



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

Performance Evaluation Report 2014–15

City and County of Swansea
Social Services

October 2015

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in City and County of Swansea Social Services for the year 2014–15

Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2014 - 2015

Local Authority: City and County of Swansea

This report sets out CSSIW's evaluation of Swansea County Council's performance in delivering its social services functions.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The council continues to make progress with implementing the modernisation and transformation programme which it has been working on for the past three years. It recognises the challenges posed by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, which comes into force in 2016. The council is working to address long term demand pressures, by building a sustainable, high quality model of social care. Social services have a clear vision which is underpinned by corporate plans and a strategic framework.
- 1.2. The challenges are clearly identified in the director of social services' annual report. There are detailed strategic business plans in place for both adult and children's services which set out the values, principles, areas for development, and achievements of the past year. Despite this having been a time of great change, the council is in a strong position based on the progress against the areas for improvement identified in last year's performance evaluation report.
- 1.3. There have been significant changes both at a strategic senior officer and operational team level, leading to structural and service re-organisation within adult and children's services. Against a context of significant efficiency savings and budget constraints, this has been unsettling for some staff groups. The council has committed to minimising the impact of these changes on service delivery to citizens. A joint workshop with the local authority and health board staff is being organised to review and evaluate what has been achieved to date, and to ensure that future progress is built on a strong foundation.
- 1.4. Further progress with the plan for improving integrated pathways for older adults and commissioning has been achieved through the development of three locality network hubs for joint specialist teams. The locality hubs were established with joint management arrangements with health board staff. Early indicators show that people can be assured their services are delivered in a timely and person centred way. The progress and development of the service will be monitored in the coming year.

- 1.5. Children's services have also been subject to change and restructure with teams being moved to a single location. This re-modelling has improved "front door" arrangements in continuity of social work support to children and families. Working in partnership in a common approach to child welfare and safety, the council has reduced demand for statutory services by encouraging a continuum model of practice which is solution focussed and facilitates access to the most appropriate level of intervention. There is a focus on prevention and early intervention which promotes family resilience and rehabilitation of children's homes. The safe looked after children strategy has proven effective in reducing the number of children in care, and has promoted permanence for children who are in the care of the council. Outcomes for looked after children have improved with strong corporate parenting arrangements.

2. Response to last year's area of improvement

Identified improvement last year	Progress in 2014-15
<p>The transformation, modernisation and integration of adult social care.</p> <p>To continue to work closely with the health board in the development of the community networks and to implement an integrated assessment framework.</p>	<p>Transformation of adult social services (TASS) continues to be implemented with developments in day services for people with learning disabilities, intermediate care and the single point of access.</p> <p>Developments have included the single point of access, three locality network hubs (west, central and north) and the intermediate care tier to respond quickly to help people back to independence.</p>
<p>To make progress with the commissioning and contract monitoring re-structure in adult services.</p>	<p>Changes have been made within social services, and particularly in the areas of business and commissioning support with corporate procurement.</p>
<p>To evaluate the independent review of older people's services.</p>	<p>The council commissioned an independent review by Cardiff University which reported in September 2014. The work to evaluate the findings and to agree and implement a way forward is being carried out through a commissioning work stream.</p>
<p>Western Bay health and social care programme progress.</p>	<p>There have been significant milestones achieved by the Western Bay</p>

	programme with the wellbeing board, regional safeguarding boards, the regional adoption service and a regional youth offending service to help reduce reoffending rates. Through Western Bay, Swansea has re-commissioned a specialist provider, DEWIS, to help extend the use of direct payments and to recruit and support locally paid carers as personal assistants.
To evaluate the findings of the adult safeguarding review and to develop and maintain the standards which ensure best practice, quality and governance arrangements.	Following an evaluation of adult safeguarding, there are further improvements with new management arrangements, and a greater focus on placing the person at the centre of each concern, with their risk managed effectively and quickly with less bureaucracy.
Progress on further establishment of the Western bay adult and children's boards.	Under Western Bay governance, regional boards are now well established, working alongside these local arrangements.
Early intervention and prevention services.	A corporate prevention strategy and the development of a prevention fund to generate innovative projects have been achieved.
Overview and scrutiny arrangements.	There are new scrutiny and cabinet arrangements in place, elected members now work closer with officers. Each scrutiny panel has a clear work programme regarding child and family performance and TASS.
Progress made against outcomes and recommendations of the looked after children inspection.	There is an action plan in place to evidence progress made against the recommendations following the national review of services to looked after children at risk.
Progress made against outcomes and recommendations of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) review.	Since the landmark Cheshire West legal judgement, there have been an unprecedented number of referrals to

