

Organisational Capacity Summary Overview

Commissioning

Statement

There is good evidence of strong collaboration across health and social care e.g., joint nursing home monitoring, joint quality standards being established and the development of Gwent wide health and social care investment plans e.g. Learning Disability Commissioning Advisory Group and Frail Elderly Path We are committed to working in partnership with all stakeholders to deliver a range of quality services to support the needs of our service users.

We are starting to develop a more outcome based focus to our commissioning and monitoring of services but recognise that this is still at an early stage of development. In the current economic climate and with the pressures on resources we are taking a collaborative approach to service provision and are evidencing good practice in such areas as Gwent Wide Integrated Community Equipment Service (GWICES), intermediate care etc.

On a wider South Wales level good partnerships are developing within the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative (SEWIC), specifically the children's commissioning work and the regional commissioning unit. The next step for the Council is to develop an individual placement tendering approach which with other SEWIC partnerships will improve outcomes and provide better value for money. The SEWIC directors have also recently agreed to develop a similar approach with learning disability placements and this will build on the work of the children's SEWIC group, the Mid & South Wales collaborative approach and the Gwent Learning Disability Commissioning Advisory Group (LDCAG).

In order to deliver quality services we are working in partnership with local providers using the developing commissioning strategies to plan for future needs and to promote improved standards across the whole sector. Contract monitoring is undertaken in the spirit of joint working but with a robust action planning process to address any identified shortcomings.

Judgement

Whilst good progress has been made in developing Joint Commissioning Strategies there is still considerable work to be undertaken on developing an outcome based approach to our commissioning strategies in particular by engaging service users. We are aware of the benefits and efficiencies to be made from a regional approach and recognise that whilst some work has already commenced there is further collaborative work required to deliver these benefits.

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

- Engage and support Local Service Boards to make better use of public sector resources and make a difference to how people experience the services
- Review all current contracts on a rolling programme and change to an outcome based specification with appropriate monitoring arrangements agreed in partnership with providers
- Further develop commissioning strategies to identify priorities and link to medium term financial plan to ensure we make best use of the resources available to us
- Implementation of Purchasing Plans to support Joint Strategic Implementation Groups (JSIGs)
- Ongoing review of Commissioning Strategies to ensure that they are fit for purpose
- Work collaboratively with other local authorities around fee levels and service standards to build sustainable services
- Continue internal service reviews on an annual basis to inform best outcomes in service provision.
- Strengthen contract monitoring procedures by harnessing the views and feedback of users and carers.
- Continued joint working on fee levels with other local authorities.

Financial Stability and Resources

Statement

Through the devolved budget process supported by the Resource Management Group (RMG) we have a good ongoing awareness of the cost of our services and the management of debt. This devolved process will be further enhanced by the continued development of the Draig information system enabling the provision of individual costed care plans.

We have a charging policy for day and domiciliary services that not only complies with Welsh Office guidance but means that older people in the borough pay less than in many other authorities.

There is improving corporate and political understanding and ownership of the budget pressures faced within the service area and whilst the demographics of the Borough show increasing demand for our services the financial resources available to us are limited; we are working with partners and service users to ensure that we achieve quality services at sustainable prices. Choices will have to be made with regard to available services linked to our commissioning strategies but this will be done within a risk assessment framework to ensure that we keep vulnerable children and adults safe.

We are ensuring that resources are directed to service provision and are streamlining business processes to reduce costs whilst maintaining service

standards and are working with other local authorities to promote a better awareness of the cost of social care needs within Wales.

Judgement

A tremendous amount of effort goes into establishing, developing, monitoring and managing the budget and ensuring that there is good awareness of costs and pressures across the organisation. Further work is ongoing to ensure that we have appropriate systems and processes in place and that we are working as efficiently and effectively as we can to deliver appropriate value for money services.

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

- Continued development of Draig finance to streamline processes and provide sound financial information on which to plan for services
- Support Shared Service agenda and Local Service Board to achieve value for money and support the service direction
- Engagement in collaborative working on fees for residential and nursing care, fostering, etc. to ensure that we can purchase the services we require at a sustainable price
- Continued joint working around fee levels and fee models for all client groups
- Review of all costed care plans to ensure they deliver value for money and meet the needs of service users
- Development of electronic financial instructions to support the alternative working strategies and help with our accommodation plans
- Continue schedule of service reviews for best value
- Maximise Benefits Advice service by targeting key users.

Performance and Information

Statement

We have a strong culture of performance management which is promoted at all levels within the organisation. We are actively working to ensure robust linkages between all of our planning and strategic documents to ensure staff are able to link their performance to the overall service objectives. There are clear reporting procedures for performance and an improving ability to collect and analyse the required information to monitor our performance and overall service delivery.

