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COUNTY COUNCIL
Thursday, 19th October, 2017

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y P A C K

1.	DISCUSSION ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES
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Inspection of *Children's* Services

Powys County Council

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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Introduction

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) undertook an inspection of services for children in Powys County Council during July 2017. The inspection focussed on the quality of leadership, management and governance arrangements to develop and support services for children and young people.

The inspection looked closely at how children and families access information advice and assistance, and care and support services.

The inspection was focussed on people's pathway into care and support services. We examined how children and families access help, care and support services.

We considered the quality of outcomes achieved for children in need of assistance, care and support and/or protection including those looked after by the local authority.

Inspectors read case files, interviewed staff, managers, and professionals from partner agencies. Where possible, inspectors talked to children and their families.

Overview of findings

Recent developments in Powys

During the year the local authority has seen significant senior management changes within social services. These include the departure of the director of social services in December 2016, with the chief executive of Powys Teaching Health Board providing support by undertaking the role of interim strategic director of people on a part time basis from January 2017.

The statutory role of director of social services is currently undertaken by the interim chief social work – operations director for social care who commenced in April 2017.

The head of children's services left the local authority in July 2017, after 11 months in post. In June 2017 an interim head of children's services was appointed

These management changes have followed a period of considerable change following the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, along with financial challenges and an anticipated overspend, the introduction of a new electronic records management system in April 2017, and the commissioning by the local authority of a major external review of both adults and children's services which was completed in 2016.

Following the appointment of the interim chief social work officer in April 2017, issues and areas of concern with regard to children's services were identified and an escalated action plan was developed. The interim statutory director for social services acknowledged that this requires further development to provided a more comprehensive organisationally owned plan.

Summary of findings

We found the implementation of the recommendations of the external review further exacerbated failings in children's services, and destabilised the workforce to a significant extent and as a result placed children at risk of harm.

Children and young people do not appear to be well served by the current arrangements for accessing support services in Powys. A lack of assessment, care and support planning combined with an inconsistent approach to working in line with the child sexual exploitation guidance and the management of sexual exploitation and risk assessment framework process placed children at risk of harm. In addition, child protection processes did not always comply with statutory guidance with delays in investigations and assessments being undertaken and completion of statutory visits.

There is evidence of missed opportunities to safeguard children, despite requests for support. Risks were not being appropriately and robustly assessed and there is no effective system to identify and manage risks.

The vision and strategic direction for children's services has been set out by the interim leadership team, together with members of the operational management team. However, this vision requires significant corporate and political support for it to be delivered. There is a lack of awareness of its content outside of children's services and considering its reliance on the full support of council this is of concern.

There are serious performance issues with front line services, however these arose because of instability in management, poor and confused direction and weak governance. Without effective support and capacity to undertake the work frontline staff cannot be expected to undertake the complex work required in children's social services.

Inspectors noted the commitment of the staff, who have shown resilience and professionalism whilst coping with significant changes, and depletion in support services and leadership capacity. We have seen real commitment to protect and respond to safeguarding children in very difficult circumstances. Staff have been mutually supportive through challenging and difficult times and have shown us their real desire to move on.

The recommendations below identify the key areas where post-inspection improvement and development work should be focused.

Next steps

CSSIW expect Powys County Council to produce an improvement plan in response to the recommendations contained in this report within 20 working days of publication.

The improvement plan will be closely monitored during our programme of inspection, engagement and performance review throughout 2017/18. Due to the serious concerns identified in this inspection consideration will be given to undertaking a re-inspection of Powys children's services within 12 months from the publication of this report.

Recommendations

Immediate priority (within 1 month):

Case management

1. The local authority must ensure assessments are carried out within statutory timescales and are undertaken in partnership with children and families.

Staffing

2. Arrangements for team managers and senior practitioners should be reviewed to ensure capacity to effectively and consistently provide management and leadership oversight and testing of decision making along with support and direction for frontline staff.
3. The local authority and senior managers should take steps to improve the frequency, consistency and quality of supervision for front line staff; an assurance mechanism must be implemented to ensure compliance with expectations and quality of decision making, recordkeeping and reporting.
4. Caseloads monitoring is required to ensure there is sufficient capacity for workers to engage effectively with children and their families.

Leadership

5. The chief executive must immediately provide strong corporate support for children's services to ensure service improvements are prioritised and the pace of improvement accelerated and sustained.
6. The council leader and the portfolio member must provide strong political support to children's services and take the necessary steps to put in place well informed and effective scrutiny to make sure service improvements are made quickly, effectively and are sustainable.

Assurance

7. An assurance mechanism must be implemented as a priority to ensure compliance with legislation, statutory guidance and protocols with regard to looked after children and children at risk.

Medium term priority (within 4 months):

Case management

8. The quality of assessments and plans must be improved to ensure they are consistently of a good quality, with a clear focus on the needs, risks, and strengths of children and families, and that desired outcomes, timescales and accountabilities for actions are clear.
9. The quality and consistency and timeliness of record keeping must be improved; all staff and managers must ensure that records are of good quality, up to date and systematically stored.
10. The local authority must clarify the role and purpose of Powys People Direct (PPD) within the overall provision of information, advice and assistance and must ensure staff and partners have clear guidance to support decision making. The local authority must ensure that all staff are suitably trained, skilled and supported to deliver this role. A clear protocol is required between PPD and the Emergency Duty Team to ensure cases are not lost between services.
11. The local authority must implement an effective model of assessment to support its interventions with families, which is understood by all staff and partners, underpinned by robust training and development.
12. The local authority must ensure its fostering service provides consistent support, training and guidance to foster carers in order to improve the quality and availability of placements.
13. The local authority must ensure that all care and support plans have a clear focus on outcomes for children, which incorporate the voice of the child.

Staffing

14. The local authority must ensure every employee understands the legislative and statutory requirements in safeguarding children and action is taken to address poor performance.
15. A robust workforce strategy should be developed as a matter of urgency to include short, medium and long term plans for recruitment and retention of social work and senior staff. Permanent appointments are required in key posts as a high priority to provide resilience and stability to the service.

Interagency/ partnership working

16. Effective multi-agency quality assurance systems and training arrangements should be established to ensure thresholds for assessments to statutory children's services are understood by staff and partners and are consistently applied; this should include multi-agency child protection decision making protocols.
17. There is a need for clear strategic direction supported by operational protocols to enable partners to have a clear understanding of the purpose, structure and decision making in children's services.

Leadership

18. There should be an early consideration of the impact of the changes made as a result of the commissioned review and whether decisions made as part of the review should be revisited.
19. Elected members need to be clear about the vision for children's services and recognise this as a high risk area for the council. To support this members need clarity about, and training to understand, the direction of services and the particular risks inherent in children's services.
20. The chief executive with support from the statutory director of social services must make arrangements to ensure all elected members have a clear understanding of, and are able to fulfil, their corporate parenting responsibilities
21. The local authority needs to undertake further work in relation to implementing the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 so there is understanding at a corporate level in relation to the delivery of information, advice and assistance.

Assurance

22. Performance management and quality assurance arrangements, including scrutiny of service demand and routine auditing of the quality of practice needs to be embedded so that managers at all levels have timely, relevant and accurate performance and quality assurance information.
23. At a corporate level the local authority must establish systems and structures effectively monitor and evaluate progress within children's services'.
24. The consistent application of a quality assurance system must be implemented to ensure families who are referred to the Team around the Family service are not subject to drift and delay and to ensure there

are targeted plans in place which are reviewed and checked by managers.

25. The local authority must strengthen the oversight of the response to complaints to improve reporting and analysis and ensure there is a mechanism to capture lessons learned.

Longer term priority (within 12 months):

Case management

26. The local authority must ensure compliance with the active offer of the Welsh language.

Interagency/ partner working

27. A multi-agency child protection protocol (drawing on regionally agreed arrangements) should be implemented to support decision making on the need for assessments in statutory children's services. This needs to be understood by staff and partners and consistently applied. Multi-agency quality assurance systems and training arrangements are required to support this.
28. The local authority and partners must work together to develop a cohesive approach to the collection and analysis of information about the needs of communities, which includes the views of children and families. This should be used to inform the shaping of strategic plans to achieve effective alignment of service delivery between information, advice and assistance services, the preventative sector and statutory services.

Leadership

29. Future changes to structure and service delivery need to include consultation with all stakeholders in its shape and development. The change needs to be incremental and with changes implemented at a pace that will ensure the full involvement of staff and young people and ensure children are not placed at risk.

Access arrangements: Information, Advice and Assistance

What we expect to see

The local authority works with partner organisations to develop, understand, co-ordinate, keep up to date and make best use of statutory, voluntary and private sector information, assistance and advice resources available in their area. All people, including carers, have access to comprehensive information about services and get prompt advice and support, including information about their eligibility and what they can expect by way of response from the service. Arrangements are effective in delaying or preventing the need for care and support. People are aware of and can easily make use of key points of contact. The service listens to people and begins with a focus on what matters to them. Effective signposting and referring provides people with choice about support and services available in their locality, particularly preventative services. Access arrangements to statutory social services provision are understood by partners and the people engaging with the service are operating effectively.

Summary of findings

- 1.1 The authority established Powys People Direct (PPD) in October 2014 as a single point of access into children's services. In April 2015 PPD the single point of access for adult services was also incorporated. The PPD team is currently based in Llandrindod Wells, and serves locality teams based in Brecon, Ystradgynlais, Llandrindod, Newtown and Welshpool.
- 1.2 The team includes five contact officers, supported by a social worker, who are responsible for dealing with all enquiries and referrals regarding children and families. Contact officers possess a sound knowledge of the local services available, in order to provide advice and support. However there have been a number of management changes in the team since its inception, leading to a lack of clarity about the direction and purpose of the service. Current management is undertaken by agency staff. There is a clear need for stability in the management of the team.
- 1.3 The service has also undergone numerous reviews both internal and external. It is not clear how these have provided direction, improved the way of working or clarified the role of the contact officers. There is a need for improved social work support, clear eligibility and threshold guidance, and direction for contact officers in order to make effective decisions at the point of referral. This would improve appropriate access and signposting for children and families.

- 1.4 We were informed by locality teams that the lack of support, advice and direction for PPD staff has led to referral information being forwarded to the locality teams which lack detail and is variable in quality. This was felt to be inappropriate and as such 'clogging' the system.
- 1.5 The role and purpose of the PPD remains unclear, together with its relationship with the wider local authority customer contact role. A decision now needs to be made as to the role and purpose of PPD within the overall provision of IAA services. It needs to be configured in a way that supports ease of access, accessibility and transparency.
- 1.6 The impact of this has been an absence of assistance to families when needed. Health, education, and housing partners and, other areas of children's services all highlighted difficulties with referring cases into PPD and accessing services. This places children and families in need of services and support at risk.
- 1.7 At the time of inspection there was no agreed universal decision making criteria to guide partner agencies. This has led to referral routes being unclear, and as a result agencies are finding their own solutions, using other networks and inappropriate escalation of referrals to get them to the attention of locality teams.
- 1.8 A positive development is that a regional approach to decision making criteria has been signed off by the regional safeguarding board and this is due to be rolled out across four local authorities. This provides an opportunity for Powys to agree clear pathways between early intervention and statutory services. This then needs to be communicated to the public, partners and within the local authority.
- 1.9 Cases that are to be referred to the Team Around the Family (TAF) require parental agreement. Where this cannot be achieved cases remain within PPD for some weeks, leading to delay and drift for children and families. We found this was also prevalent where children needed care and support assessments and there was a delay in allocation. A more proactive approach needs to be adopted in order to progress and monitor this so that children and families receive appropriate and timely care and support.
- 1.10 It is of concern that there is evidence of 'silo' working between teams within children's services. For example, despite PPD and the TAF service being located in the same directorate they do not share the same referral form, assessment format or have a shared understanding of information, advice and assistance criteria.
- 1.11 There is a need to clarify and agree the relationship between the PPD and the out of hours service (EDT). This is in order to ensure that referrals that come into PPD at the end of the day, which require out of hours intervention, will be responded to appropriately. A working

protocol is required to ensure cases are not 'lost' between the two services.

- 1.12 There is limited quality assurance and audit activity taking place within PPD. Performance figures are available but these relate to call numbers, calls abandoned, waiting times etc. and do not provide the manager with information relevant to quality and outcomes. There is no mechanism to receive feedback from children, families, partners and teams.
- 1.13 The service is not able to make the 'active offer' of Welsh language on a consistent basis.
- 1.14 The local authority needs to undertake further work to implement the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Whilst planning is evident, the embedding of the changes required is now necessary through leadership, staff training, support and guidance.

Assessment

What we expect to see

All people entitled to an assessment of their care and support needs receive one in their preferred language. All carers who appear to have support needs are offered a carer's needs assessment, regardless of the type of care provided, their financial means or the level of support that may be needed. People experience a timely assessment of their needs which promotes their independence and ability to exercise choice. Assessments have regard to the personal outcomes and views, wishes and feelings of the person subject of the assessment and that of relevant others including those with parental responsibility. This is in so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with promoting their wellbeing and safety and that of others. Assessments provide a clear understanding of what will happen next and results in a plan relevant to identified needs. Recommended actions, designed to achieve the outcomes that matter to people, are identified and include all those that can be met through community based or preventative services as well as specialist provision.

Summary of findings

- 2.1 We found that there was an absence of assessment in care and support plans and that practice was not robust.
- 2.2 Assessments did not reflect the impact that the workers involvement had and did not provide clear analysis or consistently provide evidence supporting decisions. Areas of agreement or difference were not identified between professionals and families nor were care and support needs and the services needed to meet these. The assessments as written appeared to be a blunt tool and at times reflected decisions that were not evidenced.
- 2.3 We could not always understand how thresholds were applied. There was some manager oversight but evidence of analysis was missing. There is clear evidence that appropriate risk assessments are not always being undertaken, and in the majority of cases examined there was little or no reference to a consistently used assessment tool. There is no collective model of intervention used to inform practice such as a strengths based model that is implemented across both the preventative and statutory services so that workers from other agencies and families have a common understanding as to the values and aims of the work.
- 2.4 Management oversight has been inconsistent and often missing. Quality assurance has not been established to any meaningful degree. Team managers do undertake some case audits but those carried out by the local authority prior to the inspection often demonstrated a level of positivity that was not shared by the inspectors.

- 2.5 The local authority had previously invested in the well established Gwynedd model. However, this was not implemented effectively and the local authority is considering introducing the “signs of safety” model in its place. There exists a lack of clarity or understanding as to what model of assessment will be utilised in the future.
- 2.6 Assessments are not always carried out within statutory timescales. We tracked and reviewed a total of 42 cases, of which 26 required improvement and 16 were considered to be poor. There are some serious and significant delays in children and families receiving a service, an absence of assessment, or where present, often poor analysis and decision making.
- 2.7 Whilst we saw some evidence of children and families receiving timely support and intervention, we also saw significant evidence where this was not the case, with significant delays of some months between referral, and intervention. There was a lack of assessment in child protection cases, a lack of a sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (SERAF) assessment and review contrary to statutory guidance, an absence of care and wellbeing assessment and a lack of management oversight of these cases.
- 2.8 The lack of assessment, intervention and support, together with poor follow up and oversight has and is placing children at considerable risk.

Care and support

What we expect to see

People experience timely and effective multi-agency care, support, help and protection where appropriate. People using services are supported by care and support plans which promote their independence, choice and wellbeing, help keep them safe and reflect the outcomes that are important to them. People are helped to develop their abilities and overcome barriers to social inclusion.

Summary of findings

- 3.1 Care and support for children and families is insufficient, there is a lack of leadership, management oversight and direction in order to provide a responsive and safe service.
- 3.2 The lack of information in assessments in order to inform accessible care and support plans, has led to plans not being tailored to children's identified needs leading to poor outcomes.
- 3.3 Care and support plans seen were often generic and we were not confident that social workers picking up a case would understand the focus of the plan. Those involved in the planning and review process informed us this often led to repeating the planning process leading to delay. There was little evidence of challenge in case supervision by managers and although some dip sampling of cases does now occur this is limited with little shared reporting of issues. There has been a consistent theme of a lack of management oversight, and consequently an absence of appropriate measures being implemented in order to address any identified needs
- 3.4 Plans need to ensure a clear focus on the impact any change has for the child. There was no sense of outcome focused plans and an absence of a focus on the child.
- 3.5 We saw significant evidence of delay and drift in supporting children and families effectively, however we did see some evidence that planned and timely intervention had been delivered to families.
- 3.6 Foster carers highlighted a lack of social work support with children with complex needs, this together with a lack of ongoing contact, and frequent changes of social worker, resulted in many foster carers leaving the scheme.
- 3.7 During 2015 – 16 there were 103 foster parents on the register, at the end of 2016 -17 this had reduced to 57. We are concerned as to the intervention and support children requiring this service are now receiving as a result of a lack of local resource. Social workers told us that matching children's needs to foster carers was limited due to the

decreased number of foster carers available, which may lead to children being placed inappropriately.

- 3.8 Care and support for children and families has been affected by the changes in teams, numbers of staff leaving the service and use of agency workers.
- 3.9 In talking to staff, they know their cases well but that is not reflected in records. Staff are clearly hard working and committed, and have been throughout this time, facing colleagues leaving, staff shortages, significant use of agency staff, and an absence of management support and direction.
- 3.10 Children and parents spoken with expressed their dissatisfaction with the inconsistency and changes in social workers assigned to their case. They are concerned with the delays in their cases being progressed, with examples of new workers challenging actions previously agreed, and not being fully briefed.
- 3.11 Parents also expressed concerns that support plans are not moving quickly enough, and children are concerned they are not being kept fully informed as to why decisions are being made. They told us they are not being consulted as to their future plans and they do not see their allocated social worker on a regular basis, especially following placement with a foster carer. They are left with a feeling of being in limbo with no future plan in place.
- 3.12 We saw evidence of children being disadvantaged whilst being looked after in not being supported in having contact with their parents. Social workers and partner agencies expressed concern that children are not able to build a relationship with a consistent worker, this has led to some children expressing their feeling that the service does not respect or value them.
- 3.13 We saw evidence that engagement by families in planning meetings is inconsistent. We saw examples where there was no evidence of a care and support plan and a lack of monitoring arrangements. We found cases being left inactive with families not receiving a service, or there being drift in child protection planning with evidence of statutory visits not having been carried out as required. We also saw written agreements with families being used as the only strategy to reduce risk. This clearly places children at risk of harm.
- 3.14 All of the above cases were referred back to the local authority for further investigation and review, in order to satisfy itself all appropriate action is now being taken.
- 3.15 There is a need to improve multi-agency working with partners who have lost confidence in the service. Communication was described as poor and there is a lack of understanding of the model of service

delivery in place. We found no evidence to demonstrate partnership working with respect to planning and shaping services.

Safeguarding

What we expect to see

Effective local safeguarding strategies combine both preventative and protective elements. Where people are experiencing or are at risk of abuse neglect or harm, they receive urgent, well-coordinated multi-agency responses. Actions arising from risk management or safety plans are successful in reducing actual or potential risk. People are not left in unsafe or dangerous environments. Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and protection are well understood and embedded and contribute to a timely and proportionate response to presenting concerns. The local authority and its partners sponsor a learning culture where change to and improvement of professional performance and agency behaviours can be explored in an open and constructive manner.

Summary of findings

- 4.1 There is evidence of missed opportunities to safeguard children with a lack effective systems to identify risks, nor are risks being appropriately and robustly assessed.
- 4.2 There were missed opportunities to include a wider range of partners in strategy discussions. These were mainly between children's services and police and in some instances could / should have involved a multi agency forum, for example, health, education and housing.
- 4.3 Safeguarding decisions were not always timely and several cases noted delay due to lack of availability of staff from both the police and social services. This meant that families often did not understand the concerns or were less clear as to why the issue was ongoing. The local authority has no shared approach to risk assessment management with partners. We saw evidence in two cases of an awareness of potential child sexual exploitation (CSE) and vulnerability of going missing. However, we saw evidence in three cases where CSE protocols were not adhered to.
- 4.4 The local authority's own quality assurance audits indicate poor representation at strategy meetings from partner agencies, and a lack of critical analysis in child protection (S.47) reports. There was poor recording generally within these reports as indicated by a lack of evidence to support the agreed actions and whether the need for legal advice or criminal investigation was appropriately considered. This was compounded by a lack of appropriate recording of team manager decision making in the minutes / case supervision notes.
- 4.5 Partners in the police expressed concern at the inconsistency in response from senior managers, which did not give them confidence in the quality of decision making. Police and health staff were concerned

if there was an issue that could not be resolved at an operational level they would not know who to escalate it to. This had been clear in the past.

