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Well-being of Future Generations examination: Preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitating timely discharges – **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

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This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Ian Phillips and Gareth Jones, programme managed by Non Jenkins under the direction of Huw Rees.

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Summary report

Summary

Why we undertook the Examination

- 1 In accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) the Auditor General for Wales (the Auditor General) is statutorily required to examine public bodies to assess the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when:
 - a. setting their well-being objectives; and
 - b. taking steps to meet them.
- 2 The Act defines the sustainable development principle as acting in a manner: ‘...which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.
- 3 The Auditor General must provide a report on his examinations to the National Assembly for Wales at least a year before each Assembly election. The first such report must be published by 2020, before the 2021 Assembly election.
- 4 The Auditor General has undertaken examinations across the 44 bodies covered by the Act to inform his report to the National Assembly during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- 5 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period May 2019 to July 2019.
- 6 This report sets out our findings from our examination of preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitating timely discharges, a step the Council is taking to meet its well-being objectives. It also sets out the Council’s initial response to our findings.

What we examined

- 7 We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in carrying out the ‘step’ of work in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (the Health Board) to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitate timely discharges.
- 8 In order to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following ‘ways of working’:

Exhibit 1: the 'five ways of working'

The table below sets out the 'five ways of working' as defined in the Welsh Government's 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials'¹ document.

The Five Ways of Working
Long-term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
Prevention How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
Integration Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.
Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- 9 Our examination found that: There are examples that show how the Council has applied the sustainable development principle in practice, however it will need to consider how it can effectively meet anticipated challenges over the longer term.

¹ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials, Welsh Government (2015)

Detailed report

Part One: Examination Findings

The step contributes to meeting individuals' short-term needs, but capacity constraints and likely rising demand over the medium to long-term require further consideration as to how to respond to those challenges

What we looked for

- 10 We looked for evidence of:
- a thorough understanding of current and long-term needs and the associated challenges and opportunities;
 - planning over an appropriate timescale;
 - resources allocated to ensure long-term benefits; and
 - appropriate monitoring and review.
- 11 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for the 'long-term' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.²

What we found

- 12 We identified the following strengths:
- Short-term interventions that form parts of the step may deliver long-term benefits for individuals and prevent subsequent hospital admissions.
 - There is a clear strategic commitment to addressing people's needs over the longer term.
- 13 We identified the following areas for development:
- Analysis of existing data to enable the Council and Health Board to better understand potential demand in the medium to longer term.
 - Analysis of existing data to understand the longer term impact of the step on people receiving the service.
 - Consider new and innovative approaches to addressing emerging risks and opportunities and meeting need more efficiently and effectively, for example, technological developments.

² See Appendix 1

Prevention is central to this step, but increasing demand and pressured resources may require alternative approaches to realise earlier preventative benefits

What we looked for

- 14 We looked for evidence of:
- a thorough understanding of the nature and type of problem the step could help prevent from occurring or getting worse;
 - resources allocated to ensure preventative benefits will be delivered; and
 - monitoring and review of how effectively the step is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse.
- 15 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'prevention' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.³

What we found

- 16 We identified the following strengths:
- This step has been designed to deliver short term impacts by preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and facilitating timely discharge from hospital.
 - Aspects of the step are also currently designed to engage at an earlier stage, for example, falls prevention and different pilots aimed to maximise preventative benefits.
- 17 We identified the following areas for development:
- There is scope to better understand and analyse the available data on prevention, as that is currently under-developed, albeit the different systems used in Health and Social Services are a barrier.
 - Further explore links with a wider range of partners, including the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust and General Practitioners to engage with people at an earlier stage to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.
 - Consideration of the potential root causes of unnecessary hospital admissions, for example, those people who live alone, or why the data show that admissions are up for the population as a whole but down for people aged 65 or over with a chronic condition.

³ See Appendix 1

The step has high level, integrated alignment with the Council and Health Board’s respective well-being objectives, but a more widespread knowledge of the definition of integration under the WFG Act may help to realise operational benefits

What we looked for

- 18 We looked for evidence of consideration of:
- how this step could contribute to the seven national well-being goals;
 - how delivery of this step will impact on the Council’s well-being objectives and wider priorities; and
 - how delivery of this step will impact on other public bodies’ well-being objectives.
- 19 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for ‘integration’ that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁴

What we found

- 20 We identified the following strengths:
- There is a clear alignment between the Council’s and the Health Board’s well-being objectives that this step directly contributes to.
- 21 We identified the following areas for development:
- The Act was not seen as a driver for this step and consequently understanding of the principle of integration could be further strengthened.
 - Consider opportunities to further join up the strategic integration with the operational delivery of the step.
 - Develop a shared understanding of the data about the impact of the step for the Council and Health Board.

