

Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching purpose of the Panel is to provide ongoing challenge to performance in Adult Social Services to ensure that as the Service is undergoing major change, performance is maintained and that further improvements are made across all areas of the Service.

2. Key Activities

The Panel is currently meeting on a six-weekly basis and since the beginning of this municipal year the Panel has looked at the following:

Meeting	Topic(s)
28 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring • Briefing on Recent CIW Care Home Inspection Reports • Draft Work Plan 2023-24
7 August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAO Report 'Together we Can' – Community Resilience and Self-reliance • Tackling Poverty Service Grants 2022-23: Impact Report • Additional Direct Payments Information
5 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring • Wales Audit Office Report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises
31 October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23 • Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

3. Achievements / Impact

We have sent 4 letters to the Cabinet Members for Care Services, Wellbeing, and Community Support since the start of the municipal year, in order to give our views, raise concerns and make recommendations, for example:

Positives:

- CIW Care Home Inspection Reports - There were unscheduled inspections on two Care Homes, Rose Cross and Ty Waunarlyydd. Panel pleased to hear feedback from residents, families, professionals and staff themselves was very positive with only one recommendation made for Ty Waunarlyydd regarding timely completion of annual appraisals, which was already being followed up by the management team.

- WAO Report 'Together We Can' Community Resilience and Self-Reliance – Panel asked how poverty is defined and measured, and queried how it is going to work in terms of identifying people to take on some of the work the Authority carried out in the past. Panel informed it is difficult to measure things like this and the definition the Authority currently uses is from the 2017 Tackling Poverty Strategy - Income below the minimum income standard; inadequate access to necessary services of good quality; inadequate opportunity or resource to join in with social/cultural decision-making activities. Heard the Tackling Poverty Strategy is currently being refreshed to ensure the right definitions and measures are in place and that a big part of this will be talking to communities about the role they have to play, with co-production being really important to this approach going forward.
- Direct Payments – Panel queried how the Authority monitors or stops direct payments being used for the wrong purpose and was informed that any opportunity to use a direct payment, where it increases individual resilience, reduces reliance on services, or leads to either volunteering, education or employment, is a valid use of direct payments, and that in terms of monitoring, every spend is closely monitored, people either have managed accounts or pay cards, so there is oversight.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel discussed mental health and wellbeing of staff and heard the Directorate supports staff wellbeing and that each team is having a wellbeing assessment and then individual action plans drawn up as different teams have different challenges.

Issues / Concerns:

- Performance Monitoring – Panel concerned about staffing and recruitment issues and heard it is a challenge for all five social work teams as there is a deficit of social workers across Wales. Panel informed that there are not enough people coming through the system, so the Authority has workforce strategies for developing its own staff internally, including alternatively qualified staff, and working more with universities to host those students on courses locally.
- Performance Monitoring - In terms of safeguarding, Panel noted the increasing number of referrals and asked for examples of what some of the issues have been. Heard the Directorate receives a breakdown of the type of referral and agreed this information be included in future performance monitoring reports. Panel also expressed concern about the high number of professional referrals and heard the Authority's safeguarding function is dealing with professional concerns in terms of care and support for all organisations.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel asked about legal support and how the Department is outsourcing part of it and the cost is increasing. Heard there had been a vacancy in legal which has now been filled but there is also increased demand and there are complex cases where external specialist support has been needed. Informed there is a grant for some of this but there has been increased demand and increased cost. All agreed the need to keep an eye on this.
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022-23 – Panel noted high levels of sickness and queried if it is due to the conditions they are working under and asked how wellbeing of the workforce can be improved going forward. Informed it is due to a combination of working conditions, demographics of the workforce and staff in many areas of the Service being unable to work with

certain illnesses. Panel was pleased to hear strategies are in place to try and keep staff well and in work and that the Service is compliant with sickness procedures and noted it will always have above average levels of sickness in social services. Panel requested a briefing on the strategies being used for wellbeing of staff be brought to a future meeting.

- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards - Panel informed the volume and capacity of casework has increased and there is currently a backlog of applications, the Service is looking at the introduction of revised application forms to screen and prioritise cases more effectively. Panel also heard the introduction of new legislation 'Liberty Protection Safeguards' has been delayed by a number of years. Panel queried if there is any pattern to the variations in numbers of referrals across timespans and was informed there is an increase in winter months as more people are admitted to care homes at that time. Panel heard the challenge going forward is to identify trends and be more proactive.

Action Recommended / Agreed:

- WAO report 'Together We Can' Community Resilience and Self-Reliance – Panel feels any committee responsible for development of, what effectively are different networks, would be wise to get an expert who understands network working and the training that comes with it. Panel pleased to hear the network element will be one of the approaches and that officers will take the feedback the Panel has given on board going forward as forecasting is an important element of the anticipatory approach to building networks.
- Performance Monitoring - Panel queried if the new location for the Common Access Point was fit for purpose as there are problems with acoustics, due to the Guildhall being an old building with high ceilings. Panel heard that staff are being issued with better sound proofing headsets to help with this. Panel suggested using sound boarding structures to help mitigate noise, officers confirmed these are not currently being used and they will look into it.
- Performance Monitoring – Panel discussed how more third-party charges for external care provision are being picked up by the Authority. Panel feels the Authority should make representations to the Welsh Government to review these charges. Cllr Gibbard stated the Authority does not currently have a policy around this but is looking to develop one. However, it is difficult as they are private organisations, and the Authority cannot dictate what they can and cannot charge.
- WAO report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises – Panel requested a list of social enterprises be provided to the Panel and heard that one of the first steps, as part of the action plan being developed, will be to carry out a mapping exercise to improve the data the Authority holds about social enterprises and micro enterprises. Panel requested an update on progress to be brought to a future meeting when an action plan is in place and mapping exercise completed.

4. Future Work Programme

The programme for the remainder of this municipal year is as follows:

Meeting date	Item to be discussed
12 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance Monitoring• Briefing on Dementia (including case studies)
30 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on Adult Services Transformation and Improvement Programme• Local Area Coordination Update• Update on Progress with WAO Report 'A Missed Opportunity' Social Enterprises• Presentation on Llais TBC
12 February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Budget Proposals for Adult Services / Child and Family Services
20 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on West Glamorgan Transformation Programme• Performance Monitoring• Briefing on Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2022-23
7 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on how Council's policy commitments translate to Adult Services• Update on Adult Services Transformation and Improvement Programme – including progress on Reviews• End of Year Review

5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None.