- 4.6 External agencies were also concerned with the poor quality of some assessments, the absence or ineffectiveness of family group conferencing, the poor quality of pre- court work, and poor analysis. With subsequent plans not being followed, with the voice of the child not being evident with insufficient access to advocacy services.
- 4.7 Education partners expressed the view safeguarding practice appears to be sound but that this is not supported by timely or sound documentation. The timeliness of communication with education about S.47s is an issue, with education not always being informed of such referrals nor investigations relating to children in education.
- 4.8 Housing partners have experienced some difficulty in reporting safeguarding concerns following visits to families. Access to services is not clear or simple and as such there are delays in responding to safeguarding concerns. An example was given of a concern that was not able to be progressed satisfactorily through PPD and the social work team and as consequence housing officers had to escalate this to the Interim Chief Social Work officer in order to secure appropriate action for the child.
- 4.9 Children at risk of harm are not safeguarded due to a lack of a consistency in managing the sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (SERAF) process. There is a lack of compliance with child protection process and delays in S.47s and assessments being undertaken with safety plans lacking clarity and SMART objectives.
- 4.10 Overall it was the lack of timeliness and lack of rigour in following up concerns which posed the most risk with safeguarding work. We did not see evidence of risk management on the files we reviewed.
- 4.11 As a result of the absence of sound quality assurance and significant management and staffing changes there is no comprehensive picture of the unmet need and vulnerability of children. As such there is a need for a whole service case review in order for the service to get a full picture of the need and vulnerability of children and whether safeguarding measures are required. Until this is done children remain at risk.
- 4.12 In addition to a lack of robust safeguarding assessment and planning, there has been a reduction in legal support to children's services. This has had a significant impact with managers having to chase advice and causing lengthy delays in cases being brought to the attention of the court.
- 4.13 Whilst we saw evidence in two cases of timely and positive responses

to child protection referrals, we also reviewed six cases where this was not the case.

- 4.14 We saw evidence that child protection procedures were not followed. In one example there was no record of child protection statutory visits for a period of six months, November 2016 to June 2017. There was no written record of S.47 investigations, core group meetings were not held within required timescales with a lack of review and management oversight of this case until June 2017.
- 4.15 In a further example we were concerned that despite clear child protection issues being evident the case did not progress to conference. A care plan was not in place and no home visit had been undertaken in order for the voice of child to be heard. The initial referral in respect of concerns of physically harmful behaviour was some years ago, with no meaningful work undertaken with the family since then which could indicate that the child has been exposed to ongoing suffering or harm.
- 4.16 There is evidence of missed opportunities to safeguard children, despite requests for support. A number of cases were referred back to the local authority for their review due to concerns in respect of children's safety.
- 4.17 There is evidence of a lack of effective systems to identify and thoroughly assess risk. In a significant number of cases we tracked there was a lack of effective multi – agency safeguarding, with child protection procedures not being followed and a lack of effective decision making and management oversight to prevent drift and further risk. This is further affected by the lack of a robust Independent Reviewing Officer structure and service which is lacking clear leadership and pathways for escalating concerns.
- 4.18 An interim lead for safeguarding had been appointed immediately prior to the inspection.

Leadership, management & governance

What we expect to see

Leadership, management and governance arrangements comply with statutory guidance and together establish an effective strategy for the delivery of good quality services and outcomes for people. Meeting people's needs for quality services are a clear focus for councillors, managers and staff. Services are well-led, direction is clear and the leadership of change is strong. Roles and responsibilities throughout the organisation are clear. The authority works with partners to deliver help, care and support for people and fulfils its corporate parenting responsibilities. Involvement of local people is effective. Leaders, managers and elected members have sufficient knowledge and understanding of practice and performance to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Summary of findings

- 5.1 Leadership in children's services is a significant vulnerability in this local authority.
- 5.2 It is apparent there has been an absence of systems and structures in place to monitor and evaluate progress with the changes within the service at a senior level. Consequently this has resulted in disconnect between the chief executive, the corporate management team, and children's services and a lack of oversight in relation to corporate parenting responsibilities and roles.
- 5.3 Children's services sit within the People Directorate. The directorate is represented on the corporate management team by the interim Strategic Director of People and the interim Chief Social Work officer. We are aware the chief executive of Powys Teaching Health Board has been providing support by combining their substantive role with that of interim Strategic Director for the local authority.
- 5.4 Children's services have been subject to frequent changes of management at all levels over the past two years. This includes four changes of head of service with the current post holder being an interim appointment. This is in addition to the interim arrangements for the part time strategic director and an interim chief social work officer - who holds the statutory role of director.
- 5.5 Lack of substantive management arrangements presents a fragile organisation without clear structures on which to base sound and safe practice.
- 5.6 The local authority requires a clearer understanding of the significance of the role of the statutory director and the key role of the chief executive in supporting the statutory director to deliver.

- 5.7 The local authority commissioned a major external review of children's services during 2015 and 2016. Whilst focussing on service development, and ensuring the local authority was able to meet its duties under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 it was also tasked with establishing 'if efficiencies to the value of £2.7m are deliverable and sustainable'. The report concluded that if implemented it would provide the authority with £1.5m in efficiency savings (10% of the overall budget) and £750k of income generation, leading to £2.2m in total. A significant element of this review was reliant on an overarching restructure of children's services.
- 5.8 The review commissioned by the local authority did not focus on mapping needs, meeting demands of the new legislation nor did it ensure safeguarding is prioritised.
- 5.9 The decline we saw in children's services during, and following, the external review undertaken in 2015 – 16 has been marked. The implementation of the review by the local authority significantly destabilised the workforce and consequently placed children at risk of harm. As a result the local authority has failed to fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities by ensuring that children are provided with good quality placement options, protection and effective support.
- 5.10 The interim managers had developed an escalated improvement plan that identified the significant level of improvement needed against all aspects of the service. This marked a critical move away from the conclusions of the external review with a new focus on practice. However this was at a very early stage of implementation and will require significant corporate support.
- 5.11 The chief executive acknowledged he has not been as sighted as necessary on the growing failings within the service. The need for the chief executive and his corporate management team to have a number of indicators of service performance in place is clear. There needs to be greater analysis of performance information, staff engagement and user consultation.
- 5.12 There was little evidence children's services are recognised as a priority by the local authority. Political and officer support for children's services at a senior level was not well evidenced. Systems and processes had not been established to facilitate corporate oversight of the service. This included a lack of performance information in order to ensure children and families are receiving support within statutory timescales. A lack of a sound, effective and user friendly quality assurance model, a depletion in legal support, a HR function that whilst robust, has not always supported timely front line recruitment, and an inconsistency and delay in IT support for new and agency staff.
- 5.13 There is little evidence the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act

2014 is understood at a corporate level and in that context the delivery of information, advice and assistance is seen too narrowly as a social services responsibility only.

- 5.14 When considering financial savings and investment it needs to be recognised that short and medium term financial planning and goal setting for children's services is inherently risky, and any lack of action and investment now will cost significantly more in the future, and will lead to increased failure to meet statutory accountabilities.
- 5.15 The vision and strategic direction for children's services has been set out by the interim leadership team, together with members of the operational management team. This has been cascaded to staff via a number of roadshows, which were well received. However, this vision requires significant corporate and political support for it to be implemented. It is of concern that there is a lack of awareness of the strategic direction outside children's services considering its reliance on the full support of the council. Senior management in children's services, members, and the chief executive, all had a different view on how this should be shaped.
- 5.16 The lack of a clear strategic direction and operational protocols means that partners do not have a clear understanding of the children's directorate vision, structures and thresholds. Equally partners are not being given clear expectations regarding their role and accountability in relation to services for children.
- 5.17 The council has many new members since the election in May 2017. It is hoped, that with the appointment of the new portfolio holder the profile of children's services will begin to rise within the local authority, despite the fragility of the situation.
- 5.18 The local authority acknowledges there has been an absence of challenge from Members for some time. There is a need to ensure the direction of the service, its targets and performance is clearly understood by Members and that support and training for them in order to challenge and hold officers to account is in place.
- 5.19 Recruitment and retention of staff remains a key concern for the service. Its inability to retain experienced staff has impacted significantly on children's services and as a result, on those children and families being supported. As of the 14 July 2017 the authority report that they are employing 19 agency staff covering social work and senior posts and have 36 vacancies across children's services.
- 5.20 Staff supervision has been inconsistent; however, staff report a more consistent approach and regular formal supervision is now being introduced. Staff advised that team managers and senior practitioners are now more accessible and case discussion is ongoing. Good peer

support is evident, with staff supporting each other through a very difficult and challenging time. All staff report there is good access to training throughout the service and all are supported to attend.

- 5.21 However, the absence of a workforce strategy at this time means the local authority is unable to map the strengths of its workforce and thereby build a service from that point, to meet demand and need. The development and implementation of a workforce strategy will be crucial in retaining not only the newly recruited staff but those who have stayed throughout the re structuring but are still in need of additional support. This has resulted in a workforce that remains very vulnerable at this time.
- 5.22 Capacity to deliver a quality assurance system in children's services is challenged by the lack of an agreed review framework, different models being favoured by different senior managers, morale and capacity in the workforce.
- 5.23 As a result quality assurance and performance monitoring is limited and in some instances non-existent. There is a clear lack of quality assurance and audit across the service. The quality assurance work that has been carried out by the service is in relation to a very small sample size and whilst it has identified some good practice it is clear there is significant work to do.
- 5.24 Analysis of complaints received should be a source of internal performance monitoring. During the year June 2016 – June 2017 there was a gradual increase in complaints being made. There were no specific trends identified. However, our inspection identifies there were a number from families of children with disabilities regarding the poor level of support they were receiving. Senior managers acknowledged there had been significant drift and delay in cases within the disability service.
- 5.25 Complaints were in the main not being investigated within the required timescales, recording was poor, and as such it was difficult to assess the robustness of the investigations and responses. Correspondence was missing from the files examined, and there was no evidence of management oversight or audit. The complaints process did not involve action planning nor was there any oversight to support lessons learned.
- 5.26 In order to address the shortfalls within the service the interim leadership team has produced an escalated action plan which identifies all areas of service delivery require improvement. The leader of the council is aware of the council's own escalation action plan, but it is clear that a greater narrative is needed, together with timescales, and milestones, in order for members to effectively measure and monitor progress.
- 5.27 Despite an escalation action plan having been produced, it was clear

that the local authority is waiting for CSSIW's report and recommendations in order to arrive at a work plan. Whilst it is evident some progress is now being made, it is a concern that the local authority may be waiting for the external regulator to give them direction, as opposed to moving forward positively with their own clear plan of delivery.

- 5.28 The current care and support population assessment does not provide the council with the knowledge and information required to commission effectively to meet the needs of children.
- 5.29 The interim nature of the senior management team means it may not be in a position to deliver the work required with the speed, and coverage it requires. Corporate support is vital along with a decision as to how to make permanent appointments to these vital posts to provide a permanent and stable senior management team.
- 5.30 There continues to be a debate about the future leadership structure, there is no consensus yet amongst corporate and political leaders. This raises questions about the level of political and corporate understanding of the vision for children's services. Any changes need to consider the disruption and changes that would follow and must be based on a realistic understanding of the impact of any reorganisation on the workforce and on service delivery.
- 5.31 There is an urgent need to finalise and agree the senior management structure alongside the wider workforce structure, which is keenly anticipated by staff.
- 5.32 Considering the turbulence of recent months, the core of staff have shown resilience and professionalism whilst coping with significant structural and staff changes, together with service changes brought about by successive heads of service, and a depletion in support services and leadership. Frontline staff and managers are desperate to hold onto any 'green shoots' that the interim leadership and management arrangements have been able to deliver and we have seen real commitment to protect and respond to safeguarding children in difficult circumstances. Staff have been mutually supportive through very difficult times and have shown us their real desire to move on.
- 5.33 It is a concern the senior leadership in the local authority has not been able to ensure the workforce is supported to provide an effective service for children and families who need support at all levels. The need to address the corporate and wider partnership issues is required as a matter of urgency as without the level of corporate support needed, the budget pressures will not be resolved.

Methodology

Self Assessment

The local authority completed a self assessment in advance of the fieldwork stage of the inspection. The authority was asked to provide evidence against *'what we expect'* to see under each key dimension inspected. The information was used to shape the detailed lines of enquiry for the inspection.

We sample-selected for tracking and review an initial 30 cases, together with a further 20 contact cases, a number of which we further reviewed, from a long-list provided by the local authority that was consistent with a thirteen-category criterion applicable to the period 1 June 2016 to 1 June 2017.

Fieldwork

We were on site in Powys the weeks commencing 17 July and 31 July 2017.

We reviewed a total of 42 cases of which 16 were subject to more detailed case tracking that involved interviews with local authority employees and other professionals.

We interviewed six children and/or their families.

We interviewed a range of local authority employees, including senior officers, the chief executive, the leader of the council and the portfolio lead for children's services.

We interviewed a broad range of partner organisations, representing both statutory and third sectors.

We looked at all complaints and compliments that were made about children's services between 1 June 2016 and 1 June 2017.

Inspection team

The inspection team consisted of:

- Lead Inspector: Ken Redman

- Supporting Inspectors: Katy Young, Pam Clutton, Sharon Eastlake and Lesley Roberts

Acknowledgements

CSSIW would like to thank the people who contributed to the inspection; parents and carers, staff and managers of Powys County Council; the service providers and partner organisations – including the independent and third sector; for their time, cooperation and contributions to this inspection.

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Arolygiad o Wasanaethau *Plant*

Cyngor Sir Powys

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Cyflwyniad

Gwnaeth Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru (AGGCC) gynnal arolygiad o wasanaethau plant Cyngor Sir Powys yn ystod mis Gorffennaf 2017. Roedd yr arolygiad yn canolbwyntio ar ansawdd yr arweinyddiaeth, y rheolaeth a'r trefniadau llywodraethu er mwyn datblygu a chefnogi gwasanaethau i blant a phobl ifanc.

Gwnaeth yr arolygiad edrych yn fanwl ar sut mae plant a theuluoedd yn cael gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth, a gwasanaethau gofal a chymorth.

Roedd yr arolygiad yn canolbwyntio ar lwybrau pobl i mewn i wasanaethau gofal a chymorth. Gwnaethom archwilio sut mae plant a theuluoedd yn cael gafael ar help, gofal a gwasanaethau cymorth.

Gwnaethom ystyried ansawdd y canlyniadau a gyflawnir i blant sydd angen cymorth, gofal a chefnogaeth a/neu ddiogelwch, gan gynnwys y rhai hynny sy'n derbyn gofal gan yr awdurdod lleol.

Gwnaeth yr arolygwyr ddarllen ffeiliau achos a chynnal cyfweiliadau â staff, rheolwyr a gweithwyr proffesiynol o asiantaethau partner. Gwnaeth yr arolygwyr siarad â'r plant a'u teuluoedd pan oedd yn bosibl.

Trosolwg o'r canfyddiadau

Datblygiadau diweddar ym Mhowys

Mae'r awdurdod lleol wedi gweld newidiadau sylweddol ymhlith uwch-reolwyr y gwasanaethau cymdeithasol yn ystod y flwyddyn. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys ymadawiad cyfarwyddwr y gwasanaethau cymdeithasol ym mis Rhagfyr 2016, gyda phrif weithredwr Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys yn darparu cymorth trwy ymgymryd â swydd cyfarwyddwr strategol pobl dros dro yn rhan amser o fis Ionawr 2017.

Yn ogystal, gwnaeth ymadawiad pennaeth y gwasanaethau plant, a oedd newydd ei benodi ar ddechrau 2017, hefyd arwain at benodi prif swyddog gwaith cymdeithasol dros dro, i wneud gwaith statudol cyfarwyddwr y gwasanaethau cymdeithasol, a phenodi pennaeth dros dro ar gyfer y gwasanaethau plant ym mis Mehefin 2017.

Mae'r newidiadau rheoli hyn wedi dilyn cyfnod o newid sylweddol yn dilyn gweithredu Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014, ynghyd â heriau ariannol a gorwariant a ragwelwyd, cyflwyno system rheoli cofnodion electronig newydd, a phenderfyniad yr awdurdod lleol i gomisiynu adolygiad allanol mawr o'r gwasanaethau oedolion a'r gwasanaethau phlant, a gwblhawyd yn 2016.

Yn dilyn penodiad prif swyddog gwaith cymdeithasol dros dro ym nis Ebrill 2017, fe nodwyd materion a pryderon o ran gwasanaethau plant a fe ddatblygwyd cynllun gweithredu cynyddol. Mae'r Cyfarwyddwr Statudol dros dro ar gyfer gwasanaethau cymdeithasol yn cydnabod bod angen datblygu hwn ymhellach a darparu cynllun mwy cynhwysfawr sy'n eiddo i'r sefydliad.

Crynodeb o'r canfyddiadau

Canfuom fod gweithredu argymhellion yr adolygiad allanol wedi ansefydlogi'r gweithlu i raddau sylweddol ac, o ganlyniad, wedi rhoi plant mewn perygl o niwed.

Nid yw'n ymddangos bod plant a phobl ifanc yn cael eu gwasanaethau'n dda gan y trefniadau cyfredol ar gyfer cael gafael ar wasanaethau cymorth ym Mhowys. Roedd diffyg cynllunio ar gyfer asesu, gofal a chymorth, ynghyd â dull anghyson o weithio yn unol â chanllawiau camfanteisio'n rhywiol ar blant a rheoli proses y fframwaith camfanteisio'n rhywiol ac asesu risg yn rhoi plant mewn perygl o niwed. Yn ogystal, nid oedd prosesau amddiffyn plant yn cydymffurfio â'r canllawiau statudol, gydag oediadau o ran yr ymchwiliadau a'r asesiadau a oedd yn cael eu cynnal ac o ran cwblhau ymweliadau statudol.

Mae tystiolaeth o gyfleoedd coll i ddiogelu plant, serch ceisiadau am gymorth. Nid yw risgiau yn cael eu hasesu'n briodol nac yn ddigon cadarn ac nid oes unrhyw system effeithiol i nodi a rheoli risgiau.

Mae'r weledigaeth a'r cyfeiriad strategol ar gyfer gwasanaethau plant wedi'u gosod gan y tîm arweinyddiaeth dros dro, ynghyd ag aelodau o'r tîm rheoli gweithredol. Fodd bynnag, mae angen cryn dipyn o gefnogaeth gorfforaethol a gwleidyddol i wireddu'r weledigaeth hon. Mae diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o'i chynnwys y tu allan i'r gwasanaethau plant a, chan ystyried ei dibyniaeth ar gefnogaeth lawn y cyngor, mae hyn yn destun pryder.

Mae problemau perfformio difrifol o ran y gwasanaethau rheng flaen, ond mae'r rhain yn codi oherwydd y rheolaeth ansefydlog, arweiniad gwael a dryslyd, a llywodraethu gwan. Heb gymorth effeithiol a gallu i wneud y gwaith, nid oes disgwyl i'r staff rheng flaen gyflawni'r gwaith cymhleth sydd ei angen mewn gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant.

Nododd yr arolygwyr ymrwymiad y staff, sydd wedi dangos gwydnwch a phroffesiynoldeb wrth ymdopi â newidiadau sylweddol, a llai o wasanaethau cymorth a gallu arweinyddol. Rydym wedi gweld ymrwymiad go iawn i amddiffyn ac ymateb i ddiogelu plant dan amgylchiadau anodd iawn. Mae'r staff wedi cefnogi ei gilydd trwy adegau heriol ac anodd ac wedi dangos i ni eu bod yn awyddus iawn i symud ymlaen.

Mae'r argymhellion isod yn nodi'r prif feysydd y dylai'r gwaith gwella a datblygu ôl-arolygiad ganolbwyntio arnynt.

Y Camau Nesaf

Mae AGGCC yn disgwyl i Gyngor Sir Powys lunio cynllun gwella mewn ymateb i'r argymhellion sydd wedi'u cynnwys yn yr adroddiad hwn o fewn 20 niwrnod i'w gyhoeddi.

Bydd y cynllun gwella yn cael ei fonitro'n agos yn ystod ein rhaglen arolygu, ymgysylltu ac adolygu perfformiad trwy gydol 2017/18.

Oherwydd y pryderon difrifol a nodwyd yn yr arolygiad hwn, bydd ystyriaeth yn cael ei rhoi i gynnal ail arolygiad o wasanaethau plant Powys o fewn 12 mis i gyhoeddi'r adroddiad hwn.

Argymhellion

Blaenoriaeth ar unwaith (o fewn un mis):

Rheoli achosion

1. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sicrhau bod asesiadau'n cael eu cynnal o fewn amserlenni statudol a'u gwneud mewn partneriaeth â phlant a theuluoedd.