We are working hard to create the right culture so that service improvement is owned by everyone from the Chief Officer to front line staff, with performance a key feature of team meetings.

We are embracing the availability of new technology in both service provision and to support the collection and sharing of information with all relevant stakeholders to improve service delivery.

Our approach is to learn from complaints and embrace best practice identified elsewhere and continually strive to improve our performance by setting challenging targets.

Judgement

We have invested resources in ensuring that we have a strong performance management culture and plan further ongoing pieces of work to provide us with accurate, timely and appropriate information which will allow us to plan more effectively and provide us with intelligence to understand trends and analyse performance to influence policy direction. Whilst we have made good progress in this area we recognise that we still have a long way to go in developing these systems.

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

- Continued Draig development to maximise the electronic storage of data and performance information
- Development of Information Sharing Protocols to support partnership working
- Implementation of Unified Assessment (UA) and Integrated Childrens System (ICS) to support care management processes
- Removal of legacy systems so that we have one source of data collection and to ensure robust data security
- Implement Ffynnon to share information across the authority and with partners
- Ongoing audit of Performance Information and data cleansing to ensure that we take the right action at the right time.

Workforce Planning and Development

Statement

Priority is given to workforce matters across the service recognising that we have a key role to play in supporting the recruitment and development of staff across the Social Care sector utilising the Social Care Partnership forums. We are implementing single status which includes job evaluation and supporting career pathways for staff within the service area. We are promoting a performance culture across all staff ensuring that they contribute positively to our service direction. Training is valued amongst staff and managers and a comprehensive plan is produced and delivered each year linked to our service direction and core responsibilities against a backdrop of limited financial resources.

We are working to develop seamless services via co-located teams, e.g. Mental Health and Learning Disabilities and fully integrated teams under a single manager, e.g. Intermediate Care and have implemented a three-year

investment plan in Organisational Development with support from Birmingham University Partnership, which we are currently evaluating.

We are actively seeking to manage sickness absence and this will be a key feature of our work for 2009/10 along with the promotion of family friendly policies such as flexible working and alternative working arrangements to maximise outcomes for both staff and service users.

Judgement

We have a very well-developed staff training and development programme where individual needs are recognised and addressed using a variety of mechanisms. We are an IIP accredited organisation and fully appreciate the impact that a good working environment, access to the appropriate tools to do the job and how training and development opportunities can have on staff across the whole sector.

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

- AWS Review and implementation
- Implementation of single status
- Roll out revised Work Plan Review across the service
- Review Accommodation Strategy
- Monitor and contribute to the exit strategy for County Hall, and overall Asset Management Strategy of the authority
- Implement the Managing Sickness Absence action plan to reduce costs of sickness absence
- Maintain accurate establishment listing of all staff within the service area.

Equality and Diversity

Statement

We are promoting equality and diversity, not just Social Care and Housing but also by contributing to the whole council approach, and working in partnership with health. We are building upon improved data and establishing new targets and assessing our performance. We are actively promoting Access to Work and supporting this by an Alternative Working Strategy to support our staff.

This activity is central to the services that we offer and the way in which we are planning to deliver services for the future. The work of our Benefits Advice staff will become even more essential in the current economic climate as we seek to maximise their income and therefore choice for our service users.

Judgement

We are striving to 'mainstream' equality within the workplace and work very closely with corporate colleagues in the development of a robust set of

policies and procedures to help deliver improvements. We have very well established Equality Working Groups at both corporate and service level which has assisted us to engage with a wide range of staff

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

- Roll out Equalities Impact Assessment through the Equalities Working Group
- Schedule list of policies and procedures to be Impact assessed

Management and Planning and Partnerships

Judgement

We have sound principles in place, agreed across NHS and local government, but it is still 'work in progress' that needs to be refined. Those principles are now linked to more robust, but still immature, systems that aim to deliver stronger and more effective partnerships

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

- Making the JSIGs work for benefit of users and carers
- Ensuring HSC&WB Strategic Board and the JSIGs prioritise effectively to maximise resources – this will mean difficult decisions about disinvestment and / or service reconfiguration
- Moving towards collaborative working and integrated teams reducing management costs, releasing resources for front line delivery.

Leadership – Corporate and Politicial Support

Judgement

Leadership is strong and provides clear messages and modelling to staff within SC&H as well as leading on a number of key strategic priorities for the Council.

Action to be taken: (Improvement Plan)

Succession planning will be crucial over the next 12 months