

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **29th July, 2021**
Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/20**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor John Mason, Executive Member for Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance & Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
22.6.21	08.07.21				22.07.21		29.07.21	

1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is present the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/2020 (Appendix 1) for approval.

2. **Scope and Background**

- 2.1 It is a statutory responsibility of the Director of Social Services to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Social Services and produce an Annual Report which forms part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework.
- 2.2 Owing to the pressures that Social Services were under to respond to the emergency Covid pandemic the Welsh Government agreed to postpone the development of the Annual Report 2019/20. It has subsequently been agreed by Welsh Government that the outstanding 2019/20 report be developed and approved as well as a separate report for 2020/21. The Council has agreed to present the 2019/20 report in July and the 2020/21 Report in September / October.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Report has been considered by the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 3.2 The report will also be considered at the Social Services Scrutiny Committee on 22nd July 2021, and any feedback from the Committee will be provided verbally at Council.
- 3.3 **Option 1**
Members are asked to consider and approve the detail contained within the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/20.
- 3.4 **Option 2**
Do not accept the report as provided and make recommendations for any changes required.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 It is a statutory responsibility of the Director of Social Services to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Social Services and produce an Annual Report. The Annual Report contributes and forms part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF).

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The Director's Report identifies pressures and budgetary implications from April 2019 to March 2020.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Social Services maintain a directorate risk register which is aligned to both service level and corporate risk. The risk register is reviewed as part of the business planning process and included within the performance reporting of the director of Social Services.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Performance information is included within Appendix 1.

6.2 Headline updates include:

6.3 **Children's**

Supporting families with high quality, flexible and affordable childcare continues, supporting economic regeneration, reducing pressures on family income and helping parents to participate in work, reducing a family's risk of poverty. It also supports the well-being of children through positive and rich childhood experiences. The Childcare Offer is now fully rolled out across both Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen by the Blaenau Gwent team.

The safeguarding of children, families and vulnerable adults remains a priority moving forward for the Directorate. We have strengthened our response to children's safeguarding referrals by placing a police resource within our Children's Information, Advice and Assistance service to better inform our decision making and unsure decisions are taken in a timely manner.

The 3 years Safe Reduction of Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy has been in place for over 2 years now and is supported by a clear action plan which is reviewed on a quarterly basis as part of the business planning process. The development of a Supporting Change Team who work with children and families on the 'edge of care' has evidenced that preventing problems escalating can reduce the number of children becoming looked after. We continue to see a steady reduction in the numbers of CLA during

the year. An independent review of the strategy was commenced during the year to ensure it can be reshaped for the coming years.

We have been also supporting the above strategy through the use of Integrated Care Funding (ICF) with a Family Conference service, the development of a special guardianship team, the enhancing of the current Supporting Change team and the development of a Young Person's Mediation service aimed at age 14 plus.

6.4 **Adults**

In Adult Services the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) team and Community Resource team have continued to work together to provide an enhanced 'front door' for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent for referrals for both health and social care provision. The IAA outreach pilots at both Nevill Hall Hospital and Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan continues to work well, contributing to the very low numbers of delayed transfers of care being experienced by Blaenau Gwent residents. Our performance on delayed transfers of care was again excellent with our rate at 0.98 for 2019/20 which again puts us in the top quartile of performing authorities across Wales.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) recognised the considerable investment officers have made to address the fragile domiciliary care market and how we are procuring a sustainable model jointly with Caerphilly to provide greater choice and options for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent. They also identified how service users attending Cwm Coch described social workers as very supportive and accessible. They also identified how the IAA Service with partners had embraced the 'what matters' conversations, evidencing the MIND workers interface with the Police, Women's Aid and Cwm Coch hospital as well as the emotional support via telephone, signposting to relevant services and cascading information within the team they provide.

The General Practitioner Engagement service for carers delivered by South East Wales Carers Trust who support all GP surgeries reached the final of the South Wales Argus Health and Care Awards and were recognised for the excellent work they undertaking for carers. During carers week, we put a number of raising awareness events and activities for carers across Blaenau Gwent.

We also led the development of a Regional adult advocacy commissioning strategy and helpline which set out a clear direction of travel for advocacy services in the region over the next 5 years.

6.5 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Reporting provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Directorate and ensure accountability.

6.6 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and

other key partners where possible in helping shape and influence future design of services.

6.7 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Report enables the department to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the department is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.8 ***Preventative focus***

The work undertaken by the department looks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. Having an active rather than re active approach to service planning can also help with planning resources and not spending as much on services in the future.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The performance of the department is monitored via the business planning process and reported through the democratic process via various reporting mechanisms including the ACRF, the Finance and Performance Report, the Assessment of Performance and various performance monitoring reports.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 –Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/20