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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 9 JANUARY 2019

Present

Jack Straw (Chair)	JS	Independent Chair
Bozena Allen	BA	Independent Member
Jaki Salisbury	JSa	Independent Member
Cllr Rosemarie Harris	RH	Executive Leader
Cllr Aled Davies	AD	Deputy Leader

In Attendance – PCC Representatives

			Present for Item:
Alison Bulman	AB	Director of Social Services	All
Alistair Davey	AD	Welsh Government Social Services Division	All
Cllr James Gibson Watt	JGW	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group	All
Cllr Rachel Powell	RP	Portfolio Holder for Young People	All
Cllr Stephen Hayes	SH	Portfolio Holder for Adult Services	All
David Powell	DP	Acting Deputy Chief Executive	All
Denise Moultrie	DM	Senior Manager, CIW	1
Dylan Owen	DO	Head of Transformation for Adult Services	3.1, 5, 8, 9
Emma Palmer	EP	Head of Strategic Policy and Performance	All
Felicity Llewellyn	FL	PA to Executive Office	All
Jan Coles	JC	Head of Childrens Services	All
Jane Thomas	JT	Head of Financial Services	5 - 7
Jen Jeffreys	JJ	Interim Head of Operations for Adult Services	3.1, 5, 8, 9
Jeremy Evans	JeE	Performance Audit Director, Wales Audit Office	All
Mohammed Mehmet	MM	Acting Chief Executive	All
Phil Hodgson	PH	WLGA Adviser	All
Gareth Lewis	GL	WAO	All

Apologies

Catrin Jones	CJ	Welsh Government
Cllr James Evans	JaE	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance
Ian Budd	IB	Director of Education
John Byrne	JB	Union Convener, Unison
Louise Barry	LB	Head of Operations for Adult Services
Rachel Thomas	RT	WLGA Adviser

In a change to the order of the agenda, CIW presentation was considered, followed by Adult Services, and then the remainder of Children's Services items.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting, dated 29 November 2018, were agreed as an accurate record.

2. RESPONSE TO ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING

JS noted that all the actions arising will be covered within the core agenda, as indicated in the paper.

3. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

3.1. CIW Report - Presentation by CIW (Denise Moultrie)

The report was formally issued at noon today. CIW were consistently impressed by the commitment and dedication of front line staff, support services and business intelligence throughout the inspection. The inspection was very efficiently organised, and DM expressed CIW's thanks.

- Greater corporate oversight
- PLOG is running more effectively than before.
- The Corporate Parenting Group is a work in progress, but is improving.
- The Quality Assurance Framework is a well-written document, that that is not yet fully embedded within Children's Services.
- The performance information is much improved, and issues of accuracy arising are being addressed.
- New policies and procedures have been introduced. These are not yet fully known and understood by partner agencies e.g. the regional threshold document.
- Significant improvements in 'front door' are evident; there is greater timeliness, quality and consistency.
- TAF has moved into PPD; this is a work in progress as TAF is underused and not consistently understood by frontline staff.
- Timeliness and quality has improved for assessments. Approximately one third of 48 assessments sampled were 'good' or 'excellent', noting that two-thirds required.
- some improvement e.g. child's previous history, level of risk etc. was not given sufficient weight within assessments.
- Timeliness and quality of court applications has improved; the Judges in the north and south noted a noticeable improvement, noting opportunities to intervene as early as possible to potentially reduce urgent applications.
- Significant improvements are evident in the regularity of visits to LAC and CPR.
- A decrease in the level of individual workloads is evident within performance figures.
- Supervision has increased.

Priority areas for action; action needed:

- A clear strategic overarching vision.
- A clear focus on improving strategic relationships with partners.
- Thorough and timely complaint investigations; the complaints process was considered to be inefficient, and Stage 1 investigations are not robust enough to prevent escalation to Stage 2.
- Develop commissioning and practice to anticipate children's accommodation needs and reduce the number of emergency placements. Foster placements should be better considered to ensure a 'good fit' and reduce placement failure. There have been missed opportunities for placing children, and Social Workers are directly sourcing placements, resulting in some children being placed [out of the area and/or county] without educational provision.

- Ensure the safeguarding process incorporates multi-agency information sharing as soon as possible following referral to ensure informed practice and best outcomes for children.
- Ensure an immediate multi-agency response to safeguard children at risk of CSES.
- Plans to restructure Children's Services, and implement the signs of safety approach.

