

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 11TH APRIL, 2016

REFERENCE FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH): 7TH MARCH, 2016

“909 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014 (DSS) –

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 would come into force in April 2016. The Committee had therefore requested regular updates on the progress being made in readiness for implementing the requirements of the Act in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The report updated the information considered by the Committee in January 2016, which included:

- An update on the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service, especially in the area of Adult Services where the Council were building upon the positive work undertaken in integrating social care and NHS processes and staff alongside Contact One Vale.
- Information on the resources identified to secure a customised version of the national information portal, Dewis Cymru, for Cardiff and the Vale. Dewis can be found by following this link www.Dewis.Wales.
- The selection of our region by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) to pilot a new training course aimed at officers working at the First Point of Contact so that they fully understand the changes introduced by the Act.
- Progress of the four national work groups, established to share best practice and produce consistent material on an all-Wales basis.
- Information on the series of technical briefings for the Tranche 1 Codes of Practice. These were described as “gateway” documents that summarised the key points for each Code. Access to the briefings was again via the Care Council’s Communications Hub.
- An update on the national awareness raising campaign, led by Welsh Government, which started in February 2016. The Council’s Communications team would be assisting in dissemination of the key messages.
- Progress update on the workforce development materials being developed by the Care Council for Wales.
- The completion of the national training materials for the four core modules and the briefings for external trainers, to ensure that these materials were responsive to our needs.
- Confirmation that the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University would provide support for the new Regional Partnership Board, which would be established in accordance with statutory guidance under Part 9 of the Act, and deliver training on the implications of the Act for elected Members.

- An updated WLGA e- Bulletin.

The report advised that the four all-Wales work streams continued to meet. This region had sent officers to each of these groups so that the Council could contribute to develop national toolkits / checklists and, where possible, avoid duplication and to ensure that procedures / processes would fit within the local context. The national checklist outlining the common recording requirements for assessments had been completed and work continued on the development of the national checklist for the care and support plan.

The implementation team and change champions were finalising the amendments needed for the eligibility / assessment of needs processes in order to meet the requirements set out in the assessment national checklist. They were working with staff to update the Swift IT system so that information could be recorded electronically. Local updates would be delivered to staff in March to take them through these changes.

Using the national training materials, workforce development exercises had commenced to ensure that staff received an overview of the four key areas of change on a prioritised basis. External trainers had been brought in to work in partnership with the implementation team and the Local Authority change champions. However, not all staff would be trained by 6th April and training would continue until all relevant staff had been briefed. The service was therefore currently evaluating feedback on the training received to date.

The Directorate continued to work with the Social Services Improvement Agency to pilot a new training course which would equip officers working at the First Point of Contact with a full understanding of the changes to be introduced by the new Act. This included a focus on the “what matters” question in initial discussions with the people who contacted them. The first of the “Better Conversation” sessions took place in January with consolidation sessions taking place in February and March. Initial feedback had been positive and once the evaluation had been completed, the training would be rolled out to more staff.

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University had been appointed to deliver training for Elected Members on the implications of the Act. Invitations had been sent out for a session on 9th March. This session would also include an update on Corporate Safeguarding.

The report also stated that a public awareness campaign had been launched by the Health and Social Care Minister on 11th February. The Minister had also announced the membership of the National Independent Safeguarding Board which would advise him and work alongside the regional safeguarding boards (adults and children) to secure improvements in safeguarding policy and practice throughout Wales. The statutory framework introduced by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 would require changes to “Working Together under the Children Act 2004” and “In Safe Hands” (which would guide the response to adult abuse and neglect). The report also stated that these were unlikely to be available for some time. In addition, some staff in the Council were obliged to follow the January 2013 version of the “Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable

Adults from Abuse” (POVA), which would also need to be updated to ensure compliance with the Act. Because times of significant change could generate increased risk for vulnerable people, it was important to have available clear guidance for all staff during such periods. Both regional safeguarding boards would be asked to confirm that the current guidance in respect of multi-agency and multi-professional policies and procedures would remain in force until any new material was agreed.

A local co-production workshop was held on 25th February with providers of advocacy services to explore how best an independent professional advocacy service for adults could be provided. The Directorate was in discussion with Welsh Government around how to develop a national approach to this issue similar to that being taken forward for children.

The Act also established a duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to carry out a regional population needs assessment by March 2017. This would help to identify the range of preventative and wellbeing services currently available. The Cardiff and Vale Public Health Service would be co-ordinating this work and it was intended to use the Delivering Transformation Grant in 2016/17 to commission additional capacity to carry out this task.

In March, the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet would receive a report which set out in detail the requirements of the Act and the changes needed. This report would highlight the fact that 6th April was another step on the journey towards full implementation of all the changes required. Much work would remain to be done thereafter, especially in reforming current services, revising current policies to ensure that they were compliant with the new statutory framework, and achieving the shifts in organisational culture needed.

The Chairman asked whether the Director of Social Services could comment on what he considered to be the main challenges. The Director stated that he was still perplexed by the notion of the Act being ‘cost neutral’ and he also mentioned the work to develop preventative services in order reduce service demand, the case for which was not yet convincing on a large scale. He also alluded to other significant challenges, such as the need for greater advocacy support, the “When I am ready” initiative and the requirement for extra support for carers.

In reference to the DEWIS Cymru wellbeing information website, a Committee Member queried whether the Directorate was happy with its content. In reply, the Director stated this was a positive development. At present, it was largely populated with resources relating to North Wales. In due course, this would be extended to cover the whole of Wales. He also added that this represented a monumental task, but progress was being made and that the information contained would need to be regularly updated.

A Committee Member queried whether the Act would represent a real change in culture. In response, the Director commented that this would be based on dialogue with the public around the need for individuals to take greater control and responsibility, coupled with the constraints in regard to resources. He also mentioned the importance for financial management within the Directorate and

making the “money last”. He provided Members with reassurance that officers had a good understanding of “decision making” and that frontline staff understood the need to be prudent around budgets.

In answer to a Member’s request for an update around advocacy services, the Director of Social Services informed Members that advocacy was there to provide professional advocacy for adults with profound communication difficulties. Currently, not many voluntary and third sector advocacy agencies would have the required expertise to meet the needs of service users. Therefore, there was a need to develop a service and this would represent a significant cost pressure.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Committee continue to receive regular updates about the implementation of the Act.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet in order to provide an update around the approach being taken to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Reason for recommendations

(1-3) To ensure that Elected Members are kept informed about fundamental changes to the policy and legislative framework which underpins the work of Social Services.”

Attached as Appendix - [Report to Scrutiny Committee \(Social Care and Health\) - 7th March, 2016](#)