

Committee: **Executive Committee**  
Date of meeting: **2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022**  
Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021/2022 (Quarters 1 and 2).**  
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**  
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
07.12.2021	16.12.2021	15.02.22			20.01.2022	02.03.22		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to highlight key points from quarters 1 and 2 of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021/2022 (Appendix 1).

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The performance of the department is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March, with quarterly reports presented to Social Services Committee. At the end of the year a comprehensive self-evaluation of performance is undertaken to inform the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services.

2.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

**Option 1**

The Executive accept the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021/2022 (quarters 1 and 2)

**Option 2**

The Executive do not accept the report as provided.

**The Social Services Scrutiny Committee at their meeting of the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 agreed Option 1.**

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

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 Annual Report identifies the pressures and budgetary implications for 2021/2022

### 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.

### 5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications with this report

### 5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no staffing implications related in this report

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Detail is provided within the Director's Annual Report 2021/2022 (quarters 1 and 2).

Headline updates:

#### **Children's**

During quarter 1 2021/22 the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) saw a significant increase in the numbers of referrals received across all partners. Analysis of the data over the past two years has been undertaken to understand the increase in the numbers pre and post pandemic. This information has been included within a report identifying the impact that this increase is having on the service. The overarching message was that the number of referrals during the height of the Pandemic was higher than the referral rates in the previous year.

The formal consultation with Blaenau Gwent foster carers has been finalised and the outcome shared internally with senior management team, the Placement Team and with foster carers. The response rate was just under 17% with a higher response from the kinship foster carers. The consultation showed that the highest satisfaction rate was achieved, with support from the link worker and Placement Team (10 out of 10 from generic foster carers) and a significant increase of satisfaction with training and learning opportunities available (8.85/9.35 out of 10). An Action Plan has been developed and will be implemented until the next formal consultation due in March 2022.

The numbers of Children Looked After (CLA) continue to slowly but steadily decrease. Welsh Government has recognised the need to safely reduce the number of children coming into care and identified this as a priority area. In light of this, Integrated Care Fund (ICF) grant money was allocated to each local authority in

Wales, via the Regional Partnership Boards in April 2019, to invest in and develop services to safely reduce the numbers of children coming into care.

### **Adults**

There continues to be ongoing strengthening links between the Community Resource Team (Gwent Frailty) and IAA team. This includes close working with GP colleagues to support pressures across the Health and Social Care sectors. Close work is also ongoing with other professionals such as Welsh Ambulance Service Trust, Primary and Secondary care colleagues to deliver proportionate assessments at the front door.

We have continued to develop a Hospital Hub at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan to expedite safe discharge from hospital sites. Working with Gwent Local Authorities to support unnecessary hospital admissions to the acute sites by enhancing the support provided by the Gwent Home First Service. The hospital hub is focussing on a model of 'Discharge to Recover and Assess' whereby a patient undertakes an assessment at home as opposed to being assessed in hospital when it is deemed inappropriate.

A three-year Strategic Plan was published for The South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) and the Gwent-wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GwASB) have published a three-year Strategic Plan covering the period 2020/21 and 2022/23. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused significant disruption to all services and communities across the region. Despite this, Gwent Safeguarding Board and Blaenau Gwent Safeguarding team have worked diligently to ensure that essential services have remained operational to provide support to the most vulnerable adults. We continue to plan for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) legislation as a replacement for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and are delivering training as part of the Regional consortium in addition to increasing capacity at a local level.

Consultation has taken place with staff regarding the reconfiguration of preventative services including the Support Worker roles within IAA and Community Resource Team and the Community Connector roles. It is anticipated the new structure will be in place by April 2022. The new structure will be resilient and sustainable and not be reliant on grant funding. Within the new structure, a Senior Practitioner and Senior Therapist will be co-located within the IAA Team to be at the 'front door'.

#### **6.2 *Expected outcome for the public***

The key theme of the Social Services and Well-being Act is to promote the well-being of people who need care and support. Within the annual report it is highlighted where the Directorate has worked closely with the public to improve service delivery and user outcomes. Reporting provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Directorate and ensure accountability.

#### **6.3 *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.

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

The Annual 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.

6.5 ***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.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Social Services work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The purpose of the SSWBA is to foster integration between Health and Social Services. 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 it needs to be in the future to support a sustainable and viable service.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The workforce who deliver the functions of the SSWBA have adopted the agile working policy of the council which will have a positive impact on car emissions as staff are now able to work from home to undertake paperwork and do not have to travel to the office.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

All service provision and functions that sit under social services are subject to socio economic disadvantages for example, low income, material and area deprivation. All programmes work towards addressing these disadvantages.

6.9b ***Equality Impact Assessment***

The overarching vision is to support the needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities through a range of early intervention, prevention and support mechanisms. With the aim of building resilient individuals, resilient families and resilient communities.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Annual Report for 2021/2022 (quarters 1 and 2) will be monitored via quarterly monitoring reports to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Report of the Director of Social Services