Staffio

2. Dylid adolygu'r trefniadau ar gyfer rheolwyr tîm ac uwch-ymarferwyr er mwyn sicrhau y gellir darparu trosolwg rheoli a phrofi penderfyniadau effeithiol a chyson, ynghyd â darparu cymorth ac arweiniad ar gyfer staff rheng flaen.
3. Dylai uwch-reolwyr gymryd camau i wella amllder, cysondeb ac ansawdd goruchwyliaeth staff rheng flaen. Rhaid rhoi mecanwaith sicrhau ar waith i wneud yn siŵr y cydymffurfir â'r disgwyliaid a sicrhau ansawdd penderfyniadau, cadw cofnodion ac adrodd.
4. Mae angen monitro llwythi achos er mwyn sicrhau bod digon o allu gan weithwyr i ymgysylltu'n effeithiol â phlant a'u teuluoedd.

Arweinyddiaeth

5. Rhaid i'r prif weithredwr ddarparu cymorth corfforaethol ar unwaith i'r gwasanaethau plant er mwyn sicrhau bod gwelliannau i'r gwasanaeth yn cael eu blaenoriaethu a bod cyflymder y gwelliant yn cyflymu ac yn cael ei gynnal.
6. Rhaid i arweinydd y cyngor a'r aelod portffolio ddarparu cymorth gwleidyddol cryf ar gyfer y gwasanaethau plant a chymryd y camau angenrheidiol i roi gwaith craffu gwybodus ac effeithiol ar waith er mwyn sicrhau bod gwelliannau i'r gwasanaeth yn cael eu gwneud yn gyflym ac yn effeithiol a'u bod yn gynaliadwy.

Sicrwydd

7. Rhaid rhoi blaenoriaeth i weithredu mecanwaith sicrhau er mwyn gwneud yn siŵr y cydymffurfir â'r ddeddfwriaeth, y canllawiau statudol a'r protocolau o ran plant sy'n derbyn gofal a phlant mewn perygl.

Blaenoriaeth tymor canolig (o fewn pedwar mis):

Rheoli achosion

8. Rhaid gwella ansawdd asesiadau a chynlluniau er mwyn sicrhau eu bod o ansawdd da, gyda phwyslais eglur ar anghenion, risgiau a chryfderau plant a theuluoedd, a bod y canlyniadau, yr amserlenni a'r cyfrifoldebau dros weithrediadau yn eglur.
9. Rhaid gwella ansawdd a chysondeb y cofnodion a gedwir a'u hamseroldeb. Rhaid i'r holl staff a rheolwyr sicrhau bod y cofnodion o ansawdd da, yn gyfredol, ac yn cael eu storio'n drefnus.
10. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol egluro rôl a diben Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys o ran darparu gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth cyffredinol a rhaid iddo sicrhau bod gan staff a phartneriaid ganllawiau clir i gefnogi penderfyniadau. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sicrhau bod yr holl staff wedi'u hyfforddi'n briodol a'u bod yn fedrus ac yn cael eu cefnogi i gyflawni'r rôl hon. Mae angen protocol clir rhwng Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys a'r tîm dyletswydd argyfwng er mwyn sicrhau na chaiff achosion eu colli rhwng gwasanaethau.
11. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol roi model asesu effeithiol ar waith i gefnogi ei ymyriadau â theuluoedd, a rhaid i hwn fod yn ddealladwy i bob aelod o staff a phob partner, ac yn seiliedig ar hyfforddiant a datblygiad cadarn.
12. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sicrhau bod ei wasanaeth maethu yn darparu cymorth, hyfforddiant ac arweiniad cyson i ofalwyr maeth er mwyn gwella ansawdd ac argaeledd lleoliadau.
13. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sicrhau bod gan bob cynllun gofal a chymorth bwyslais clir ar ganlyniadau i blant, sy'n cynnwys llais y plentyn.

Staffio

14. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sicrhau bod pob cyflogai yn deall y gofynion deddfwriaethol a statudol o ran diogelu plant a bod camau'n cael eu cymryd i fynd i'r afael â pherfformiad gwael.
15. Dylid datblygu strategaeth gadarn i'r gweithlu ar unwaith, a fydd yn cynnwys cynlluniau tymor byr, canolig a hirdymor ar gyfer recriwtio a chadw staff gwaith cymdeithasol a staff uwch. Mae penodi pobl yn barhaol i swyddi allweddol yn flaenoriaeth uchel er mwyn rhoi gwydnwch a sefydlogrwydd i'r gwasanaeth.

Gwaith rhyngasiantaeth/partneriaeth

16. Dylid sefydlu systemau sicrhau ansawdd a threfniadau hyfforddi amlasiantaeth effeithiol er mwyn sicrhau bod trothwyon asesiadau ar gyfer gwasanaethau plant statudol yn ddealladwy i'r staff a'r partneriaid ac yn cael eu cymhwyso'n gyson; dylai hyn gynnwys datblygu protocol amlasiantaeth ar gyfer gwneud penderfyniadau ynglŷn ag amddiffyn plant.
17. Mae angen arweiniad strategol clir, a gefnogir gan brotocolau gweithredol, er mwyn galluogi partneriaid i gael dealltwriaeth glir o ddiben, strwythur a phroses benderfynu'r gwasanaethau plant.

Arweinyddiaeth

18. Dylid rhoi ystyriaeth gynnar i effaith y newidiadau a wnaed o ganlyniad i'r adolygiad a gomisiynwyd ac a ddylid ailedrych ar benderfyniadau a wnaed fel rhan o'r adolygiad.
19. Mae angen i aelodau etholedig fod yn glir ynghylch y weledigaeth ar gyfer y gwasanaethau plant a chydabod ei fod yn faes risg uchel i'r cyngor. I gefnogi hyn, mae angen i aelodau gael eglurder ynghylch cyfeiriad y gwasanaethau a'r risgiau penodol sy'n gynhenid mewn gwasanaethau plant, a hyfforddiant i ddeall hyn.
20. Rhaid i'r prif weithredwr wneud trefniadau i sicrhau bod gan yr holl aelodau etholedig ddealltwriaeth glir o'u cyfrifoldebau rhianta corfforaethol a'u bod yn gallu cyflawni'r rhain.
21. Mae angen i'r awdurdod lleol wneud gwaith pellach o ran gweithredu gofynion Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014, fel bod dealltwriaeth ar lefel gorfforaethol o'r ffordd y caiff gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth eu darparu.

Sicrwydd

22. Mae angen ymwreiddio trefniadau rheoli perfformiad a sicrhau ansawdd, gan gynnwys craffu ar y galw am y gwasanaeth ac archwilio ansawdd yr arferion yn rheolaidd, fel bod gan reolwyr ar bob lefel wybodaeth amserol, berthnasol a chywir am berfformiad a sicrhau ansawdd.
23. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sefydlu systemau a strwythurau ar lefel gorfforaethol er mwyn monitro a gwerthuso'r cynnydd o fewn y gwasanaethau plant yn effeithiol.
24. Rhaid sefydlu system sicrhau ansawdd i sicrhau nad yw teuluoedd a gaiff eu hatgyfeirio i'r gwasanaeth Tîm o Amgylch y Teulu yn cael eu hanghofio nac yn profi oediadau ac i sicrhau bod cynlluniau wedi'u targedu ar waith sy'n cael eu hadolygu a'u gwirio gan reolwyr.

25. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol gryfhau'r arolygiaeth o ran ymateb i gwynion er mwyn gwella'r gwaith adrodd a dadansoddi a sicrhau bod mecanwaith i gipio'r gwersi a ddysgwyd.

Blaenoriaeth fwy hirdymor (o fewn 12 mis):

Rheoli achosion

26. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol sicrhau ei fod yn cydymffurfio â chynnig gweithredol y Gymraeg.

Gwaith amlasiantaeth/partner

27. Dylid sefydlu protocol amlasiantaeth ar gyfer amddiffyn plant i gefnogi penderfyniadau ar yr angen am asesiadau mewn gwasanaethau plant statudol. Mae angen i staff a phartneriaid ddeall hwn a rhaid iddo gael ei gymhwyso'n gyson. Mae angen systemau sicrhau ansawdd a threfniadau hyfforddi amlasiantaeth i gefnogi hyn.

28. Rhaid i'r awdurdod lleol a'r partneriaid weithio gyda'i gilydd i ddatblygu dull cydlynol o gasglu a dadansoddi gwybodaeth am anghenion cymunedau, sy'n cynnwys barn plant a theuluoedd. Dylid defnyddio hwn fel sylfaen i lywio cynlluniau strategol er mwyn sicrhau bod y gwasanaeth a ddarperir yn alinio'n effeithiol rhwng gwasanaethau gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth, y sector ataliol, a gwasanaethau statudol.

Arweinyddiaeth

29. Bydd angen i newidiadau i'r strwythur a'r gwasanaethau a ddarperir yn y dyfodol gynnwys ymgynghoriad â phob rhanddeiliad o ran eu siâp a'u datblygiad. Mae angen i'r newid fod yn gynyddol a rhaid gweithredu'r newidiadau ar gyflymder a fydd yn sicrhau ymglymiad llawn staff a phobl ifanc a sicrhau nad yw plant yn cael eu rhoi mewn perygl

Trefniadau mynediad: Gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth

Yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld

Mae'r awdurdod lleol yn gweithio gyda sefydliadau partner i ddatblygu, deall, cydlynu, cael yr wybodaeth ddiweddaraf a gwneud y defnydd gorau o'r adnoddau gwybodaeth, cymorth a chyngor sydd gan y sector statudol, gwirfoddol a phreifat yn ei ardal. Mae gan bawb, gan gynnwys gofalmwr, fynediad at wybodaeth gynhwysfawr ynglŷn â gwasanaethau ac maent yn derbyn cyngor a chymorth yn ddi-oed, gan gynnwys gwybodaeth am eu cymhwysedd a'r hyn y gallant ei ddisgwyl o ran yr ymateb a gânt gan y gwasanaeth. Mae trefniadau'n effeithiol wrth ohirio neu atal yr angen am ofal a chymorth. Mae pobl yn ymwybodol o fannau cyswllt allweddol ac yn gallu eu defnyddio'n rhwydd. Mae'r gwasanaeth yn gwrandao ar bobl ac yn dechrau gyda ffocws ar yr hyn sy'n bwysig iddynt. Mae arwyddbostio ac atgyfeirio pobl yn effeithiol yn cynnig dewis i bobl ynghylch cymorth a gwasanaethau sydd ar gael yn eu hardal, yn enwedig gwasanaethau ataliol. Mae partneriaid yn deall trefniadau mynediad at ddarpariaeth gwasanaethau cymdeithasol statudol ac mae'r bobl sy'n ymgysylltu â'r gwasanaethau yn gweithredu'n effeithiol.

Crynodeb o'r canfyddiadau

- 1.1 Sefydlodd yr awdurdod Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys ym mis Hydref 2014 fel pwynt mynediad sengl i'r gwasanaethau plant. Ym mis Ebrill 2015, cafodd pwynt mynediad sengl ar gyfer gwasanaethau oedolion hefyd ei gynnwys yn Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys. Mae tîm Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys yn gweithio yn Llandrindod ar hyn o bryd, ac mae'n gwasanaethu timau ardal yn Aberhonddu, Ystradgynlais, Llandrindod, y Drenewydd a'r Trallwng.
- 1.2 Mae'r tîm yn cynnwys pum swyddog cyswllt, a gefnogir gan weithiwr cymdeithasol, sy'n gyfrifol am ymdrin â phob ymholiad ac atgyfeiriad sy'n ymwneud â phlant a theuluoedd. Mae gan swyddogion cyswllt wybodaeth drylwyr am y gwasanaethau lleol sydd ar gael, er mwyn darparu cyngor a chymorth. Fodd bynnag, mae'r tîm wedi cael nifer o newidiadau rheoli ers iddo ddechrau, sydd wedi arwain at ddiffyg eglurder ynghylch cyfeiriad a diben y gwasanaeth. Staff asiantaeth sy'n rheoli'r gwasanaeth ar hyn o bryd. Mae yna angen clir am sefydlogrwydd yn rheolaeth y tîm.
- 1.3 Mae'r gwasanaeth hefyd wedi cynnal adolygiadau dirifedi, yn fewnol ac yn allanol. Nid yw'n amlwg sut mae'r rhain wedi darparu cyfeiriad, gwella'r ffordd o weithio, nac egluro rôl swyddogion cyswllt. Mae angen gwell cymorth gwaith cymdeithasol, canllawiau cymhwysedd a throthwy clir, ac arweiniad i'r swyddogion cyswllt er mwyn gwneud

penderfyniadau effeithiol ar y pwynt atgyfeirio. Byddai hyn yn gwella'r mynediad a'r arwyddbostio priodol i blant a theuluoedd.

- 1.4 Cawsom wybod gan y timau ardal bod y diffyg cymorth, cyngor a chyfeiriad ar gyfer staff Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys wedi golygu bod gwybodaeth atgyfeirio'n cael ei throsglwyddo i'r timau ardal heb ddigon o fanylder ac yn amrywio o ran ansawdd. Teimlwyd fod hyn yn amhriodol a, chan hynny, yn arafu'r system.
- 1.5 Nid yw'n amlwg o hyd beth yw rôl a diben Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys, na'i pherthynas â swyddogaeth cyswllt cwsmer ehangach yr awdurdod lleol. Mae angen gwneud penderfyniad nawr o ran rôl a diben Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys o fewn darpariaeth gyffredinol y gwasanaethau gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth. Mae angen ei chyflunio mewn modd sy'n cefnogi mynediad hawdd, hygyrchedd a thryloywder.
- 1.6 Effaith hyn yw nad yw teuluoedd wedi cael cymorth pan oedd ei angen. Gwnaeth yr holl bartneriaid iechyd, addysg a thai, a meysydd eraill o'r gwasanaethau plant, amlygu anawsterau o ran atgyfeirio achosion i Linell Uniongyrchol Powys a chael gwasanaethau. Mae hyn yn rhoi plant a theuluoedd sydd angen gwasanaethau a chymorth mewn perygl.
- 1.7 Ar adeg yr arolygiad, nid oedd unrhyw feini prawf cyffredinol cytunedig i roi arweiniad i asiantaethau partner wrth wneud penderfyniadau. Mae hyn wedi arwain at lwybrau atgyfeirio aneglur ac, o ganlyniad, mae asiantaethau yn dod o hyd i'w datrysiadau eu hunain, gan ddefnyddio rhwydweithiau eraill ac uwchgyfeirio atgyfeiriadau'n amhriodol er mwyn eu dwyn at sylw'r timau ardal.
- 1.8 Un datblygiad cadarnhaol yw bod dull rhanbarthol o weithredu meini prawf penderfynu wedi'i gymeradwyo gan y bwrdd diogelu rhanbarthol, ac mae hwn ar fin cael ei gyflwyno ar draws pedwar awdurdod lleol. Mae hyn yn rhoi cyfle i Bowys gytuno ar lwybrau clir rhwng ymyrraeth gynnar a gwasanaethau statudol. Bydd angen cyfathrebu hwn wedyn i'r cyhoedd, y partneriaid ac o fewn yr awdurdod lleol.
- 1.9 Bydd angen cytundeb rhieni ar gyfer achosion a fydd yn cael eu hatgyfeirio i'r Tîm o Amgylch y Teulu. Pan na ellir cyflawni hyn, mae'r achosion yn aros gyda Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys am rai wythnosau, gan arwain plant a theuluoedd i brofi oediadau a chael eu hanghofio. Canfuom fod hyn yn digwydd yn aml hefyd pan oedd plant angen asesiadau gofal a chymorth, ac roedd oediadau o ran dyrannu. Mae angen mabwysiadu dull mwy rhagweithiol er mwyn datblygu a monitro hyn, er mwyn i blant a theuluoedd gael gofal a chymorth priodol ac amserol.
- 1.10 Mae'n destun pryder bod tystiolaeth o weithio 'annibynnol' rhwng timau o fewn y gwasanaethau plant. Er enghraifft, er bod Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys a'r gwasanaeth Tîm o Amgylch y Teulu yn yr un gyfarwyddiaeth,

nid ydynt yn rhannu'r un ffurflen atgyfeirio na'r un fformat asesu ac nid oes ganddynt gyd-ddealltwriaeth o feini prawf gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth.

- 1.11 Mae angen egluro a chytuno ar y berthynas rhwng Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys a'r gwasanaeth y tu allan i oriau (y tîm dyletswydd argyfwng). Bydd hyn yn sicrhau bod atgyfeiriadau a ddaw i law Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys ar ddiwedd y dydd, sydd angen ymyrraeth y tu allan i oriau, yn cael ymateb priodol. Mae angen protocol gweithio i sicrhau nad yw achosion yn mynd 'ar goll' rhwng y ddau wasanaeth.
- 1.12 Ychydig iawn o weithgarwch sicrhau ansawdd ac archwilio sy'n cael ei gynnal yn Llinell Uniongyrchol Powys. Mae ffigurau perfformiad ar gael, ond mae'r rhain yn ymwneud â nifer y galwadau, galwadau a adawyd, amserau aros ac ati, ac nid ydynt yn rhoi gwybodaeth berthnasol i'r rheolwr o ran ansawdd a chanlyniadau. Nid oes unrhyw fecanwaith ar gyfer cael adborth gan blant, teuluoedd, partneriaid a thimau.
- 1.13 Nid yw'r gwasanaeth yn gallu darparu'r 'cynnig gweithredol' o ran y Gymraeg yn gyson.
- 1.14 Mae angen i'r awdurdod lleol wneud rhagor o waith i weithredu gofynion Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014. Er bod cynllunio'n amlwg, mae angen yn awr ymwreiddio'r newidiadau sydd eu hangen trwy arweinyddiaeth, hyfforddiant staff, cymorth ac arweiniad.

Asesiad

Yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld

Mae'r holl bobl sydd â hawl i gael asesiad o'u hanghenion gofal a chymorth yn derbyn un yn eu dewis iaith. Mae'r holl ofalwyr y mae'n ymddangos bod ganddynt anghenion cymorth yn cael cynnig asesiad anghenion gofalwr, waeth pa fath o ofal a ddarperir, faint yw eu hincwm ariannol, neu ba lefel o gymorth y gallai fod ei angen. Mae pobl yn derbyn asesiad amserol o'u hanghenion sy'n hybu eu hannibyniaeth a'u gallu i wneud dewisiadau. Mae asesiadau yn ystyried canlyniadau a safbwyntiau, dymuniadau a theimladau personol y sawl sy'n cael ei asesu a rhai'r bobl berthnasol eraill, gan gynnwys y rhai sydd â chyfrifoldeb riant. Mae hyn cyn belled â'i bod yn rhesymol ymarferol ac yn gyson â hybu eu lles a'u diogelwch yn ogystal â lles a diogelwch pobl eraill. Mae asesiadau yn darparu dealltwriaeth eglur o beth fydd yn digwydd nesaf ac yn arwain at gynllun sy'n berthnasol i anghenion a nodwyd. Mae camau gweithredu, sy'n bwriadu cyflawni canlyniadau sydd o bwys i bobl, yn cael eu nodi ac yn cynnwys yr holl rai y gellir eu bodloni trwy wasanaethau ataliol neu gymunedol yn ogystal â darpariaeth arbenigol.

Crynodeb o'r canfyddiadau

- 2.1 Canfuom nad oedd asesiadau mewn cynlluniau gofal a chymorth ac nid oedd yr arfer yn gadarn.
- 2.2 Nid oedd asesiadau'n adlewyrchu'r effaith yr oedd ymglymiad y gweithwyr yn ei chael ac nid oeddent yn darparu dadansoddiad clir nac yn darparu tystiolaeth gyson ar gyfer cefnogi penderfyniadau. Nid oedd meysydd o gytundeb neu anghytundeb rhwng gweithwyr a theluoedd nac anghenion cymwys yn cael eu nodi, ac roedd angen i'r gwasanaethau fynd i'r afael â hyn. Roedd yr asesiadau fel y'u hysgrifennwyd nhw yn edrych fel erfyn di-awch ac, ar brydiau, yn adlewyrchu penderfyniadau nad oedd wedi'u tystiolaethu.
- 2.3 Nid oeddem yn gallu deall sut yr oedd trothwyon yn cael eu cymhwysio bob amser. Roedd rhywfaint o arolygiaeth gan reolwyr, ond roedd tystiolaeth o ddadansoddi ar goll. Ceir tystiolaeth glir nad yw asesiadau risg priodol yn cael eu cynnal bob amser, ac, yn y mwyafrif o'r achosion a archwiliwyd, ychydig iawn o gyfeirio a wnaed, os o gwbl, at offeryn asesu a ddefnyddiwyd yn gyson. Nid oes model ymyrryd cyfunol yn cael ei ddefnyddio i lywio arferion, fel model seiliedig ar gryfderau a weithredir ar draws y gwasanaethau ataliol a statudol, er mwyn i weithwyr o asiantaethau eraill a theluoedd gael dealltwriaeth gyffredin o werthoedd ac amcanion y gwaith.
- 2.4 Mae'r arolygiaeth gan reolwyr wedi bod yn anghyson ac, yn aml, ar goll. Nid oes sicrwydd ansawdd wedi'i sefydlu i unrhyw raddau ystyrllon. Mae rheolwyr tîm yn cynnal rhai archwiliadau achos, ond, yn aml,

roedd y rhai hynny a gynhaliwyd gan yr awdurdod lleol cyn yr arolygiad yn dangos lefel o bositifrwydd na rannwyd gan yr arolygwyr.

