

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/19

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

22nd October 2018

Item No. 3

Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2017/18

REPORT OF:-

**THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC
SERVICES**

Author: Christian Hanagan

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the Wales Audit Office 'Annual Improvement Report 2017/18' presented to Council on 19th September 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the statements of progress (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Form a view on the adequacy of progress made by Council Services in implementing proposals for improvement / recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office, and consider whether further information and / or further progress up dates are required.
- 2.3 Determine whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require referral to the Council's Audit Committee.

**3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING WALES AUDIT OFFICE
PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT / RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council recognises the important role the Wales Audit Office plays in supporting on-going improvement to governance and service delivery, and uses the oversight of Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee to oversee the arrangements and the monitoring of progress.

Scrutiny Committees

- 3.2 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function is to, amongst other things, scrutinise actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions. In line with this, the Committee has responsibility to oversee reports issued by the Wales Audit Office i.e. to review and challenge the progress the Council is making toward implementing agreed actions.
- 3.3 In addition to the above function, where the Committee determines there are matters of a 'governance', 'internal control' or 'risk management' nature that require further review, it is able to refer these to Audit Committee for consideration.

Audit Committee

- 3.4 Members will note that the Council's Audit Committee has a different, albeit, linked role in overseeing reports issued by the Wales Audit Office in line with its Terms of Reference i.e. 'To receive and consider reports of the External Auditor in relation to the accounts, matters of financial probity and corporate governance and providing the opportunity for direct discussion with the auditor(s) on these.'
- 3.5 To discharge the above requirement, the Council's Audit Committee has responsibility for:
- Providing independent assurance that there are adequate controls in place to mitigate key risks; and
 - Determining whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention.
- 3.6 Similar to the information set out above for Scrutiny Committees, where Audit Committee considers there are performance related matters that require further review, it is also able to refer these to the designated Scrutiny Committee for review.

4. WALES AUDIT OFFICE – ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2017/18

- 4.1 At the meeting of Council held on the [19th September 2018](#) Members received the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2017/18 (AIR). The AIR contained proposals for improvement / recommendations from published reports that were specific to Rhondda Cynon Taf and also national reports that relate to both local authorities more generally and Welsh Government. Table 1 provides a list of the published reports covered by the AIR together with hyperlinks to copies of each report.

Table 1 – Published reports covered by the 2017/18 AIR

Type of Report	Report Title	Proposals For Improvement Reported
RCT Specific Reports (audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2017-18)	Aligning the levers of change	No
	Scrutiny: Fit for the future Review¹	Yes
	Annual Audit Letter 2016-17 contained in WAO Annual Improvement Report to Council 21 June	No
	Wales Audit Office - annual improvement plan audit	No
	Wales Audit Office – annual assessment of performance contained within the 2016/17 AIR	No
	Wales Audit Office – Savings Planning contained within the 2016/17 AIR	Yes
National Report recommendations 2017-18	Savings Planning in Councils in Wales	No Specific proposals for improvement were included in a local report to the Council. This was reported to Council (21/6/17), O&S Committee (13/9/17) and Audit Committee (16/10/17)
	Public Procurement in Wales	Yes
	Good governance when determining significant service changes – national summary	No Specific proposals for improvement were included in a local report to the Council. This was reported to Cabinet (9/3/17) and Audit Committee (20/3/17)
	Local government Financial Reporting 2016/17	No

¹ Scrutiny: Fit for the Future? Review – this report is a specific agenda item on the 22nd October 2018 Overview and Scrutiny meeting in view of this Committee’s role in overseeing the Council’s scrutiny function.

Type of Report	Report Title	Proposals For Improvement Reported
National Report recommendations 2017-18	How Local Government managed demand - homelessness	Yes
	Housing Adaptations	Yes
	Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services	Yes
	Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities	Yes

4.2 A statement of progress made by Council Services to implement the proposals for improvement / recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office, where applicable to Rhondda Cynon Taf, are set out in Appendix 1.

4.3 In line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee is requested to scrutinise the statement of progress, in addition to Members own lines of enquiry, and:

- Form a view on the adequacy of progress made and consider whether any further information / action is required; and
- Determine whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require referral to the Council's Audit Committee.

5. **CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Wales Audit Office reports play an important role in supporting on-going improvement to the Council's governance and service delivery arrangements, and as part of this process the Council utilises its Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee to oversee the arrangements and the monitoring of progress.

5.2 In line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee has responsibility for reviewing and challenging the progress the Council is making toward implementing agreed actions and forming a view on the adequacy of progress being made.

5.3 Lastly, where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider there are matters of a 'governance', 'internal control' or 'risk management' nature that

require further review, these can be referred to Audit Committee for consideration.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

as amended by

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22nd October 2018

Report of the Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services

Author: Christian Hanagan

Item: 4 - Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2017/18

Contact Officer: Christian Hanagan

Wales Audit Office - [Annual Improvement Report 2017-18](#)

Local and National Reports – Recommendations/Proposals for improvement

Progress to date

Local Reports

April 2018 - Aligning the Levers of Change –

The reference to Aligning the Levers of Change in the AIR arose from a Pilot Project undertaken by the WAO with the Council in the use of a software 'Sense Maker' to assess attitudes to Risk. The work comprised a workshop with senior staff and Members. There was no formal WAO report issued and consequently no proposals for improvement. This work has helped to inform an Academi Wales report [Taking Risks – how to make it safe to fail](#).

July 18 – [Scrutiny Fit for the Future](#) –The report contained five proposals for improvement.

