

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	AUDIT COMMITTEE
DATE	13 FEBRUARY 2012
TITLE	OUTPUT OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT SECTION – INTEGRATED CHILDREN’S SYSTEM
PURPOSE OF REPORT	TO RECEIVE THE COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE
AUTHOR	DEWI MORGAN, SENIOR MANAGER AUDIT & RISK
ACTION	TO RECEIVE THE REPORT, COMMENT ON THE CONTENTS AND RECEIVE THE COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICER

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The result of Internal Audit work on the development of the Integrated Children’s System was reported to the Audit Committee on 17 November 2011. The report to the committee contained the main points of the audit work. These have been included in part 2 below.
- 1.2 The Committee resolved **to agree to invite the Head of Housing and Social Services Department to the next committee meeting to explain the situation.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of the Integrated Children’s System was to introduce formal arrangements within local authorities to give assurance on the arrangement for protecting vulnerable children. ICS is built on the foundation of the Assessment Framework (2001) and the Child Protection Guidelines (2002 and 2008). A number of documents have been issued by both the Westminster and Wales Governments the define aspects of the ICS.
- ICS 1a (WAGC 21/2005) to be implemented by 31/12/2006.
 - ICS 1b (WAGC 37/2007) to be implemented by 31/12/2008.
 - ICS 1c (WAGC23/2008) to be implemented by 30/04/2010.
- 2.2 The 1c statutory guidance has now been withdrawn in England, but the statutory requirements have not yet been slackened in Wales, although local authorities have been awaiting similar direction from the Welsh Government since October 2010.

- 2.3 A progress report on the performance of the Social Services Department was presented to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 30/11/2010 that explained why the Council had not complied with ICS 1a, despite the original target being 31/12/2006. In recognising the failure to implement 1a, it was explained that the ICS would not achieve its key targets for that period due to the more ambitious targets of ICS 1b and 1c that also need to be implemented. The situation with regards to resources and the pressure on the service as the number of referrals on children in care increases. As a result of the inquiry of the "Baby P" case, it was accepted that further changes are on the horizon in this area and that the ICS is expected to come to an end in its current form, although confirmation has not yet been received that the scheme is to come to an end in Wales. Therefore, as the ICS should continue, theoretically, until formal confirmation of its abolition has been received, audit assurance on the controls in place cannot be given as a large element of risk remains attached to it.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to accept an explanation from the Head of Housing and Social Services with regards to the latest situation on the development of the Integrated Children's System, with particular regards to the risks that Gwynedd Council faces as a consequence of the matters that are reported on in part 2 above.