



Report of the Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well

Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 16th April 2019

Progress addressing WAO Recommendations relating to Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide an overview of the WAO report and recommendations.• To highlight actions taken by Adult Services to address recommendations.
Content	This report includes a summary of the context and methodology used to produce the WAO report and conclusions and a summary of how Swansea is performing against the recommendations.
Councillors are being asked to	Endorse the conclusion of the report
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1. Background

- 1.1 In May 2018 the Welsh Audit Office published a report on arrangements for commissioning accommodation services for people with learning disabilities. The findings published were based on:
- Analysis of performance indicator returns and budget data available online at the Office for National Statistics and Stats Wales and population projections produced by the Institute of Public Care for the Welsh Government.
 - Local authority and housing association fieldwork during 2016-17 which involved discussions with staff and elected members at City of Cardiff County Council; Ceredigion County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council;` and Anglesey County Council
 - Completion of a survey with senior managers with responsibilities within local authorities for learning disability services.
- 1.2 Swansea Council was not involved in sharing information with the Audit Office and did not contribute to producing the final report. None of the conclusions in the report are based on Swansea Council submissions or evidence of Swansea Council practice.

2. WAO Conclusions

- 2.1 The WAO concludes that local authorities are generally meeting the accommodation needs of adults with learning disabilities, but existing commissioning arrangements are unlikely to be fit for purpose. The report separates its conclusions into 3 main areas.

1.The approach to commissioning accommodation for people with learning disabilities is potentially unsustainable.

- The number of people with learning disabilities provided with accommodation by local authorities is growing and current authority provision is keeping step with demand. The changing profile of demand raises some challenges for authorities in the future.
- Expenditure on learning disabilities accommodation services have grown in recent years and authority investment has kept pace with demand. However, it is difficult to determine why there is a wide variation in authority spending.

- At an all Wales level provision is keeping step with projected growth but a third of authorities face major choices in how they address future accommodation demand.
- Current levels of expenditure on learning disabilities accommodation services is insufficient to keep pace with inflation and growing demand.

2. Local authorities generally do not have effective arrangements to commission accommodation services for people with learning disabilities.

- Not all local authorities have developed strategic commissioning options in line with Welsh Government guidance and the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Commissioning strategies are not always resulting in cost effective service options that meet the needs of people with learning disabilities
- Regional joint working between local authorities is steadily developing, but engagement with Health Boards is variable 32
- Resources to support planning and commissioning of services vary widely 34
- Local authority engagement is not always responding to the needs of people with learning disabilities and their carers 36

3. Ineffective evaluation of outcomes for learning disability services means local authorities are not always able to demonstrate the positive impact of their accommodation commissioning choices.

- Many local authorities have not set clear outcome measures to judge the impact of their commissioning activity.
- Variable oversight and scrutiny of performance hinders evaluation.

3. WAO Recommendations

- 3.1 The WAO report sets out 6 overarching recommendations to assist local authorities to address the areas highlighted in the report.

Recommendation 1.

People with a learning disability have a right to live independently. The last 50 years have seen significant changes in the provision of accommodation and support. Service provision has moved to a model that enables people to live in the community in ordinary houses throughout Wales. The WAO recommends;

- that local authorities continue to focus on preventing people becoming dependent on more expensive placements in care homes by providing

effective support at home and range of step up accommodation by: improving the evaluation of prevention activity so local authorities understand what works well and why;

- utilising the mapping of prevention services under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 that covers other agencies and service providers;
- Improving the signposting of additional help so carers and support networks can be more resilient and self-reliant. This should include encouraging carers to make long-term plans for care to maintain and protect their dependant's wellbeing; and
- sharing risk analysis and long term planning data with other local authorities, service providers, and partners to agree a shared understanding of the range of options.

Recommendation 2.

Population projections show that the number of people with a learning disability will increase in the future, and those aged over 65 and those with a moderate or severe learning disability will rise significantly. The WAO recommends;

- that local authorities improve their approach to planning services for people with learning disabilities by building on the Regional Partnership Boards population assessments for people with learning disabilities and agreeing future priorities.

Recommendation 3.

Welsh Government produced guidance to local authorities, entitled 'developing a commissioning strategy for people with a learning disability' to support authorities in producing strategic plans for the commissioning of learning disability services. In conjunction with codes of practice developed following the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Welsh Government requires local authorities to develop integrated commissioning options with Local Health Board services. The aim is to provide a joined-up and cost-effective approach to the commissioning of services. The WAO recommends;

- that local authorities do more to integrate commissioning arrangements with partners and providers and take account of the work of the National Commissioning Board by:
 - understanding the barriers that exist in stopping or hindering further integration;
 - improving the quality of joint strategic plans for learning disability services;

- establishing investment models and sustainable financial structures, joint workforce planning and multi-year budgeting;
- developing appropriate governance and data sharing frameworks with key local partners that include a clear process for managing risk and failure.

Recommendation 4

Local authorities' engagement with people with learning disabilities and their carers is variable. Whilst many authority services have positive relationships with advocacy groups, some are less successful in involving these groups and carers in evaluating the quality of services (The WAO recommends that:

- local authorities do more to involve people with learning disabilities and their carers in care planning and agreeing pathways to further independence by:
 - consistently including people with learning disabilities and their carers in the writing, monitoring and development of care plans;
 - systematically involving carers and advocacy groups in evaluating the quality of services;
 - involving people with learning disabilities in procurement processes; and
 - ensuring communications are written in accessible and appropriate language to improve the understanding and impact of guidance and information.