	the council. Resources have been put into place to manage those assessments, which are outstanding, as well as responding to new applications. All adult social workers are now mandated to train as best interest assessors (BIA).
Wales Audit Office (WAO) led review to examine whether the council is effectively supporting older people to live independently.	The council is progressing developments in the areas of integration and intermediate care. According to the WAO report, Swansea is acknowledged as having a wide range and balance of high quality services to meet the continuum of need from information and advice, to intervention.

3. Visits and inspections undertaken during the year:

- 3.1. Site visits provide CSSIW with an opportunity to speak with people who use the services, their families, and staff who manage and work in the services. During 2014-15, site visits were made to:
- Single point of access team.
 - Bonymaen House.
 - Transition service.
 - TY Cila.
 - Carers engagement conference.
 - Children's services staff event.
 - Scrutiny performance panels for adults and children.
- 3.2. CSSIW followed up on the recommendations of the inspection of the council's safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours. The council were asked to consider 21 areas for further improvement. These areas were then developed into a detailed action plan which has informed developments in practice.

- 3.3. CSSIW undertook inspections of regulated services commissioned or run by the council including the in-house residential care homes and fostering service. The inspections were positive, with inspectors reporting that the services were compliant and the registered managers were always responsive to any issues raised. Details on these are contained in separately published reports and are available on CSSIW's website.
- 3.4. In September 2014 the Wales Audit Office published its report into the governance of Swansea's arrangements to support safeguarding children, the audit was carried out between March and May 2014. The report was positive about safeguarding arrangements and made only five recommendations for further improvement, all of which are being actioned.
- 3.5. CSSIW met with senior officers of the council throughout the year to review social services performance and discuss progress within the areas for improvement identified in last year's performance evaluation. The council were helpful in their engagement with CSSIW providing information and evidence of follow up when issues were raised for their attention.

4. Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

- 4.1. 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 during regular engagement meetings. Specific areas for follow up will include:
 - The role of the statutory director of social services and changes to the senior management team.
 - The ongoing service development in readiness for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
 - The council's involvement in the Western Bay collaborative health and social care programme.
- 4.2. Key challenges for the council in 2015-16 will continue to be the budget, the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act, and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding arrangements.

5. Inspection and review plan for 2015-16

- 5.1. CSSIW is also undertaking the following thematic inspections and services

in Swansea which may be selected for fieldwork:

- National review of domiciliary care.
- National review of services for people with learning disabilities.
- National review of care planning for looked after children.

6. The extent to which the experiences and outcomes for people who need care and support are improving their wellbeing.

Adults

Overview

- 6.1. People are able to access social care advice and support in a timely, consistent and appropriate way. Services are responsive and through its integrated approach people are benefiting from locally based health and social care services. Key priorities of leadership and organisational capacity are in place to support and sustain the changes needed to continue to transform adult services. The council recognises the need to develop and deliver services in a different way, by enhancing access to advice, information, early intervention and/or prevention services. As part of the modernisation agenda the council continues to work effectively with its health partners Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU) in designing and implementing an integrated model of intermediate care. This new service is now being delivered from three locality hub teams which cover the whole of Swansea.
- 6.2. The council promotes wellbeing through provision of a comprehensive public information service, together with an accessible website and strengthened single point of access to service. This continues to bolster the department's early intervention and preventative response and pathways to the intermediate care tier. The domiciliary care brokerage service also sits within the single point of access team. There is a high demand on this service but it continues to be responsive and effective in ensuring people receive the care they require. There are strong links with the private provider sector with daily contact and liaison. The staffing levels within the domiciliary care/reablement service have been increased to provide capacity and to improve both the service resilience and client outcomes.
- 6.3. The council and ABMU have continued to work closely together to improve strategic planning, service developments, and the fully integrated recovery service model across mental health services. This

ensures that the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010 is appropriately complied with and implemented through the Western Bay programme. The availability of approved mental health practitioners (AMHPs) continues to be an issue with a need for more social workers to complete AMHP training to ensure there is coverage across community mental health teams.