CIW Overview:

- "We find children's services has achieved significant improvements in certain areas of practice and some improvement in other aspects."
- "There continue to be other areas of practice where we have serious concerns."

Conclusion / Next Steps:

- Powys County Council will submit a revised improvement plan to CIW within 20 working days.
- CIW will continue to monitor by completing focussed activity on a quarterly basis.
- CIW may undertake a further inspection in twelve to eighteen months.

Director of Social Services Comment

AB thanked DM and the team for the way in which they conducted the inspection. The Service welcomes the report and agrees that it accurately reflects the situation as at October 2018. A number of key actions have already been completed since the inspection. **ACTION: JC will bring an update on these actions to the Board meeting on 30 January 2019, together with the revised action plan.**

Acting Chief Executive Comment

MM thanked DM for the clear summary of the report. It was good to see that the improvements have been acknowledged. Improvements are being made, and the future focus is on increasing pace and improvement in the areas that remain concerns – for all of us. The agenda has been clearly set by this presentation for the areas that require improvement; where improvements and progress have been made, these will need to become fully embedded. MM highlighted that the authority has made good progress since the focus shifted to improvement in early 2018. There are areas of significant concern within the report; the big picture demonstrates good progress, whilst focusing on strategy, vision, partnership working etc. going forward.

Leader of the Council's Comment

RH thanked DM for acknowledging the progress that has been made, and that the authority remains on a journey. The corporate and political oversight has been developed, and performance information is being shared with the wider Membership. An internal group continues to meet; the agenda will be changed to concentrate on the areas highlighted within DM's presentation. RH requested that JS consider aligning the agenda for this Board to the recommendations to ensure the focus is on current priority areas. RH thanked the senior leadership team, the performance management staff, portfolio holder and all others involved in supporting the process.

Phil Hodgson's Comment

The list of improvements was acknowledged. The relative lack of pace of improvement was highlighted, as the vision and strategy around effective early help was highlighted as this Board has raised this matter over the past twelve months. The pace of change needs to be increased.

Alistair Davey's Comment

Getting the vision and strategy approach right is vital; focus on prevention is key, as are placements (reducing the number of children being placed out of County), and children exiting care. The capacity and capability of the workforce is key going forward.

Head of Children's Services Comment

JC noted that the vision is to intervene at the earliest possible opportunity, and that for every moment within the intervention process, resources are to be focused on early intervention and prevention. AB noted that JC has been in post since October and, as such, the pace of change has increased significantly.

Cllr. James Gibson-Watt's Comment

It was queried whether Children's Disability Services (CDS) was considered within the inspection. DM noted that some of the case files were sampled, and a Team Manager was involved in the inspection, but noted that there is no specific reference within the report. Further monitoring work may include/focus on CDS.

Bozena Allen's Comment

BA acknowledged the positives, noting that improvement matters arising have been the focus of the I&AB, but noted continuing serious concerns.

Independent Chair's Comment

JS thanked DM for her presentation. The position is broadly as expected, given the Board's work, but it was emphasised that the pace in the next six to twelve months must be significantly higher than in the previous months. JS is optimistic that there will be an increased pace and that the authority is actively engaging in improvement, but the fact that serious concerns remain is a concern. JS acknowledged that the report does reflect significant progress in some areas whilst noting the need to act on the areas for improvement. JS will be making a quarterly report to the new Minister, Julie James AM, shortly. The focus of future I&AB meetings will be considered further, with suggestions being made by the authority and Independent Members of the Board in relation to key priorities. **ACTION: JS will provide an update on the key focus items at the next Board meeting.** The outcome of the inspection highlights many issues that have been of major concern to the Board.

Portfolio Holder for Young People's Comment

RP noted the honesty of the report, and the clarity of the areas for improvement which have been identified. The acknowledgement of staff's efforts was appreciated.

3.2. CIW Report – Key Findings / Next Steps Discussion

No matters arising; discussions were covered within item 3.1.

3.3. Performance Report

The Board received the report. **ACTION: JC will provide an update at the next Board re: Review of arrangements for 24 children subject to placement orders, waiting to be placed.**

PH highlighted the 'particularly good' figures for November 2018, and commended the staff for the outcomes. The number of LAC was queried; the number has increased in comparison to the same period last year. The key of course is to maintain this improvement on a sustainable basis.

EP has contacted Albert Heaney re: the top 5 indicators for Children's Services, as comparative information is not currently published. AB liaises with peer Directors to undertake benchmarking; over recent months Powys has compared favourably.

