

MEETING: **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

DATE: **23 June 2016**

TITLE: **External Audit Reports**

PURPOSE: **To submit a summary of implementation steps established by the services in response to external audit reports and their recommendations for consideration by the Audit Committee**

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CABINET MEMBER: **Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn**

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 It was decided in the special meeting of the Audit Committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to approve the procedure of presenting a summary of actions in response to external audit reports and their recommendations for consideration by the Audit Committee

1.2 The Audit Committee has a responsibility to consider the external audit reports, including national reports, the recommendations contained therein, and the implications of these for governance, risk management and control, ensuring that arrangements and processes are in place to ensure that these recommendations are implemented.

## **2. Continuity from previous report**

Further information / explanation on the following issues are identified in the special meeting on the 21st of January 2016.

2.1 **Ensure that the services promote independence for older people:** need confirmation that this work was only completed in relation to telecare (4.6)  
The comments in the previous report's progress column refers to Telecare only. In this report we have ensured that any information in the progress column refers to progress on the recommendation only to avoid any confusion.

2.2 **Strategic planning with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).** - need confirmation that monitoring of the therapeutic service for children/young people placed outside the authority's area was undertaken (8.1)

Operational arrangements are in place and an officer has been placed with an overview of the situation outside the County. The officer keeps in touch with Council officers. Any concerns will be directed to the officer, and discussions are taking place between the Council and BIBPC; if applicable the providers will discuss their concerns and find a way forward.

- 2.3 **Awareness and use of advocacy services:** more information should be received because the comments do not confirm the consistency in the quality of care plans; (8.5)

It is an ongoing challenge to get children and young people to attend meetings and reviews that deal with them. On the whole, young people choose not to attend. The requirements to IRO under the Welfare and Social Services Act will ensure that this officer will meet with all young people before their review to ensure that their wishes are heard. This has resource implications for the Department in terms of time to make this happen in view of the increasing numbers of children in care. Independent advocacy is being offered to all children in care and they receive information leaflets and so on about the service. The majority of children in care do not choose an independent review, rather if they have an issue that needs to be resolved, they choose a person who is part of their lives to intercede on their behalf, for example foster carer, teacher, social worker and so on. All this will contribute to ensuring that children and young people have someone who can intercede for them when they require help. Interestingly, a high percentage of children in care are choosing to contact independent advocates to attend meetings as reviews on their behalf to speak for and share their wishes.

- 2.4 **Opportunities to take advantage of health care and accommodation for looked-after children (Accommodation)** - that confirmation should be received in terms of the intentions of the Children and Supporting Families Department in relation to responding to the lack of range of placements available for those with complex needs (8.7)

Finding suitable locations locally to address the most severe and complex needs is an ongoing challenge and those needing specialist residential placements to meet these needs will inevitably go out of county. These young people would not be suitable for foster placements at the initial stage, but the Department's strategy to ensure that placements are regularly scrutinized actively means that there are significantly fewer young people in residential settings than has been historically (12 compared to 22 previously). Finding foster placements are less of a challenge and we are fortunate to have suitable resources to address the needs within our resources internally fostering ourselves. Of course it can not be said that we have adequate resources, since the area is one that is 'volatile' and change from day to day depending on the cases coming to the attention, but at the moment we are not anxious we do not have fostering adequate resources.

- 2.5 **Raise awareness of the implications and requirements of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and improve the governance arrangements for the operation of the procedures** - that confirmation should be received as to why DoLS applications had increased from 7 in 2013-14 to 365 in 2014-15 (8.11)

The large increase in DoLS applications is a National pattern that has manifested itself after the Supreme Court ruling in the case in Cheshire West.

- 2.6 **Gwynedd Older People Domiciliary Care Review by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (CSSIW)** - it was noted as 'In progress (continuous)', it would be more sensible to note that it had been completed on a specific date and

noting that it was continuous work. It was noted that a request was made for confirmation of the situation;

The record has since been changed and the situation has been confirmed as completed. Arrangements are in place to ensure that risk assessments are completed, all our documentation has been modified in the form of a Personal Care Plan and Monitoring Visits 27 are held by Adult, Health and Wellbeing monitoring officers.

- 2.7 National Review of the Use of DoLS in Wales 2014 - Gwynedd Local Authority and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board - CSSIW** - the progress column noted that specific steps in the action plan had been realised but not the entire recommendation. One progress should be noted, namely 'In progress (9.1) We have ensured that any information in the Progress column refers to progress on the recommendation only to avoid any confusion.

### **3. Summary of report in Appendix I**

Below is a summary of the reports provided in Appendix I

- 3.1 Presented in Appendix I is a list of inspections carried out by external auditors over recent years as well as their proposals for improving, their action plans and progress that has occurred to date. The committee will need to consider whether it is satisfied with the progress that has taken place.
- 3.2 The information is set out in chronological order for ease and includes the responds to national reports as well as those specific to Gwynedd.
- 3.3 Of the 102 proposals / recommendations that are included in Appendix I, a summary of progress are as follows:

<b>Progress</b>	<b>Number</b>
Not started	1
Being planned	11
In progress	40
Complete	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>

- 3.4 It can be seen that 50 out of 106 have been completed

### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The committee will need to decide if it is satisfied that the recommendations and proposals for improvement in the auditors' reports listed in Appendix I have been implemented. Deciding if it is to call any mater in for further consideration, either to the full committee or to the Controls Improvement Working Group.**