Proposals for improvement The Council should		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
WAO FFF 1	Review whether specific training could better prepare overview and scrutiny members to respond to current and future challenges. This could include training on Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.	<p>AGREED The training needs of Members have been reviewed through a Personal Development Review process as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to Member development.</p> <p>Training needs in respect of Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Cardiff Regional City Deal, among other things have already been identified as part of this process.</p> <p>Well-being of Future Generations Act- Following initial training in respect of Well-being of Future Generations Act at Member induction, a Scrutiny Working Group has been established to develop RCT scrutiny arrangements that can be incorporated into existing processes. This will include consideration of a draft Scrutiny Framework which is being developed by the office of the Future Generations Commissioner.</p>	<p>A new approach to providing training that will strengthen arrangements for Member development will be presented to Democratic Services Committee for consideration on 25.10.18.</p> <p>Working Group meetings have scheduled between October and January.</p>	<p>Arrangements to be put in place by the start of the new municipal year</p> <p>Oct-18 and Jan-19</p>	<p>Christian Hanagan</p> <p>Christian Hanagan</p>

July 18 – [Scrutiny Fit for the Future](#) –The report contained five proposals for improvement.

Proposals for improvement The Council should	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<p>It is anticipated that Members of the Working Group will act as WFG ‘Champions’ within their respective Committees to support any changes to the scrutiny arrangements arising from the findings of the working group.</p> <p>Cardiff City Region City Deal- scrutiny arrangements have been established, with Bridgend Council taking forward the lead. We are working closely with colleagues in Bridgend to ensure that Members of the Board representing the council are provided with sufficient training and support to allow them to undertake their scrutiny role in this area.</p> <p>The Council is responsive to Members requests for training and changing legislation, with forthcoming training to be provided in respect of GDPR, which we will share with our Community and Town Council colleagues to ensure all elected representatives for RCT are supported.</p>	<p>CCRC Training is being discussed at the first meeting of the City Deal Joint Scrutiny which is taking place on the 15.10.18</p> <p>Subject to the agreement of Democratic Services Committee GDPR training to take place prior to full Council on the 28.11.18</p>	<p>Following the Joint Scrutiny Committees first meeting in October</p> <p>Nov-18</p>	<p>Christian Hanagan</p> <p>Christian Hanagan</p>
WAO FFF 2	<p>AGREED The Council is constantly reviewing capacity and support arrangements. Most recently at the Democratic Services Committee in July, 2018 it was agreed that Christian Hanagan be designated the interim Head of Democratic Services (HODS) following the retirement of Karyl May. The Committee further agreed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a Council Business Unit that will support the Executive and Non-Executive Members; 	<p>Further detail that will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhance officer support available to non-executive members provide assistance for members to better prepare for scrutiny and Strengthen research support for members improved support for the Council’s scrutiny functions, 	<p>Democratic Services Committee -25 Oct 18</p>	<p>Christian Hanagan</p>

July 18 – [Scrutiny Fit for the Future](#) –The report contained five proposals for improvement.

	Proposals for improvement The Council should	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make the Member support functions more resilient; and • reinvest any efficiency savings arising to increase the capacity of the Business Unit to support the Scrutiny Committees in undertaking their duties. 	will be included in the statutory 'Sufficiency of Resources' report which will be presented to the Democratic Services Committee on 25 October 2018.		
WAO FFF 3	Ensure that members have the opportunity to adequately prepare for scrutiny activity by having access to information in advance of scrutiny committee meetings.	<p>AGREED - Through the new Council Business Unit, the Council will ensure that Members have sufficient access to information and Officer reports in the specified time-lines as set out in the Council's constitution. Also, that any presentations from Officers supplement Officer reports and recommendations, where appropriate, and are not stand alone items. This will be strengthened by the Head of Democratic Services now being part of the Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>The recent development of the Cabinet/Scrutiny Engagement sessions with Scrutiny Chairs and Cabinet portfolio holders will continue to enhance this approach, with timely discussions of forward work programmes and opportunities for Scrutiny committees.</p> <p>Greater transparency of the detailed Cabinet work programme will also assist Scrutiny Members to establish items for pre-scrutiny and associated timelines.</p>	See above	Following the Democratic Services Committee Oct-18	Christian Hanagan

July 18 – [Scrutiny Fit for the Future](#) –The report contained five proposals for improvement.

Proposals for improvement The Council should	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
<p>WAO FFF 4</p> <p>a) Strengthen committee ownership of forward work programmes and committee agendas; and</p> <p>b) Clarify and promote arrangements for adding items to forward work programmes for members and the public.</p>	<p>AGREED - The Council continues to strengthen ownership of forward work programmes and committee agendas. Steps include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s (O&S) consideration of the quarterly Cabinet work programme. This enables O&S to refer matters to other Scrutiny Committees to help them plan their work programmes • Regular meetings between Scrutiny Chairs with associated Cabinet Members and Group Directors. These meetings address the cabinet work programme, policy developments and scrutiny priorities and have strengthened Members’ overall understanding of the Council’s business. <p>At its meeting on 27 June the Council agreed a Council Work Programme which will help to make the business of the Council more transparent and although we know have more to do we’ve have started to make changes. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meetings of Scrutiny Committees being held in locations within communities across RCT. The aim of this is to encourage greater public engagement in the development of work programmes and attendance and involvement at Committee meetings. However, it is too early to evaluate the extent to which this has been achieved. • dedicated pages for Scrutiny have been included on the Council’s Website. These pages contain detailed information about the role of Scrutiny, projects that have been introduced as a result of Scrutiny intervention and a ‘Scrutiny Chairs’ Blog’ 	<p>Review the effectiveness and impact of holding Scrutiny Committee meeting in locations across RCT.</p>	<p>May-19</p>	<p>Christian Hanagan</p>

July 18 – [Scrutiny Fit for the Future](#) –The report contained five proposals for improvement.