- 2.5 Roedd yr awdurdod wedi buddsoddi'n flaenorol yn y model sefydledig gan Wynedd. Fodd bynnag, ni chafodd hwn ei roi ar waith yn effeithiol, ac mae'r awdurdod lleol yn ystyried cyflwyno'r model 'arwyddion diogelwch' yn ei le. Mae diffyg eglurder neu ddealltwriaeth yn bodoli o ran pa fodel asesu fydd yn cael ei ddefnyddio yn y dyfodol.
- 2.6 Ni chaiff asesiadau eu cynnal bob amser o fewn amserlenni statudol. Gwnaethom olrhain ac adolygu cyfanswm o 42 o achosion, ac, o'r rhain, roedd 26 angen eu gwella ac 16 ohonynt yn cael eu hystyried yn wael. Mae rhai oediadau difrifol a sylweddol o ran cynnig gwasanaeth i blant a theuluoedd, nid oes asesiad ar gael, neu, pan fo un ar gael, bydd dadansoddiad a phenderfyniadau gwael.
- 2.7 Er i ni weld rhywfaint o dystiolaeth o blant a theuluoedd yn cael cymorth ac ymyrraeth amserol, gwelsom hefyd lawer o dystiolaeth a oedd yn dangos nad hyn oedd yr achos, gydag oediadau sylweddol o rai misoedd rhwng atgyfeirio ac ymyrryd. Roedd diffyg asesiad mewn achosion amddiffyn plant, diffyg asesiad ac adolygiad SERAF (fframwaith asesu'r risg o gamfanteisio'n rhywiol), a oedd yn groes i'r canllawiau statudol, absenoldeb asesiad gofal a lles, a diffyg arolygiaeth gan reolwyr o'r achosion hyn.
- 2.8 Mae'r diffyg asesiad, ymyrraeth a chymorth, ynghyd â gwaith dilynol ac arolygiaeth wael, wedi rhoi plant mewn perygl sylweddol ac yn parhau i wneud hyn.

Gofal a chymorth

Yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld

Mae pobl yn derbyn gofal, cefnogaeth, help ac amddiffyniad amlasiantaeth amserol ac effeithiol lle bo'n briodol. Mae pobl sy'n defnyddio gwasanaethau yn cael eu cefnogi gan gynlluniau gofal a chymorth sy'n hybu eu hannibyniaeth, dewis a lles, yn helpu i'w cadw'n ddiogel, ac yn adlewyrchu'r canlyniadau sydd o bwys iddynt. Mae pobl yn cael cymorth i ddatblygu eu galluoedd a goresgyn rhwystrau i'w cynhwysiant cymdeithasol.

Crynodeb o'r canfyddiadau

- 3.1 Nid oes digon o ofal a chymorth i blant a theuluoedd, ac mae diffyg arweinyddiaeth, arolygiaeth gan reolwyr a chyfeiriad er mwyn darparu gwasanaeth ymatebol a diogel.
- 3.2 O ganlyniad i'r prinder gwybodaeth mewn asesiadau i lywio cynlluniau gofal a chymorth hygyrch, nid yw cynlluniau wedi'u teilwra ar gyfer anghenion dynodedig plant, ac mae hyn yn arwain at ganlyniadau gwael.
- 3.3 Roedd y cynlluniau gofal a chymorth a welwyd yn aml yn generig ac nid oeddem yn hyderus y byddai gweithwyr cymdeithasol a oedd yn cael yr achos yn deall canolbwynt y cynllun. Dywedodd y rhai hynny a oedd yn ymwneud â'r broses cynllunio ac adolygu wrthym fod hyn yn arwain at orfod ailadrodd y broses gynllunio yn aml, gan arwain at oedi. Ychydig iawn o dystiolaeth a welwyd o reolwyr yn herio wrth oruchwylio achosion, ac er y porir trwy rai samplau o achosion bellach, nid oes llawer o hyn yn cael ei wneud ac ychydig iawn o faterion a adroddir ar y cyd. Gwelwyd thema gyson o ddiffyg arolygiaeth gan reolwyr ac, o ganlyniad, nid oes mesurau priodol wedi'u rhoi ar waith i fynd i'r afael ag unrhyw anghenion dynodedig.
- 3.4 Mae angen i gynlluniau sicrhau pwyslais eglur ar yr effaith y mae unrhyw newid yn ei chael ar y plentyn. Ni chafwyd synnwyr o gynlluniau a oedd yn canolbwyntio ar ganlyniadau ac nid oedd y pwyslais ar y plentyn.
- 3.5 Gwelsom lawer o dystiolaeth o oedi ac anghofio wrth gefnogi plant a theuluoedd yn effeithiol, ond gwelsom rywfaint o dystiolaeth bod ymyrraeth arfaethedig ac amserol wedi'i rhoi i deuluoedd.
- 3.6 Amlygodd gofalwyr maeth ddiffyg cymorth gwaith cymdeithasol gyda phlant ag anghenion cymhleth. Oherwydd hyn, a'r diffyg cyswllt parhaus, a newidiadau aml i'r gweithwyr cymdeithasol, roedd llawer o ofalwyr maeth yn gadael y cynllun.
- 3.7 Yn ystod 2015–16, roedd 103 o rieni maeth ar y gofrestr. Erbyn diwedd 2016–17, roedd hyn wedi gostwng i 57. Rydym yn poeni ynghylch yr

ymyrraeth a'r cymorth y mae plant sydd angen y gwasanaeth hwn yn eu cael yn awr o ganlyniad i'r diffyg adnoddau lleol. Dywedodd gweithwyr cymdeithasol wrthym fod paru anghenion plant â gofalwyr maeth yn anodd oherwydd y nifer ostyngol o ofalwyr maeth sydd ar gael, a gallai hyn olygu bod plant yn cael eu lleoli'n amhriodol.

- 3.8 Mae'r gofal a'r cymorth i blant a theuluoedd wedi'u heffeithio gan y newidiadau yn y timau, nifer y staff sy'n gadael y gwasanaeth, a'r defnydd o weithwyr asiantaeth.
- 3.9 Wrth siarad â staff, maen nhw'n gwybod eu hachosion yn dda, ond nid yw hyn wedi'i adlewyrchu yn y cofnodion. Mae'n amlwg bod y staff yn gweithio'n galed ac yn ymrwymedig, ac wedi bod trwy gydol yr amser hwn, ond maen nhw wedi wynebu cydweithwyr yn gadael, prinder staff, defnydd sylweddol o staff asiantaeth, a diffyg cymorth a chyfeiriad iddynt gan reolwyr.
- 3.10 Mynegodd y plant a'r rhieni y siaradwyd â nhw eu hanfodlonrwydd â'r anghysondeb a'r newidiadau mewn gweithwyr cymdeithasol a benodwyd i'w hachos. Maen nhw'n poeni am yr oedi yn natblygiad eu hachosion, gydag enghreifftiau o weithwyr newydd yn herio camau gweithredu a gytunwyd yn flaenorol, ac achosion lle nad oeddent wedi cael eu briffio'n llawn.
- 3.11 Gwnaeth rhieni hefyd fynegi pryder ynghylch y ffaith nad yw cynlluniau cymorth yn symud yn ddigon cyflym, ac mae plant yn poeni nad ydynt yn cael eu hysbysu'n llawn o ran pam y mae penderfyniadau'n cael eu gwneud. Gwnaethant ddweud wrthym nad ydynt yn cael eu hymgyngori ar eu cynlluniau ar gyfer y dyfodol ac nid ydynt yn gweld eu gweithiwr cymdeithasol penodedig yn rheolaidd, yn enwedig ar ôl cael eu lleoli gyda gofalwr maeth. Maen nhw'n cael eu gadael mewn rhyw ebargofiant heb unrhyw gynllun yn ei le ar gyfer y dyfodol.
- 3.12 Gwelsom dystiolaeth o blant dan anfantais wrth dderbyn gofal gan nad ydynt yn cael eu cefnogi i gael cyswllt â'u rhieni. Mynegodd gweithwyr cymdeithasol ac asiantaethau partner bryder o ran y ffaith nad yw plant yn gallu meithrin perthynas gyda gweithiwr cyson. Mae hyn wedi arwain rhai plant at fynegi eu bod yn teimlo nad yw'r gwasanaeth yn eu parchu nac yn eu gwerthfawrogi.
- 3.13 Gwelsom dystiolaeth fod cyfranogiad teuluoedd mewn cyfarfodydd cynllunio yn anghyson. Gwelsom enghreifftiau lle nad oedd dystiolaeth o gynllun gofal a chymorth a lle roedd diffyg trefniadau monitro. Canfuom achosion a oedd yn cael eu gadael yn anweithredol, heb fod teuluoedd yn derbyn gwasanaeth, neu fod cynlluniau amddiffyn plant yn mynd yn angof, a gwelwyd dystiolaeth nad oedd ymweliadau statudol wedi'u gwneud yn ôl y gofyn. Gwelsom hefyd gytundebau â theuluoedd yn cael eu defnyddio fel yr unig strategaeth i leihau risg. Mae hyn, yn amlwg, yn rhoi plant mewn perygl o niwed.

- 3.14 Cafodd yr holl achosion uchod eu hatgyfeirio'n ôl i'r awdurdod lleol i'w hymchwilio a'u hadolygu ymhellach, er mwyn bodloni ei hun bod yr holl gamau gweithredu priodol yn cael eu cymryd.
- 3.15 Mae angen gwella gwaith amlasiantaeth gyda phartneriaid sydd wedi colli hyder yn y gwasanaeth. Nodwyd bod y cyfathrebu'n wael ac mae diffyg dealltwriaeth o'r model darparu gwasanaeth sydd ar waith. Ni welsom unrhyw dystiolaeth i ddangos gweithio mewn partneriaeth o ran cynllunio a llywio gwasanaethau.

Diogelu

Yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld

Mae strategaethau diogelu lleol effeithiol yn cyfuno elfennau ataliol ac amddiffynnol. Pan fydd pobl yn dioddef camdriniaeth, esgeulustod neu niwed neu mewn perygl ohonynt, maent yn derbyn ymatebion amlasiantaeth brys sydd wedi'u trefnu'n dda. Mae camau gweithredu sy'n deillio o gynlluniau rheoli risg neu ddiogelwch yn llwyddiannus wrth leihau risg wirioneddol neu bosibl. Nid yw pobl yn cael eu gadael mewn amgylcheddau anniogel neu beryglus. Mae polisiâu a gweithdrefnau mewn perthynas â diogelu ac amddiffyn yn cael eu deall a'u hymgorffori'n dda ac yn cyfrannu at ymateb amserol a chymesur i bryderon sy'n codi. Mae'r awdurdod lleol a'i bartneriaid yn hyrwyddo diwylliant dysgu lle gellir archwilio mewn modd agored ac adeiladol i newidiadau a gwelliannau i ymddygiad a pherfformiad proffesiynol asiantaethau.

Crynodeb o'r canfyddiadau

- 4.1 Mae tystiolaeth o gyfleoedd coll i ddiogelu plant. Mae diffyg systemau effeithiol i nodi risgiau, ac nid yw'r risgiau yn cael eu hasesu'n briodol ac yn gadarn.
- 4.2 Roedd cyfleoedd yn cael eu colli i gynnwys amrediad ehangach o bartneriaid mewn trafodaethau strategol. Roedd y rhain yn bennaf rhwng y gwasanaethau plant a'r heddlu ac, mewn rhai achosion, gallent/dylent fod wedi cynnwys fforwm amlasiantaeth – er enghraifft, iechyd, addysg a thai.
- 4.3 Nid oedd penderfyniadau diogelu'n amserol bob amser, a nodwyd oedi ar nifer o achosion oherwydd prinder y staff a oedd ar gael gan yr heddlu a'r gwasanaethau cymdeithasol. Golygai hyn nad oedd teuluoedd yn deall y pryderon yn aml neu roeddent yn llai eglur ynghylch pam roedd y mater yn parhau. Nid oes gan yr awdurdod lleol unrhyw ddull ar gyfer rheoli asesiadau risg a rennir gyda phartneriaid. Mewn dau achos, gwelsom dystiolaeth o ymwybyddiaeth o gamfanteisio'n rhywiol ar blentyn posibl a pherygl o fynd ar goll. Fodd bynnag, gwelsom dystiolaeth mewn tri achos lle na chydymffurfiwyd â'r protocolau camfanteisio'n rhywiol ar blant.
- 4.4 Mae archwiliadau sicrhau ansawdd yr awdurdod lleol ei hun yn nodi bod cynrychiolaeth wael o asiantaethau partner mewn cyfarfodydd strategol, a bod diffyg dadansoddi beirniadol mewn adroddiadau amddiffyn plant (Adran 47). Roedd y gwaith cofnodi'n wael yn yr adroddiadau hyn yn gyffredinol. Dangoswyd hyn gan ddiffyg tystiolaeth i gefnogi'r camau gweithredu cytunedig a'r ffaith nad oedd yn amlwg a oedd yr angen am gyngor cyfreithiol neu ymchwiliad troseddol wedi'i ystyried yn briodol. Gwnaed hyn yn waeth gan y ffaith nad oedd penderfyniadau rheolwyr tîm wedi'u cofnodi'n briodol yn y cofnodion/nodiadau goruchwyllo achos.

- 4.5 Gwnaeth partneriaid yn yr heddlu fynegi pryder ynghylch yr ymateb anghyson gan uwch-reolwyr, nad oedd yn rhoi hyder iddynt yn ansawdd y broses benderfynu. Roedd yr heddlu a staff iechyd yn poeni pe bai mater na ellid ei ddatrys ar lefel weithredol, ni fyddent yn gwybod at bwy i'w uwchgyfeirio. Roedd hyn wedi bod yn amlwg yn y gorffennol.
- 4.6 Roedd asiantaethau allanol hefyd yn poeni ynghylch ansawdd gwael rhai asesiadau, absenoldeb neu aneffeithiolrwydd cynadleddau grŵp teulu, ansawdd gwael y gwaith cyn cyrraedd y llys, a dadansoddiadau gwael. Nid oedd cynlluniau dilynol yn cael eu dilyn, nid oedd llais y plentyn yn amlwg, ac nid oedd digon o fynediad at wasanaethau eirioli.
- 4.7 Gwnaeth partneriaid addysg fynegi'r farn bod yr arfer diogelu yn ymddangos yn gadarn, ond ni chaiff ei gefnogi gan ddogfennu amserol na chadarn. Mae cyfathrebu'n brydlon â gwasanaethau addysg ynghylch achosion Adran 47 yn broblem. Nid yw gwasanaethau addysg yn cael eu hysbysu bob amser o atgyfeiriadau nac ymchwiliadau o'r fath bob sy'n ymwneud â phlant mewn addysg.
- 4.8 Mae partneriaid tai wedi cael peth anhawster o ran adrodd pryderon diogelu ar ôl ymweld â theuluoedd. Nid yw'r mynediad at wasanaethau yn eglur na'n syml ac, oherwydd hyn, mae oediadau mewn ymateb i bryderon diogelu. Rhoddwyd enghraifft o bryder nad oedd yn gallu gwneud cynnydd boddhaol trwy Linell Uniongyrchol Powys a'r tîm gwaith cymdeithasol. O ganlyniad, bu'n rhaid i swyddogion tai uwchgyfeirio'r achos at y prif swyddog gwaith cymdeithasol dros dro er mwyn sicrhau bod camau gweithredu priodol yn cael eu cymryd dros y plentyn.
- 4.9 Ni chaiff plant mewn perygl o niwed eu diogelu oherwydd y diffyg cysondeb o ran rheoli proses y fframwaith asesu risg o gamfanteisio'n rhywiol (SERAF). Mae diffyg cydymffurfiaeth â'r broses amddiffyn plant, mae oediadau mewn achosion Adran 47 ac asesiadau a gaiff eu cynnal, ac mae diffyg eglurder ac amcanion CAMPUS mewn cynlluniau diogelwch.
- 4.10 Yn gyffredinol, y diffyg prydlondeb a'r diffyg manyldeb wrth fynd ar drywydd pryderon a oedd yn cyflwyno'r risg fwyaf mewn gwaith diogelu. Ni wnaethom weld tystiolaeth o reoli risg ar y ffeiliau a adolygwyd gennym.
- 4.11 O ganlyniad i absenoldeb sicrhau ansawdd cadarn a newidiadau sylweddol ymhlith rheolwyr a staff, nid oes darlun cynhwysfawr o'r angen nas diwallwyd na pha mor agored i niwed y mae'r plant. Gan hynny, mae angen cynnal adolygiad achos o'r holl wasanaeth er mwyn cael darlun llawn o'r angen a pha mor agored i niwed y mae'r plant ac er mwyn ystyried a oes angen mesurau diogelu. Bydd plant yn parhau i fod mewn perygl hyd oni y bydd hyn yn cael ei wneud.

- 4.12 Yn ogystal â diffyg asesiadau a chynlluniau diogelu cadarn, mae'r gwasanaethau plant wedi cael llai o gymorth cyfreithiol. Mae hyn wedi cael effaith sylweddol, ac mae rheolwyr wedi gorfod mynd ar ôl cyngor, gan achosi oediadau hir o ran dod ag achosion gerbron y llys.
- 4.13 Er i ni weld tystiolaeth o ymatebion amserol a chadarnhaol i atgyfeiriadau amddiffyn plant mewn dau achos, gwnaethom hefyd adolygu chwe achos lle na ddigwyddodd hyn.
- 4.14 Gwelsom dystiolaeth nad oedd gweithdrefnau amddiffyn plant yn cael eu dilyn. Mewn un enghraifft, nid oedd unrhyw gofnod o ymweliadau amddiffyn plant statudol am gyfnod o chwe mis, rhwng mis Tachwedd 2016 a mis Mehefin 2017. Nid oedd unrhyw gofnod ysgrifenedig o ymchwiliadau Adran 47, nid oedd cyfarfodydd grŵp craidd wedi'u cynnal o fewn yr amserlenni gofynnol, ac ni chafodd yr achos hwn ei adolygu na'i arolygu gan reolwr tan fis Mehefin 2017
- 4.15 Mewn enghraifft arall, er bod materion amddiffyn plant clir yn amlwg, roeddem yn poeni nad oedd yr achos wedi cael ei fwrw ymlaen i gynhadledd. Nid oedd cynllun gofal ar waith ac nid oedd unrhyw ymweliad cartref wedi'i wneud er mwyn clywed llais y plentyn. Roedd yr atgyfeiriad cychwynnol, o ran pryderon ynghylch ymddygiad a oedd yn gorfforol niweidiol, wedi'i wneud rai blynyddoedd yn ôl, ac nid oedd unrhyw waith ystyrion wedi'i wneud gyda'r teulu ers hynny. Gallai hyn nodi bod y plentyn wedi bod yn destun dioddefaint neu niwed parhaus.
- 4.16 Mae tystiolaeth o gyfleoedd coll i ddiogelu plant, serch ceisiadau am gymorth. Roedd nifer o achosion wedi'u hatgyfeirio'n ôl i'r awdurdod lleol i'w hadolygu oherwydd pryderon o ran diogelwch plant.
- 4.17 Mae tystiolaeth o ddiffyg systemau effeithiol i nodi ac asesu risg yn drwyadl. Mewn nifer fawr o'r achosion y gwnaethom eu holrhain, roedd diffyg diogelu amlasiantaeth effeithiol, nid oedd gweithdrefnau amddiffyn plant yn cael eu dilyn, ac roedd diffyg penderfyniadau effeithiol ac arolygiaeth rheolwyr i atal plant rhag cael eu hanghofio a'u rhoi mewn mwy o berygl. Caiff hyn ei effeithio ymhellach gan ddiffyg strwythur swyddog adolygu annibynnol cadarn a gwasanaeth sydd â diffyg arweinyddiaeth a llwybrau clir ar gyfer uwchgyfeirio pryderon.
- 4.18 Roedd pennaeth diogelu dros dro wedi'i benodi yn union cyn yr arolygiad, ond mae hyn wedi achosi swydd wag ar lefel rheolwr tîm mewn rhan arall o'r gwasanaeth.