- 6.4. The council continues to implement changes within learning disability services to introduce a greater person-centred approach following recent external and Western Bay reviews. There is a new specialist sensory impairment team which is an integrated service based at Swansea Vale resource centre, with direct access to a range of resources and support for people with visual and hearing impairments. The service is unique, provided alongside other agencies and third sector providers.
- 6.5. Adult safeguarding arrangements have been reviewed, this was identified as an area for improvement last year. In order to ensure consistency in threshold decisions, early response and oversight of the interface between practitioners and partner organisations, a new post of service manager for safeguarding adults has been recruited to. The changes are supported by a new corporate safeguarding policy. There is now a clearer focus on prevention and on the vulnerable person at the centre of any action or decisions being taken. In 2014-15 there was a slight fall in the number of adult safeguarding referrals where risks were reduced. There is a corporate and service based training programme with mandatory e-learning packages for all staff including council members.
- 6.6. A recent example of safeguarding capacity was tested when a domiciliary care agency was unable to deliver a service to a large number of very vulnerable and dependent service users. The council undertook immediate action to organise alternative arrangements to deliver care in a safe and person centred way, which minimised the impact of sudden service changes for people who are frail and vulnerable. A multiagency approach was used and co-ordinated through the single point of access team, to ensure that all service users were safe, received appropriate care and were followed up and contacted daily in some cases.
- 6.7. CSSIW inspectors reported that safeguarding arrangements have improved and that there is a timelier and more organised response to concerns raised. Inspectors are being informed of safeguarding issues within regulated settings and being invited to adult protection strategy meetings. There remains an increased impact on workload for the team managers who undertake the designated lead manager role in chairing and managing each adult safeguarding case. Adult safeguarding arrangements are continuing to be under review as resources are very

constrained with a risk to timely and robust intervention in some cases.

- 6.8. The council have identified concerns regarding the impact of the Cheshire West Supreme Court judgement on deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS) applications being received from regulated settings. The applications increased significantly from 40 in 2013-14 to 1116 in 2014-15. This has caused huge capacity issues for care management services and has had an impact on the timeliness of reviews for older people. The council has recognised this as an area of risk and have developed a strategy to address this issue, the effectiveness of which will be monitored this year.
- 6.9. The council's core fund, Swansea Carers Centre, delivers a wide range of free support services to meet the needs of adult carers. Carers can be offered an assessment of need as well as indirect assistance. 95% of people were offered an assessment as opposed to 97% the previous year. Actual take up of carers' assessments has increased from 38% in 2013-14 to 45% in 2014-15, there is still a wide disparity between being offered an assessment and actually taking up the offer. This has been recognised as an area for further work and the council should consider the reasons behind this. As part of a regional approach and using monies available from the Carers (Wales) Measure implementation fund, the council have adopted an on line training resource for staff. This course enables learning about carers needs and how they can help support them. The council's induction training also includes a specific session on carers and written material is included in the induction pack.
- 6.10. The take up of direct payments, as an alternative to service provision, continues to rise across adult services from 250 in 2013-14 to 308 in 2014-15. The access to direct payments for some specific service user groups has also increased. The brokerage contract has been re-tendered through Western Bay with the DEWIS Centre for Independent Living successfully awarded the contract. The aim is to improve the outcomes for people, by increasing the quality of support, including the recruitment and development of personal assistants. There is now a pool of around 700 personal assistants available in Swansea.

Key National Priorities

Preventative and early intervention services

- 6.11. The council recognises the expectations and responsibilities that will be placed upon it by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It has worked closely with health partners to implement changes to the managed care provided by social workers and joint teams to ensure that

the most vulnerable within the community continue to be well supported, and achieve their best outcomes.