Proposals for improvement The Council should	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<p>which currently contains contributions from two Scrutiny Chairs. Implementation of additional pages 'Engage with the Council' which provide options by which residents can engage in the Council's decision making processes, are imminent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work to ensure the format of work programmes is fit for purpose and user friendly for both Members and residents. • arrangements to ensure that meetings of Chairs and Vice-chairs of Scrutiny receive regular updates on Council business being developed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Executive for consideration so that they can better reflect the priorities being discussed. 	<p>Continue to develop dedicated Scrutiny pages.</p> <p>Ensure the implementation of the 'Engage with the Council' Web pages.</p> <p>Continue work to introduce user friendly Scrutiny work programmes.</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to provide Chair and Vice meetings with more detailed information to inform their discussions about Council priorities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct-18</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By the Council AGM 2019</p>	<p>Christian Hanagan</p> <p>Christian Hanagan</p> <p>Christian Hanagan</p> <p>Christian Hanagan</p>
WAO FFF 5	<p>AGREED – Steps have already been taken to better evaluate the impact of Scrutiny, which has been reflected in the Annual Scrutiny Report 2017/18. A number of policies have been developed by Scrutiny Work groups and subsequently supported and taken forward and endorsed by Cabinet. An example of this is the work to improve the provision of sanitary products to female learners in schools arising from recommendations from Children and Young People Scrutiny Working Group which received cross party support by Council in February 2018 with a implementation plan being agreed by Cabinet in April 2018.</p> <p>The Council is continuing to develop its performance arrangements for Scrutiny so that they can better facilitate improved evaluation of scrutiny. This will include robust action planning to support the delivery</p>	<p>Develop and introduce strengthened performance arrangement to enable</p>	<p>By the Council AGM 2019.</p>	<p>Christian Hanagan</p>

July 18 – [Scrutiny Fit for the Future](#) –The report contained five proposals for improvement.

Proposals for improvement The Council should	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	of agreed recommendations with appropriate monitoring arrangements in place.	Scrutiny committees to better evaluate their impact		

Compliance letters issued November 2017

Annual Audit Letter 2016-17	No proposals for improvement
Annual Improvement Plan Audit	No proposals for improvement
Annual Assessment of Performance contained with the 2017 AIR	No proposals for improvement

June 17 - [Savings Planning](#) . The local report in relation to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council contained one proposal for improvement and was presented to [Council on 21 June 2017](#), O&S Committee ([13 Sept 2017](#)) and Audit Committee ([16 Oct 2017](#)). An update on progress since this time is set out below.

Proposals for improvement The Council should	Update & Action to Date
WAO SP1 Strengthen financial planning by finalising the development of an income generation approach; and developing savings plans to cover the funding gap identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan.	<p><u>Income Generation</u> The Council’s approach to income generation has been incorporated into its Fees and Charges Policy that is reported to Cabinet on an annual basis (link to the Fees and Charges Policy 2018/19). In parallel with this approach, the Council has continued to keep the area of income generation under on-going review and, where deemed appropriate, reports specific proposals to Cabinet / takes delegated decisions during the year e.g. Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool admission (Cabinet 28/9/17) and Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crimes (Cabinet 25/1/18).</p> <p><u>Savings Plans</u> The Council refreshes its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) on an on-going basis throughout the year – the latest MTFP was reported to Cabinet on 17th July 2018 and covers the period 2018/19 to 2021/22. This document sets out, amongst other things, the forecasted funding gap and a position statement on savings proposals identified.</p> <p>To assist the Council in its approach to savings planning, Cabinet agreed 'Delivering the Corporate Plan - the way ahead' on 28 September 2017 that set out 5 workstreams to invest in as part of delivering the Corporate Plan within a climate of reducing resources. The 5 workstreams are: Digitisation; Commercialisation; Independence; Early Intervention and Prevention; and Efficient and Effective Organisation, with the Council using these areas to inform the identification and delivery of budget savings over the medium term.</p>

National Report Recommendations 2017-18 and Updates

June 17 - [Savings Planning in Councils in Wales](#). The report contained no national recommendations or proposals for improvement. The report was presented to [Council on 21 June 2017](#), O&S Committee ([13/09/17](#)) and Audit Committee ([16/10/17](#)). An update on progress since this time is set out below.

October 17 - [Public Procurement in Wales](#) The national report contained seven recommendations. Six of the recommendations were for the Welsh Government and one of the recommendations was for public bodies:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date
WAO PP3	It was clear from our sampling that some procurement strategies are out of date and there has also been a mixed response to new policy and legislation, such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We recommend that public bodies review their procurement strategies and policies during 2017-18 and on an annual basis thereafter to ensure that they reflect wider policy and legislative changes and support continuous improvement.	The Council's Procurement strategy 2017-20 was revised in November 2017 and has been made available on the Council's website . To date there has been no advice issued by the office of the FG commissioner. However, notwithstanding this gap, the strategy is currently being reviewed with a view to completion and publication in April 2019.

October 2017- [Good Governance when determining Service Change](#) – National Summary The report contained no national recommendations or proposals for improvement. A [local report](#) issued to the Council was reported to [Cabinet](#) on 9 March 2017 (and Audit Committee on [20/03/17](#)) and contained three proposals for improvement, the responses to which were [subsequently approved](#). Work to ensure the findings from the report are used to strengthen the governance processes is continuing.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date
WAO SCP1	The Council set out at the point of decision on service change proposals how the impact of proposed changes is going to be measured and monitored.	There have been no significant service change proposals since the report was issued that would provide the opportunity to fully test this approach. However, an example of the Council's approach will become evident as part of the detailed plans to implement changes to the Mobile Library Service which were agreed by Cabinet on 20 September . The identification of impact, measures and monitoring will also feature as part of the strengthened scrutiny arrangements.
WAO SCP2	The Council clarify and promote the arrangements for public participation in its overview and scrutiny process in order to encourage and promote public involvement;	Dedicated Scrutiny pages have been included in the Council's Website, additional work to strengthen opportunities to engage with scrutiny are being addressed and are contained within the Fit for the Future responses

October 2017- [Good Governance when determining Service Change](#) – National Summary The report contained no national recommendations or proposals for improvement. A [local report](#) issued to the Council was reported to [Cabinet](#) on 9 March 2017 (and Audit Committee on [20/03/17](#)) and contained three proposals for improvement, the responses to which were [subsequently approved](#). Work to ensure the findings from the report are used to strengthen the governance processes is continuing.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date
WAO SCP3	The Council publish its overview and scrutiny committees' forward work programme(s) as stand-alone documents(s) on the Council website to increase openness and transparency	The latest Scrutiny programme was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 June . Work to strengthen and make the Scrutiny work programme more transparent is continuing and further detail is contained within the Fit for the Future responses.