⁴ See Appendix 1

Collaboration with the Health Board is central to this step and there are good examples of effective internal and external collaboration, however there are opportunities to strengthen links with wider partners

What we looked for

- 22 We looked for evidence that the Council:
- has considered how it could work with others to deliver the step (to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its well-being objectives);
 - is collaborating effectively to deliver the step; and
 - is monitoring and reviewing whether the collaboration is helping it or its stakeholders meet well-being objectives.
- 23 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁵

What we found

- 24 We identified the following strengths:
- Delivery of this step involves a multi-disciplinary approach with staff from the Council and Health Board.
 - Some other Council service areas, including housing, collaborate to help deliver the step and the Council has forged links with third sector organisations and other external partners.
- 25 We identified the following areas for development:
- Different ways of working between health and social services mean collaboration is not always seamless.
 - There is inefficiency in the referral process to the Community Resource team that suggests collaboration could be strengthened.
 - Despite efforts that have been made, there remains a recognised need to strengthen collaboration with some stakeholders to help realise further preventative benefits (including, GPs, the Welsh Ambulance Service (NHS Trust) and District Nurses).
 - Consider opportunities to learn from other organisations who have experienced similar challenges.

⁵ See Appendix 1

Feedback on people's experience of the Community Resource Team is routinely collected but there is further scope to consider how wider stakeholder involvement can influence the design and delivery of the step in the medium to long-term

What we looked for

- 26 We looked for evidence that the Council has:
- identified who it needs to involve in designing and delivering the step;
 - effectively involved key stakeholders in designing and delivering the step;
 - used the results of involvement to shape the development and delivery of the step; and
 - sought to learn lessons and improve its approach to involvement.
- 27 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'involvement' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁶

What we found

- 28 We identified the following strengths:
- The 'What matters' conversation that is part of work under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 is central to delivery of this step.
 - Service users are asked routinely about their experience of the Community Resource team and we found evidence of positive views.
- 29 We identified the following areas for development:
- Consider how other public bodies and organisations can be involved to help understand the causes, as well as the symptoms, of unnecessary hospital admissions to inform the design and delivery of actions to address those root causes.
 - Consider ways in which the public can contribute to the design of the step over the medium to long-term.
 - Consider ways to further educate the public about how they can remain independent.
 - Consider strengthening links to families and/carers to ensure effective contingency planning for those at risk of hospital admission.

⁶ See Appendix 1

Part Two: Council's response

- 30 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in October 2019 that was attended by senior officers from the Council's Social Services Departments, officers from the University Health Board. At this workshop the Council began to consider its response to our findings and as a result of discussions at the workshop and further reflection on our findings the Council has developed the following actions.
- 31 We will continue to monitor the Council's progress in implementing these actions, and the extent to which they address the issues we have identified in our findings.

Appendix 1

Community Resource Team – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act WAO Examination Outcomes – Action Plan 2019-20

Corporate Wellbeing Objectives:	Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being.
Step:	Work in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (the Health Board) to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitate timely discharges.
Lead Officer:	Joanne Williams, Head of Adult Services, Social Services
Analysis of application of the sustainable development principle:	There are examples that show how the Council has applied the sustainable development principle in practice, however it will need to consider how it can effectively meet anticipated challenges over the longer term.

Improvement Actions	Success Criteria	Time scale	Person responsible	Finance
Long term				
1. Develop systems to effectively collate and analyse data to assist with predicting and forecasting service demand and trends.	Systems are in place and being routinely analysed to assist with forecasting service demand and trends and inform service planning.	March 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway Owain Sweeting	N/A
2. Research and consider opportunities to invest in assistive technology to deliver both medium and long-term benefits for individuals.	Research completed and appropriate assistive technology identified and purchased.	March 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway	Transformation Funding
Integration				
1. Develop systems to effectively collate and analyse data to assist with predicting and forecasting service demand and trends.	Systems are in place and being routinely analysed to assist with forecasting service demand and trends and inform service planning.	March 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway Owain Sweeting	N/A
2. Develop a wider understanding across the Authority regarding the understanding of 'Integration' as defined within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.	Integration is clearly understood within the context of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and is imbedded within strategic and operational plans.	June 2020	Ros Roberts Jo Williams	N/A
Involvement				
1. Develop systems to effectively collate and analyse data to assist with predicting and forecasting service demand and trends.	Systems are in place and being routinely analysed to assist with forecasting service demand and trends and inform service planning.	March 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway Owain Sweeting	N/A

