



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

4th November 2020

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Agenda Item No: 4

Care Inspectorate Wales

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update Scrutiny Members on the outcome of Care Inspectorate Wales' (CIW) inspection and review activities with Children's Services during the last year and actions taken by the service to date.

Please note that the report outlining the findings of the Disabled Children's Service Review and proposed next steps was brought to Scrutiny Committee on the 4/12/2019 for consideration and comment. See link below:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/ChildrenandYoungPeopleScrutinyCommittee/2019/12/04/ChildrenandYoungPeopleScrutinyCommittee04Dec2019.aspx>

CIW activity has included:

- The inspection of children's services, focusing on support for disabled children in December 2019.
- Focused activity with regard to support for care leavers in March 2020.

- CIW's Quality of Care Review Reports 1/4/2019 to 31/3/2020 in respect of Children's Residential Care and Fostering Services have also been completed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND

Disabled Children's Service

Children's Services received CIW's Inspection Report on the provision of early help, care and support and seamless transition for disabled children and their families in Rhondda Cynon Taf in March 2020. See link below:

<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2020-03/200309-support-and-arrangements-for-children-disabled-rtc-bc-en.pdf>

The report identified a number of strengths which included:

- A strong vision for remodelling services for disabled children.
- An effective and improved response at the 'front door' of children's services.
- The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) evidenced good joint working arrangements.
- An understanding of the social model of disability within our prevention and early intervention services and an intention to improve equality of access for disabled children.
- The Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) is an effective and valued service, with a focus on family strengths and the achievement of personal outcomes.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) provides its own psychological support for children and practitioner consultation.
- That staff were positive and felt well supported by colleagues and managers.
- Evidence of partnership working in the development of an emotional well-being service jointly with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

Areas for improvement were also identified they included:

- Increased focus on family strengths and the identification of personal outcomes.
- Improved practice in relation to assessments of parent carers.
- Ensuring greater promotion of the voice of the child including the use of advocacy.
- Greater support for siblings of disabled children.
- To develop alternative approaches to providing respite/short breaks.
- The local authority and the health board need to reach greater resolution on eligibility for continuing care arrangements for children with complex needs.
- Improving quality assurance within DCT.
- Consideration to be given to the benefits to disabled young people of earlier active involvement by adult services social workers and Personal Advisors (PAs).
- Re-establish the disability register.
- CTMUHB and RCTCBC to continue to focus efforts to achieve a more joined up strategic approach to the advantage of citizens.

As outlined in the December 2019 Disabled Children's Service Review Report to Scrutiny Committee, work was already underway to change the delivery model for disabled children prior to the CIW inspection. Where further areas for improvement were identified they have been incorporated into the Disabled Children's Services Remodelling Implementation Plan.

16+ Teams

At the end of March 2020, Children's Services received CIW feedback in relation to the focused activity undertaken earlier that month with the 16+ teams. The strengths identified by inspectors that Personal Assistants (PAs) were committed to promoting the well-being of young people; that young people valued their PAs; and that there were good examples of good contact between the PAs and other professionals. The areas for improvement identified included:

- Improving the outcome focused approach, ensuring that young people's wishes and feelings are evident in pathway planning.
- Ensuring Pathway Plans are reviewed in a timelier manner and involve updates from relevant agencies.
- Improving quality assurance.
- Ensuring young people have an active offer of a service in Welsh.

4. **NEXT STEPS**

Action plans have been developed for both the Disabled Children's Service and 16+ Teams which incorporate the areas for improvement identified by CIW. As previously noted in the case of the Disabled Children's Services they have been included in the Remodelling Implementation Plan.

Due to the unprecedented circumstances relating to Covid 19, on the 23rd of March 2020 Children's Services Management Team made changes and adjustments to working arrangements. Four critical areas of work on which to focus activity were identified: access to services and family support, safeguarding duties, children looked after and youth offending. A reduced service was delivered in these areas by prioritising those at greatest level of risk and need. All development and improvement activity was placed on hold.

Quality Assurance monitoring was reduced to two key indicators:

- Communication and support for staff
- Quality of work

RCT Children's Services has developed a recovery plan, and a separate report is being provided in that regard. We are now beginning to deliver what is likely to be a staged return of services; having regard to changes in local restrictions and any future national requirements which will impact on the extent and rate of recovery. The guiding principle must be how we safeguard the health and wellbeing of our service users and staff as well as minimise the ongoing risk of infection.

We are now in a position to begin to take forward elements of the action plans that have been prioritised (subject to the impact of local restrictions). They are as follows:

Disabled Children's Service:

- Implement the revised Disabled Children's Service Structure and model of working.
- Develop a clear pathway for disabled children that strengthens early intervention and transition.
- Improve strength based assessment and outcome focused planning through changes to Disabled Children's Service model of working and training for practitioners.
- Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework to be embedded within the service.
- Work is underway with colleagues in adult services to incorporate the 'carers' conversation' into a new carers assessment.

16+ Teams:

- A strengths based outcome focused approach has been identified as a priority training need for Children's Services. A training programme is being developed.
- Focus on team development. Consider the culture of the team, how things currently operate, strengths, opportunities for development.
- Review and amend guidance to practitioners in 16+ Teams concerning roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the SSWB (Wales) Act 2014.
- Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework to be embedded within the service.
- Utilise performance data, greater use to be made of available information to analyse and explore outcomes for young people.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This is an information report.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the implementation process.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 This is an information report.

6.2 Further consultation will however be undertaken as part of the implementation process.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

7.2 Funding opportunities may need to be explored to take forward elements of the Action Plans.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The legal requirements for children and young people are set down within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP

9.1 This consultation links to the corporate priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone by ensuring that the Council listens to the

people it provides for.

9.2 It also contributes to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

10. **CONCLUSION**

There is a strong commitment within RCT Children's Services to support the Disabled Children's Service and the 16+ Teams to implement positive change, whilst acknowledging and building upon the strengths identified. Steering groups have been established and the action / remodelling plans provide a clear framework to facilitate and drive change to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people within RCT.