



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22**

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

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

**CARE INSPECTORATE WALES**

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Scrutiny Members in relation to progress with action plans associated with Inspection of the Disabled Children's Service and Focused Activity in the 16+ Service.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

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

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In October 2020, Scrutiny Committee received its first report about the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) reports relating to:
- The inspection of children's services, focusing on support for disabled children in (December 2019)
  - Focused activity with regard to support for care leavers (March 2020)

- 3.2 Prior to this, a report outlining the findings of the Disabled Children’s Service Review and proposed next steps was brought to Scrutiny Committee on the 4/12/2019 for consideration and comment. See link below:

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

#### 4. **DISABLED CHILDREN’S SERVICE**

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

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

- 4.2 The report identified the following strengths and areas for improvement :

| Strengths  | Areas For Improvement  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong vision for remodelling services for disabled children.</li> <li>• An effective and improved response at the ‘front door’ of children’s services.</li> <li>• The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) evidenced good joint working arrangements.</li> <li>• An understanding of the social model of disability within our prevention and early intervention services and an The Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS) is an effective and valued service, with a focus on family strengths and the achievement of personal outcomes.</li> <li>• Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) provides its own psychological support for children and practitioner consultation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased focus on family strengths and the identification of personal outcomes.</li> <li>• Improved practice in relation to assessments of parent carers.</li> <li>• Ensuring greater promotion of the voice of the child including the use of advocacy.</li> <li>• Greater support for siblings of disabled children.</li> <li>• To develop alternative approaches to providing respite/short breaks.</li> <li>• The local authority and the health board need to reach greater resolution on eligibility for continuing care arrangements for children with complex needs.</li> <li>• Improving quality assurance within DCT.</li> <li>• Consideration to be given to the benefits to disabled young people of earlier active</li> </ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That staff were positive and felt well supported by colleagues and managers.</li> <li>• Evidence of partnership working in the development of an emotional well-being service jointly with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.</li> <li>• intention to improve equality of access for disabled children.</li> </ul> | <p>involvement by adult services social workers and Personal Advisors (PAs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-establish the disability register</li> <li>• CTMUHB and RCTCBC to continue to focus efforts to achieve a more joined up strategic approach to the advantage of citizens.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

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

4.4 Progress against the post inspection Action plan is outlined at Appendix 1.

**5. CIW FOCUSED ACTIVITY 16 + TEAMS**

5.1 AT the end of March 2020, Children’s Services received CIW feedback in relation to the focused activity undertaken earlier that month with the 16+ teams. This did not lead to a written and published report owing to the status of the work but there was feedback in letter format. The letter identified the following Strengths and areas for improvement :

| Strengths  | Areas For Improvement   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Assistants (PAs) were committed to promoting the well-being of young people</li> <li>• that young people valued their PAs;</li> <li>• and that there were good examples of good contact between the PAs and other professionals</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the outcome focused approach, ensuring that young people’s wishes and feelings are evident in pathway planning</li> <li>• Ensuring Pathway Plans are reviewed in a timelier manner and involve updates from relevant agencies.</li> <li>• Improving quality assurance.</li> <li>• Ensuring young people have an active offer of a service in Welsh.</li> </ul> |

The associated improvement plan can be found at Appendix 2

**6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This is an information report.

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

**7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 This is an information report.

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

**8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

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

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

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

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

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

10.1 This consultation links to the corporate priority of promoting independence and positive lives for everyone by ensuring that the Council listens to the people it provides for.

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

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

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 Progress has been made against both action plans which also highlight the areas where progress is still required.
- 11.2 There is a strong commitment within RCT Children's Services to support the Disabled Children's Service and the 16+ Teams to implement positive change, whilst acknowledging and building upon the strengths identified. Steering groups have been established and the action plans provide a clear framework to facilitate and drive change to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people within RCT.

## Appendix 1: Disabled Children's Service Post CIW Inspection Improvement Plan

Children's Services received CIW's Inspection Report on the provision of early help, care and support and seamless transition for disabled children and their families in Rhondda Cynon Taf in March 2020. The action plan below tracks progress and barriers with the improvements identified as necessary by the inspection.

| Improvement area<br>1:<br>Well-being   | What Needs to be Done   | Who / When                            | Update 7.9.21   | RAG              |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1.1 There should be increased focus on strengths, the voice of the child and clear outcomes for assessment and care and support within the Disabled Children's Team (DCT). | Review documentation, Assessment, Care and Support Plan, supervision to ensure it captures the voice of the child and has regard to the needs of siblings. Ensure documentation supports a strength based, outcome focused approach.                        | HoS /SM/TMs & training<br><br>30.4.21 | Revised templates implemented.  | <b>Completed</b> |
|  | Agree approach to strength based work (solution focused /restorative practice).<br>Review available inhouse resource: trainers, mentors, training dept support etc.<br>Develop a sustainable training programme to be piloted within the DCT and 16+ Teams. | 30.4.21                               | Research element is complete. Steering group have endorsed an RCT approach. RCT Model of Practice will now commence in March 2022. We are in the midst of a recruitment and retention challenge and current level of vacancy would be a barrier to implementation. However, preparatory work will take place. |                  |