3.4. Progress Against CIW Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION: Following the Corporate Parenting workshop, consider the recommendations identified during that workshop and engage with all areas of the Council. RP noted that the Members Development Day was received favourably. The authority's Apprenticeship offer is Council-wide, and opportunities are being advertised.

3.5. Legal Report

The report was not considered by the Board as, whilst it notes capacity, it does not address the adequacy of the service provision. **RECOMMENDATION:** that representatives of the authority contact peers on other authorities to better consider the process by which legal support is provided to Social Services, to identify the role of each person (legal representative, Social Worker etc.) and how it can positively impact on outcomes for service users.

ACTION: DP will liaise with the Head of Legal to provide the Board with a report that provides assurance that there is a legal service that supports the statutory functions effectively to meet the improvement agenda; this is not an establishment query, but rather a need to fundamentally change the way that Legal and Social Services teams work together effectively to achieve the outcomes.

3.6. PTHB – Statutory Meetings

The Board received and noted the report, which detailed the approach consistent with work regulations.

3.7. Overarching Narrative – Powys Commitment to Children

ACTION: AB will circulate to the Board an updated version of a broader overarching narrative for Children. PH linked this narrative to the work of the Ministerial Advisory Group, and this will be embedded within the revised document.

3.8. Exit Interviews – Leave of Own Accord

The Board received the report for information. An employee representative team regularly meets with AB and the Heads of Service. **ACTION:** JC/HR to continue to develop management information and learn from it.

3.9. New Structure – Proposed Consultation Timeline

The Board received the paper, and JS confirmed that the Board was assured, but that it is imperative that this timetable is delivered.

3.10. Cost of Placements

The Board received the report. Therapeutic Fostering provision is currently being scoped; JGW noted that the authority previously had a Therapeutic Fostering Policy, which may be worth revisiting. **ACTION:** JT and JC will provide an updated fostering cost breakdown document (an updated version of the report previously provided to the Board).

a. CIW Children’s Report 2017 – Key Themes

The Board received the report. The narrative within the document will be considered to ensure that it reflects the ‘current’ situation e.g. identifying where a policy exists, but is *being* embedded (rather than *is* embedded).

MM noted that more clarity is required as to the items of Corporate Governance that need to be the focus going forward. JS confirmed that the Board may deploy a lighter touch, and will work closely with the authority to ensure that the [reporting] requirements of the Board are focused on the key items required as a result of the Ministerial intervention, noting the need of the authority to be focused on the ‘business as usual’ improvement.

ACTION: JS will provide the Board with clarity on all of the items that the Board’s priorities following his quarterly report to the Minister.

5. ADULT SERVICES

a. Performance Report

The Board received the report. MD queried how the domiciliary care provision may be affected by Brexit. 7% of the Care staff across Britain are non-UK citizens; in Powys the figure is 3%. The authority has registered with the Government systems – and are recommending that providers do the same – to support EU citizens to remain working in Powys. The Board recognises the huge challenges faced by the authority; the Allied transfer has been successfully managed.

Some ‘winter pressures’ funding has been accessed via PTHB. JS confirmed that representatives of the Board will support discussions with RPB to help to facilitate the allocation of funding for both Children’s and Adults. JaS noted that the RPB allocation has not been identified under ‘What are we worried about?’ on page 21 of the report. SH confirmed that this is fully acknowledged within corporate planning and MTFS drafts.

ACTION: AB/MM to consider how and when the Board will engage in work with the RPB.

AB will be attending a Continuing Health Care meeting tomorrow.

b. Response to Queries in Performance Data

‘1D – Percentage of assessments service’ was queried at the last meeting, and DO noted that this month’s report includes two versions of the response – one to clarify the information previously circulated to the Board, and one to include a visual demonstration of the example. **ACTION: DO will be available 10 minutes prior to the I&AB on 30 January to clarify the information provided; Board members were invited to join this conversation, if the so wished.**

The need to know when all indicators would be reported was raised; some reporting items require a change to systems like WCCIS in order to report on outcomes. **ACTION: EP will provide [via email to the Board] an updated document detailing the current situation for each data item that has been requested.**

It was clarified that item 4 within the Performance Report demonstrates the percentage of case supervisions held. BA highlighted the omission of information for 'What are we worried about?' on page 18.

c. Progress Against CIW Recommendations

JaS requested that the outcomes of the actions are demonstrated, aligned to the recommendations. Consideration should be given to 'lessons learned' and the appropriate allocation of BRAG ratings to reflect the current situation for each item.