- 6.12. The council have established a single point of access to ensure a responsive and effective service that minimises any delays and ensures that customers can access intermediate tier services quickly. It is hoped that improving pathways will improve outcomes, and at the same time, help to prevent pressures in the system caused by peaks in demand.
- 6.13. The strategy to support people at home is effective with a wide range of community based services which are vital in helping people remain supported within their own homes. The in-house service has seen a marked increase in the support it provides to people needing domiciliary care and support. Additional to this are the significant increases in the independent sector domiciliary care provision, and the growth of the supply of aids and adaptations to people in the community.
- 6.14. The council expects every adult receiving a service to have their care plan reviewed annually, however performance has fallen from 81% in 2013-14 to 71% in 2014-15. This drop is attributed to the impact of DoLS activity on care management teams and significant management changes and restructuring involving whole team moves to locality bases. This will be an area for improvement this year.

Integration of health and social care services for older people with complex needs.

- 6.15. The council with its health partner is committed to supporting people leaving hospital to return home following a period of reablement. Care and support pathways are being developed to ensure stays are as short as possible and people can return home safely to minimise delayed transfer of care (DToC). However, the DToC indicator for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over increased for the first time in recent years from 2.85 in 2013-14 to 4.7 in 2014-15. This is thought to be the result of delays experienced with domiciliary care availability
- 6.16. Bonymaen House is an example of an integrated health and social care service which is delivering positive outcomes for people through reablement services. There are plans for an integrated reablement response service within each of the three locality hubs capable of dealing with emergencies and other referrals in a timely way, with the aim of preventing hospital admission. A review is currently underway to measure the effectiveness of the rehabilitation service in order to prioritise the right support to those most able to benefit from early intervention. The integrated Gower team has co-located health and social care staff, providing support for hard to reach areas of the

peninsular. This model has been successful in reducing delays for care in the Gower area, and the unnecessary time spent in acute hospital beds waiting for care provision.

- 6.17. Development of an integrated care homes quality team with health and social care staff all sharing in a set of aims and objectives for supporting people in care homes is also under development. The role of community connectors has been in development for some time and is providing a focal point for supporting people to live independently in the community. Development of the role of primary and community health networks to minimise duplication and encourage joining up services across geographical areas for the benefit of citizens. There are improving links with third sector organisations and information is available in GP practices to help signpost people to the most appropriate level of service.

Areas of progress

- Development of the integrated locality hubs.
- Increasing choice and control through the use of direct payments.
- Well advanced integrated partnerships with the health board.

Areas for improvement

- Completion of the review into safeguarding arrangements.
- The prioritisation and management of overdue DoLS applications.
- Reviews in adult services that are timely and focus on outcomes.
- Completion of the review into care management processes and resources.
- Outcome measurement and evaluation of progress to assess the impact of community hubs for older people.

Children and young people

Overview

- 6.18. The council's children's services are providing children and families with a sustainable, focussed service which is improving outcomes for children. Outcomes for children, young people and their families have improved by supporting their wellbeing through a continuum of effective

prevention, early intervention and family support services. As well as a robust front door and locality responses to children in need, there are strong relationships with core partners who work closely together to ensure children are protected from harm.

- 6.19. The council is working to improve the effectiveness and governance of local and regional safeguarding of their most vulnerable children and young people. There has been improvement in the quality and value for money of placements for looked after children to achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity, and to enhance their life chances and future aspirations. For the second year they have delivered on a three year budget strategy through effective and collaborative commissioning to achieve targets, set within the safe looked after children reduction strategy. The revenue saved from this approach has been re-invested into child and family services to improve the outcomes for children and families in Swansea.
- 6.20. In addition to the new corporate safeguarding policy there is also a safeguarding steering group and a local safeguarding children management group to oversee the recommendations for action set at the Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board. There is strong corporate commitment to the welfare and safety of children set against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child giving safeguarding a high profile. A wider use of safety networks and safety planning within child protection and care planning practice is driving up standards of support to looked after children and children returning home. All child protection referrals are responded to in a timely manner with the number of children whose names are on the child protection register increasing from 295 in 2013-14 to 338 in 2014-15, although the rate of de-registration is keeping pace with this increase. There is a slight decrease in performance in Section 47 inquiries but increases seen in performance for strategy meetings, initial child protection conferences and child protection reviews.
- 6.21. There is a corporate safeguarding policy in place coupled with mandatory training for all staff within the council to understand their role and responsibility in referring concerns about vulnerable children. Monitoring and reporting on safeguarding is mainly undertaken through the children's services monthly performance report which is presented to the senior management team, the directorate management team, scrutiny and executive board on a quarterly basis. CSSIW have attended scrutiny sessions where performance information has been presented and have witnessed the robustness of the challenge given from elected members.