December 2017- [Local Government Financial Reporting](#) The report contained no national recommendations or proposals for improvement.

January. 18 - [How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness](#) The report contained eight recommendations, all of which were for local authorities. This action plan will be presented the Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee on 6 November as part of the Council's proposed Homelessness Strategy.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
WAO HLR1	Local authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure their staff are sufficiently skilled to deal with the new demands of mediating, problem solving, negotiating and influencing with homeless people; and • review and reconfigure their services to engage more effectively with homeless and potentially homeless people to prevent homelessness 	The role of the Housing Solutions Officers (HSO) is to assess all people who present as homeless and threatened with homelessness. The outcome of the assessment is to develop a housing and support plan for all clients which clearly set out the actions to be followed to prevent or relieve homelessness.	Carry out an audit with the Housing Solutions Officers to identify any ongoing training needs.	Jan-19	Ian Jones
		All HSOs have received significant training on the new Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and current procedures reflect the changes in legislation. .	Develop a continuing professional development and training plan for Housing Solutions staff	Mar-19	Ian Jones
		The Team are also supported by other agencies to help with their work. This includes a mediation Officer (Llamau) and Housing Advice Workers (Gofal Cymru) for people who present with a mental health need. The homelessness	Review performance and outcomes of all the co-located key worker support projects	Mar-19	Cheryl Emery
			Improve opportunities for clients to feed back their experience and	Apr-19	Ian Jones

January. 18 - [How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness](#) The report contained eight recommendations, all of which were for local authorities. This action plan will be presented the Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee on 6 November as part of the Council’s proposed Homelessness Strategy.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
		service has been reviewed and reconfigured to work closely with the “ Step by Step ” Project and the Homelessness Intervention Project (HIP) funded via the Homelessness Prevention Grant and Supporting People Grant. Both projects work closely with the Housing Solutions Team to provide a link officer to support homeless people.	expectations of service delivery to ensure the Council is providing an efficient person centred service, where client views contribute to continuous service improvement.		
WAO HLR2	Local authorities review their funding of homelessness services to ensure that they can continue to provide the widest possible preventative approach needed. Reviews should consider use of Supporting People as well as General Council fund monies to support delivery of the authority’s homelessness duties.	In 2017-18, a funding review was undertaken for all homeless funding including the RSG, Homelessness Prevention Grant and Supporting People Grant. This review identified the ongoing revenue support requirements for the homelessness prevention service and has enabled new resources to be made available including additional staffing for the Housing Solutions team. Supporting People services have also been reviewed to ensure people being referred for support are assessed as early as possible to help the preventative agenda. This includes a review of floating support projects and the development of an Early Intervention and Prevention model. A Project Officer has also been placed in each of the hostels i.e. Mill Street and the Grange and Women’s Aid RCT Refuge to work with complex needs clients to help prevent episodes of future homelessness. Merthyr and the Valleys Mind are providing mental health and wellbeing support in hostels and supported accommodation.	Consider the impact of the new projects on the prevention agenda through monitoring and performance data which will influence decisions on distribution of future funding.	Dec-18	Louise Davies & Cheryl Emery
WAO HLR3	Local authorities: • design services to ensure there is early contact with service users;	The Housing Advice team currently operate a drop in service from 9am until 5pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday with a service for ‘emergency homeless on the day’ cases only on a Thursday.	Explore options to introduce a more detailed triage assessment on first contact to see if this will streamline the process for some clients and	Jan-19	Ian Jones

January. 18 - [How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness](#) The report contained eight recommendations, all of which were for local authorities. This action plan will be presented the Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee on 6 November as part of the Council’s proposed Homelessness Strategy.

Proposals for improvement	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use ‘triage’ approaches to identify and filter individuals seeking help to determine the most appropriate response to address their needs; and • test the effectiveness of first point of contact services to ensure they are fit for purpose. 	<p>Demand means clients can arrive at the office and sometimes have a relatively long wait if there are a number of people ahead of them waiting for a full Housing assessment by a Housing Solutions Officer.</p> <p>On occasion clients are sometimes asked to return the following day if they present to the office and their circumstances are not urgent and the interview diary is full for the day and staff schedules are up to interview capacity when taking account of the number of clients waiting.</p> <p>Clients are currently triaged if they need help with an application to join the Common Housing Register and are not threatened with homelessness. These clients are seen by a Homefinder Officer to free up Housing Officer interview time.</p>	<p>filter emergency or priority cases for urgent action.</p> <p>Explore closer joint working opportunities with other services e.g. Probation , Health, Social Services to carry out pre-arranged Housing assessments at their offices in one joint appointment with hard to engage clients.</p> <p>Explore how Housing Officers specialising in specific areas (such as Domestic Abuse, or with offenders) would improve joint working and prevention outcomes in this client group.</p> <p>Continually monitor the first point of contact services to identify any pressure on resources as demand for services changes.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to improve data collection around the handling of first point of contact telephone calls to the service/ website searches and their resolution</p>	<p>Mar-19</p> <p>Mar-19</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Jun-19</p>	<p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Ian Jones</p>
<p>WAO HLR4</p> <p>Local authorities publish service standards that clearly set out what their responsibilities are and how they will provide services to ensure people know what they are entitled</p>	<p>The Council already provide a booklet to all clients who receive a housing assessment.</p> <p><i>‘Here to Help: your guide to homelessness services’</i> is written in easy to understand language and explains the process and what applicants can expect to happen. It also</p>	<p>Review information available to clients and determine if in addition to complaints procedure information, any further improvements are required.</p>	<p>Feb-19</p>	<p>Ian Jones</p>

