

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 14TH NOVEMBER, 2016

REFERENCE FROM HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 10TH OCTOBER, 2016

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

The Director of Social Services presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide an update in respect of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the approach being taken in regard to implementation.

The report advised that the Act came into effect on 6th April, 2016. The Committee had requested regular updates on the progress being made in implementing the Act in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The report therefore provided an update on the information considered by the Committee in March 2016, which included:

- progress of the four national work groups, established to share best practice and produce consistent material on an all-Wales basis;
- progress on the amendments to the eligibility / assessment of needs process, to ensure compliance with the national assessment checklist;
- an update on the use of the national training materials for the four core modules and the briefings for staff to ensure that they received an overview of the four key areas of change;
- an update on inclusion in the new “Better Conversations” training course that had been piloted by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA), aimed at equipping officers working at the First Point of Contact;
- an update on the national awareness raising campaign, led by Welsh Government, which started in February 2016;
- information about the National Independent Safeguarding Board which would work alongside the regional Safeguarding Boards (adults and children) to secure improvements in safeguarding policy and practice throughout Wales;
- an update on the local co-production workshop held in February to explore how best an independent professional advocacy service for adults could be provided;
- information about the duty on Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to carry out a regional population needs assessment by March 2017;
- an update on resource implications (financial and employment).

In summary, the Director of Social Services stated that 6th April was another step, albeit a fundamental one, on the journey towards full implementation of all the changes required by the Act. He advised that good progress had been made in all areas, including the reform of current services, the revision of current policies to ensure that they were compliant with the new statutory framework, and achieving the shifts in organisational culture that was needed. Furthermore, he added that the decision to focus on business continuity as well as change had been vindicated by the Council's success in minimising the disruption caused to existing service users and carers or those wishing to make referrals. However, the Director stated that the Council was beginning to see the impact that it was having in practice and upon Council resources. Although there were clear benefits in changing the ways in which citizens were supported, this had been very time consuming and caused some issues in relation to managing demand. One direct consequence appeared to have been an increase in the waiting times for Adult Services.

The Chairman, in referring to the increase in waiting times, queried whether evidence of this could be shared with Welsh Government. In reply, the Director of Social Services stated that this would be the right approach to take and that there was quantitative evidence as well as comments from care practitioners that could be provided. The Director also added that the changes to practices introduced by the Act had less immediate impact in areas such as mental health and Children's Services but they did require significant and urgent changes in Older People's Services which was the biggest area of demand. It was not a surprise that waiting times would be affected as a result of adopting a new approach.

A Committee Member stated that some Local Authorities had been struggling with implementing the new Act and he praised the proactive approach adopted by the Vale. He also added that funding was always going to be an issue and he commented that Welsh Government should consider the level of the cap on charges for community care packages.

In reply to a query as to what would happen in cases where service users considered that they were not being appropriately listened to, the Director of Social Services advised that the service worked on the premise that the person's voice must be heard and recorded throughout their care journey. If individuals felt that this was not the case, then there were many routes that they could explore such as advocacy and through the Council's complaints procedures. For the service, a major aspect of the reform was in relation to the change in entitlement to services for carers and so it was important to ensure that all carers were aware of this.

The Committee, in discussing future progress reports, requested that an update be received early in the New Year and that this be in tabular form, reflecting each section of the Act, which would make it easier for the reader to appreciate how well the Council was doing. It was agreed that this update would be as a Region and not specific to the Vale.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be accepted.
- (2) T H A T an update be received in March 2017.
- (3) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Reason for recommendations

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

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee: 10th October, 2016](#)