Improvement Actions	Success Criteria	Time scale	Person responsible	Finance
2. Work in partnership with other organisations, communities and citizens to embed Compassionate Communities and Integrated Wellbeing Networks.	Compassionate Communities and Integrated Networks are established within the North of the Borough.	March 2020	Jo Williams David Llewellyn Alison Gough	Transformation funding secured
Collaboration				
1. To participate in and contribute towards the Gwent wide Adult Strategic Partnership review of referral systems and processes currently in place.	Review completed and a move towards one referral system agreed and in place.	Oct 2020	Jo Williams	Not Known
2. Continue to seek out and share learning and good practice across the region with a wide range of organisations.	Sharing and learning has actively lead to influencing good practice, new ways of working and promoting change.	Ongoing	Jo Williams Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway	N/A
3. Seek out and explore links with a wider range of partners and organisations to work towards preventing unnecessary hospital admissions.	New projects and opportunities identified and appropriate funding secured.	July 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway	N/A
Prevention				
1. Seek out and explore links with a wider range of partners and organisations to work towards preventing unnecessary hospital admissions.	New projects and opportunities identified and appropriate funding secured.	July 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway	N/A
2. Develop systems to effectively collate and analyse data to assist with predicting and forecasting service demand and trends.	Systems are in place and being routinely analysed to assist with forecasting service demand and trends and inform service planning.	March 2020	Joanne Milliken Trudy Conway Owain Sweeting	N/A

Appendix 2

Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

The table below sets out 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working that we have identified and will use to help inform our assessments of the extent to which bodies may be applying the Sustainable Development Principle (SDP). We do not intend to use the indicators as a 'checklist'. They should be viewed as 'indicators' that will help us to form conclusions, rather than 'determinants' of the extent to which a body is acting in accordance with the SDP in taking steps to meet its wellbeing objectives.

Exhibit 2: Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a clear understanding of what 'long-term' means in the context of the Act.• They have designed the step to deliver the wellbeing objective/s and contribute to their long-term vision.• They have designed the step to deliver short or medium-term benefits, which are balanced with the impact over the long-term (within the project context).• They have designed the step based on a sophisticated understanding of current and future need and pressures, including analysis of future trends.• Consequently, there is a comprehensive understanding of current and future risks and opportunities.• Resources have been allocated to ensure long-term as well as short-term benefits are delivered.• There is a focus on delivering outcomes, with milestones/progression steps identified where outcomes will be delivered over the long-term.• They are open to new ways of doing things which could help deliver benefits over the longer term.• They value intelligence and pursue evidence-based approaches.
What would show a body is fully applying the preventative way of working?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The body seeks to understand the root causes of problems so that negative cycles and intergenerational challenges can be tackled.• The body sees challenges from a system-wide perspective, recognising and valuing the long-term benefits that they can deliver for people and places.• The body allocates resources to preventative action that is likely to contribute to better outcomes and use of resources over the longer-term, even where this may limit the ability to meet some short-term needs.• There are decision-making and accountability arrangements that recognise the value of preventative action and accept short-term reductions in performance and resources in the pursuit of anticipated improvements in outcomes and use of resources.

What would show a body is taking an 'integrated' approach?

- Individuals at all levels understand their contribution to the delivery of the vision and wellbeing objectives.
- Individuals at all levels understand what different parts of the organisation do and proactively seek opportunities to work across organisational boundaries. This is replicated in their work with other public bodies.
- Individuals at all levels recognise the cross-organisation dependencies of achieving the ambition and objectives.
- There is an open culture where information is shared.
- There is a well-developed understanding of how the wellbeing objectives and steps to meet them impact on other public sector bodies.
- Individuals proactively work across organisational boundaries to maximise their contribution across the wellbeing goals and minimise negative impacts.
- Governance, structures and processes support this, as do behaviours.

What would show a body is collaborating effectively?

- The body is focused on place, community and outcomes rather than organisational boundaries.
- The body has a good understanding of partners' objectives and their responsibilities, which helps to drive collaborative activity.
- The body has positive and mature relationships with stakeholders, where information is shared in an open and transparent way.
- The body recognises and values the contributions that all partners can make.
- The body seeks to establish shared processes and ways of working, where appropriate.

What would show a body is involving people effectively?

- Having an understanding of who needs to be involved and why.
- Reflecting on how well the needs and challenges facing those people are currently understood.
- Working co-productively, working with stakeholders to design and deliver.
- Seeing the views of stakeholders as a vital source of information that will help deliver better outcomes.
- Ensuring that the full diversity of stakeholders is represented and they are able to take part.
- Having mature and trusting relationships with its stakeholders where there is ongoing dialogue and information is shared in an open and transparent way.
- Ensure stakeholders understand the impact of their contribution.
- Seek feedback from key stakeholders which is used to help learn and improve.

Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru
24 Heol y Gadeirlan
Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Ffôn testun: 029 2032 0660

E-bost: post@archwilio.cymru

Gwefan: www.archwilio.cymru