

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Scrutiny Committee - Services
DATE OF MEETING	13 February 2014
TITLE OF ITEM	Annual Review and Evaluation of Gwynedd Council's Performance 2012/13 – Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW)
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor R H Wyn Williams

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to submit information to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the main findings and recommendations of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales of their review and evaluation of the annual performance of Gwynedd Council 2012-13. Information is also provided on Gwynedd Council's response to the recommendations in question.

2. Context, background and purpose of CSSIW's Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012-13

- 2.1 The CSSIW undertake a review and evaluation of the performance of Gwynedd Social Services on an annual basis. The review report resulting from the work will identify the fields that have improved and fields for improvement in the Social Services Department of Gwynedd Council for the year in question.
- 2.2 As part of the process, CSSIW will consider a wide range of evidence base which is available, including the arrangements for directors of social services to submit annual reports on their performance and plans for improvements. The observations of other auditors and inspectors will be considered, along with the regulatory work of the CSSIW.
- 2.3 A copy is appended as **Appendix 1** of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales' Annual Review and Evaluation of the Performance of Gwynedd for 2012-13.
- 2.4 The **summary section** of the Gwynedd 2012-13 Annual Review and Evaluation of Gwynedd Council's Performance 2012/13 notes as following:
- i. The Council has improved its structure in accordance with the statutory guidelines and the recommendations of CSSIW's national review in respect of the function of the statutory director of social services.
 - ii. The Council has ensured that the director receives professional support and advice, and the Council must ensure that she has the capacity to achieve the necessary improvements for Gwynedd Social Services.

- iii. The general performance of the Council was mixed. Although some areas had improved (managing child re-referrals), some other areas still need attention e.g. not reviewing looked after children.
- iv. It has not secured improvement in some important performance and commissioning areas. Some of these will be vital to improving the quality of services and ensuring sustainability in the future.

2.5 The **following potential risks** were noted:

- i. There is further delay in terms of modernising services for adults, leading to unsustainable services of a poor quality in the future.
- ii. The ability to influence locality-focused strategic planning with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

2.6 In terms of responding to **development areas that had been identified in the 2011-12 review**, the CSSIW noted...

"In general the Council has made limited progress in the specific fields for improvement that were noted in last year's report. However, the Council did succeed in improving the timeliness of child protection conferences and made structural changes in respect of the Director of Social Services."

2.7 (Services Scrutiny Committee Members might recall that, in its June 2013 meeting, the Committee scrutinised the contents of the 2011-12 CSSIW annual review and evaluation for Gwynedd in addition to being presented with information on the response steps which in reality continue to be implemented.)

3. Response of Gwynedd Council (per issue highlighted by CSSIW)

3.1 We welcome the Inspectorate's annual review and acknowledge the importance of this annual process in terms of providing an independent evaluation on the performance of social services in Gwynedd. We certainly respect and value the independent viewpoints of regulators within this area of work.

3.2 So to ensure the factual accuracy of the contents of the Inspectorate's annual review, there is an engagement period between CSSIW and the Statutory Director (August / September in the case of the 2012/13 evaluation) to discuss the final draft version of the review document. This process allows us to rectify any misinterpretations by the Inspectorate.

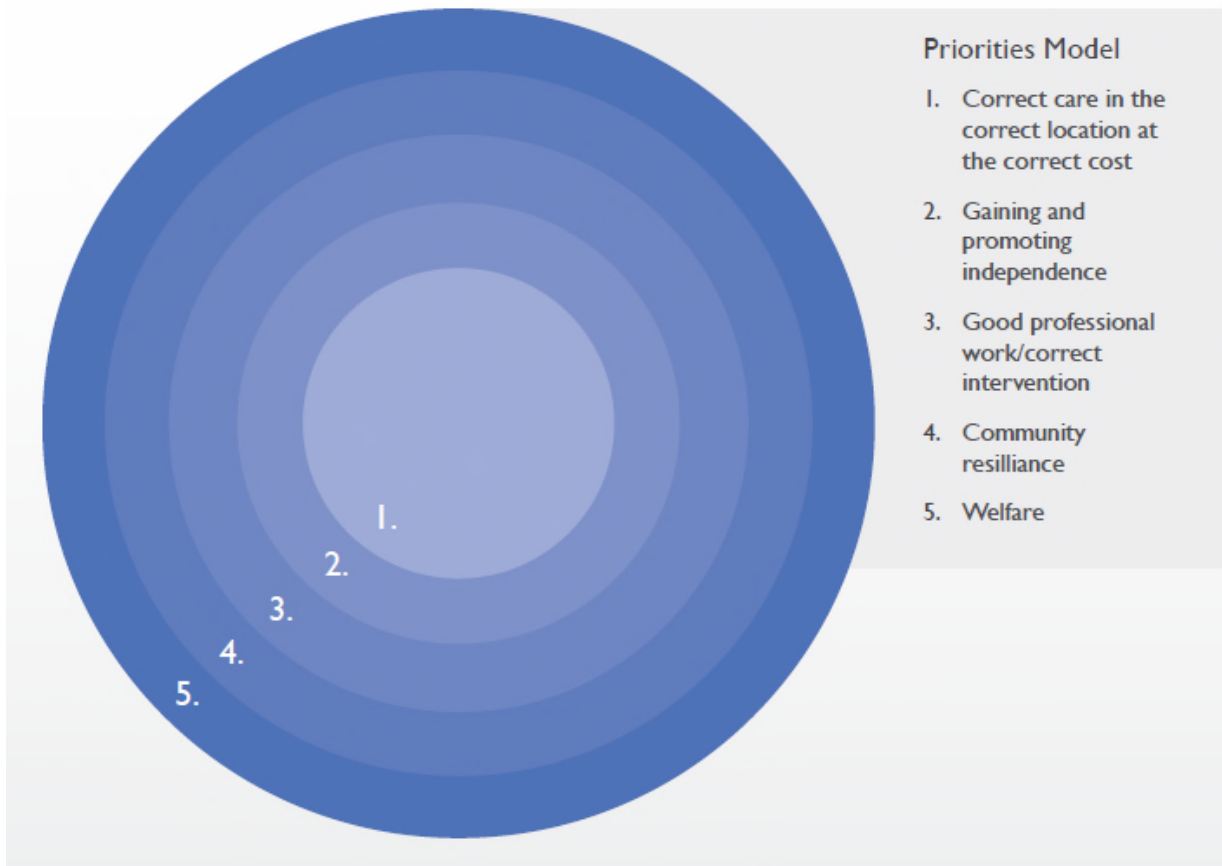
3.3 Following on from paragraph 3.2, we therefore can confirm that the Statutory Director is generally content with the review's contents, of the view that it's factually accurate and also agrees with the comments in relation to the improvement areas for the future.