Arweinyddiaeth, rheolaeth a llywodraethu

Yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld

Mae trefniadau arweinyddiaeth, rheolaeth a llywodraethu yn cydymffurfio â chanllawiau statudol ac yn sefydlu strategaeth effeithiol gyda'i gilydd ar gyfer cyflenwi gwasanaethau o ansawdd a chanlyniadau da ar gyfer pobl. Mae diwallu anghenion pobl am wasanaethau o ansawdd yn ffocws clir ar gyfer cynghorwyr, rheolwyr a staff. Mae gwasanaethau'n cael eu harwain yn dda, mae'r rheolaeth yn glir, ac mae arweinyddiaeth newid yn gryf. Mae swyddogaethau a chyfrifoldebau drwy gydol y sefydliad yn glir. Mae'r awdurdod yn gweithio gyda phartneriaid i gyflenwi cymorth, gofal a chefnogaeth i bobl ac yn cyflawni ei gyfrifoldebau rhianta corfforaethol. Mae cysylltiad pobl leol yn effeithiol. Mae gan arweinwyr, rheolwyr ac aelodau etholedig ddigonedd o wybodaeth a dealltwriaeth o arfer a pherfformiad i'w galluogi i gyflawni eu dyletswyddau'n effeithiol.

Crynodeb o'r canfyddiadau

- 5.1 Mae'r arweinyddiaeth yn y gwasanaethau plant mewn perygl mawr yn yr awdurdod lleol hwn.
- 5.2 Mae'n amlwg nad oes systemau a strwythurau wedi bod ar waith i fonitro a gwerthuso cynnydd gyda'r newidiadau yn y gwasanaeth ar lefel uwch. O ganlyniad, mae hyn wedi torri'r cysylltiad rhwng y prif weithredwr, y tîm rheoli corfforaethol a'r gwasanaethau plant a cheir diffyg arolygiaeth o ran cyfrifoldebau a rolau rhianta corfforaethol.
- 5.3 Mae'r gwasanaethau plant o fewn Cyfarwyddiaeth y Bobl. Caiff y gyfarwyddiaeth ei chynrychioli ar y tîm rheoli corfforaethol gan gyfarwyddwr strategol pobl dros dro a'r prif swyddog gwaith cymdeithasol dros dro. Rydym yn ymwybodol fod prif weithredwr Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys wedi bod yn darparu cymorth trwy gyfuno ei rôl barhaol gyda rôl cyfarwyddwr strategol dros dro'r awdurdod lleol
- 5.4 Mae'r gwasanaethau plant wedi gweld newidiadau aml i'r rheolaeth ar bob lefel yn ystod y ddwy flynedd ddiwethaf. Mae hyn yn cynnwys pedwar pennaeth gwasanaeth gwahanol, ac mae deilydd cyfredol y swydd wedi'i benodi dros dro. Mae hyn yn ychwanegol i'r trefniadau dros dro ar gyfer y cyfarwyddwr strategol rhan-amser a'r prif weithiwr cymdeithasol dros dro – sy'n cyflawni rôl y cyfarwyddwr statudol.
- 5.5 Mae diffyg trefniadau rheoli cadarn yn cyflwyno sefydliad bregus heb strwythurau clir i seilio arferion cadarn a diogel arnynt. Ychydig iawn o brofiad sydd gan y rheolwyr dros dro, gan gynnwys yr uwch-swyddogion, o wasanaethau plant, felly mae angen cymorth ychwanegol arnynt.
- 5.6 Mae angen i'r awdurdod lleol gael dealltwriaeth fwy clir o bwysigrwydd

rôl y cyfarwyddwr statudol a rôl allweddol y prif weithredwr o gynorthwyo'r cyfarwyddwr statudol i gyflenwi.

- 5.7 Gwnaeth yr awdurdod lleol gomisiynu adolygiad allanol mawr o'r gwasanaethau plant yn ystod 2015 a 2016. Wrth ganolbwyntio ar ddatblygu'r gwasanaeth, a sicrhau bod yr awdurdod lleol yn gallu bodloni ei ddyletswyddau o dan Ddeddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014, cafodd hefyd y dasg o bennu 'a oedd modd cyflawni mesurau effeithlonrwydd gwerth £2.7 miliwn sy'n gynaliadwy'. Daeth yr adroddiad i'r casgliad pe bai'n cael ei roi ar waith, gallai ddarparu £1.5 miliwn mewn arbedion effeithlonrwydd i'r awdurdod (10% o'r gyllideb gyffredinol) a chreu incwm o £750 mil, gan arwain at gyfanswm o £2.2 miliwn. Roedd elfen fawr o'r adolygiad hwn yn dibynnu ar ailstrwythuriad cyffredinol o'r gwasanaethau plant.
- 5.8 Nid oedd yr adolygiad a gomisiynwyd gan yr awdurdod lleol yn canolbwyntio ar fapio anghenion, ateb galwadau'r ddeddfwriaeth newydd, na sicrhau bod diogelu yn flaenoriaeth.
- 5.9 Rydym wedi nodi'r dirywiad y gwelsom yn y gwasanaethau plant dros gyfnod cymharol fyr yn ystod, ac ar ôl, yr adolygiad allanol. Gwnaeth yr adolygiad a roddwyd ar waith gan yr awdurdod lleol ansefydlogi'r gweithlu'n sylweddol ac, o ganlyniad, rhoddwyd plant mewn perygl o niwed. O ganlyniad, mae'r awdurdod lleol wedi methu â bodloni ei gyfrifoldebau rhianta corfforaethol trwy sicrhau bod plant yn cael dewis o leoliadau o ansawdd da, diogelwch a chymorth effeithiol.
- 5.10 Roedd y rheolwyr dros dro wedi datblygu ac uwchgyfeirio cynllun gwella a oedd yn nodi lefel sylweddol o welliannau yr oedd eu hangen ym mhob agwedd ar y gwasanaeth. Roedd hyn yn symudiad allweddol o gasgliadau'r adolygiad allanol, gyda phwyslais newydd ar arfer. Fodd bynnag, roedd hwn newydd ddechrau cael ei roi ar waith, a bydd angen cymorth corfforaethol sylweddol arno.
- 5.11 Cydnabu'r prif weithredwr nad yw wedi rhoi'r sylw angenrheidiol i'r methiannau cynyddol yn y gwasanaeth. Mae'n amlwg fod angen i'r prif weithredwr a'i dîm rheoli corfforaethol gael nifer o ddangosyddion ar waith ar gyfer perfformiad y gwasanaeth. Mae angen gwneud mwy i ddadansoddi'r wybodaeth am berfformiad, ymgysylltu â staff ac ymgynghori â defnyddwyr.
- 5.12 Ychydig iawn o dystiolaeth a welwyd fod y gwasanaethau plant yn cael eu cydnabod fel blaenoriaeth gan yr awdurdod lleol. Nid oedd dystiolaeth gadarn o gymorth gwleidyddol na chymorth i swyddogion ar gyfer y gwasanaethau plant ar lefel uwch. Nid oedd systemau a phrosesau wedi'u sefydlu i hwyluso arolygiaeth gorfforaethol o'r gwasanaeth. Roedd hyn yn cynnwys diffyg gwybodaeth am berfformiad er mwyn sicrhau bod plant a theuluoedd yn cael cymorth o fewn amserlenni statudol, diffyg model sicrhau ansawdd cadarn ac effeithiol sy'n gyfeillgar i ddefnyddwyr, llai o gymorth cyfreithiol, swyddogaeth adnoddau dynol sy'n gadarn ond nad yw bob amser yn cefnogi'r gwaith

o recriwtio staff rheng flaen mewn modd amserol, ac anghysondeb ac oedi mewn cymorth TG i staff newydd a staff asiantaeth.

- 5.13 Ychydig o dystiolaeth a welir fod Deddf Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Llesiant (Cymru) 2014 yn cael ei deall ar lefel gorfforaethol ac, yn y cyd-destun hwnnw, caiff darparu gwybodaeth, cyngor a chymorth ei ystyried yn rhy gul fel cyfrifoldeb i'r gwasanaethau cymdeithasol yn unig.
- 5.14 Wrth ystyried arbedion a buddsoddiadau ariannol, mae angen cydnabod bod creu cynlluniau a gosod nodau ariannol yn y tymor byr a chanolig i'r gwasanaethau plant yn hanfodol beryglus, a bydd unrhyw ddiffyg gweithredu a buddsoddi nawr yn costio llawer mwy yn y dyfodol, a bydd yn arwain at fethiant cynyddol i fodloni cyfrifoldebau statudol.
- 5.15 Mae'r weledigaeth a'r cyfeiriad strategol ar gyfer gwasanaethau plant wedi'u gosod gan y tîm arweinyddiaeth dros dro, ynghyd ag aelodau o'r tîm rheoli gweithredol. Mae hyn wedi'i gyfleu i'r staff trwy nifer o sioeau teithiol, a gafodd dderbyniad cynnes. Fodd bynnag, mae angen cymorth corfforaethol a gwleidyddol sylweddol ar y weledigaeth er mwyn ei gwireddu. Mae'n destun pryder bod diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o'r cyfeiriad strategol y tu allan i'r gwasanaethau plant, gan ystyried ei fod yn dibynnu ar gefnogaeth lawn y cyngor. Roedd gan yr uwch-reolwyr gwasanaethau plant, yr aelodau a'r prif weithredwr oll wahanol farn ar sut y dylid llunio hwn.
- 5.16 Mae'r diffyg cyfeiriad strategol clir a phrotocolau gweithredol yn golygu nad oes gan bartneriaid ddealltwriaeth glir o weledigaeth, strwythurau na throthwyon y gyfarwyddiaeth blant. Yn yr un modd, nid yw partneriaid yn cael disgwyliadau clir o ran eu cyfrifoldebau nhw nac yn cael eu dwyn i gyfrif.
- 5.17 Mae gan y cyngor lawer o aelodau newydd ers yr etholiad ym mis Mai 2017. Gyda phenodiad y deilydd portffolio newydd, gobeithir y bydd proffil y gwasanaethau plant yn dechrau codi o fewn yr awdurdod lleol, serch breuder y sefyllfa.
- 5.18 Mae'r awdurdod lleol yn cydnabod nad yw aelodau wedi herio ers peth amser. Mae angen sicrhau bod cyfeiriad y gwasanaeth, ei dargedau a'i berfformiad yn cael eu deall yn glir gan aelodau a'u bod yn parhau i gael cymorth a hyfforddiant er mwyn herio a dwyn swyddogion i gyfrif.
- 5.19 Mae recriwtio a chadw staff yn parhau i fod yn bryder allweddol i'r gwasanaeth. Mae ei anallu i gadw staff profiadol wedi effeithio'n sylweddol ar y gwasanaethau plant ac, o ganlyniad, ar y plant a'r teuluoedd hynny sy'n cael eu cefnogi. Fel ag yr oedd ar 14 Gorffennaf 2017, adrodda'r awdurdod ei fod yn cyflogi 19 staff asiantaeth i wneud swyddi gwaith cymdeithasol a swyddi uwch, ac mae ganddo oddeutu 40 o swyddi gwag ar draws y gwasanaethau plant.

- 5.20 Mae goruchwyliaeth staff wedi bod yn anghyson; fodd bynnag, mae'r staff yn nodi bod dull mwy cyson a rheolaidd o oruchwyliaeth ffurfiol yn cael ei gyflwyno bellach. Nododd y staff ei bod hi'n haws cael gafael ar reolwyr tîm ac uwch-ymarferwyr bellach ac mae trafodaethau achos yn parhau. Mae cymorth da gan gymheiriaid yn amlwg, gyda'r staff yn cefnogi ei gilydd trwy gyfnod anodd a heriol iawn. Noda'r holl staff fod mynediad da at hyfforddiant trwy gydol y gwasanaeth a chaiff pob un ohonynt ei gefnogi i fynyachu.
- 5.21 Fodd bynnag, mae absenoldeb strategaeth weithlu ar hyn o bryd yn golygu nad yw'r awdurdod lleol yn gallu mapio cryfderau ei weithlu a, chan hynny, adeiladu gwasanaeth o'r pwynt hwnnw, er mwyn ateb y galw a diwallu'r angen. Bydd datblygu a gweithredu strategaeth weithlu yn hanfodol, nid yn unig i gadw'r staff sydd newydd eu recriwtio, ond i gadw'r rhai hynny sydd wedi aros trwy'r ailstrwythuro ond sy'n parhau i fod ag angen mwy o gymorth. Mae hyn wedi arwain at weithlu sy'n parhau i fod yn fregus iawn ar hyn o bryd.
- 5.22 Caiff y gallu i gyflenwi system sicrhau ansawdd yn y gwasanaethau plant ei herio gan ddiffyg fframwaith adolygu cytunedig, gwahanol fodelau yn cael eu ffafrio gan wahanol uwch-reolwyr, a morâl a gallu'r gweithlu.
- 5.23 O ganlyniad, ychydig iawn o sicrhau ansawdd a monitro perfformiad sy'n cael eu gwneud, ac mewn rhai achosion, nid ydynt yn bodoli o gwbl. Mae'n amlwg nad oes digon o sicrhau ansawdd nac archwilio ar draws y gwasanaeth. Mae'r gwaith sicrhau ansawdd sydd wedi'i wneud gan y gwasanaeth yn ymwneud â sampl fechan iawn ac, er ei fod wedi nodi ychydig o arfer da, mae'n amlwg bod gwaith sylweddol i'w wneud.
- 5.24 Dylai dadansoddi'r cwynion a ddaeth i law fod yn fodd o fonitro'r perfformiad mewnol. Yn ystod y flwyddyn Mehefin 2016 – Mehefin 2017, gwelwyd cynnydd graddol o gwynion yn dod i law. Ni nodwyd unrhyw dueddiadau penodol. Fodd bynnag, nodir o'n harolygiad fod nifer wedi dod o deuluoedd plant ag anabledau o ran y lefel wael o gymorth yr oeddent yn ei chael. Cydnabu'r uwch-reolwyr fod llawer o achosion wedi mynd yn angof neu wedi profi oediadau yn y gwasanaeth anabledau.
- 5.25 Nid oedd y rhan fwyaf o gwynion yn cael eu hymchwilio o fewn yr amserlenni gofynnol, roedd y cofnodi'n wael, ac, oherwydd hyn, roedd hi'n anodd asesu cadernid yr ymchwiliadau a'r ymatebion. Roedd gohebiaeth ar goll yn y ffeiliau a archwiliwyd, ac ni welwyd unrhyw dystiolaeth o arolygiaeth gan reolwyr nac archwiliad. Nid oedd y broses gwyno yn cynnwys cynlluniau gweithredu ac nid oedd unrhyw arolygiaeth i gefnogi'r gwersi a ddysgwyd.
- 5.26 Er mwyn mynd i'r afael â'r diffygion yn y gwasanaeth, mae'r tîm arweinyddiaeth wedi cynhyrchu cynllun gweithredu uwchgyfeiriedig, sy'n nodi bod angen gwella pob rhan o ddarpariaeth y gwasanaeth. Mae arweinydd y cyngor yn ymwybodol o gynllun gweithredu

uwchgyfeiriedig y cyngor ei hun, ond mae'n amlwg bod angen mwy o naratif, ynghyd ag amserlenni a cherrig milltir, er mwyn i aelodau fesur a monitro cynnydd yn effeithiol.

- 5.27 Serch cynhyrchu cynllun gweithredu uwchgyfeiriedig, roedd yn amlwg bod yr awdurdod lleol yn aros am adroddiad ac argymhellion AGGCC er mwyn llunio cynllun gwaith. Er ei bod yn amlwg bod rhywfaint o gynnydd yn cael ei wneud bellach, mae'n destun pryder y gallai'r awdurdod lleol fod yn aros am arweiniad gan y rheoleiddiwr allanol, yn hytrach na symud ymlaen yn gadarnhaol gyda'i gynllun cyflenwi clir ei hun.
- 5.28 Nid yw'r asesiad cyfredol o'r boblogaeth yn rhoi'r wybodaeth sydd ei hangen ar y cyngor i gomisiynu'n effeithiol er mwyn diwallu anghenion plant.
- 5.29 Mae natur dros dro yr uwch-dîm rheoli yn golygu na fydd mewn sefyllfa o bosibl i gyflawni'r gwaith sydd angen ei wneud ar y cyflymder a'r cwrpas sydd eu hangen. Mae cymorth corfforaethol yn hanfodol, ynghyd â phenderfyniad ar sut i wneud penodiadau parhaol i'r swyddi hanfodol hyn er mwyn darparu uwch-dîm rheoli parhaol a sefydlog.
- 5.30 Mae trafodaeth yn parhau ynghylch strwythur yr arweinyddiaeth ar gyfer y dyfodol. Nid yw'r arweinwyr corfforaethol a gwleidyddol wedi dod i benderfyniad eto. Mae hyn yn codi cwestiynau ynghylch lefel y ddealltwriaeth wleidyddol a chorfforaethol sy'n bodoli o ran y weledigaeth ar gyfer y gwasanaethau plant. Mae angen i unrhyw newidiadau ystyried yr aflonyddwch a'r newidiadau a fydd yn dilyn a rhaid iddynt fod yn seiliedig ar ddealltwriaeth realistig o effaith unrhyw ad-drefnu ar y gweithlu ac ar ddarpariaeth y gwasanaeth.
- 5.31 Mae angen brys yn bodoli i gadarnhau a chytuno ar y strwythur uwch-reoli, ochr yn ochr â'r strwythur ehangach ar gyfer y gweithlu, ac mae'r staff yn disgwyl yn eiddgar am hyn.
- 5.32 Gan ystyried aflonyddwch y misoedd diwethaf, mae'r staff craidd wedi dangos gwydnwch a phroffesiynoldeb wrth ymdopi â newidiadau strwythurol a staffio sylweddol, ynghyd â newidiadau i'r gwasanaeth a ddaeth yn sgil cael penaethiaid gwasanaeth olynol, a gostyngiad mewn gwasanaethau cymorth ac arweinyddiaeth. Mae'r staff rheng flaen a'r rheolwyr yn daer am gadw gafael ar unrhyw fuddion y mae'r trefniadau arweinyddiaeth a rheolaeth dros dro wedi llwyddo i'w cyflawni, ac rydym wedi gweld ymrwymiad go iawn i amddiffyn ac ymateb i blant, a'u diogelu, dan amgylchiadau anodd. Mae'r staff wedi bod yn gefn i'w gilydd trwy gyfnodau anodd iawn ac maen nhw wedi dangos i ni eu bod yn awyddus tu hwnt i symud ymlaen.
- 5.33 Mae'n destun pryder nad yw uwch-arweinyddiaeth yr awdurdod lleol wedi gallu sicrhau bod y gweithlu'n cael ei gefnogi i ddarparu gwasanaeth effeithiol ar gyfer plant a theuluoedd sydd angen cymorth ar bob lefel. Mae angen mynd i'r afael â'r materion corfforaethol a'r

materion partneriaeth ehangach ar unwaith, oherwydd heb y lefel o gymorth corfforaethol sydd ei hangen, ni fydd y pwysau ar y gyllideb yn cael eu datrys.

Methodoleg

Hunanasesu

Cynhaliodd yr awdurdod lleol hunanasesiad cyn cyfnod gwaith maes yr arolygiad. Gofynnwyd i'r awdurdod ddarparu tystiolaeth ar gyfer '*yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld*' o dan bob dimensiwn allweddol a fyddai'n cael ei arolygu. Defnyddiwyd yr wybodaeth i lunio manylion y meysydd manwl i'w harchwilio yn ystod yr arolygiad.

Gwnaethom ddewis sampl o 30 o achosion i'w holrhain a'u hadolygu i ddechrau, ynghyd ag 20 achos cyswilt pellach. Gwnaethom adolygu nifer o'r rhain ymhellach, o restr hir a ddarparwyd gan yr awdurdod lleol a oedd yn gyson â'r 13 o feini prawf a oedd yn berthnasol o'r cyfnod rhwng 1 Mehefin 2016 a 1 Mehefin 2017.

Gwaith maes

Roeddem ar y safle ym Mhowys yn ystod yr wythnosau a oedd yn dechrau ar 17 Gorffennaf a 31 Gorffennaf 2017.

Gwnaethom adolygu cyfanswm o 42 o achosion ac, o'r rhain, cafodd 16 achos eu holrhain yn fwy manwl, gan gynnwys cyfweiliadau â chyflogeion yr awdurdod lleol a gweithwyr proffesiynol eraill.

Gwnaethom gyfweled â chwech o blant a/neu eu teuluoedd.

Gwnaethom gyfweled ag amrediad o gyflogeion yr awdurdod lleol, gan gynnwys uwch-swyddogion, y prif weithredwr, arweinydd y cyngor, a'r arweinydd portffolio ar gyfer y gwasanaethau plant.

Gwnaethom gyfweled ag amrediad eang o sefydliadau partner, a oedd yn cynrychioli'r sector statudol a'r trydydd sector.

Gwnaethom edrych ar bob cwyn a chanmoliaeth a gyflwynwyd ynghylch y gwasanaethau plant rhwng 1 Mehefin 2016 a 1 Mehefin 2017.