|   |   |                               |  |                  |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|------------------|
|   | Detailed implementation plan to be developed.   |                               | Staff Engagement sessions held in June 2021, considered our vision and values, which will inform the model of practice.  |                  |
| <b>1.2 There should be increased effective management oversight and quality assurance within DCT.</b> | Work commenced to develop bespoke quality assurance tools e.g. audit and supervision tools.   | HoS / SDO<br>1.5.21           | Revised templates etc implemented.   | <b>Completed</b> |
|   | Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework to be embedded within the service and WCCIS as a priority.<br><br>DCT detailed performance report to be developed by the Management Information Team. | HoS /SDO / BPM<br><br>31.7.21 | Service QA Plan has been developed and is being implemented.<br><br>Subgroup established, performance report under development.  |                  |
| <b>1.3 There should be greater support for siblings of disabled children.</b>                         | To review the commissioned services against DCT's new model of intervention and support for siblings.   | SMs / SDO<br>31.7.21          | Work with the Resilient Families Service to take forward joint working to support siblings of disabled children paused, will recommence in Autumn 2021.<br><br>Undertaking a review of Action For Children's commissioned services in RCT. |                  |

| Improvement area 2:<br>People – voice and choice  | What Needs to be Done   | Who / When                   | Update 7.9.21  | RAG                     |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| <p>2.1 There needs to be greater promotion of the voice of the child throughout services for disabled children, including advocacy.</p> <p>There should be more specialist training undertaken by practitioners in DCT.</p> | <p>See 1.1<br/>Script developed and shared, further information and guidance provided practitioners clear all children automatically to be referred to TGP for advocacy. Monitoring tool discussed as part of interface meetings.</p> | <p>SDM HoS<br/>Completed</p> | <p><b>Completed</b></p>  |                         |
|   | <p>Develop specialist training for DCT practitioners.</p>   | <p>SDM</p>                   | <p>Further specialist training for DCT practitioners will be provided as the need is identified.</p> | <p><b>Completed</b></p> |

| Improvement area 3:<br>Partnerships and integration  | What Needs to be Done | Who / When | Update 7.9.21   | RAG |
|--|-----------------------|------------|---|-----|
| <p>3.1 CTMUHB and RCTCBC should continue to focus efforts to achieve a more joined up strategic approach</p> |                       |            | <p>Service Director taking forward CC and MAPP directly with CTMUHB.</p> <p>Meeting held in April 2021 with reps from LHB and CS; where it was agreed to establish regular meetings</p> |     |



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| <p>to the advantage of citizens.</p>  |  |                | <p>to achieve a more joined up strategic approach to service development for disabled children and their families.</p> <p>SM SDO to co-ordinate the initial meeting June/July 2021. Meeting delayed to be scheduled in Autumn 2021.</p> <p>Population needs assessment has commenced.</p> |  |
| <p>3.2 Current service provision for disabled children and their families should be evaluated and planning of services undertaken against projected future needs. This information would inform improved joint commissioning.</p> | <p>To review the commissioned services against DCT's new model of intervention. Need to ensure that all services are working to support the new model.</p> <p>Ensure opportunities for joint commissioning are identified E.G. COT agreement with Adult Services to be reviewed. Review of Rhondda Family Support.</p> | <p>HoS SDM</p> | <p>Review of commissioned services continuing</p> <p>Initial discussions held with Adult Services re provision of COT services going forward.</p>   |  |
| <p>3.3 There should be resolution of the funding of continuing care.</p>  | <p>Work with health colleagues to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No clear process for accessing CC.</li> <li>• Lack of engagement at MAPP</li> <li>• Funding difficulties</li> <li>• Transition</li> </ul>  | <p>CSD</p>     | <p>LHB has developed its policy and further work is required on implementation.</p>   |  |

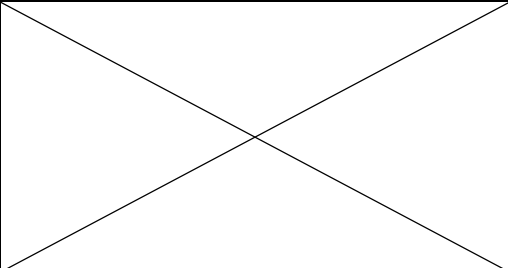
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| <p>Consideration should be given to the benefits to disabled young people of earlier active involvement by adult services social workers and Personal Advisors (PAs).</p> | <p>Create a 16+ PA post within the new DCT's structure.</p> | <p>SDM  HoS<br/>14.2.21</p> | <p>PA in post, operational, mechanisms established, improved links and joint working.</p> | <p><b>Completed</b></p> |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------|

| <p><b>Improvement area 4:</b><br/><br/><b>Prevention and early intervention</b></p>  | <p><b>What Needs to be Done</b></p> | <p><b>Who / When</b></p> | <p><b>Update 7.9.21</b></p>  | <p><b>RAG</b></p>       |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| <p>4.1 All assessments must be sufficiently thorough (proportionate) and analyse need (and not be viewed as a process just to secure a specific resource).</p> | <p>See 1.1</p>                      |                          | <p>Post in Early Intervention Teams (IAA/EAT) operational. Good working practice established</p> | <p><b>Completed</b></p> |