January. 18 - [How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness](#) The report contained eight recommendations, all of which were for local authorities. This action plan will be presented the Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee on 6 November as part of the Council’s proposed Homelessness Strategy.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<p>to receive and what they must do for themselves. Service standards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be written in plain accessible language; • be precise about what applicants can and cannot expect, and when they can expect resolution; • clearly set out the applicant’s role in the process and how they can help the process go more smoothly and quickly; • be produced collaboratively with subject experts and include the involvement of people who use the service(s); • effectively integrate with the single assessment process; • offer viable alternatives to the authority’s services; and • set out the appeals and complaints processes. These should be based on fairness and equity for all involved and available to all. 	<p>includes information about how to seek a review of a decision taken by the Council. There is further work to do to review the complaints and appeals process to ensure the information provided is fit for purpose</p> <p>Personal Housing Plans are written for each client in easy to understand language and clearly sets out what the Council will do, and what the client must do to work with the Council to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Clients receive written confirmation of any decisions made and the Council’s duty owed which is specific to their individual circumstances in accordance with the legislation.</p>	<p>Consider developing service standards as per WAO recommendation</p> <p>Review the website content to ensure online advice is easy to understand (including e advice about the formal review process in respect of homelessness decisions).</p>	<p>Apr-19</p> <p>Apr-19</p>	<p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Ian Jones</p>
WAO HLR5	<p>Local authorities make better use of their websites to help manage demand by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • testing the usability and effectiveness of current website information using our lines of enquiry set out in Appendix 5; 	<p>Council website gives basic Housing Advice and Homelessness information.</p> <p>Applications for social housing via the Common Housing Register is via our HomefinderRCT website and an online application process.</p>	<p>Review website content to check its usability for clients.</p> <p>Identify and implement any required improvements to the website including increased use of online application processes for homelessness prevention services</p>	<p>Dec-19</p> <p>Apr-19</p>	<p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Ian Jones</p>

January. 18 - [How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness](#) The report contained eight recommendations, all of which were for local authorities. This action plan will be presented the Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee on 6 November as part of the Council’s proposed Homelessness Strategy.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing and improving the range, quality and coverage of web based information; making better use of online applications; linking more effectively to information from specialist providers’ and advice specialists, such as Citizens Advice. 	<p>Engagement with Homelessness clients after assessment is being tested via text messaging to improve communication and this is planned to be rolled out to all by December.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction survey being developed with will ask client view on ease of engagement, service accessibility etc.</p> <p>Pontypridd Citizens Advice Bureau have been commissioned to offer direct financial support to all persons who present as homeless or who are in receipt of a Supporting People funded project.</p>	<p>Complete the introduction of text message service to homeless clients</p> <p>Finalise and introduce customer satisfaction survey</p> <p>Monitor the effectiveness of the service commissioned from Pontypridd Citizens Advice Service</p>	<p>Jan-19</p> <p>Jan-19</p> <p>Mar-19</p>	<p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Ian Jones</p> <p>Cheryl Emery</p>
WAO HLR6	Local authorities set out and agree their expectations of partners identifying how they will work together to alleviate homelessness. The agreement should be reviewed regularly and all partners’ performance reviewed to identify areas for improvement.	<p>The authority has operated a common Housing Register and allocation scheme for a number of years in partnership with 6 local housing associations. Agreements are in place to monitor this arrangement through the established Steering and Operational Groups which oversee working arrangements.</p> <p>The authority also works with some housing associations to deliver specific projects for vulnerable people including high risk offenders. All projects are regularly reviewed through performance data and contract monitor to ensure effective outcomes or areas for improvement.</p>	Continue to monitor partners performance via current arrangements	On going	Ian Jones
WAO HLR7	Local authorities address weaknesses in their equalities monitoring, and ensure that their homelessness service accurately records and evaluates appropriate data to demonstrate equality of access for all	Equalities information is captured as part of the Housing Assessment where clients are threatened with homelessness, and via Homefinder when applications are made to join the Common Housing Register to access social housing. The information is subject to regular monitoring and analysis.	Review how this information is reported and monitored to identify any improvements which will improve equality of access for all service users	Jun-19	Ian Jones

February 18 - [Housing Adaptations](#) The report contained nine recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government and eight of the recommendations were for local authorities and/or delivery organisations:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> linking the system for managing and delivering adaptations with adapted housing policies and registers to make best use of already adapted homes. 	bespoke housing. This enables officers in strategic housing to plan for these requirements in relation to new housing developments and identify individual options if required e.g. purchase of bespoke property.	<p>adaptations across all service providers to ensure that the same adaptations are provided in the same time regardless of tenure.</p> <p>Update and consult on new RCT Private Sector Renewal Policy to reflect outcome of review and recommendations/best practice in WAO report.</p> <p>Agree strategic objectives for new Policy in partnership with health, housing associations and Care and repair</p>		
WAO HAR2	Delivery organisations provide information on housing adaptations in both Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. Information should be promoted widely via a range of media including social media, websites and published information, and also through key partners. Preferably, information should be produced jointly and policies aligned between delivery bodies to improve coverage and usage.	<p>Information is provided in English and Welsh on the Council's website.</p> <p>The DFG/WOA service is not widely promoted and we do not routinely encourage applicants to consider all housing options as part of their grant application.</p>	<p>Establish an officer task and finish working group (including Care and Repair, Health, Community Care) to review opportunities for improved information, promotion and literature regarding the services we offer.</p> <p>User friendly guide to adaptations to be produced in partnership with Health, Social services, Care and Repair agency and Housing Associations.</p>	Apr-19	Jennifer Ellis
WAO HAR3	Delivery organisations streamline applications by creating single comprehensive application forms covering all organisations within a local	All residents regardless of tenure apply for adaptations through the Council's First Response Team who depending on applicants' requirements and tenure are directed to the appropriate organisation for assistance.	We will meet with partners to discuss whether any improvements can be made to the existing application	2019/20	Jennifer Ellis

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Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	authority area that are available via partners and online.	The Council's Grants Application form for DFGs and WOA is currently paper based.	process to reduce waiting time/any duplication that may exist. During 2018/19- 2019/20 we will aim to move to an on line application system for housing adaptations.		
WAO HAR4	To improve timeliness in delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Welsh Government reviews whether local authorities should continue to use the means test for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs); • local authorities provide or use home improvement agency services to support disabled and older people to progress their DFG applications efficiently; • delivery organisations work with planning authorities to fast track and streamline adaptations that require approvals; • delivery organisations use Trusted Assessors to undertake less complex adaptation assessments; and • the Welsh Government streamlines its approval processes for Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs). 	RCTCBC has an in house agency service. RCTCBC works in partnership with the Cwm Taf Care and Repair agency. The agency provides a Rapid Response Adaptations/Safety at Home Service for residents in RCT and is jointly funded by housing and community care. There is currently no fast track policy/procedure in RCT. In RCT all referrals for adaptations are made via social services and an Occupational Therapist.	Review practice in other LAs and consider introducing fast track policy for grants under a certain amount and/or for a certain type of grant in the new RCT Private Sector Renewal Policy Continue to attend the Housing Expert panel and other Adaptations working Groups in order to work with WG to develop and implement any proposals.	Apr-19	Jennifer Ellis
WAO HAR5	Delivery organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce formal systems for accrediting contractors to undertake adaptations. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - standards of customer care such as keeping to appointments, 	The Council has a 3 year Disabled Adaptations and Repairs Framework Contract in place until 31 st March 2019 with the option to extend for 12 months. This was competitively tendered and uses a schedule of rates. The contract requires appropriate skills, qualifications and	A Customer Evaluation survey in place, but this is not systematically used to continually review contractor performance. Formal feedback is not provided to contractors on a regular basis. This will be considered and	2019/20	Jennifer Ellis

February 18 - [Housing Adaptations](#) The report contained nine recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government and eight of the recommendations were for local authorities and/or delivery organisations:

Proposals for improvement	Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
<p>keeping the site tidy, controlling noise ,etc. ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vetting of financial standing, tax and VAT status; - promoting good health and safety practices; - requiring the use of warranty schemes; - ensuring that adequate insurance is held; and - requiring references. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use framework agreements and partnered contracts to deliver adaptations. • address weaknesses in the contracting of adaptations, updating Schedule of Rates used to tender work and undertaking competitive tendering to support value for money in contracting. • develop effective systems to manage and evaluate contractor performance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting an appropriate range of information to judge performance and delivery of works covering timeliness of work; quality of work; applicant/tenant feedback; cost of work (including variations); health and safety record; and customer feedback; 	<p>certification, insurance and compliance with Health and Safety legislation.</p> <p>Contract states that Contractor performance will be monitored and evaluated after each individual Scheme. There is a clear process for dealing with complaints and sub standard work.</p> <p>As part of the contract there is a Customer Care protocol that all contractors must adhere to.</p>	<p>implemented as part of the wider review.</p> <p>New Framework Contract will be tendered for in 2019/20.</p>		

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Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regularly reporting and evaluating performance to identify opportunities to improve services; and - providing formal feedback to contractors on their performance covering key issues such as client satisfaction, level and acceptability of variations, right first-time work, post-inspection assessment and completion within budget and on time. 				
WAO HAR6	Local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to develop and improve joint working to maximise both take-up and the benefits of adaptations in supporting independence by pooling of resources, co-locating staff and creating integrated delivery teams.	<p>RCTCBC has a strong relationship with Cwm Taf Care and Repair agency. The Council provides core funding to support the agency as well as funding for the Handyperson service, Rapid Response Adaptations and Safety at Home Service.</p> <p>A considerable proportion of RCT's ENABLE funding has also been allocated to Care and Repair.</p>	<p>Review Service Level Agreement with Care and Repair and Social Services to ensure that it is fit for purpose and reflects accurately the roles and responsibilities of each partner.</p> <p>Housing and Health Conference scheduled for October 2018 to consider all opportunities of working more closely together</p>	Dec-18 then Ongoing	Tony Kibble
WAO HAR7	To enhance take-up and usage of adaptations with health bodies we recommend that delivery organisations jointly agree and publish joint service standards for delivery of adaptations within each local-authority area. The service standards should clearly set out how each agency approaches delivery of adaptations and how they will provide services to ensure people	<p>There are currently no agreed service standards in RCT. However, RCTCBC and Trivallis have an agreed approach to adaptations as a consequence of the stock transfer, and the Council is consulted on Trivallis' Adaptations Policy.</p> <p>Private Housing applicants for adaptations are not routinely given any information or advice about other housing options. However if an adaptation is not feasible, the Council does have a grant available that can facilitate</p>	<p>Produce service standards for adaptations in RCT in conjunction with Care and Repair, Health, Social Services and Housing Associations. This should include clear information about the in-house agency services.</p> <p>All letters/literature relating to adaptations to be reviewed and updated. User friendly guide to</p>	2019/20	Jennifer Ellis

February 18 - [Housing Adaptations](#) The report contained nine recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government and eight of the recommendations were for local authorities and/or delivery organisations:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<p>know what they are entitled to receive. Service Standards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be written in plain accessible language; • be precise about what people can and cannot expect to receive; • be produced collaboratively to cover all adaptations services within an area; • set out the eligibility for the different funding streams, application and assessment processes, timescales and review processes; and • offer the viable options and alternatives for adaptations including linking with adapted housing registers to maximise use of already adapted homes. 	<p>people to move to a more suitable home, but this is officer led rather than being actively promoted as an option.</p> <p>Social Housing applicants who apply to Homefinder for re-housing due to their home being unsuitable due to a physical disability are provided with advice about housing grants/adaptations that their housing association might be able to provide.</p>	<p>adaptations to be produced in partnership with Health, Social services and Care and Repair agency.</p> <p>Grant application process should include a discussion about housing options to ensure that the provision of adaptations in the applicant's existing home is the most appropriate, effective and efficient option.</p> <p>Consider making available a proactive grant to assist people to move.</p>		
WAO HAR8	<p>To effectively manage performance and be able to judge the impact of adaptations, we recommend that the Welsh Government and delivery organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set appropriate measures to judge both the effectiveness and efficiency of the different systems for delivering adaptations and the impact on wellbeing and independence of those who receive adaptations; 	<p>Agree that this would be useful and it would help LAs to learn from each other and help to promote consistency of service and standards across Wales.</p>	<p>RCTCBC will provide information to WG as requested to assist in the delivery of this recommendation.</p>	As required	Jennifer Ellis

February 18 - [Housing Adaptations](#) The report contained nine recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government and eight of the recommendations were for local authorities and/or delivery organisations:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure delivery organisations report against their responsibilities in respect of the Equalities Act 2010; • ensure performance information captures the work of all delivery organisations – local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies; and • annually publish performance for all delivery organisations to enable a whole systems view of delivery and impact to support improvement to be taken. 				

April-18 [Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services](#) The report contained two recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government in conjunction with public bodies and the other recommendation was for public bodies.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	
WAO SMLR1	<p>Ensuring that people who face language and communication barriers can access public services</p> <p>Public bodies are required to ensure that people can access the services they need. To take account of the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and other legislation, we recommend that public bodies regularly review the accessibility of their services to people who do not speak English or Welsh as a main language including Deaf people who use sign language. This assessment can include using our checklist</p>	Welsh Govt and Public Bodies	<p>Whilst the Checklist referred to by WAO is not routinely used, the Council currently takes steps to make services accessible to people who do not speak English or Welsh as their main language. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website – complies with requirements of Disability Discrimination Act 1995 • Telephone –follows Barrier Free Call Routing Guidelines issued by Employers Forum on Disability • Text phone in place • Advice points rooms for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People in One4all Centres equipped with loop systems to enhance sound.

April-18 [Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services](#) The report contained two recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government in conjunction with public bodies and the other recommendation was for public bodies.

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with British Sign Language(BSL) Interpreter are available for a wide range of services • 'Call off' arrangements in place with Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) • Training for staff, inc BSL training. <p>The Council recognises that there is more to be done to identify the extent of the issues in respect of overcoming language and communication barriers and officers are currently reviewing the WAO report to seek to identify any gaps in Council services together with proportionate responses given the needs of the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p>
WAO SMLR2	<p>Developing interpretation and translation services in Wales</p> <p>Our work with public bodies, interpretation and translation service providers and service users has identified some challenges for interpretation and translation services.</p> <p>We recommend that the Welsh Government work with public bodies, representative groups and other interested parties to make sure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the supply of interpreters is sufficient especially for languages in high demand such as BSL and Arabic; • interpreters with specialist training are available to work in mental health services and with people who have experienced trauma or violence; and • quality assurance and safeguarding procedures are in place. 	Welsh Govt	<p>The Council welcomes the opportunity to work with Welsh Government, representative groups and other interested parties to meet the organisational challenges arising from the need for interpretation and translation services.</p>

May-18 [Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities](#) The report contained six recommendations, all of which were for local authorities:

Proposals for improvement

Update & Action to Date

Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Merthyr Tydfil Council and the Cwm Taf University Health Board, worked together to develop a Joint Statement of Strategic Intent for children, young People, and adults with learning disabilities and their families which was agreed by Cabinet on 21st November 2017.

The Joint Statement of Strategic Intent is set within the context of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and describes a shared commitment and approach to commissioning new models of care and support for people with learning disabilities and their families by partners across Cwm Taf.

A workshop held in January 2018 with key stakeholders, including people with learning disabilities, their families and carers and service providers identified 5 strategic workstreams to take forward a number of Regional priority outcomes, while building on the work already being undertaken, to deliver the strategic aims of the Joint Statement of Intent.

Each strategic workstream has an individual workplan as part of an overarching Statement of Intent action plan, which underpins individual agency implementation plans. The overarching action plan is monitored by the Cwm Taf Statement of Intent Strategic Steering Group chaired by Neil Elliott, Service Director Adult Services and overall progress regarding the implementation and delivery is monitored by the Regional Social Services Partnership Board.

WAO
SCAR1

Local authorities continue to focus on preventing people becoming dependent on more expensive placements in care homes by providing effective support at home and a range of step up accommodation by:

- improving the evaluation of prevention activity so local authorities understand what works well and why.
- utilising the mapping of prevention services under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 that covers other agencies and service providers.
- improving the signposting of additional help so carers and support networks can be more resilient and self-reliant. This should include encouraging carers to make long-term plans for care to maintain and protect their dependants' wellbeing.

In response to recommendation 1, the Statement of Intent mentioned above, identifies the need to make choices in what services Adult Services and its partners commission now and in the future for people with learning disabilities. Central to reaching a position of a preferred direction of travel and approach has been the need to ensure that services continue to focus on early intervention and prevention and promoting independence to support individuals to retain in their own homes and local communities for as long as possible.