Y tîm arolygu

Roedd y tîm arolygu yn cynnwys:

- Prif arolygydd: Ken Redman
- Arolygwyr ategol: Katy Young, Pam Clutton, Sharon Eastlake a Lesley Roberts

Cydnabyddiaethau

Hoffai AGGCC ddiolch i'r bobl a gyfrannodd at yr arolygiad hwn – rhieni a gofalwyr, staff a rheolwyr Cyngor Sir Powys, y darparwyr gwasanaethau a'r sefydliadau partner (gan gynnwys y sector annibynnol a'r trydydd sector) – am eu hamser, eu cydweithrediad a'u cyfraniadau at yr arolygiad hwn.

**POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL
SAFEGUARDING
IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2017**

Version 2.0

Version Control

Version	Update	By Whom
1.4	First working draft	by Children's Services SMT
2.0	Second working draft	additions from Partners

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to set out the Safeguarding Children Improvement Plan for 2017. It will continue to evolve based on feedback from staff, children and young people, parents and carers, external review, audit and challenge. The strategic plan is supported by a number of action plans for each of the priority areas.

1. Context

An inspection in July 2017 by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales raised serious concerns about leadership, management and practice in Powys Children's Services. The grounds for these concerns included:

- failings in corporate leadership;
- lack of stability in management arrangements;
- staffing capacity in front-line children's services teams; and
- quality of professional practice.

As a consequence, children were being placed at risk.

The council quickly acknowledged the need for urgent and sustained improvement. Extensive activity has taken place across the local authority, Children's Services and partnerships since June 2017 to secure compliance with statutory requirements and practice standards. Powys has developed a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development, informed by the helpful recommendations made by the Inspectors. There is a commitment at all levels to continuing improvement so that children and families receive the help and support they need. The arrangements for accountability set out later in this plan demonstrate that, within the Council, the Leader, Cabinet members, the Chief Executive, the corporate management team, staff and partners accept a personal and collective responsibility for ensuring that this plan is delivered and good outcomes achieved.

Children and young people in our society who need care and support under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 are especially vulnerable and entitled to effective help. The Act gives the local authority responsibility for making sure that children in need of care and support receive the right help at the right time, to improve their well-being and protect them from harm. This means:

- identifying and assessing children who need care and support as early as possible;
- helping them to use the strengths in their families and resources in their communities to provide help and support; and
- intervening at a time which prevents needs becoming critical.

In addition, as Corporate Parents of children who are looked after, it is the Council's responsibility to help keep them safe, to make sure that their experiences in care are positive, and to improve the access they have to opportunities for them to succeed in life, including after care support. In carrying out these complex and high-profile tasks, a local authority must establish how it is going to improve the general well-being of children and young people who need care and support, for whatever reason. This work should focus too on all stages of any 'care journey', saying how children and their families will be supported to stay together whenever it is safe to do so and, as a result, how it will minimise the need for children to become looked after. The local authority is obliged to describe the types of care and the range of placements it wants to provide and commission for looked after children. The overall strategy should identify how the needs of children, young people and their families will be met within the resources available to the local authority for a specific period, both short-term and long-term, to ensure that services are sustainable and consistent. All these elements contribute to the delivery of an integrated pattern of services to children and young people. This is the context in which Powys has sought to provide an improvement plan which will be effective in delivering the following aims and objectives.

A set of key aims and objectives have been developed, as set out below and defined further in Appendix 1. It provides a checklist for the council and key partners to use as a means of holding up a mirror to their current strategy. It will provide one of the tools that can help them us to engage in effective scrutiny, peer review and operational improvement. The major emphasis is on helping local authorities, their partners, inspectors, reviewers and auditors to reassure themselves that the programme of change set out in this plan is having a timely and significant influence on the outcomes for children and young people in a specific area.

KEY AIMS

1. **To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising.
2. **To manage risk confidently and effectively when providing support to families where children and young people at the 'edge of care'** by making sure that need is accurately assessed, resulting in the right children being accommodated at the right time. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by making private arrangements within their wider family networks.
3. **To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** which meet the diverse range of children's needs.
4. **To give children clearly planned journeys through care and into adulthood** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements and exit the care system with good prospects for improved life chances.

These aims are underpinned by the following objectives:

- a. The responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people looked after or at risk of becoming looked after rests across all services for children, including statutory and independent providers.
- b. The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
- c. Preventative services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided in ways that give them every chance to stay together.

- d. Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, there will be help available for assisting them to make private arrangements within their wider family and friendship networks and, where necessary, to make these arrangements permanent.
- e. Formal kinship fostering arrangements will be explored as the preferred alternative arrangement where it is necessary for the local authority to share parental responsibility or intervene in managing risk and protecting children.
- f. Multi-agency arrangements to assessing and managing risk to vulnerable children and young people need to be robust.
- g. Local authorities have a responsibility for ensuring that intensive family support is available on a multi-agency basis for families where children or young people are on the edge of care.
- h. Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements already described, the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family.
- i. Residential care placements will be made only where the complexity of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting or where a young person is subject to a Court Ordered Secure Remand.
- j. Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.
- k. Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs. It is the role of the local authority to consider the most appropriate type of placement to meet these needs, with due regard given to the available resources.
- l. All Looked After Children of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school. Providing appropriate support to enable engagement in education is just as important as finding suitable care placements for Looked After Children.
- m. Placements should support a positive transition to independence, adulthood, education, employment, and training and, where applicable, resettlement back into the community from custodial settings.

2. How the Plan has been developed

In July 2017, CSSIW inspected the local authority's services for children in respect of Information, Advice and Assistance; they also looked at services to children looked after and care leavers and found the effectiveness of these to be inadequate. The regulatory findings and recommendations are addressed in this improvement plan.

Since developing an initial escalation plan earlier this year in relation to Children's Services, Powys County Council and partners have taken action in priority areas also highlighted by CSSIW to ensure children's safety. We have strengthened governance arrangements including the introduction of a multi-agency Improvement Board. We have recruited experienced senior leadership for Children's Services. We have engaged the council's whole extended leadership team in this priority work. We have recruited more skilled and experienced social workers. We must build on this work, creating the conditions in which all children and young people will be able to thrive.

Our improvement plan puts children and young people at the heart of everything we do. Working with our partners, we will listen to the voice of the child to improve outcomes for the county's children.

The plan focuses on ensuring that we have the right conditions to allow our staff to do their very best for children in Powys. Working together we will improve the lives of our children and young people.

During our improvement journey we will have an open and positive dialogue with our children and young people, those who care for them, our partners and our frontline staff in order to make the improvements needed and ensure a sustainable journey of improvement.

Progress towards delivering the actions set out in the Improvement Plan will be updated on a quarterly basis.

The first draft Improvement Plan for August 2017 focused on the recommendations from the draft inspection report. It included also the recommendations and areas for further consideration identified by the Escalation Plan developed earlier in the year and actions identified at the Roadshows in the summer of 2017.

Achieving the necessary improvements is dependent on all agencies concerned with protecting and improving outcomes for children and young people working together. This plan is therefore a multi-agency Improvement Plan which we will share and develop with all key agencies.

Following development of the Escalation Plan, we focused on how to move forward in ways that will guarantee that:

- the Children and Young People's Partnership has the leadership, culture, values and behaviour needed;
- best practice is consistent in all areas of frontline services;
- resources support good practice and improved outcomes for children and young people
- professional awareness, informed by listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people, drives improvements.

These shared priorities will be used to underpin change initiatives across the partnership and there is an Improvement Board accountable for ensuring that all elements of the Improvement Plan are met.

3. Understanding where we are now

Powys Profile

Powys County Council is the unitary authority for Powys and covers a quarter of the area of Wales. It is one of the largest, yet least populated counties in England and Wales. Located in central Wales along the Borders area with England, it borders 13 other authorities. Powys covers 5,197 square kilometres. Its population of approximately 132,000 is just 4.4% of the Welsh total.

Powys is a predominantly rural county with some small and medium-sized towns, but no large settlements or cities. There is only one town with a population over 10,000; there are 15 other main settlements and hundreds of small villages and hamlets.

There are approximately 22,000 children and young people under the age of 18 living in Powys. Powys has a low proportion of young adults and a high proportion of older working and retired adults compared with the UK as a whole. The average age of the population in 2002 was 43 years, which compared with 40 in Wales and 39 in England and Wales.

The 2001 Census shows that 25,516 people (21.1% of the county's population over three years old), can speak, read and write Welsh and that 38.1% of the 3-15 age group are Welsh speakers. In Powys, Welsh speakers are not evenly distributed within the various communities. There is a bigger density in the north than in the east.

The total workforce in the county numbers approximately 73,000. The county's main primary industries are agriculture and forestry, which employ 11% of the workforce. The public sector is the only large employer with 26% of the workforce employed mainly in

local government, schools and health services. The last ten years have seen the disappearance of most large manufacturing employers. Unemployment rates are low compared to the rest of Wales. However, average incomes are low, with part-time workers forming 27% of the workforce. 16% of Powys households are in fuel poverty. The proportion of pupils in compulsory education entitled to free school meals is 12%, which compares with 18.9% nationally.

For most children and young people, Powys is a good place to grow up. Most children and young people are safe, well educated, experience good health and have good leisure and employment opportunities. However, there are groups of children and young people who experience poorer outcomes, compounded in some cases by the challenges of sparsity and isolation. The vulnerability profile demonstrates the current level of need in Powys from targeted to specialist services.

Action Taken So Far

The first draft Improvement Plan for August 2017, whilst focusing on the recommendations from the original inspection report in 2017, also includes the recommendations and areas for further consideration identified by the Escalation Plan developed earlier in the year and actions identified at the Roadshows in summer of 2017.

Achieving the necessary improvements is dependent on all agencies concerned with protecting and improving outcomes for children and young people working together. This plan is therefore a multi-agency Improvement Plan which we will share and develop with all key agencies.

Powys has made some progress in improving arrangements to protect children since June 2017. Senior and frontline staffing arrangements are now more secure. Extensive activity has taken place to drive improvement across Children's Services and, whilst progress has been slow in some areas, improvement has been made in regards to compliance with statutory requirements and practice standards. Powys has an understanding of its strengths and areas for development, and there is commitment at all levels to continuing improvement in order to give the best service to children and families.

Following the development of the Escalation Plan we focused on:

- the leadership, culture, values & behaviour of the partnership ensure good outcomes for children and young people;
- best practice is consistent in all areas of frontline services;
- resources support good practice and improved outcomes for children and young people; and
- self-knowledge, informed by listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people drives improvements.

These shared priorities will be used to drive change across the partnership and the Improvement Board will be accountable for ensuring that all elements of the Improvement Plan are met.

The improvement Plan will continue to evolve over the course of the year and beyond, based on feedback from staff, children and young people, parents and carers, external review, audit and challenge. The plan is supported by a number of action plans for each of the four priority areas.

Governance

The strategic partnership boards responsible for safeguarding children and young people in Powys are the Powys Local Operational Group (PLOG), Regional Partnership Board (RPB), the Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) and the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG). A protocol is being developed which clarifies:

- the roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements for each including their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and young people.
- how they work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of people living in Powys
- governance, accountability and coordination arrangements

The **Improvement Board** will monitor, challenge and ensure sustainable improvement across the service and partnership, ensuring that the requirements set out in the CSSIW Report are met and that children and young people in Powys are safeguarded. The Board is overseen by the Powys County Council Cabinet and Partnerships.

The **Regional Safeguarding Board** is chaired by the Regional Chair, meeting quarterly and works in partnership with PLOG board to ensure that where children are harmed, or at risk of harm, all agencies actively cooperate to safeguard them and promote their welfare. The PLOG is supported by a number of sub-groups that progress separate work streams of the PLOG Business plan.

The Regional Partnership Board and its supporting **Children and Young People's Partnership** promote collaborative working and decision-making that improves health and social care outcomes for children and young people. It has been established under Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being Act to drive the integration of health and social services; to plan and ensure the delivery of integrated, innovative care and support services to best meet the needs of people in response to the population assessment. Through joint commissioning, the Board works to secure sustainable, appropriately integrated health, social care and education, delivered to

children and young people, from pre-birth up to transition to adulthood, with high quality delivery and outcomes.

Powys County Council's **Corporate Parenting Group** (CPG) considers matters concerning the Council's role as a Corporate Parent to children and young people Looked After and those receiving Aftercare services. In particular with regard to improving the health, education, employment, training and housing outcomes for children and young people Looked After.

Corporate Parenting Group (CPG). A protocol is being developed which clarifies:

- the roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements for each including their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and young people;
- how they work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of people living in Powys; and
- governance, accountability and coordination arrangements

The Improvement Board will monitor, challenge and ensure sustainable improvement across the service and partnership, ensuring that the requirements set out in the CSSIW Inspection Report are met and that children and young people in Powys are safeguarded. The Board is overseen by the Powys County Council Cabinet and Partnerships.

The **Regional Safeguarding Board** is chaired by the Regional Chair, meeting quarterly and works in partnership with PLOG board to ensure that where children are harmed, or at risk of harm, all agencies actively cooperate to safeguard them and promote their welfare. The PLOG is supported by a number of sub-groups that progress separate work streams of the PLOG Business plan.

Progress So Far

Considerable external review of children's social care intervention and audit activity has taken place in the last year. There has been a review of efficiencies. The escalation plan developed in early summer 2017 has shown some progress in delivery more effective services but there remains much to do. The messages from internal audits and external scrutiny have been drawn together into main priorities for the Improvement Plan.

4. Planning for where we want to be for children and their families

Powys Children and Young People's Partnership Vision

The partnership aims to ensure that:

‘Children and young people are safe, happy and healthy, feel valued and value others, are treated fairly, have lives filled with learning, thrive and are able to enjoy life and spend quality time with family and friends.’

Priorities for Improvement and Development

In order to achieve this vision and deliver the necessary improvements in safeguarding services, the partnership agreed that the priorities for the Improvement Plan are:

- The leadership, culture, values & behaviour of the partnership ensure good outcomes for children and young people.
- Best practice is consistent in all areas of frontline services.
- Resources support good practice and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Professional awareness, informed by listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people drives improvements.

The Improvement Plan identifies four key priority areas, each led by a member of the Improvement Board. These are:

- Leadership Governance and Partnership;
- Case Management /Strategy and Models of Care;
- Workforce; and
- Practice Quality and Assurance.

As an Improvement Board, Council and multi-agency partnership we will drive change by focussing on these priorities. This will ensure that improvements to partnership working are aligned and made across all aspects of services for children and young people.

5. How will we get there?

There are a number of key themes that will underpin the improvement plan:

Multi-agency approach - from frontline delivery to strategic decision making, there is a need to ensure that vulnerable children, young people and families receive co-ordinated and effective support. This is not only about the different agencies involved in a

child and family's life working effectively together but it is also about enabling supportive challenge between agencies when this does not happen.

Learning from children and young people - we will listen to the experiences of children, young people and families, hearing what they are telling us and responding to this in our improvement work.

Learning from others - there is much that can be learned from other authorities that will support us to improve services. We will work collaboratively to identify offers of support and challenge that can help us innovate and sustain improvements to services.

Early help - identifying needs early and providing targeted support is the best way to achieve good outcomes for children but also to prevent the escalation of issues that leads to statutory interventions. This prevention and early help approach will be key to developing more effective and efficient services to protect and safeguard children.

Workforce - throughout the improvement process, we must ensure that services that are working well and continue to thrive. Our workforce are key to delivering high quality services and need to be supported in their determination to improve practice.

Improved outcomes - the range of activity and actions described within the improvement plan must deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families. The way we will measure success is when we are able to demonstrate that outcomes are improving.

Providing evidence of improvement - There are a number of ways in which we will assure the public, members of the Improvement Board and other accountability structures that we are making a difference and improving the services that children and young people access. They include the:

- Performance Dashboard - a collection of key indicators that will enable the Improvement Board, PLOG & Council Management Team to measure progress against targets set; and
- the Quality Assurance Framework - this framework will detail ways in which the Improvement Board will ensure that activity and actions delivered through the Improvement Plan are having the positive impact on the quality of practice and the experience of children and young people.

Responsibilities & Accountabilities

Achieving the priorities relies on a whole partnership approach. In order to ensure that the pace of change and improvement continues, there will be a number of project boards / working groups operating under each priority (see below). Please look at the detailed Improvement Plan Governance Report for details of each group.

Communications Plan

The success of the Improvement Plan in Powys relies on communication and engagement with a number of different stakeholders. A number of methods for communicating improvement progress have been which will continue to be used to inform stakeholders:

- Regular updates to Council Management Team and Regional Partnership Board
- PLOG Newsletter
- Websites –Improvement to Children’s Services Website PCC
- Fortnightly ‘Getting to Good’ newsletter to all Children’s Social Care
- Updates to Children’s Partnership Board.

A stakeholder analysis setting out levels of interest and influence in achieving the Improvement Plan and a stakeholder engagement table to identify the purpose and methods of engagement have been developed.

Risks/ Issues

It is essential to identify, analyse and prioritise risks as part of the improvement process to ensure that these risks are managed effectively. There are a number of significant risks to the Improvement Plan including the ability to deliver consistent good practice with a stable workforce. A programme risk register will be maintained by the Programme Manager and reported to the Improvement Board and, where appropriate, risks will be escalated to the relevant agency’s corporate risk registers.

6. How will we know that we have achieved good outcomes for children and families?

Leadership, Governance & Partnership - Elected members, senior leaders, managers and frontline practitioners will have a shared understanding of what good looks like (as set out in Appendix 1) and this will be informed by evidence that is available locally, regionally and nationally and what children, young people and families are telling us about their experience. There will be

positive and visible leadership that ensures there is clarity of priorities and expectations. Leadership will be provided at many different levels but always with a consistency of message and approach. Leadership will embed a can do approach.

Strategy and Models of Care - Integrated working will ensure that resources, expertise and skills from across a range of partners can achieve the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Workforce - Practitioners will have the skills, knowledge and capacity needed to provide effective and timely support to children, young people and families.

Practice & Quality Assurance - The way we work with and support families will be coherent and effective. Regular supervision will allow appropriate support and challenge and workloads will be manageable.

Reporting Framework

The Improvement Board will be the key vehicle for scrutiny and challenge, together with the Council's own performance management and scrutiny functions. The PLOG and Corporate Management Team will receive regular updates on outcomes for children and progress as indicated by performance information and reports on audit findings. The Improvement Board will also receive a Data Dashboard and detailed Key Performance Indicators report at each meeting along with a programme and performance report to track progress. There is a list of all of the Key Performance Indicators being used to measure progress along with expected performance for a 'good' local authority.