Recommendation 5

Local Authorities could do more to involve service providers in commissioning and make the tendering process more effective by making it easier to navigate and more outcome focused. However, providers are not as effectively engaged as they should be. The WAO recommends:

- that local authorities collaborate with providers, the third sector and suppliers in understanding challenges, sharing data, and pooling expertise by;
 - improving the quality range, and accessibility of tendering information;
 - working with providers to shape local markets by coming to a common understanding of the opportunities, risks, and future priorities in providing learning disabilities services.

Recommendation 6

Most local authorities do not have effective arrangements to monitor and evaluate their commissioning of learning disability services. The WAO recommends:

- that local authorities develop a more appropriate set of performance indicators and measures of success that make it easier to monitor and demonstrate the impact of service activity by;
 - co-designing measures, service and contract performance indicators with service providers, people with learning disabilities and their carers;
 - ensure commissioners have sufficient cost and qualitative information on the full range of placement and care options available;
 - equipping commissioners with data to demonstrate the long term financial benefits of commissioning choices, this includes having the right systems and technology;
 - integrating the outcomes and learning from reviews of care plans into performance measures;
 - evaluating and then learning from different types of interventions and placements; and
 - including learning disability services in local authority scrutiny reviews to challenge performance and identify improvements.

4. The Position in Swansea and Progress against Recommendations.

- 4.1 Swansea Social Services has well developed commissioning processes and a comprehensive local strategy which explains how the accommodation needs of people with a learning disability will be met.
- 4.2 Broadly speaking the areas of concern highlighted in the WAO report are already addressed via the existing commissioning strategy and supporting arrangements.
- 4.3 A commissioning Review of LD services commenced in January of this year. This is examining suitability of current arrangements across all service types, including accommodation based services.
- 4.4 In relation to the recommendations made. The following features of our existing arrangements are helpful to highlight:
- 4.5 **Rec 1.** Local authorities continue to focus on preventing people becoming dependent on more expensive placements in care homes by providing effective support at home.
- 4.6 This premise is the basis of Swansea's commissioning strategy for all adults including people with a learning disability. In recent years expensive and inappropriate residential care home placements have been de-commissioned in favour of tenancy based options which are

less expensive for social services and promote more effective outcomes for service users.

- 4.7 **Rec 2.** The LD population will increase, particularly for those over 65. We recommend that local authorities improve their approach to planning services by building on the Regional Partnership Boards population assessments.
- 4.8 Our current demand analysis is based on the regional population assessment. This has highlighted gaps in our understanding of future demand and an action plan has been created to address these shortcomings (looking at alternative services as opposed to default) which is being progressed by the Learning Disabilities Commissioning Group.
- 4.9 **Rec 3.** We recommend that local authorities do more to integrate commissioning arrangements with partners and providers.
- 4.10 There are a number of existing arrangements which promote regional partner integration. This includes senior management governance and oversight of commissioned services (via the Adult Services Transformation Board and its various subgroups). Partners recognise there is room for improvement in this area and arrangements for pooling resources are being explored. A regional post is being created for this purpose. This will lead to development of more integrated arrangements for cost sharing, data analysis, longer term financial planning and development of more strategic commissioning options across all services including those which are accommodation based.
- 4.11 **Rec 4.** Local authorities' engagement with people with learning disabilities and their carers is variable. We recommend that local authorities do more to involve people with learning disabilities.
- 4.12 This is an area of our commissioning practice which in relation to LD services is particularly effective. Swansea commissions 2 external organisations to support us to engage LD service users and their families, and has a well-developed co-production approach which is implemented to ensure that people are engaged in the commissioning process. In relation to recommendation 4 the focus of our ongoing commissioning strategy is to ensure that commissioned Providers are able to successfully implement these practices on our behalf.
- 4.13 **Rec 5.** Local Authorities could do more to involve service providers in commissioning and do more to collaborate with Providers to understand challenges and risks.
- 4.14 The local authority is taking steps to improve in this area. Provider engagement events have been organised to help navigate procurement processes. Provider Forums and Co-production groups have been established. A risk management strategy group to manage potential

service disruptions and threats to service continuity has been set up. Further work is underway to establish a fees and costs group to minimise risk of service failure. A relational approach to contracting with emphasis on collaboration is being adopted where possible.

- 4.15 **Rec 6.** We recommend that local authorities develop a more appropriate set of performance indicators and measures of success that make it easier to monitor and demonstrate the impact of service activity.
- 4.16 This is an area where the authority acknowledges there is room for improvement. Current re-tendering arrangements address this by requiring Providers to develop performance monitoring arrangements and performance management data which commissioners can use to assess performance at service and strategic levels. A number of KPIs have been built into future contract requirements. Providers will need to demonstrate that services are achieving SSWBA duties relating to attainment of wellbeing outcomes.

5. Table of Progress Against WAO Recommendations

- 5.1 A more detailed table of recommendations and progress is set out at Appendix 1.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 There are a number of areas in which the authority accepts that it is able to improve commissioning practice, the department is of the view that current commissioning arrangements, alongside the actions described are sufficient to address the recommendations highlighted in the report.