture and self-evaluation. There is a clear direction supported by corporate plans and a strategic framework. It has worked through changes in senior management and scrutiny arrangements. The chief officer of social services is now well established in her role and reports directly to the chief executive on operational matters. Although not a member of the top tier CSSIW are assured that social services receive the continued support at a corporate level.

Swansea is a council which has fully acknowledged that the services in place are unsustainable in their current form and that the citizens of Swansea want and need very different services for their future. The agenda for ambitious transformation has been gathering momentum over the past three years and it is being driven corporately and strategically as well as at an operational level. The commitment of members, officers and staff is evident from the level of consultation and engagement in place.

The pace of change is rapid and occurring in a context of demographic and budgetary pressures which will continue to be a risk factor for the foreseeable future. There is a strong focus on integration with health and the council continues to work closely with its partners within the Western Bay health and social care programme. The aim is to develop joined up care provision which is strengths based, focusing on people's independence, and early prevention to ensure best outcomes through the provision of proportionate support and care.

The chief officer of social services is confident that Swansea will be able to rise to the challenge laid down in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

There is continued political and corporate sign-up and support in place and there are designated members with specific areas of responsibility which is seen as a very positive strategy, to ensure continued improvement on service development. The council continues to implement detailed and comprehensive business plans for adult and children's social services which are closely aligned to 'The One Swansea Plan' and the corporate improvement plan.

There are robust scrutiny arrangements which are supported by performance information reported by the heads of service in line with the council's quality assurance reporting framework. The wellbeing performance panel is chaired by a designated member of the council and oversees separately convened meetings to table adults and children's service issues, developments and performance information. This is a positive commitment by members who now meet fortnightly in order to allow enough time for a full and detailed scrutiny of business. The council has made good progress and has reported improvement in performance within adult and children's service areas.

### **Areas of progress**

- The support and commitment of members, senior officers and operational staff in progressing the work of the transformation and integration agendas.
- The continued stability of the strong leadership and direction given to realise the programme of change needed to meet the challenge of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- Continues improvement in children's services evidenced by performance indicators.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Continued progress with the Western Bay programme.