Quality Assurance

A range of quality assurance activity is planned. The Quality Assurance Framework covers this in detail. Quality assurance activity that will be carried out includes:

- Surveys of children and young people, parents' and carers'
- Focus groups of service users
- Feedback via Mind Of My Own or other digital App.
- Quantitative Audits

- Qualitative Audits of case files
- Peer audits
- External audits
- Case mapping with partners

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Priority Improvement Area	Recommendations	Action	Outcome Success	Lead	Timescale	Progress
A Leadership Governance and Partnership (Improvement Board Lead-Chief Executive)	Immediate A.1 The chief executive must immediately provide strong corporate support for children's services to ensure service improvements are prioritised and the pace of improvement accelerated and sustained.	The Chief Executive to establish an Improvement Board to provide additional support, to develop and implement the Improvement plan.	Improvement Board established and meeting regularly with partner agencies	Chief Executive	October 2017	
		Weekly meetings to be established by the Chief Executive across all Directorates to ensure corporate support is being made available in a timely manner	Weekly meetings established and taking place and all parts of the Council are undertaking their role as corporate parents.	Chief Executive	October 2017	
		Areas that require investment to support best practice and safeguard children are identified and the Council supports the Service to deliver these.	Invest to save bids completed. Better Outcomes achieved for children and their families. Children in Powys are Safeguarded.	Head of Children's Services Head of Children's Services	October 2017	

			Children from Powys are supported to live in Powys.			
	<p>A.2 The council leader and the portfolio member must provide strong political support to children's services and take the necessary steps to put in place well informed and effective scrutiny to make sure service improvements are made quickly, effectively and are sustainable.</p>	<p>Weekly meetings to be held with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>The Council will ensure corporate oversight and support as corporate parents.</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee will regularly require an update on progress being made.</p>	<p>Weekly meetings established and taking place and all parts of the Council and Elected Members are undertaking their role as corporate parents.</p> <p>To provide a safe environment to safeguard children and young persons of Powys</p>	Chief Executive	October 2017	
	<p>Medium</p> <p>A.3 Effective multi-agency quality assurance systems and training arrangements should be established to ensure thresholds</p>	<p>Regional threshold document to be launched and implemented in Children's Services and with partner agencies.</p>	<p>Partner agencies understand the thresholds for an Assessment to be undertaken by Statutory Children's Services.</p>	Head of Children's Services	Launch 2 nd October 2017	

	<p>for assessments to statutory children's services are understood by staff and partners and are consistently applied; this should include the development of a multi-agency child protection decision making protocol.</p>	<p>To undertake multi-agency training needs analysis and publish a multi-agency training brochure</p> <p>To increase the number of multi-agency child protection fora from two programmes to three programmes</p> <p>To establish multi-agency child protection decision making protocol</p>	<p>Threshold for Assessments are consistently applied.</p>	<p>Professional Lead - Business Support Resources</p> <p>Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p>	<p>November 2017</p> <p>January 2018</p>	
	<p>Medium A.4 There is a need for clear strategic</p>	<p>Develop a guide for partners</p>	<p>There is clearer understanding across</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Child Care South</p>	<p>December 2017</p>	

	<p>direction supported by operational protocols to enable partners to have a clear understanding of the purpose, structure and decision making in children's services.</p>	<p>around children's services to include threshold document, governance structures and personnel to key contacts and decision processes to be supported via child protection fora</p>	<p>partners about the strategic direction and operational protocols of children's services</p>	<p>& CWD / Senior Manager - Child Care North & PPD</p>		
	<p>Medium A.5 There should be an early consideration of the impact of the changes made as a result of the commissioned review and whether decisions made as part of the review should be revisited.</p>	<p>Undertake a review of Children's Services re-structure to ensure that decisions made allow for the delivery of high quality services that keep children safe. The review will need to consider the impact of removing a</p>	<p>Confirmation as to whether the decisions made as part of the commissioned review enable the service to deliver high quality services to all children and young people or if alternative arrangements need to be established.</p>	<p>Children's Services SMT</p>	<p>November 2017</p>	

		specific 16+ Team and whether these services can be protected and enhanced within the new structure.				
	<p>Medium A.6 Elected members need to be clear about the vision for children's services and recognise this as a high risk area for the council. To support this members need clarity about, and training to understand, the direction of services and the particular risks inherent in children's services.</p>	Children's Services to provide a briefing to Members Development Day that sets out the direction of services and the inherent risks in Children's Services.	<p>Elected Member have a greater understanding of the inherent risks in Children's Services.</p> <p>Children's Services are recognised as a High Risk area for the Council and receive full corporate support to ensure delivery of high quality Services.</p>	Head of Children's Services	November 2017	
	<p>Medium A.7 The chief executive must make arrangements</p>	To develop a children's services training module to	Cabinet and all elected members have clear knowledge	Head of Children's Services	November 2017	

	<p>implementing the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 so there is understanding at a corporate level in relation to the delivery of information, advice and assistance.</p>	<p>meetings as set out in the Terms of Reference. Provide an IAA briefing to Corporate Management Team and Members and implement regular reporting under the Corporate Improvement Plan for delivery of IAA</p> <p>Undertake a mapping and gapping exercise across the Council for all IAA functions.</p> <p>Work with the social values forum supported by PAVO to develop community responses to building families resilience</p>	<p>Parenting Group to ensure the Council discharges its Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.</p> <p>Clear View across the Council in respect of how IAA responsibilities are being discharged.</p> <p>Areas for improvement identified.</p>	<p>Director of Social Services</p> <p>Senior Manager CYPP</p>	<p>October 2017</p> <p>October 2017</p>	
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		<p>Reinstating In-Focus news briefing to be provided on termly basis to Council and to all partners</p> <p>Promotional campaign around PPD, Info-engine and DEWIS</p>	<p>Improved communication across the Council and partners and strengthened provision of IAA for citizens.</p>	<p>Communications & Engagement Officer</p> <p>Communications & Engagement Officer</p>	<p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2017</p>	
	<p>Long term A.9 A multi-agency child protection protocol should be established to support decision making on the need for assessments in statutory children's services. This needs to be understood by staff and partners and consistently applied. Multi-agency quality assurance systems and training arrangements are</p>	<p>Implement and fully embed the Regional Threshold Document across Children's Services and Partner Agencies.</p> <p>Work with Partners to review and strengthen multi-agency child protection protocol and practices</p>		<p>Head of Children's Services</p> <p>Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p>	<p>Launch 2nd October 2017</p> <p>March 2018</p>	

	required to support this.	Undertake Themed Audits to ensure that Thresholds are being consistently applied.		Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead	December 2017	
		Undertake feedback events (on-line) to ensure that staff and partners understand and consistently apply thresholds.		Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead	February 2018	
		Threshold Document to be included in all staff induction.			November 2017	
		Ensuring threshold document is included in partners agencies induction programme		Professional Lead - Business Support Resources	December 2017	
				Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead		

	<p>Long term A.10 The local authority and partners must work together to develop a cohesive approach to the collection and analysis of information about the needs of communities, which includes the views of children and families. This should be used to inform the shaping of strategic plans to achieve effective alignment of service delivery between information, advice and assistance services, the preventative sector and statutory services.</p>	<p>To ensure annual updates of the population and wellbeing assessment</p> <p>To develop and implement the wellbeing and area plans ensuring robust reporting and monitoring through clear governance arrangements (RPB and PSB)</p> <p>To undertake thematic reports in relation to IAA and early intervention and prevention across the RPB partnership arrangements</p> <p>Develop management</p>		<p>Strategic Programme Manager</p> <p>Regional Partnership Board Coordinator</p> <p>Regional Partnership Board Coordinator</p>	<p>March 2018</p> <p>June 2018</p> <p>January 2018</p> <p>December 2017</p>	

		information data that is robust, reliable, and accessible and provides insight to develop patterns.		Strategic Programme Manager		
	<p>Long term</p> <p>A.11 Future changes to structure and service delivery need to include consultation with all stakeholders in its shape and development. The change needs to be incremental and with changes implemented at a pace that will ensure the full involvement of staff and young people and ensure children are not placed at risk.</p>	<p>Review and strengthen engagement and consultation processes within the management of change policy to include service user and partner agencies.</p> <p>Strengthen and implement the communications and engagement strategy for children services to include formal and informal</p>		<p>Professional Lead - Human Resources Management and Development</p> <p>Communications & Engagement Officer</p>	<p>December 2017</p> <p>January 2018</p>	

		engagement for a wide range of stakeholders				
B Case Management /Strategy and Models of Care (Improvement Board lead- Director of Education/ CYPP Co-Lead)	Immediate B.1 The local authority must ensure assessments are carried out within statutory timescales and are undertaken in partnership with children and families.	Performance Management information report to be further developed and available to all levels of staffing, management and Members to ensure that assessments are completed within statutory timescales.	All staff, Managers and Members will have access to management information in relation to key performance indicators Statutory timescales are routinely being met and the views of children and young people are informing the assessment	Strategic Programme Manager	October 2017	
		The new Quality Assurance Framework to be implemented.	Team Managers and Senior Managers are using the new Quality Assurance Framework to monitor the quality of the assessment being undertaken	Head of Children's Services	October 2017	
		Managers ensure that statutory timescales are routinely being	Children's views inform personal/ individual interventions and planning.		October 2017	

		<p>met and the views of children and young people are informing the assessment.</p> <p>Social workers to complete the "What Matters" document with the child/ young person as part of all assessments.</p> <p>Social worker to have easy access to performance data to assist the staff in management of timescale</p>	<p>Child's records contain an accurate account of the child's experiences, an analysis of their cultural, religious and diversity needs, and detailed reasons for key decisions.</p> <p>Assessments are routinely completed within statutory timescale and are undertaken in partnership with the child.</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD & Senior Manager - Child Care North & PPD</p> <p>Front Line Team Managers</p> <p>Strategic Programme Manager</p>	<p>October 2017</p> <p>October 2017</p>	
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<p>Medium B.2 The quality of assessments and plans must be improved to ensure they are consistently of a good quality, with a clear focus on the needs, risks, and strengths of children and families, and that desired outcomes, timescales and accountabilities for actions are clear.</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Framework to be implement to monitor the quality Assessments and Plans.</p>	<p>Evidence that High Quality Assessments and Plans are being undertaken consistently across the service.</p>	<p>Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	
	<p>Regular Supervision to facilitate monitoring of the Quality of Assessments and Plans.</p>	<p>Assessments and Plans are balanced i.e. recognise strengths as risks.</p>	<p>All Managers</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	
	<p>Training to be delivered regarding Outcome focussed planning to improve the quality of plans.</p>	<p>All Agencies actively contribute to Assessments and Plans in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Professional Lead - Business Support Resources</p>	<p>December 2017</p>	
	<p>Implementation of agreed Strengths Based Model across the Service and with Partner agencies.</p>	<p>Agreed SW Model recognised, understood and underpinning all assessment and planning in Powys.</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD</p>	<p>31st January 2018</p>	
		<p>Staff have a clear understanding of</p>			

			Departmental expectations.			
	<p>Medium B.3 The quality and consistency and timeliness of record keeping must be improved; all staff and managers must ensure that records are of good quality, up to date and systematically stored</p>	<p>Policies, Procedures and business processes to be updated that clearly set out requirements for all staff.</p> <p>Additional business and data support for staff to ensure information is recorded on WCCIS and is up to date.</p> <p>Requirements regarding record keeping to be included as part of staff induction.</p>	<p>Staff have a clear understanding of Departmental expectations</p> <p>Policies, Procedures and Business processes being adhered to.</p> <p>Information is recorded in line with Departmental Policy.</p> <p>Information held is accurate up to date and systematically stored.</p> <p>All staff are aware of Departmental requirements.</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Child Care North & PPD / Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p> <p>Strategic Programme Manager / Professional Lead - Business Support Resources</p>	<p>Phase 1 – November 2017 Phase 2 – January 2018</p> <p>January 2018</p> <p>December 2017</p>	

		<p>Clear and up to date business processes are established that detail how and where information should be recorded to ensure Management Information is accurate.</p> <p>Review of workloads to ensure staff have the capacity to deliver high quality record keeping in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Record keeping is of a high quality and is up to date.</p> <p>Consistency in Practice across Children's Services.</p> <p>Few anomalies in Performance Management information.</p> <p>Social Workers will have reasonable Caseload levels.</p> <p>Children and their Families will experience high quality and meaningful interventions.</p> <p>Staff Morale will be high.</p>	<p>Professional Lead - Business Support Resources / Senior Manager Resources & Placements</p> <p>Strategic Programme Manager /Strategic Programme Manager</p> <p>Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD</p>	<p>November 2017</p> <p>October 2017</p>	
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	<p>Medium B.4 The local authority must clarify the role and purpose of Powys People Direct (PPD) within the overall provision of information, advice and assistance and must ensure staff and partners have clear guidance to support decision making. The local authority must ensure that all staff are suitably trained, skilled and supported to deliver this role. A clear protocol is required between PPD and the Emergency Duty Team to ensure cases are not lost between services.</p>	<p>The Local Authority will publish its requirements for PPD and setting out how it will meet the requirements to deliver IAA</p> <p>Develop training and capacity within PPD for delivering IAA</p> <p>Review and strengthen handling of cases & transfer of information between EDT and PPD</p>	<p>Clear understanding of the role and purpose across the Council.</p> <p>Improved IAA function available to citizen's.</p> <p>Seamless transition of cases between EDT and PPD.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Senior Manager - Child Care North & PPD / Senior Manager CYPP</p> <p>Senior Manager - Child Care North & PPD</p>	<p>January 2018</p> <p>November 2017</p> <p>November 2017</p>	

	<p>Medium B.5 The local authority must implement an effective model of assessment to support its interventions with families, which is understood by all staff and partners, underpinned by robust training and development.</p>	<p>To implement the strengths based model to incorporate staff within children's services and partners</p> <p>Implement Signs of Safety or similar model</p>	<p>Children's Services will have an effective model of assessment that is understood by all staff and partners.</p> <p>Families receive a consistent and equitable service.</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD</p>	<p>January 2018</p>	
	<p>Medium B.6 The local authority must ensure its fostering service provides consistent support, training and guidance to foster carers in order to improve the quality and availability of placements.</p>	<p>Complete listening and learning exercise with foster carers and develop recommendations for service improvement</p> <p>To develop peer support for foster carers</p>	<p>The Department will have a further understanding of the needs of its foster carers.</p> <p>Additional support and services available to support foster carers.</p> <p>Increased numbers of foster carers which facilitates stronger</p>	<p>Improvement Programme Manager / Senior Manager Resources & Placements</p> <p>Senior Manager Resources & Placements</p>	<p>January 2018</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>Phase 1 - January 2018 Phase 2 – June 2018</p>	

		To develop an intensive support service for carers with children with more complex needs	matching with children who need to be Looked After. Reduction in placement breakdowns.	Senior Manager Resources & Placements	December 2017	
		Development policy framework for fostering To review and implement a recruitment and retention strategy	Reduction in the numbers of children who need to be placed outside of the Local Authority.	Senior Manager Resources & Placements Senior Manager Resources & Placements	November 2017	
	Medium B.7 The local authority must ensure that all care and support plans have a clear focus on outcomes for children, which incorporate the voice of the child.	Engagement and development with staff to ensure care and support plans are SMART and outcome focussed and include the voice of the child	Clearly developed care plans that are focussed on outcomes and incorporate the voice of the child	Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD	December 2017	

	<p>Long term B.8 The local authority must ensure compliance with the active offer of the Welsh language.</p>	<p>Corporate action</p> <p>Review capacity within Children's for provision of an active offer / possible target recruitment required</p>	<p>The council are able to fully comply with the active offer of the Welsh Language</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Improvement Programme Manager</p>	<p>September 2018</p> <p>September 2018</p>	
<p>C Workforce (Improvement Board Lead-Director of HR)</p>	<p>Immediate C.1 Arrangements for team managers and senior practitioners should be reviewed to ensure capacity to effectively and consistently provide management oversight and testing of decision making along with support and direction for frontline staff.</p>	<p>Phase 1 - review of current staffing levels to provide additional staff and capacity to front line teams.</p> <p>Phase 2 – review management capacity</p> <p>To deliver specific induction programme for social care managers that ensures new</p>	<p>Social Workers in the front line teams have manageable caseloads.</p> <p>Managers providing regular oversight that is clearly evidenced through recording.</p> <p>Managers have a manageable workload</p> <p>New Managers have the skills and knowledge required to effectively undertake their role.</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD</p> <p>Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD</p> <p>Professional Lead - Business</p>	<p>October 2017</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>October 2017</p>	

		<p>managers have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their role in Powys in a timely way</p> <p>Additional capacity to be provided to undertake investigations of and disseminate learning from Stage 1 complaints.</p>	<p>Increased capacity for Team Managers and ATM's to provide Management Oversight of casework.</p> <p>Department responding to Complaints in a timely manner.</p> <p>Department learning from complaints and taking steps to improve practice.</p>	<p>Support Resources / Senior Manager Resources & Placements</p> <p>Head of Children's Services</p>		
	<p>Immediate C.2 Senior managers should take steps to</p>	<p>Publish and implement Quality</p>	<p>The supervision policy is embedded within all</p>	<p>Head of Children's Services</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	

	improve the frequency, consistency and quality of supervision for front line staff; an assurance mechanism must be implemented to ensure compliance with expectations and quality of decision making, recordkeeping and reporting.	Assurance framework	service areas. The quality of supervision is reflective and analytical. Staff have supervision every 4 weeks including individual cases discussions which are recorded on the child's file. Social workers are supported in their interventions with children through reflective supervision.		October 2017	
		Updated supervision policy to be implemented		Head of Children's Services	October 2017	
		All supervision dates to be recorded on Trent to ensure compliance with policy regarding timescales.		Senior Managers		
		Audit of supervision.			October 2017	
		Receiving and analysing monthly supervision reports		Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead	October 2017	
		Improve management oversight through monthly reporting at SMT		Head of Children's Services	October 2017	
		There is a specific induction programme for social care managers that ensures new		Strategic Programme Manager	October 2017	

		Recruit additional staff as identified to ensure sufficient capacity for workers to effectively engage with children and their families.	Reduction in the use of agency staff.	Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD	October 2017	
		Streamline the recruitment process, ensuring sufficient business support, to ensure timely recruitment of staff.	Average time to fill vacant posts is reduced	Human Resources Business Partner	October 2017	
		Identify and agree a strengths based care planning Model.	All staff will be aware of the strengths based model that is to be introduced.		October 2017	
		A brief outline of the chosen model to be provided to all staff.	Staff will have an increased knowledge of the model and stages of implementation.	Senior Manager - Child Care South & CWD	October 2017	
	Medium				January 2018	

	<p>C.4 The local authority must ensure every employee understands the legislative and statutory requirements in safeguarding children and action is taken to address poor performance.</p>	<p>Mandatory training for all Council staff to communicate legislative and statutory requirements in safeguarding</p>	<p>Improved employee awareness of Legislative and statutory requirements across the Council.</p> <p>Risks to children are reduced.</p>	<p>Professional Lead - Business Support Resources</p>	<p>December 2017</p>	
		<p>Develop a clear Social Work Training Strategy which covers the necessary skills and behaviours to develop a workforce that is sufficient to improve quality of Social Work practice to improve outcomes.</p>	<p>Children and their families are receiving high quality Social Work interventions that improve Outcomes.</p> <p>Children and their families receiving timely interventions that are supported by all partners.</p>	<p>Professional Lead - Business Support Resources / Senior Manager Resources & Placement</p>		
		<p>There is a specific induction programme for social care managers that ensures new managers have the necessary skills and</p>	<p>New Managers have the skills and knowledge required to effectively undertake their role.</p>	<p>Professional Lead - Business</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	

		<p>knowledge to undertake their role.</p> <p>All new starters to Children's Services are successfully inducted and are given the right information at the right time to settle into their role and equip them to do a good job.</p>	<p>All staff have the basic skills and knowledge required to undertake their role effectively within Powys.</p>	<p>Support Resources</p> <p>Professional Lead - Business Support Resources</p>	December 2017	
	<p>Medium C.5 A robust workforce strategy should be developed as a matter of urgency to include short, medium and long</p>	<p>Develop a social care Workforce Strategy (including Talent & Succession Planning) which</p>	<p>% of Permanent staff increases</p> <p>Increased retention of staff.</p>	<p>Senior Officer - Culture & Leadership Development</p>	January 2018	

	<p>term plans for recruitment and retention of social work and senior staff. Permanent appointments are required in key posts as a high priority to provide resilience and stability to the service.</p>	<p>ensures staff are supported to reach their potential.</p> <p>Exit Interviews to be undertaken with all social care staff and used to inform the Workforce Strategy.</p> <p>Feedback from Exit Interviews to be considered by SMT on a Quarterly basis</p> <p>Develop a clear and transparent selection process that ensures high quality social work staff are selected.</p>	<p>There is a clear and consistently implemented exit interview process for all social care staff leaving Powys CC or moving to a different area within Children's Services.</p> <p>Feedback from Exit interviews is used to inform the Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Strategies.</p> <p>Standardised agreed threshold agreed for recruitment decisions which is understood by all.</p> <p>Recruiting Managers are trained to ensure they have the skills to implement the selection process and</p>			
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		Develop a process to gather and review candidate feedback.	<p>select high quality staff.</p> <p>100% of recruiting managers have completed the recruitment training.</p> <p>Candidates feedback on the selection process in gathered and reviewed</p> <p>Candidates feel they have a fair opportunity to demonstrate the skills and knowledge.</p>			
	Long term					
D Practice Quality and Assurance (Improvement Board Lead-Head of Children's Services)	Immediate D.1 An assurance mechanism must be implemented as a priority to ensure compliance with legislation, statutory guidance and protocols with regard to looked after children and children at risk.	<p>Quality Assurance framework will be implemented</p> <p>Develop the IRO Monitoring form</p> <p>Review of current policies and procedures to</p>	<p>Regular auditing, to ensure management oversight of the quality of work being undertaken</p> <p>Independent oversight in respect of care planning for children who are looked after</p> <p>All staff will have access to policies and procedures which will</p>	<p>Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p> <p>Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p>	<p>End October 2017</p> <p>October 2017</p>	

		<p>ensure that they comply with legislation, statutory guidance and protocol with regards to Looked After children and children at risk.</p> <p>Implement and embed the regional threshold document</p>	<p>can be used to effectively guide their practice.</p> <p>Appropriate referrals are made by all agencies based on an agreed threshold.</p>	<p>Head of Children's Services</p> <p>Head of Children's Services</p>	<p>October 2017</p> <p>Launch 2nd October 2017</p>	
	<p>Medium D.2 Performance management and quality assurance arrangements, including scrutiny of service demand and routine auditing of the quality of practice needs to be embedded so that managers at all levels have timely, relevant and accurate performance and</p>	<p>Detailed Management information reports to be developed in line with service requirements.</p> <p>Performance Management to be a standard agenda item for SMT and OMT.</p>	<p>Management information is analysed at all levels of the Service and plays a key role in decision making.</p> <p>Evidence that Management Information is informing Decision Making. Performance against Key performance</p>	<p>Strategic Programme Manager</p>	<p>December 2017</p>	

	<p>quality assurance information. At a corporate level the local authority must establish systems and structures to effectively monitor and evaluate progress within children's services.</p>	<p>Performance information available to and scrutinised by Elected Members.</p> <p>Data Quality Clerks to work with the service to ensure that available information is robust and reliable.</p>	<p>Indicators is readily available.</p>		
	<p>Medium D.3 A quality assurance system must be established to ensure families who are referred to the Team around the Family service are not subject to drift and delay and to ensure there are targeted plans in place which are reviewed and checked by managers.</p>				
	<p>Medium</p>				<p>January 2018</p>

	<p>D.4 The local authority must strengthen the oversight of the response to complaints to improve reporting and analysis and ensure there is a mechanism to capture lessons learned.</p>	<p>Children's Services to Recruit a specific member of staff to investigate stage 1 complaints and disseminate learning from complaints across the service.</p>	<p>Complaints are responded to in a timely manner.</p> <p>Independent investigation of all complaints.</p> <p>Learning from complaints shared across the service and leading to improvements in practice.</p> <p>Analysis of complaints to inform planning and delivery of services.</p>	<p>Interim Safeguarding Children's Lead</p>		
	<p>Long term</p>					

Appendix 1

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

“What does good look like?”