d. CIW Report (Monitoring Visit) **CONFIDENTIAL pending publication by CIW **

SH confirmed that the monitoring visit was aligned to the authority's own perception of the Service. The report notes that: "*Our findings were akin to PCC's own recent file audit*". The need for further improvement is recognised, and the authority is pleased that improvement to date has been acknowledged. **ACTION: DO/JJ will present the authority's revised plan to the Board meeting on 30 January 2019.**

PH positively noted the report's reference to the '... beginnings of a cultural shift to continuous improvement.'

e. Process Map – Whole System Review

The map issued with the agenda was replaced by a hardcopy neurological diagram, which will assist the authority in understanding the impact that decisions have on the whole system when made at any given point (predictive analytics). Noting the positive progress, and that work is ongoing, this document will not be brought back to the Board unless/until the authority considers it beneficial to providing the Board with assurance. **ACTION: EP to bring this item back to the Board when the work is substantively complete.**

f. Technology Enabled Care

It was noted that better use is being made of resources. The information and examples at the workshop held a few months ago were very useful. **RECOMMENDATION: JaS recommended that the authority reconsider the calculations, as so much caution has been included within the models that it undersells the provision and the realistic benefits that could be achieved. Consideration should be given to applying a sensitivity analysis approach.**

g. Exit Interviews – Leave of Own Accord

The Board received the report for information. **RECOMMENDATION: To continuously record and continue to explore the reasons for staff leaving to help to positively impact on the recruitment [by addressing any issues arising].** EP noted that the leaver information is proactively used at an operational level.

6. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND FORECAST

The Board received the report, and JT presented indicative budget information. JS welcomed the clarity of how the Social Services pressures will be addressed. **ACTION JT to advise the Board further on the funding of Social Care and relevant risks prior to the Council approving its budget.**

7. EXTERNAL ADVISOR / INDEPENDENT MEMBER UPDATES

Updates were not provided for this meeting.

8.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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The Board expressed their thanks to Louise Barry who was unable to attend the meeting, and is leaving the authority shortly. AB introduced JJ as Interim Head of Operations for Adult Services.

9.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
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- 27th February 2019
- 27th March 2019
- 1st May 2019
- 5th June 2019
- 26th June 2019
- 7th August 2019
- 4th September 2019
- 2nd October 2019
- 30th October 2019
- 4th December 2019

Jack Straw, Independent Chair

Actions from Improvement and Assurance Board held on 09 January 2019

	<u>Item Number</u>	<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	3.1.	3	Jan Coles	Bring an update on these actions [completed since the inspection] to the Board meeting on 30 January 2019, together with the revised action plan. [Added to agenda for 30 January]
2.	3.1.	4	Jack Straw	Provide an update on the key focus items at the next Board meeting. [Added to agenda for 30 January]
3.	3.3.	4	Jan Coles	Provide an update at the next Board re: Review of arrangements for 24 children subject to placement orders, waiting to be placed. [Added to agenda for 30 January]
4.	3.5.	5	David Powell	Liaise with the Head of Legal to provide the Board with a report that provides assurance that there is a legal service that supports the statutory functions effectively to meet the improvement agenda. [Added to agenda for 30 January]
5.	3.7.	5	Alison Bulman	Circulate to the Board an updated version of a broader overarching narrative for Children.
6.	3.8.	5	Jan Coles / HR	Continue to develop management information and learn from it.
7.	3.10.	5	Jane Thomas / Jan Coles	Provide an updated fostering cost breakdown document (an updated version of the report previously provided to the Board). [Added to agenda for 30 January]
8.	4.1.	6	Jack Straw	Provide the Board with clarity on all of the items that the Board's priorities following his quarterly report to the Minister.
9.	5.1.	6	Alison Bulman / Mohammed Mehmet	Consider how and when the Board will engage in work with the RPB.
10.	5.2.	6	All	DO will be available 10 minutes prior to the I&AB on 30 January to clarify the information provided; Board members were invited to join this conversation, if the so wished.
11.	5.2.	6	Emma Palmer	Provide [via email to the Board] an updated document detailing the current situation for each data item that has been requested.
12.	5.4.	6	Dylan Owen / Jen Jeffreys	Present the authority's revised [CIW Monitoring Visit] plan to the Board meeting on 30 January 2019. [Added to agenda for 30 January]
13.	5.5.	7	Emma Palmer	Bring the 'Whole System Review' back to the Board when the work is substantively complete.

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