



A driver for excellence

Issue 9 - Published July 09

Welcome to 'Improving Social Services', the 9th issue of the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) bulletin.

This edition provides updates on the new SSIA Business Plan, latest events and updates on the work programme.

Delivering for improvement

The Welsh Assembly Government have approved the SSIA's new business plan for 2009-12. The initial focus of our work is the ongoing programme in the following priority areas:

- Strengthening performance management
- Supporting professional leadership and management development
- Supporting strategic commissioning
- Supporting the piloting and evaluation of new service models
- Supporting councils experiencing significant difficulties in delivering on their social services responsibilities

For more information please e-mail: ssiaenquiries@wlga.gov.uk

Programme highlights

Supporting the implementation of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan for Wales

Wales was the first country in the world to have its own national strategic action plan for ASD, which sets a clear vision for effectively meeting the needs of children and adults with the condition, as well as those of their families and carers. To help bring this about, WAG has awarded funding to the SSIA to establish a dedicated team providing support on a regional basis to councils and partners in their shared task of improving services. Early work of the team, details of which are provided opposite, is focused on reviewing local action plans drawn up over the past year by councils. Ongoing support is likely to include help with mapping the incidence of ASD across local areas, advice on planning for and commissioning effective services, and the development of new service models that are citizen centred and involve collaboration between councils and across sectors. More information on the ASD Strategic Action Plan and the work of the SSIA team can be found at:

www.ssiacymru.org.uk/asd



SSIA new structure

From 1 April 2009 the new SSIA team is as follows:

- **Business Manager** – Martyn Palfreman
- **Knowledge Manager** – Andrew Bell
- **Improvement Managers** – Cathryn Thomas & Vicky Poole
- **Lead Adviser** – Chris Davies
- **Strategic Advisers** - Joe Howsam & Sheila Wentworth
- **ASD Coordinator: Regional Support** – David Poole
- **ASD Regional Support Officers** – Sharon Walters (N Wales); Mary Rendell (Mid and SW Wales); Johanna Manikiza (SE Wales)

Also supporting the team is Tracy Hinton, **Business & Knowledge Officer**.

For more information regarding these roles and contact details please view the team pages on the SSIA website at:

www.ssiacymru.org.uk/team

Annual Council Reporting Framework



From the summer of 2010, the statutory Director of Social Services in each Welsh council will be responsible for publishing an annual report setting out their assessment of the effectiveness of social care services. It is expected that this will allow for the opportunity to present a more rounded picture, commenting on local as well as national issues and priorities. The annual report will also set out how priority areas for improvement will be tackled by the Council in the year ahead.

Supported by the SSIA, Wreccsam and Torfaen councils have worked through a real time pilot to develop the new framework approach. Both councils will have formally presented their reports to full council and executive boards by the end of July. Lessons learnt from their experience have been incorporated into an electronic toolkit which is available to other councils (and key stakeholders) as they begin their preparations to report in the summer of 2010.

Workshops are currently being delivered to all significant managers and members within each council on key aspects of the new framework. SSIA have also commissioned additional support from SCP Consult to support councils with their preparations.

For more information and to view the latest ACRF newsletter visit: www.ssiacymru.org.uk/annualreporting

Reablement

The national Reablement Action and Learning Set established and supported by the SSIA and comprising 9 councils has been progressing 3 workstreams aimed at producing high quality resources for councils wishing to move towards a reablement approach. The resources being prepared are:

1. A compendium of notable practice.
2. A model for identifying capacity and impact of reablement services as a means of presenting a business case
3. The development of a competency and accreditation framework based on a 'Gold Standard' for reablement.

A national event at which the SSIA and 9 pioneer councils presented the resources and which provided councils with the opportunity to share experiences from a local perspective took place at the Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells on 10 July 2009.

For more information on this work visit www.ssiacymru.org.uk/reablement

Developing Effective Leaders

We are committed to supporting managers at all levels in developing their skills and capacity to lead the change needed in their organisations to drive service improvement. Over the current year we have supported 8 managers from across Welsh social services in their participation on the PSMW/NLIAH strategic leadership programme for the whole public sector, '**Leadership for Collaboration**'. We are now working with these managers to help embed learning and support them in using their learning to bring about change within their authorities. The 2009-10 programme begins in Autumn 2009. More information on this and how the SSIA will continue to support social services managers taking part in the programme will be available shortly on the SSIA website at www.ssiacymru.org.uk/leadership.

Social Work Team Manager Development Programme

The Institute of Public Care (IPC) was commissioned by the SSIA to develop the framework for a national **Social Work Team Manager Development Programme**. The programme is aimed initially at equipping managers of fieldwork social workers to influence behaviour and culture change within their teams to drive improvement in practice and outcomes. The framework, developed through wide consultation with key stakeholders has been completed and we will shortly be starting work on commissioning the delivery of the programme and applying for formal accreditation. The programme is expected to go live in mid-2010.

For more information on this exciting programme visit www.ssiacymru.org.uk/teammanager

Promoting an outcomes focus in social services

A consistent principle underpinning the range of SSIA workstrands is that of maintaining a clear focus on outcomes for service users and carers in the planning and delivery of services. In April 2009 the SSIA and the WLGA's Partnership Support Unit (PSU) co-hosted a second national event introducing the Results Based Accountability (RBA) model of performance management developed by Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute in the USA. Over 100 delegates from across social services and the wider public sector attended the event, which was facilitated by Mark Friedman. SSIA and PSU are also supporting a Community of Practice comprising Children and Young People's Partnerships across Wales in trialling RBA, and co-lead a strategy task group of senior representatives of key public sector organisations which aims to map use of the approach across Wales and gather evidence of its positive impact in relation to performance improvement. For more information, and to tell us about your experience of and involvement in RBA, visit www.ssiacymru.org.uk/rba

Learning



Highlighting notable practice



Digital Pen
Vale of Glamorgan Fostering Team

Seamless recording – the Vale of Glamorgan Digital Pen

An innovative pilot run by the Vale of Glamorgan Fostering Team utilises technology to assist practitioners. The Vale of Glamorgan Fostering Team in conjunction with their ICT Department are currently testing a pioneering approach to recording information carried out by staff when conducting visits.

To read more about this pilot and view video footage please visit the following:

www.ssiacymru.org.uk/digitalpen

Notable practice online

Coming soon will be an interactive on-line resource on the SSIA website which will enable you to search from a wide range of examples of new and innovative practice in social services across Wales. Amongst a broad range of examples highlighted are examples looking at focussed themes such as dignity in care & older people's services. For each example you will be able to read a brief synopsis of the work and be able to contact those involved for further details and help.

Supporting learning and improvement networks

New to the SSIA website are two areas supporting national learning and improvement networks, each of which will include a variety of information and resources for both network members and those with an interest in their field of work.

- Carers Learning and Improvement Network
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder Local Government Lead Network

For information on all the all Wales networks supported by the SSIA website please visit:

www.ssiacymru.org.uk/networks

Featured in the next Bulletin (September 09):

- Using Peers to support improvement in Wales
- SSIA Knowledge Strategy – putting you in the picture on social services improvement