## Appendix 2: 16+ Post CIW Focused Activity Improvement Plan

At the end of March 2020, Children's Services received CIW feedback in relation to the focused activity undertaken earlier that month with the 16+ teams. The resulting letter highlighted the areas of strengths and improvements. This action plan tracks progress and barriers with the related improvements.

| Improvement  | What Needs to be Done   | Who / When   | Update 7.9.21   | RAG  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1.PAs should use an outcome focused approach with young people to identify personal outcomes and ensure the young person's wishes and feelings are evident in pathway planning.    | <p>Agree approach to strength based work (solution focused /restorative practice).</p> <p>Review available inhouse resource: trainers, mentors, training dept support etc.</p> <p>Develop a sustainable training programme to be piloted within the DCT and 16+ Teams.</p> <p>Detailed implementation plan to be developed.</p> | <p>HoS / SM/ TMs &amp; training</p> <p>30.4.21</p> | <p>Research element is complete. Steering group have endorsed an RCT approach. RCT Model of Practice will now commence in March 2022. We are in the midst of a recruitment and retention challenge and current level of vacancy would be a barrier to implementation. However, preparatory work will take place.</p> <p>Staff Engagement sessions held in June 2021, considered our vision and values, which will inform the model of practice.</p> | Implementation of RCT Model of Practice has been delayed, will now commence in March 2022. |
| 2.Reviews of pathway plans should be meaningful, timely and involve updates from relevant people and agencies. Progress against outcomes should be evaluated and plans and actions | <p>Review documentation, Assessment, Pathway Plans, supervision to ensure it captures the voice of the young person and supports a strength based, outcome focused approach.</p> <p>See point 3<br/>Begin to embed the actions outlined in point 3 into practice and monitor implementation.</p>                                | <p>HoS/ SM</p> <p>1.7.21</p>                       | <p>SMs have regular performance meetings with TMs (inc Pathway Plans) utilising the data contained within the Performance Report.</p> <p>HoS review of documentation to support QA, focus, supervision and case audit tool completed.</p> <p>Implementation of supervision and audit tools to commence in the Autumn 2021</p>   |  |

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| changed where appropriate   |  |                                | Further changes to documentation will be led by the work on the RCT Model of Social Work Practice.  |                  |
| 3. Quality assurance practice should be improved. This should involve greater use of available information to analyse and explore outcomes for young people and thereby identify effective approaches | 16+ Performance Report has been developed by the Management Information Team. Report has been shared with TMs.<br><br>Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework to be embedded within the service and WCCIS as a priority. | HoS SMs 31.1.21<br><br>30.5.21 | Performance meetings established.<br><br>Programme of focused audits being implemented.<br><br>Service QA Plan has been developed, in the initial stages of implementation.               |                  |
| 4. Managers must ensure young people receive the active offer for services in the Welsh language  | To pursue incorporating a trigger question regarding the Welsh language into the 16+ documentation. To be included in any wider changes made to the Pathway Review/ Plan templates on WCCIS.                                     | SM PM<br><br>30.4.21           |   | <b>Completed</b> |
| 5. Managers should consider a systemic review of capacity, allocation practice and use  | First step to focus on team development. Consider the culture of the team, how things currently operate, strengths, opportunities for development.   | HoS/SM<br>31.1.2021            | As a result of recruitment difficulties, the team development training has been put on hold so that new staff joining the service will have the opportunity to take part in the sessions. |                  |

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| <p>of resources across the current team structures and take any immediate action necessary</p>               | <p>Capacity and resources have been addressed.</p>   |                |   |  |
| <p>6. RCTCBC may be able to improve its offer to care leavers by a more proactive approach from housing.</p> | <p>Recommence the 16+ Accommodation and Support Strategy as it has been placed on hold due to the pandemic. Identify priority areas to take forward.</p> | <p>CSD HoS</p> | <p>16+ Accommodation Strategy priority actions areas being progressed:</p> <p>Mercury Project report and recommendations delivered. Housing Solutions Officer identified as lead for Care Leavers in Housing. Further work scheduled to develop a clear pathway to housing for care leavers. Improve the interface between housing and Children's Services.</p> <p>Appointed to SW post Supported Lodging Scheme, changes made to the recruitment pathway of supported lodging providers.</p> <p>2 Mentor posts 16+ Teams now out to advert.</p> <p>ICF Bid for the Care Leavers Accommodation (PassivHaus) awarded 24.8.21.</p> <p>Autumn 2021 exploring options re utilising the training flats, linking with</p> |  |

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|  |  |  | the new mentor posts and care leavers accommodation. |  |
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