INTRODUCTION

Amongst the most vulnerable children and young people in our society are those who need care and support under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This is especially the case for children looked after by the local authority and not by their parent(s) or within their wider families.

The Act gives each local authority a responsibility for making sure that children in need of care and support receive the right help at the right time, to improve their well-being and protect them from harm. This means:

- identifying and assessing children who need care and support as early as possible;
- helping them to use the strengths in their families and resources in their communities to provide help and support; and
- intervening at a time which prevents needs becoming critical.

In addition, as Corporate Parents of children who are looked after, it is their responsibility to help keep them safe, to make sure that their experiences in care are positive, and to improve the access they have to opportunities for them to succeed in life, including after care support.

In carrying out these complex and high-profile tasks, it is the responsibility of a local authority to establish how it is going to improve the general well-being of children and young people who need care and support, for whatever reason. This work should focus too on all stages of any ‘care journey’, saying how children and their families will be supported to stay together whenever it is safe to do so and, as a result, how it will minimise the need for children to become looked after. The local authority is obliged to describe the types of care and the range of placements it wants to provide and commission for looked after children.

The overall strategy should identify how the needs of children, young people and their families will be met within the resources available to the local authority for a specific period, both short-term and long-term, to ensure that services are sustainable and consistent. All these elements contribute to the delivery of an integrated pattern of services to children and young people.

It is essential that councils and their partners share a commitment to improving the effectiveness and quality of services provided to

children and families in need of care and support. This means looking continuously for evidence about performance, from external sources but also through sector-led improvement and learning processes such as peer reviews. These help the local authority to identify what is working well and what changes are needed to achieve best practice and best value. The WLGA and SSIA have produced two very helpful documents, setting out a guide to carrying out peer reviews¹ and standards for Children's and Adults Services against which reviews can be conducted² is a constructive and supportive process with the central aim of helping councils improve.

KEY AIMS

- 1. To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising.
- 2. To manage risk confidently and effectively when providing support to families where children and young people at the 'edge of care'** by making sure that need is accurately assessed, resulting in the right children being accommodated at the right time. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by making private arrangements within their wider family networks.
- 3. To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** which meet the diverse range of children's needs.
- 4. To give children clearly planned journeys through care and into adulthood** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements and exit the care system with good prospects for improved life chances.

1. Social Services Peer Review Guide January 2016

file:///C:/Users/user/OneDrive/MAG/Peer%20Review/141216_Peer%20Review%20Manual%20Final_Draft.pdf

² Children's and Adults' Services Social Services Peer Review Guide April 2016

<file:///C:/Users/user/OneDrive/MAG/Peer%20Review/Peer%20review%20-%20Childrens%20and%20Adults%20Standards.pdf>

These aims are underpinned by the following objectives:

- n. The responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people looked after or at risk of becoming looked after rests across all services for children, including statutory and independent providers.
- o. The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
- p. Preventative services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided in ways that give them every chance to stay together.
- q. Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, there will be help available for assisting them to make private arrangements within their wider family and friendship networks and, where necessary, to make these arrangements permanent.
- r. Formal kinship fostering arrangements will be explored as the preferred alternative arrangement where it is necessary for the local authority to share parental responsibility or intervene in managing risk and protecting children.
- s. Multi-agency arrangements to assessing and managing risk to vulnerable children and young people need to be robust.
- t. Local authorities have a responsibility for ensuring that intensive family support is available on a multi-agency basis for families where children or young people are on the edge of care.
- u. Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements already described, the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family.
- v. Residential care placements will be made only where the complexity of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting or where a young person is subject to a Court Ordered Secure Remand.

- w. Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.
- x. Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs. It is the role of the local authority to consider the most appropriate type of placement to meet these needs, with due regard given to the available resources.
- y. All Looked After Children of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school. Providing appropriate support to enable engagement in education is just as important as finding suitable care placements for Looked After Children.
- z. Placements should support a positive transition to independence, adulthood, education, employment, and training and, where applicable, resettlement back into the community from custodial settings.

AIM 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER

Key Objectives

- i. The responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people in need of care and support and tackling social welfare inequalities that increase the chances of becoming looked after rests across all public service provision for children.
- ii. The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families who should be helped to use their own resources and resources within their communities .in times of difficulties.
- iii. Proportionate assessment, preventative services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided quickly to give them every chance to stay together.

1.1 Children and young people's needs are best met in their own families wherever this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together needs to be a key objective for the Council and the agencies who work directly with children, young people and families. This can be achieved best through inclusive and co-ordinated approaches in the way all parts of the Council respond to families in need. All Council departments and agencies need to identify where children and families are struggling as early as possible, and offer good advice, information, assessment and interventions at the right level at the right time. This is especially the case where children are known to have adverse experiences which may impair their health or development (such as abuse or being in a household where there is domestic violence, substance misuse, mental illness or poverty).

1.2 The following shared commitments assist in achieving this objective.

- a. **The provision of an Information, Advice and Assistance Service in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act.** This will give families and professionals quick and easy access to a single point of contact providing information and advice about all the services available to children and families, and what they need to do when they have concerns about the welfare of a child. The service will be able to sign-post them on to targeted and specialist services as needed.

- b. **Ensuring that social workers and other staff can deliver best professional practice.** This will help to deliver outcome-based social work, incorporating empowerment, advocacy and respect for the rights of children and families.
- c. **Housing Services having a policy of giving priority help to families where there is a child known to Children and Young People Services who needs care and support.** This will help to secure and maintain tenancies of safe, affordable social housing; prioritising the needs of families with a disabled child who require adaptations to be made to the property using Disability Facilities Grants; assisting homeless families and young people to exercise their rights and entitlements and providing advice to vulnerable tenants; and intervening early in the case of families in need who are at risk of eviction to prevent that happening.

Reflecting these commitments in the housing strategy, procurement plans and allocations policy, and in the objectives for using the Supporting People Grant will support social workers and housing officers to respond in partnership to the difficulties that families are experiencing. The needs of young people for accommodation and support should be fed into the Supporting People planning group and process.

- d. **The Education Department having a policy to enhance the education and attainment of children in need of care and support.** This can be achieved through making maximum use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant and all forms of pastoral support such as the School Counselling Service, Putting Families First and Nurture Programmes. The ability of schools to continue to provide wrap around care such as breakfast and after school clubs needs to be protected in the areas of highest social deprivation where most children known to Social Services live.

The Council is also in a good position to offer apprenticeships, work experience and employment opportunities to young people most in need of care and support, and there is an overarching policy objective to work across the whole Council to reduce the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

Schools and social workers need to share concerns about children's welfare and progress at the earliest point, and to continue to communicate well with one another and work in partnership with parents, kinship and foster carers to support the child's learning and development. Children in need of care and support, including those looked after, are a significant group at risk of school exclusion, placing pressure on their foster carers and sometimes resulting in placement breakdown. Central resources in Education Departments needed to prevent this, such as education welfare officers and learning support assistants, should be protected, with schools being supported to operate a policy of non-exclusion of children in need of care

and support.

- e. **Enhancing access to Play, Leisure and Youth Services for children in need of care and support who may need additional help to make the most of opportunities universally available to all local children and young people.** This can be achieved by offering free or subsidised entry/places, directly supporting the aspirations of children in need to train in sports, and to take part in healthy lifestyles and activities. The Youth Service offers invaluable support to teenagers and young people who are hard to reach and teach, who may be truanting from school and are disengaged from the curriculum, and are potentially vulnerable and at risk from exploitation, including sexual. Continuing to fund street/outreach youth work is vital to ensuring enough of this type of flexible, targeted support is available to meet needs.

- f. **Ensuring that eligible families who are expecting or have babies and young children under four make the fullest use of their entitlement to Flying Start services.** These include ante and post-natal services, health visiting, child care and parenting support, building up their ability and confidence to be responsible, safe and committed parents right from the start of a child's life. Families with children in need of care and support should have access to targeted co-ordinated help from early intervention and preventative services provided through the Welsh Government funding streams such as Families First.

- g. **Providing families where a child is at risk of offending, or at risk of re- offending with access to timely and targeted assessment and parenting support from the YOS preventative service.** This includes prioritising children whose cases are open to Children and Young People Services and working collaboratively across the Council on the Domestic Abuse Strategy and other Communities First initiatives that are active in promoting community safety and protecting vulnerable citizens.

AIM 2: TO MANAGE RISK CONFIDENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY WHEN SUPPORTING FAMILIES WHERE CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AT THE EDGE OF CARE

Key Objectives

- i. The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
- ii. Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, there should be support for them to make private arrangements within their wider family and friendship networks and, where necessary, to make these permanent via Child Arrangements Orders.
- iii. Multi-agency arrangements to assessing and managing risk to vulnerable children and young people need to be robust.
- iv. Local authorities have a responsibility for ensuring that intensive family support is available on a multi-agency basis for families where children or young people are on the edge of care.

2.1 We need to ensure the right children become accommodated at the right time. To do this, we need to be able to manage risk safely with families who are approaching the threshold for care proceedings to be issued. We will carry out timely and proportionate assessments, agree a plan of action, and directly deliver and/or commission interventions which support families to make changes, always ensuring that children and young people are kept safe.

2.2 We need to support staff to make safe risk assessments and be confident about planning for and managing risk to a child across all settings. It will need other family members, nursery staff, teachers, housing officers, play and youth leaders and out of hours services to be clear about their role in helping to manage risk to a child, to be observant through their daily contact with children and families, and responsive to any welfare concerns they see. For children whose names are placed on the Child Protection Register, staff across the Council and agencies involved will work together under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures to protect children and safeguard them from harm. the following shared commitments will contribute

to supporting children, young people and families 'at the edge of care':

- a. **Engagement of wider family and friendship networks.** When a family is struggling to cope or has reached a point of crisis, we will support them to explore whether there are people within their wider family and friendship network who can safely care for the child or young person, either temporarily or on a permanent basis through private family arrangements. Research shows that family meetings or mediation based approaches are effective in achieving this.
- b. **Provision of intensive family support services.** This can be achieved by support from the multi-agency Intensive Family Support Service or other 'edge of care'/IFSS schemes.
- c. **Provision of multi-agency arrangements to assessing and managing risk.** The local authority should have a formal agreement with other agencies about how it will operate an intelligence-led approach to assessing and managing risk to vulnerable children. There is a range of approaches which may be used including a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Missing Children protocols, Signs of Safety, etc.
- d. **Provision for children who cannot remain living with parents and for whom the family are making arrangements for permanency.** This can be achieved via a Child Arrangements Order. The plan for meeting future support needs should be based on a formal assessment and have a contractual basis.
- e. **Providing shared care and short breaks to enable families time limited opportunities to have respite or to resolve issues which have an adverse impact on their parenting capacity.** Families sometimes need respite from caring or time and space to resolve stressful, chaotic situations and achieve change. Short break care and respite have been provided for disabled children and young people and this has now extended to children and young people on the edge of care, reducing the need for them to come into longer term or permanent care. Use of Direct Payments and child-minding can assist families to access the most appropriate level of support when they need it.
- f. **Ensuring placements made in an emergency or at short notice have robust time limited care plans.** A small number of children and young people may require immediate accommodation because of a Court Order or because of their involvement in the Criminal Justice System. These arrangements need to be reviewed as early as possible to ensure that children accommodated in emergency situations have time limited plans in place that focus on rehabilitation

to family and friends.

- g. **Provision of accommodation for young people aged 16 and 17 presenting as homeless to Social Services or Housing.** In most cases, with mediation and social work input, young people can be supported to return home. It should be only those young people who genuinely do not have a suitable place to live that become looked after by the Local Authority. If we are to succeed in supporting this group of vulnerable young people, it is important to have access to a range of appropriate short-term accommodation that allows the assessment to be completed and any family mediation work carried out. This would avoid the need to make more expensive short-term arrangements which can often create false expectations and hamper efforts to return young people home. Access to services and support is managed and monitored.
- h. **Maintaining effective working relationships with Family Courts.** This is a crucial relationship for local authorities and it needs to be managed well through regular contact with the judiciary and CAFCASS to monitor delivery of the court's expectations in terms of process and practice and to explain the policies adopted.

AIM 3: TO PROVIDE AND COMMISSION A FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE RANGE OF HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS

Key Objectives

- i. Formal kinship fostering arrangements will be explored as the preferred alternative arrangement where it is necessary for the local authority to share parental responsibility or intervene in managing risk and protect children.
- ii. Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements described in principles 4. and 5, the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family, wherever possible within the area.
- iii. Residential placements will only be made where the complexity and challenge of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting or where a young person is subject of a Court Ordered Secure Remand.
- iv. Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.
- v. Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs.

3.1 The Council should seek to provide or commission the right range of placements which provide positive experiences for children and young people who are looked after. The following shared commitments will assist it to provide and commission a range of placements which are good quality and value and respond to children's needs.

- a. **Increasing the number and capacity of local fostering placements.** Efforts continue to be focused on recruiting and retaining new foster carers, to ensure the Council has enough families with the right combination of skills who are supported to meet the diverse needs of children and young people. It needs foster carers who can manage very challenging behaviours, provide placements for young people involved in the Criminal Justice System (including on Remand), provide parent and baby placements, placements for disabled children and short term or emergency placements. It also need to recruit carers able to offer short breaks and respite placements to support children and young people to remain living at home or within

their family network. The Council should have a fostering recruitment strategy and set annual targets have been set, complemented by regional recruitment work. It should explore the potential for reduced or waived Council Tax for foster carers, and for their prior consideration in allocations of larger Council housing properties.

- b. **Reducing inappropriate use made of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements and clearly specifying their role.** A successful recruitment strategy should aim to reduce the need to commission IFAs for new placements. Agencies can continue to play a role in complementing our in-house provision through targeted commissioning of more specialist provisions rather than being used because a local authority foster placement is not available.
- c. **Managing demand for mainstream and specialist residential placements.** Mainstream residential care placements are needed for children and young people who may present challenging or risky behaviours. They may have experienced several placement breakdowns or they may be running away, misusing substances or be at risk of child sexual exploitation. They need the additional level of supervision and support that can be provided in staffed residential care. Specialist residential placements are needed for disabled children and young people with extremely complex and challenging needs, with staff who are experienced in providing the care they need.
- d. **Making fewer mainstream residential placements and make them closer to home.** For a very small number of children, a residential home will be the best environment to meet their needs and help them succeed. Staffing levels allow 24-hour support to be provided for the highest levels of need and most challenging types of behaviours.
- e. **Finding specialist placements which support older disabled children and young people locally.** Some severely disabled young people require 24-hour care. Children and Young People Services should agree a joint strategy with the Education Department and the Local Health Board.
- f. **Jointly commissioning accommodation for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years.** We need to commission more independent or semi-independent living options such as supported housing, 'training flats' and supported lodgings for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 to support them at different levels of independence and to make a good transition into adulthood.

AIM 4: TO GIVE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CLEARLY PLANNED JOURNEYS THROUGH CARE

Key Objectives

- i. Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements described in 4 and 5 above, the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family provided preferably by in-house foster carers and, if not, with Independent Fostering Agency carers, wherever possible within the area.
- ii. Residential placements will only be made where the complexity and challenge of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting or where a young person is subject of a Court Ordered Secure Remand.
- iii. Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.
- iv. Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs.
- v. All Looked After Children of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school. Providing appropriate support to enable engagement in education is just as important as finding suitable care placements for Looked After Children.
- vi. Placements should support positive transitions to independence, adulthood, education, employment and training equipping young people to succeed and improve their life chances.

4.1 Every looked after child should be offered the support of an independent advocate to help make sure their wishes and feelings are expressed and made known. Having a clear plan informed by their views is essential. A good plan ensures that children come into and leave care at the right time, and that they do not 'drift' through care. Children need clearly planned journeys which allow them to be re-united with family and friends wherever possible, or have stable placements with carers or in care homes, and they leave the care system positively when they are ready to

do so.

4.2 A shared commitment to make this happen include the following actions.

- a. **Finding the right placements.** We need to ensure that the process of referral for a placement includes providing enough detailed information about the needs and circumstances of the child to support placement finding and making the best match possible with appropriate carers. We need to provide and source a wide range of high quality placements supported by integrated assessment and good planning.
- b. **Giving children stability and permanence as quickly as possible.** Giving children and young people, a sense of security, continuity and commitment is crucial to ensuring that they have a positive experience of being looked after. Permanence includes emotional, physical and legal stability. As corporate parents, the Council must commit to providing a plan to achieve permanence for all looked after children through:
 - reunification with their birth family
 - living with other family and friends
 - Child Arrangements Orders
 - long-term fostering
 - adoption.

The Council should agree and monitor plans for permanence, ensuring they remain focused on achieving reunification with families and friends where it is in the child's best interests and, where this is not possible, permanency via adoption or long-term fostering.

- c. **Monitoring drift in care planning.** Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) monitor a child's care plan at set intervals required by law. Once it is identified that a child can be reunified with family or friends (through rehabilitation, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015, Child Arrangements Orders), the IRO will monitor the revised care plan and oversee the process until it is concluded.

Social workers will work with colleagues in child care legal teams and CAF/CASS to review the legal status of all long-term placements to consider the revocation of Care Orders, or the granting of Child Arrangements Orders when this is appropriate

for the child.

- d. **Continuing involvement of other agencies in placement decision making is critical.** It helps to ensure that a holistic approach to meeting the child's needs is taken (for example, minimising disruption to school attendance because of the placement location).
- e. **Ensuring all looked after children and young people receive a good education.** Providing the right education setting is just as important as providing a suitable home environment. Becoming looked after is a dramatic change in the life of a child or young person and this can be even more significant if it results in a change of school at the same time.

When a child becomes looked after, substantial efforts should be made to keep them in the school they were attending before being accommodated, if this is safe and in their best interests to do so. To make this work, schools, social workers and carers need to work together to share information and plan effectively.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is an integral part of the care planning process. It helps schools to identify the learning and pastoral support needs of a looked after child, and sets out clearly the expectations of carers, social workers, teachers and others involved in helping the child or young person achieve their learning potential.

- f. **Helping young people prepare for adulthood and independence.** A vital part of the Council's role as corporate parents is to prepare young people it looks after for their adult lives. Young people will be supported to develop the necessary life skills, experience and confidence with the purpose of achieving as much independence as possible in preparation for adult life.

The future 'life chances' of care leavers are significantly improved if they can be supported to move into education, employment or training. Councils are committed to encouraging ambition and achievement from as early an age as possible, to developing work and training opportunities within the Council (including priority consideration for access to apprenticeship, workplace experience and employability skills training) and to supporting young care leavers in going on to tertiary education in university or college.

They must ensure that all Pathway Plans for young people leaving care address transitions issues in a timely manner to ensure appropriate links can be made across services and partner agencies. This will include for example Housing, Health, employers, colleges and universities, the benefits agency, Adult Social Services and with their families wherever there is a need identified for ongoing support to the young person. Young people need to be given meaningful opportunities to develop

the support services they need and to monitor their impact.

- g. **Ensuring professional involvement is purposeful.** The roles and responsibilities of corporate parents, foster carers, social workers, IROs, teachers, specialist looked after children education and health professionals, advocates and guardians must be clear to ensure they feed into the planning and reviewing processes for looked after children. A child who is being looked after faces a confusing range of people with whom they must build relationships; they should rely on us to coordinate what we do and to always act in their best interests. The key is to consider what we would want to see happen for our own children.

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