- 3.4 Naturally the Council will be required and expected to take action to respond to these improvement areas. To this end we have already formed a 2013-14 response steps template and a work programme per improvement area which is presented as **Appendix 2**. When formulating the template, specific consideration was given to the 2 potential risk areas identified by CSSIW (these being the risk of further delay in terms of modernising services for adults and the ability to influence locality-focused strategic planning with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.)
- 3.5 The Social Services, Housing and Leisure Department discussed and agreed on the content of the response steps and the work programme with CSSIW in the quarterly Engagement meeting between the Department and CSSIW on 15 November 2013. The CSSIW was satisfied with the content on the response programme in question.
- 3.6 2012/13 has been a year of successes and challenges. Progress was noticeable in a number of areas including responding to referrals, holding reviews, safeguarding conferences, statutory visits and young carers, and this during a period where there has been increasing demand due to demographic changes and families needs in general. Certain areas remain a challenge, including the high level of traditional residential provision, level of support in the community for adults, and ensuring timely personal educational plans and health assessments for looked after children. Further efforts are required to ensure future success within these areas.
- 3.7 It would be fair to note that there are actions already in place for responding to the improvement areas in question. We have already seen an improvement in some areas this year including personal education plans, looked after children health assessments and looked after children reviews.
- 3.8 A substantial number of this year's response steps are incorporated within the 2013-14 care field action plan of the Gwynedd Strategic Plan. In addition, subsequent years' Strategic Plan action plans (the period 2014-2017) shall also respond to the strategic improvement areas and risk areas highlighted by CSSIW.

4. Vision for the future

- 4.1 The main purpose of the Social Services is to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and support them to live as independently as possible in their communities. We do this by co-producing the future in equal partnership between individuals, families, communities and professionals.
- 4.2 The past year has been very challenging but exciting and I predict that this will also be true for the year ahead. We certainly cannot continue to operate in the same way as we have been doing. We must co-produce new ways to respond to the challenges that exist and to those that are ahead of us. To do so we must all be open minded and show a willingness to find new and exciting solutions. Together we can succeed in providing the best for Gwynedd's citizens, both today and tomorrow.

- 4.3 When looking to the future, we must consider the context of prolonged financial pressures, demographic changes and increased expectations. Future services need to be sustainable and this is mirrored in the Welsh Government Social Services and Welfare Being Bill.
- 4.4 The Bill identifies the need to ensure the well-being of people is central, by providing those who need services a voice and control in addition to protecting and safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. To ensure this we must develop new appropriate services for specific groups and to regulate and monitor the services provided so to ensure the highest standard.
- 4.5 The following model conveys the priorities of the Statutory Director of Social Services within the context of Gwynedd Council's strategic priorities. What becomes apparent is the need for the joint production of our services in future, by collaborating on an equal level with individuals, families, communities and professional people. This will include the joint planning, joint developing and joint appraisal of services.



4.6 **We therefore will be:**

- i. **Ensuring the right care in the right place at the right price.....by**
..... responding better to the needs of vulnerable people and ensuring sustainable care services.

- ii. **Focusing on rehabilitation and maintaining independence.....by**
.....increasing preventative work in adults and older people care.
- iii. **Promoting Good Social work and care and intervention on a firm foundation.....by**
.....ensuring a fit for purpose structure,
.....safeguarding and protecting children and adults,
.....promoting the Welsh language within the care.
- iv. **Developing the Resilience of Families and Communities.....by**
.....aligning opportunities for vulnerable groups of children, young people and families,
.....promoting a suitable supply of housing for local people,
.....reducing the impact of poverty and deprivation,
..... promoting community pride and responsibility.
- v. **Promoting and maintaining the welfare of individuals, families and carers.....by**
.....increasing preventative work and targeting health inequalities.

- 4.7 We in Gwynedd must plan a future that is sustainable. We must think differently to ensure that this occurs. We are very fortunate in Gwynedd that we have a strong foundation of viable communities and committed individuals. This is the foundation essential for future planning and provision. By ensuring that we co-produce services through building upon the strengths of individuals and communities, there is a potential to create a sustainable future.
- 4.8 Ensuring change is not an easy task, especially if it entails us to all think differently. Even so, there exist a real opportunity for us to co-create and co-produce a positive and sustainable future for the people of Gwynedd.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – CSSIW’s Review and Evaluation of Gwynedd’s Performance in 2012-13
2. Appendix 2 – A template of Gwynedd’s steps in 2013-14 to respond to improvement areas as identified in CSSIW’s annual review 2012-13.

Background Papers

1. Services Scrutiny Committee 20th June 2013 - Annual Review and Evaluation of Gwynedd Council’s Performance 2011/12 – Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW)