



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	June 2015
Report Author	Lisa Curtis-Jones / Anne Powell
Service Area	Social Services
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	15 th July 2015

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Annual Report on Social Services 2014 / 2015

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

To present the Annual Report on Social Services to Council for information.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Chief Officer (Social Services) in her role as Statutory Director of Social Services is responsible for publishing an annual report on the effectiveness of social care services across the County Borough. The Annual Report on Social Services 2014 / 2015 has been produced in accordance with the Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) and is intended to provide an overview of our performance for the period April 2014 to March 2015. The report is available via the background papers link.
- 1.2 The report highlights: what we are doing well, areas for improvement and our priorities for the year ahead (2015 / 2016).

2.0 THE ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORTING FRAMEWORK (ACRF) PROCESS

- 2.1 The process for delivering the ACRF and associated templates has continued to evolve. We have adapted the process and templates used to ensure that as far as possible they complement and support the Council's Performance Management Framework. Additionally, we have ensured that there are clear links with priorities set out in the Single Integrated Plan and Corporate Plan.

2.2 The table below sets out the key stages of the ACRF process for 2014 / 2015.

Activity	Timescale
Development of Performance Report Cards and collection of underpinning documentary evidence	July 2014 to May 2015 (Updated quarterly)
Development of Draft Annual Report on Social Services	February to March 2015
Consultation Action Planning and Preparation	January to March 2015
Consultation Period	April 2015
Submission of Report Cards, evidence and supplementary documentation to Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)	May 2015
Development of Annual Report on Social Services (final version)	June 2015
Submission of report to CSSIW	June 2015
Report translated and made publically available	Early August 2015

2.3 Performance Report Cards

2.3.1 Performance Report Cards were used to capture a range of key information in relation to each strategic service area (Adult Social Services; Childrens Social Services; Safeguarding and Leadership). The Report Cards have been updated on a quarterly basis to reflect progress made against key service priorities and performance. At year end, the Report Cards, together with supporting documentary evidence were submitted to the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) for review.

2.3.2 Information collated in the Report Cards was used to inform the development of the Annual Report for 2014 / 2015.

2.4 Consultation Process

2.4.1 Consultation is a key element of the ACRF process and provides an opportunity for the views and experiences of local service users, carers and all other key stakeholders to be reflected in the Annual Report.

2.4.2 As part of the consultation planning process for 2014 / 2015, a review of methods previously used and their effectiveness was undertaken. It was agreed that as our response rate to the consultation last year was extremely low (6 responses); a change of approach was therefore required.

2.4.3 In addition to the methods traditionally used, such as: website, posters, press release, Facebook and Twitter etc (all of which have been refreshed) – this year we have also carried out workshops with a number of key groups in order to gather their views on the accuracy and accessibility of the Annual Report. This exercise also provided individuals with an opportunity to share their personal experiences of the services they have received. The groups we

consulted with included: Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum, older people (50+ Forum) and carers.

2.5 Next Steps

2.5.1 The Annual Report and consultation feedback statements will be made publically available via the council website by early August 2015.

2.5.2 The Report and supporting documentary evidence provided will be examined by CSSIW; which will help them to determine how they will review and inspect Merthyr Tydfil CBC over the coming year.

3.0 ANNUAL REPORT ON SOCIAL SERVICES 2014 / 2015

3.1 Summary of Report Content

3.1.1 The Report focuses on five strategic service areas: 'Safeguarding Vulnerable People', 'Services for Adults', 'Services for Children', 'Services for Carers' and 'Managing our Business'. Each section is aimed at providing a picture of how well our services have performed over the last year, what we can improve on and key priorities for 2015 / 2016.

3.1.2 Over the last year we have seen a number of changes in the management of social services and the demand for our services has remained high; despite this, I am pleased to report that our performance across social services over the last year (2014 / 2015) has remained generally good. We recognise however that there are a number of areas where performance is not as good as it could be. We will continue to regularly monitor the quality of practice, work hard to improve our performance and strive to maintain the areas where we are performing well.

3.1.3 Key achievements during 2014 / 2015 include the following:

- A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for both adults and children has been developed and is operational.
- Over the last year we have worked with our partners and used the Intermediate Care Fund (which is a grant from the Welsh Government to improve services for older people) to help all agencies work together better so that services are provided in a joined up way. By using our Initial Response Services we have generally been successful in helping people to return home from hospital when they are ready to do so and supporting people to live for longer in their community.
- The Enhanced Child in Need Service continues to be a success and many of the children, young people and their families have told us that their lives have improved as a result of our support. In April 2015 the service moved to a new base which will offer more space and better facilities.

- We have continued to build on our success in recruiting Foster Carers. This year we have recruited an additional 8 foster carers and have assessed and approved 9 kinship (family and friends) foster carers. This has increased our number of foster carers to 53 and 17 kinship foster carers. This has meant that children and young people have been provided with more choice in where they live.
- In July 2014 the arrangements for our Youth Offending Service changed. The Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Offending Services have now joined up to provide one service across both areas (Cwm Taf area).
- Over the last year, support provided by the Carers Network has continued to make excellent progress in increasing the number of carers that they have identified and who are now receiving a service. The Network (including social services) is in contact with and supports over 900 carers in our community. We recognise however; that there is still some work to do to identify more carers (those we currently do not know about), get a better understanding of carers needs and what we need to do to continue improving the range and quality of services that are useful to them.

3.1.4 We will have a number of challenges over the next year, the biggest of which will be to:

- Continue to safeguard the most vulnerable people in our community;
- Maintain or improve our current performance across all areas of social services;
- Together with our partners, prepare for the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act in 2016; and
- Wherever possible, make the savings that we have been asked to without affecting the quality of services we provide.

3.1.5 In addition to the above; we will continue to support and effectively contribute to the objectives outlined in the Welsh Government Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in health and social services called “More than Just Words”.

3.1.6 For detailed information on our performance and priorities for the forthcoming year, please refer to the Annual Report on Social Services 2014 / 2015 which is available via the background papers link.

3.2 Consultation Feedback on the Annual Report

3.2.1 As detailed in 2.4.2 our approach to consultation has been revised. The change has proved to be successful and we have seen a considerable increase in the volume (40 responses) and range of feedback received.

3.2.2 The majority of responses to the consultation were from individuals (82.5%). Of those who participated in the consultation, 30% were currently receiving a service or had received services in the past. Of those who had not received a service, 72% of the consultees stated that they would know how to contact us or find information about our services. The most popular methods of

accessing information were noted to be via the council website (62%) or via telephone (27%).

- 3.2.3 Feedback was received from young people via questionnaires. In addition to this, a separate consultation exercise was carried out by the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF). This provided us with a range of supplementary information.
- 3.2.4 Overall, feedback received demonstrated that our report was fair and balanced, of interest to many and had been clearly written for most audiences. Feedback from young people on the accessibility / content of the report however was mixed. Whilst a number found it relevant and easy to understand; feedback from the additional group workshop carried out with the MTBWYF highlighted that this was not the case for all. As a result, next year we plan to engage the support of the MTBWYF in writing a young person friendly version of the final Annual Report.
- 3.2.5 There was very little challenge to the strengths / weaknesses and areas for improvement detailed in the report and the majority were in agreement with our priorities. Whilst we had responses from a number of carers; very few shared their experiences or views.
- 3.2.6 All feedback received has been carefully considered and used to inform the Annual Report on Social Services 2014 / 2015. A number of the comments provided have also been shared with our services for consideration for planning future services, improvement and development.
- 3.2.7 Consultation arrangements will continue to be reviewed and developed, with a view to improving engagement and effective participation.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the ongoing development and implementation of the ACRF process and the subsequent publication of the Annual Report on Social Services 2014 / 2015.

5.0 SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT SUMMARY

- 5.1 The Single Integrated Plan and Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed and the proposals positively impact on most aspects of the Corporate Plan and Single Integrated Plan. No negative impacts have been identified.

6.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time. The form can be accessed on the Council's website/intranet via the 'Equality Impact Assessment' link.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION that

7.1 The contents of the report be noted.

LISA CURTIS-JONES
CHIEF OFFICER - SOCIAL SERVICES
(STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES)

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Annual Report on Social Services 2014 / 2015	June 2015	Via Background paper link and Social Services 'O' drive

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.