- 6.22. There has been a slight deterioration in performance against the key indicators which is disappointing for the council given its signs of safety model and increased intervention with children and families. Performance in undertaking initial assessments within the seven working day timescale has fallen from 91% of cases in 2013-14 to 90% of cases in 2014-15, whilst the remaining cases were completed within an average of 12 working days. There has also been a reduction in the percentage of children seen by a qualified social worker from 83% to 80%. Children seen alone as part of an initial assessment has also fallen, from 42% of cases in 2013-14 to 38% in 2014-15. This fall has been discussed with the appropriate officers and they are sighted on this reduction on performance and are working to improve the timeliness of assessments.
- 6.23. All assessments for social care input, apart from children with a disability and those young people at risk of offending, are undertaken by one of the five locality teams. Within the locality teams there has been a greater focus on initial assessments and child protection work which was previously carried out by the front door team, now called the 'Swansea Model'. Core assessment of needs should generally be completed within 35 working days. Performance has significantly fallen from 81% in 2013-14 to 68% in 2014-15. When this area has been discussed with the council the reduction has been attributed to the impact of additional workloads within the teams in managing the whole child journey following referral. Whilst this approach ensures there is better continuity of social workers for each child in need, the council needs to be sighted on the possible risks for children and families. Again this is an area of work which will be followed up in the coming year with senior officers.

Key national priorities

Preventative and early intervention services

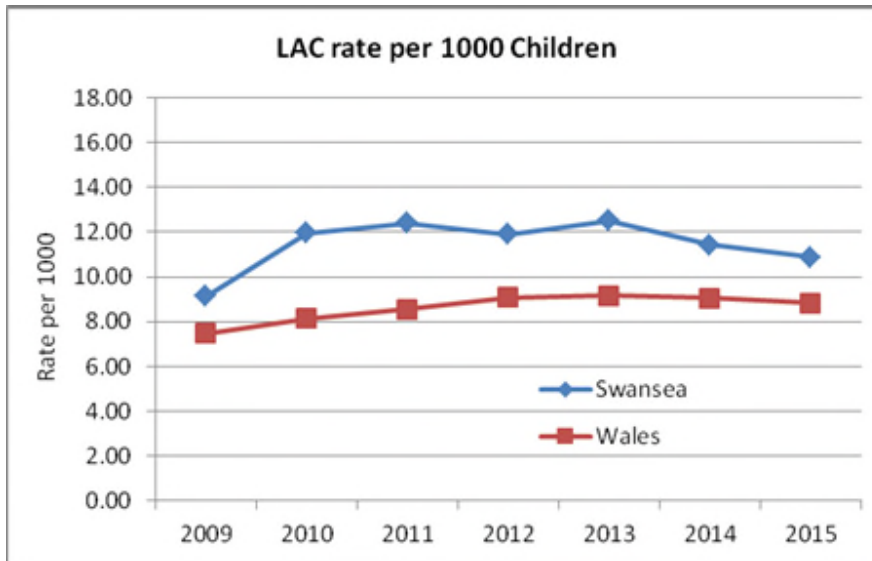
- 6.24. The council is developing a "continuum of need" model to provide structure to the assessment process and service delivery to children and families. This is a risk based approach which fits well with the 'Signs of Safety' model which underpins practice. The council is working with partners in health and education to develop a coherent and proportionate model for practice where everybody understands their own role and responsibility in supporting vulnerable children and their families. The aim is for the appropriate professional to give the right level of support to families at an early enough stage which can prevent issues escalating and stop inappropriate referrals for formal statutory input from social services. This is relevant when a lower level of help,

support or information will meet the need in a more proportionate and empowering way.

- 6.25. The council has focussed on developing a "warm front door" approach with their team around the family (TAF). Weekly meetings are held to ensure the right thresholds are in place to support timely "step up and step down" arrangements to meet the needs of children and families. The number of open child in need (CIN) cases are being reviewed to ensure that any action is still necessary and proportionate for each child, and to consider whether any other actions which are needed are taken.
- 6.26. The council is taking stock with a review of where it is in its journey with the "Signs of Safety" as a practice model. All children's service teams currently use this solution focussed model and there is a plan to role out an adapted version with adult service teams, starting with family group conferencing as a pilot area.
- 6.27. Transition arrangements have also been reviewed and there are much closer working arrangements between child and adult teams, with clearer lines of communication and accountability. This is to ensure early planning can take place to meet the needs of those children with a disability who will require help and support into adulthood. Adults needing support now and in the future have very different expectations and aspirations to what the more traditional services are able to offer. The council recognises the challenge in changing the culture from buildings based provision to more flexible forms of care and support which encourage independence and self determination.

Looked after Children

- 6.28. The council work closely with partners in education, primary and secondary health care, housing, mental health, supporting people, careers and substance misuse to improve the outcomes that each child who is looked after can expect. Together they work towards the agreed safety goals and outcomes. All looked after children have their care and support plans reviewed by independent reviewing officers (IRO). These officers provide an independent quality assurance mechanism and the senior managers provide regular monitoring reports to cabinet and scrutiny.
- 6.29. The councils safe looked after children reduction strategy, is not only reducing the number of looked after children year on year, but has contributed to the overall budget savings required.



- 6.30. The number of looked after children declined from 588 in 2012-13 to 539 in 2013-14, and has now further reduced to 511 in 2014-15.
- 6.31. There are a number of ways elected members carry out their corporate parenting function. They consider the latest performance and activity data at quarterly corporate parenting meetings, look at new service developments, but most importantly receive the views of the children and young people themselves through participation feedback, digital stories or placement visits.
- 6.32. The completion of the permanence review has informed the development of the permanence service in Swansea. This is helping to promote the timely discharging of care orders as a milestone towards positive outcomes, rather than an end in itself, and to establish a new set of arrangements that best support children subject to special guardianship orders which have doubled in the past year. It is also working to improve the quality and value for money of placements for looked after children to achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity and to enhance their life opportunities. The rate of successful matching for adoption is corresponding with the rate of new placement orders being granted, so activity is being maintained.
- 6.33. The percentage of children who had more than three placements has increased. The council recognises this issue and is continuing to develop the capacity and skills of foster carers to support those children and young people at risk of placement breakdown. In addition the family placement team is providing increased support to foster carers, including out of hours support.

6.34. There are well established systems in place to capture the views of vulnerable children and young people in need. These views are used to make a difference to the service they and others receive. The council hold regular engagement events where children and families participate and engage with staff to inform the business plan agenda. CSSIW attended a staff event which demonstrated the use of digital stories and the effectiveness of listening to the child's voice to inform best social work practice.

Areas of progress

- Balanced budget for second consecutive year.
- Stable workforce no agency staff.

Areas for improvement

- Timeliness of core assessments to include children seen alone.
- Development of continuum of need model to reduce dependency on statutory services.
- To monitor the number of children having more than 3 placement moves and to work with foster carers to support permanency and to prevent placement breakdown.

7. The extent to which leadership, governance and direction for the council is promoting improvement in outcomes and wellbeing for people who need care and support.