“My Community” is a strategic workstream of the Statement of Intent and the mapping of services that provide universal services and community support plus targeted intervention and support is being undertaken. “My Home” is another strategic workstream and the following priority outcomes have been agreed and are being progressed:

May-18 [Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities](#) The report contained six recommendations, all of which were for local authorities:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing risk analysis and long-term planning data with other local authorities, service providers, and partners to agree a shared understanding of the range of options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the range of housing needs now and in the future Development of a robust evidence base to inform future housing plans Investigate how other new models of supported housing are provided, taking into account best practice and national guidance on housing, care and support Strategically plan sustainable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of adults with a learning disability now and in the future <p>Key to the implementation of the above will be the ongoing development of alternative models of community based accommodation in order to enhance the health, wellbeing and independence of people with learning disabilities and avoid over reliance on care home settings. As a result, service models are evolving with an emphasis on supporting people to remain at home longer. Currently, this work involves the ongoing development of new extra care schemes across Rhondda Cynon Taf; new supported living accommodation schemes in Aberdare and Treorchy along with increased levels of shared lives provision, targeted support and other community based activities. There will however, remain a need for specialist care home provision for those individuals whose needs require this level of support, as part of the overall spectrum of support necessary to support the needs of our community.</p>
WAO SCAR2	Local authorities improve their approach to planning services for people with learning disabilities by building on the Regional Partnership Boards' population assessments for people with learning disabilities and agreeing future priorities.	In response to recommendation 2, the development of the Joint Statement of Strategic Intent took into account the Regional Population Assessments as well as relevant data and information to prioritise needs and determine strategic commissioning priorities for future service developments. It is anticipated for any future updates in the Regional Population analysis will necessitate an updated analysis of needs and on-going modernising of future learning disability services.
WAO SCAR3	Local authorities do more to integrate commissioning arrangements with partners and providers and take account of the work of the National Commissioning Board by:	In response to recommendation 3, partners and providers have been fully involved in the development of the Joint Statement of Strategic Intent and the action plan and implementation of commissioning priorities and services delivery options.

May-18 [Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities](#) The report contained six recommendations, all of which were for local authorities:

Proposals for improvement	Update & Action to Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the barriers that exist in stopping or hindering further integration; • improving the quality of joint strategic plans for learning disability services (see also paragraphs 3.11 to 3.14); • establishing investment models and sustainable financial structures, joint workforce planning and multi-year budgeting; and • developing appropriate governance and data sharing frameworks with key local partners that include a clear process for managing risk and failure. 	<p>Partners and providers are also active members of the Regional Groups and Rhondda Cynon Taf Provider Forums. These Groups and Forums are driving the commissioning work programmes and designing and delivering services that target resources in the most effective way. Emphasis is placed on co-producing work schemes.</p> <p>Through the Regional Partnership we participate in the work of the National Commissioning Board.</p>
<p>WAO SCAR4</p> <p>Local authorities do more to involve people with learning disabilities and their carers in care planning and agreeing pathways to further independence by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently including people with learning disabilities and their carers in the writing, monitoring and development of care plans; • systematically involving carers and advocacy groups in evaluating the quality of services; • involving people with learning disabilities in procurement processes; and • ensuring communications are written in accessible and appropriate language to improve the understanding and impact of guidance and information. 	<p>In response to recommendation 4, we developed an engagement strategy to support the implementation of Statement of Intent that outlines the level and principles of engagement, the purpose, objectives and audiences and the core messages that will be consistently delivered throughout engagement activities. People with learning disabilities and their parents/carers are also active members of the Regional Commissioning Groups and, as mentioned above, these Groups are driving the work programmes and designing and delivering services that target resources in the most effective way. Emphasis is placed on co-producing work schemes and we support as needed.</p> <p>There are systems in place to involve people with learning disabilities and their parents/carers and, where appropriate, advocacy groups in assessment and care planning through to evaluating quality of services. However, there needs to be greater consistency to these approaches and actions to embed strengthen based practice and quality assurances systems are being implemented. It is important that through this improvement work that Advocacy Services are more integral to assessment and care planning processes. Similarly, there needs to be more consistency in the involvement of people with learning disabilities and their parents/carers both in procurement and recruitment processes.</p>

May-18 [Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities](#) The report contained six recommendations, all of which were for local authorities:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date
		Through the engagement strategy more emphasis is now placed on using appropriate communication methods – information must be provided in accessible formats to meet people’s needs. Work is underway with People’s First to improve current arrangements and initial actions are in place to regularly produce easy to read material as part of the Regional commissioning arrangements. These improvements are being delivered through the “reducing stigma” and “communicating our work” Regional workstreams of the statement of intent.
WAO SCAR5	Local authorities collaborate with providers, the third sector and suppliers in understanding challenges, sharing data, and pooling expertise by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving the quality, range, and accessibility of tendering information; and working with providers to shape local markets by coming to a common understanding of the opportunities, risks, and future priorities in providing learning disabilities services. 	In response to recommendation 5, overall relationships are positive and emphasis is placed on collaboration and co-producing work schemes. As mentioned above, Adult Services and its stakeholders are working together to share information and intelligence to drive the priority workstreams of the Regional Statement.
WAO SCAR6	Local authorities develop a more appropriate set of performance indicators and measures of success that make it easier to monitor and demonstrate the impact of service activity by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-designing measures, service and contract performance indicators with service providers, people with learning disabilities and their carers; ensure commissioners have sufficient cost and qualitative information on the full range of placement and care options available; equipping commissioners with data to demonstrate the long-term financial benefits of commissioning choices, this includes having the right systems and technology; 	In response to recommendation 6, whilst processes are in place to measure some aspects of performance and success, there are information gaps and arrangements to collect performance indicators consistently and regularly in relation to people with learning disabilities needs to improve and actions included within relevant action plans for implementation. In addition, ensuring all people in receipt of services and their parents/carers are empowered to provide feedback on services on an ongoing basis, with results being used in a meaningful way, to improve standards will also be a key element of quality assurance processes being improved across Adult Services.

May-18 [Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities](#) The report contained six recommendations, all of which were for local authorities:

Proposals for improvement		Update & Action to Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• integrating the outcomes and learning from reviews of care plans into performance measures;• evaluating and then learning from different types of interventions and placements; and including learning disability services in local authority scrutiny reviews to challenge performance and identify improvements.	