

Scrutiny Report



Performance Scrutiny Committee – Performance Scrutiny - People

Part 1

Date: May 2024

Subject Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023-24

Author Scrutiny Advisor

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer:	Area / Role / Subject
Sally Ann Jenkins	Strategic Director of Social Services, Prevention and Inclusion
Natalie Poyner	Head of Children's Services
Lucy Jackson	Interim Head of Adult Services
Caroline Ryan-Phillips	Head of Prevention and Inclusion
Cllr Laura Lacey	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Cllr Pat Drewett	Cabinet Member for Community and Poverty Reduction
Cllr Deb Davies	Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

1. Consider information contained within the report concerning the delivery, performance, risks and planned improvements of the Social Services function in the Council.
2. Determine whether Committee wish to make any comments to the Director of Social Services/Cabinet regarding this report.

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 Under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 all Local Authorities must produce a report considering the work of Social Services. The outline for this report is laid out by Welsh Government.

- 2.2 The report must focus on the work of the Local Authority to deliver Social Services within the framework of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. When complete and following submission through the governance of the Local Authority the report must be submitted to both Welsh Government and Care Inspectorate Wales.
- 2.3 The purpose of the Annual Report is to set out how Social Services are meeting the needs of Service users and carers, how the service has delivered on priorities during the past year as well as highlighting those areas of the service that have been prioritised for future improvement.
- 2.4 In accordance with the Council's performance management framework, the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider and comment on the adequacy of the draft report in addressing the issues identified and provide feedback/ comments to the Cabinet and Council prior to its adoption.
- 2.5 The "Annual Council Reporting Framework" (ACRF) is overseen by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA). Copies and analysis of previous annual reports from across Wales can be found on their website (www.ssiacymru.org.uk/annualreporting).
- 2.6 As stated on the SSIA website, the intention of the ACRF approach is to:
- *Embed the accountability for performance management clearly with the local authority (council members, chief executives, directors, managers and officers)*
 - *Present a recognisable picture through analysis and self-assessment, to those responsible for the management and delivery of, as well as those served by social services*
 - *Generate the core set of information needed by CSSIW to delivery their annual performance assessment letter to Councils.*
- 2.7 These internally reached judgements are then subject to challenge by partners, carers and users of services. As stated in the [Guidance](#):
- 'It is vital that the Council and its citizens, as well as inspectors and regulators, can rely on the Report as a full and true picture of Social Services in its area. That will require transparency and frankness on the part of its authors. Good quality data and intelligence will be vital and strong links with the Local Government Data Unit will be essential to ensure that opportunities for the full utilisation of performance and intelligence are exploited.*
- There will also need to be robust challenge built into its development and this is likely to include:*
- *auditing of data accuracy;*
 - *"clubs" of like Councils to examine comparative data;*
 - *Peer review*
- 2.8 The approach requires each Council to deliver its own assessment of performance in social services, to analyse the services provided and consider what they are doing well, what could be done better. The report should be written in accessible language, and accompanied by evidence that supports the conclusion reached.
- 2.9 The Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24 will be considered by the Cabinet following its Scrutiny Review.
- 2.10 The statutory requirement is that the Annual Report is written by the Director of Social Services. Comments and observations from Members will be directed to the Director of Social Services for consideration and may be incorporated into the final report before it is considered by Cabinet and then presented to Council. Any comments will be included for reference within the covering report to the Cabinet / Council, under the section 'Comments of Scrutiny Committees'.

Previous Consideration of this Item

- 2.11 Committee last considered this report on the [6th June 2023](#).
- 2.12 This report was presented to Cabinet on the [14th June 2023](#) and Council on the [18th July 2023](#).

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 Attached at **Appendix 1** is the Director of Social Services Annual Report 23/24.
- 3.2 Attached at Appendix 2 is HR Data.
- 3.3 Attached at Appendix 3 is Children's Services Welsh Government Checkpoint Data.
- 3.4 Attached at Appendix 4 is Adult's Services Welsh Government Checkpoint Data.
- 3.5 Attached at Appendix 5 is Adult Referral Welsh Government Data.
- 3.6 Attached at Appendix 6 is Children's Referral Welsh Government Data.
- 3.7 Attached at Appendix 7 is the Adult and Children's New Referrals April 2021-March 2024.
- 3.8 Attached at Appendix 8 is Adult Services Data 2021-2024.
- 3.9 Attached at Appendix 9 is Child Protection Data 2021-2024.
- 3.10 Attached at Appendix 10 is Children Looked After Data.

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

4.1 Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

- Establish if the author has provided a true and accurate picture of Social Services, and decide if Social Services are meeting the needs of the service users?
- Whether the priorities set out in the report for the next year are sufficient and will increase the quality of social services provisions?
- Question whether the priorities are measurable and achievable?
- Decide if each Quality Standard has been achieved, if not why?
- Conclusions:
 - What was the overall conclusion on the information contained within the report?
 - Is the Committee satisfied that it has had all of the relevant information to base a conclusion on the overall performance of Social Services?
 - Do any areas require a more in-depth review by the Committee?
 - Do the Committee wish to make any Comments / Recommendations to the Cabinet?

4.2 Suggested Lines of Enquiry

The committee may wish to consider the following areas in their questioning:

- How have workforce challenges affected the service area? Have these been addressed and if so, what evidence is there of improvement?
- Is the service area taking and demonstrating sufficient steps to innovate or change the way they deliver to service users?
- Are targets sufficiently challenging and balanced, realistic, and robust?
- How have restructures affected the service area and have appropriate measures been taken to mitigate?
- Are actions appropriately contributing to the Wellbeing Objectives and how is this evidenced within the report?
- Is any underperformance being addressed and are associated risks being mitigated?
- What are future challenges that the service areas envision having to plan for?

4.3 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
<p>Long-term</p> <p>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</p>	What consideration have you given to the long term trends that could affect your proposal or; how could your proposal impact these trends?
	How will the needs of your service users potentially change in the future?
<p>Prevention</p> <p>Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	What is the objective (or the desired outcome) of this proposal?
	How are you addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?
	How have the decisions, so far, come about? What alternatives were considered?
<p>Integration</p> <p>Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	Are there any other organisations providing similar / complementary services?
	Have you consulted with the health board, third sector, emergency services, businesses and anyone else you think might be impacted?
	What practical steps will you take to integrate your project with existing plans and strategies of other public organisations to help us all contribute fully to the seven national well-being goals?
<p>Collaboration</p>	Who have you been working with? Why? Who have you collaborated with in finding out more about this problem and potential solutions?

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).	How are you co-working with other sectors?
	How are you using the knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence the Council's work?
<p style="text-align: center;">Involvement</p> <p>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</p>	How have you involved the people who are being impacted by this decision?
	How have you taken into account the diverse communities in your decision making?
	How have you used different / alternative methods to reach people and involve them?
	How will you communicate the outcome of your decision?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Well-being Objective	1 – Economy, Education and Skills	2 – Newport's Environment and Infrastructure	3 – Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care	4 – An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council
Aims:	Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.	A city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.	Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.	Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

5.1 This report has strong links to Wellbeing Objective 3.

6 Background Papers

- [The Essentials – Well-being of Future Generation \(Wales\) Act](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services](#)
- Link to the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) website for copies and analysis of previous annual reports from across Wales - www.ssiacymru.org.uk/annualreporting

Report Completed: May 2024