7.1. In the past year there have been significant changes within the senior management team. There are interim management arrangements in place for the chief social services officer (CSSO) and for the head of service for child and family services, there has also been successful recruitment to the post of head of service for adults' services. Despite the risk associated with this level of change the council have continued to make progress with the transformation, re-structure and integration of services. The people in post are experienced and committed to ensuring services are sustainable and centred on people's choice and independence. The CSSO is a member of the corporate management team and is supported closely by the corporate director for people and has direct access to and the support of the chief executive and senior elected members of the council.

7.2. The council has clear mechanisms for holding cabinet members to account and each member has portfolio responsibilities for distinct areas

of council business. The council publishes forward work programmes for council and scrutiny panels. The council's scrutiny structure consists of a formal scrutiny programme committee, performance panels and time limited enquiry panels and affords members to take part in the scrutiny of topics and areas of service which reflects their experience and areas of interest.

- 7.3. In the area of social services, there are currently two scrutiny panels, child and family service performance and the TASS panel which relates to the adults' services transformation programme and readiness for the Act. The Scrutiny Panel meets to agree a work programme, and the chair reports regularly on progress to the respective cabinet members of which there are currently three with portfolios which relate to social services functions. There is the development of a more members led approach to decision making and policy, which requires officers to provide clear evidence to make the case for changes in direction.
- 7.4. CSSIW attended a number of performance panel meetings for both adult and children's services during the year. Information about the scrutiny activity has been improved with the publication of "Scrutiny Despatches" with access to recent reports and inquiry panel findings. Social media is also being used to improve access to this activity and to evidence work achieved.
- 7.5. The council has effective and well managed budget setting and financial planning arrangements in place to deliver their medium term financial plan. The council has implemented a three year budget strategy to meet saving targets and requirements. The prevention and early intervention approach is being used to reduce the need for step up to formal social services provision and to increase the step down to third sector lower level help and support. Elected members are fully involved and are supportive of the strategies in place to realise longer term savings. The budget underspend of £3 million in children's services has for the second year given strength to this approach employed by the implementation of the safe looked after children reduction strategy. A similar approach is being used in the transformation of adult social care.
- 7.6. Work has been done to enable front line staff to be cost conscious in commissioning services for adult and children. There is greater understanding of the costs of care, across a wider range of services, which contribute to better outcomes for service users. For example, remodelling day services by promoting day and work opportunities and using direct payments for people with a learning disability. The commissioning arrangements have been reviewed with designated commissioners based within each team designed to deliver better outcomes for people and to prevent delays in hospital discharge.

CSSIW inspectors report close working relationships, this has been evidenced when provider performance has needed to be addressed in a timely and effective way. The escalating concerns protocol is managed effectively by the council in collaboration with health partners and CSSIW. The council recognise the challenge of supporting the provider market to deliver effective, efficient and good quality services. There is good engagement with the provider sector and a market position statement is being developed for publication later this year.

- 7.7. The council has proved effective in being able to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff, with no agency staff currently being used. The council has a social care workforce development planning (SCWDP) group in place which focusses on recruiting, inducting, supporting, developing and retaining the right people to meet the strategic and operational challenges within the council. There is a commitment to ensuring all staff have access to training opportunities which will inform best practice standards. The council also have a learning and development strategy in place for councillors
- 7.8. The “Signs of Safety” and solutions focussed care planning approach adopted across all children’s teams is being planned for rollout into adult care management. This approach will initially be used for adult family group conferencing. Regular staff engagement events are facilitated across adult and children’s teams to share achievement and to celebrate success. The council’s readiness for the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 has been the main focus over the past year. Regular supervision and appraisal are in place.
- 7.9. The council are working to an action plan in line with the expectations of the Welsh Language Measure “More Than Just Words” (Mwy Na Geirau). Over 19% of the population in Swansea use Welsh language and there is an awareness that there needs to be an “active offer” for people who want to be responded to in the medium of Welsh.

Areas of progress

- Effective and well managed scrutiny arrangements.

Areas for improvement

- To ensure the leadership, management and work force capacity is in place to continue to sustain progress in re-shaping and developing sustainable services.
- To implement solution based practice across all teams.

- To finalise the review of learning disability day services and to develop a sustainable model of service, which promotes independence and choice.
- To develop the Welsh language offer to service users who want to utilise their right to converse in Welsh.